



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

The Mountain Path

Vol. III

JULY 1966

No. 3

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

"Even when the thieves
of the five senses break in
upon me, art Thou not still
in my heart, Oh Aruna-
chala!"

— *The Marital Garland of
Letters*, verse 11.

Publisher :

T. N. Venkataraman,
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

✱

Editor :

Arthur Osborne,
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

✱

Managing Editor :

V. Ganesan,
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

✱

Annual Subscription :

INDIA .. Rs. 5.
FOREIGN .. 10 sh. \$ 1.50.

Life Subscription :

Rs. 100; £ 10; \$ 30.

Single Copy :

Rs. 1.50; 3 sh.; \$ 0.45



THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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

Vol. III

JULY 1966

No. 3

CONTENTS

	Page
EDITORIAL :	
Reincarnation ..	223
Bhagavan on Reincarnation ..	226
The Dream-Self (Poem) — A. Rao ..	227
Lines from "A Testament" — Arthur Osborne ..	228
The Hindu Doctrine of Karma and Reincarnation ..	230
— Prof. M. K. Venkatarama Iyer ..	230
Devayana and Pitriyana — Bhagavan Das ..	234
Bhagavan's Teaching on Aham Vritti — N. R. Rajagopalaiyer ..	236
The Questions of Nachiketa — Madguni Shambu Bhat ..	237
Sri Ramana Maharshi and the Indian Philosophic Tradition ..	238
— His Highness Sri Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar Bahadur, Maharaja of Mysore ..	238
Outer Change and Inner Poise — Irmgard George Schultz ..	242
Narayana Guru — John Spiers ..	243
What is Reincarnated — Dorothy C. Donath ..	247
I am Alpha and Omega — Gladys De Meuter ..	250
Causality and Rebirth — Dr. W. J. Henn Collins ..	252
The Dance (Poem) — Alta Yates ..	257
The Tibetan Doctrine of Incarnate Buddhas — Bodhichitta ..	258
An Incarnate Abbot Explains ..	260
Verses from Sri Muruganar — Prof. K. Swaminathan ..	262
An Introduction to Japji — Lt. Col. Karamchandani ..	263

CONTENTS—(Contd.)

	Page
ARROWS FROM A CHRISTIAN BOW — XI :	
A Christian view of Reincarnation — <i>Sagittarius</i> ..	265
Traces of Reincarnation in the West — <i>H. Sabastian Gubbins</i> ..	267
The Hero of Mythology — <i>Sir George Trevelyan</i>	270
Renewed Opportunity — <i>Cornelia Bagarotti</i> ..	274
Strange Case of the Pollock Twins — <i>Kenneth Brass</i> ..	275
From the Ganges to the Amazon — <i>Jean Butler</i>	276
How I Came to the Maharshi — <i>K. K. Nambiar</i>	277
How the Maharshi Came to Me — <i>MUDr. Robert Fuchsberger</i> ..	280
Some Reminiscences — <i>Kunju Swami</i> ..	282
True-Seeing — <i>Wei Wu Wei</i> ..	283
The Bhagavad Gita — <i>Prof. G. V. Kulkarni</i> and <i>Arthur Osborne</i> ..	284
Book Reviews ..	287
Ashram Bulletin ..	293
Introducing	299
Letters to the Editor ..	301

To Our Subscribers

1. The official year of the quarterly is from January to December.

2. 'SUBSCRIBERS IN INDIA should remit their annual subscription by Money Order only as far as possible and not by cheque. The words 'subscription for *The Mountain Path* for year/years' should be written on the M.O. coupon and the full name and address written in BLOCK LETTERS on the reverse of the coupon.

Life Subscription should be sent by cheque drawn favouring *The Mountain Path* and crossed.

The journal will not be sent by V.P.P.

3. FOREIGN SUBSCRIBERS can send their subscription by International Money Order, British Postal Order or by Bank cheque or draft payable in India, U.S.A. or U.K.

The subscription rates are for despatch of the journal by *surface mail* to all parts of the world.

If despatch by AIR MAIL is desired the following **additional annual amount** should be remitted :

	£	\$
(a) Pakistan, Ceylon Rs. 4.00
(b) Asia, Egypt, Indonesia 12s. ..	12s.	1.80
(c) Europe, Africa (excluding Egypt) 18s. ..	18s.	2.70
(d) Australia, New Zealand, Fiji 24s. ..	24s.	3.60
(e) North & South America, Hawaii 30s. ..	30s.	4.50

The Mountain Path

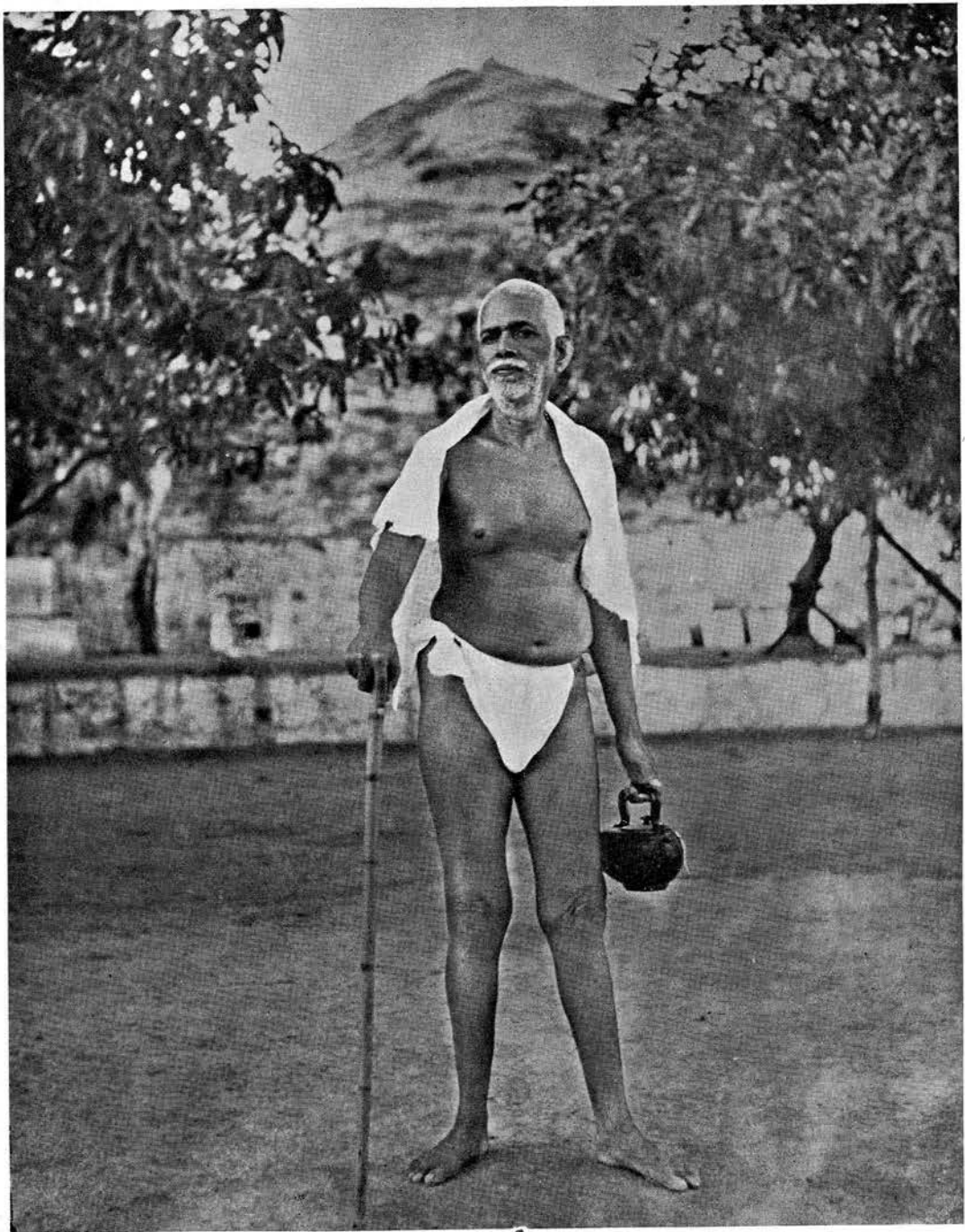
(A QUARTERLY)

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

Contributions for publication should be addressed to 'The Editor, *The Mountain Path*, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State'. They should be in English and typed with double spacing. Contributions not published will be returned on request.

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

No payment is made for contributions published. Anything herein published may be reprinted elsewhere without fee provided due acknowledgement is made and the editor is previously notified.





THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

VOL. III

JULY, 1966

No. 3

REINCARNATION

(EDITORIAL)

It is possible to discuss rebirth only from the point of view of ignorance, because from the point of view of knowledge there is no one to be reborn. Therefore Bhagavan would generally brush the question aside when asked about it. He would make some such reply as: "First find out whether you are born now before asking whether you will be reborn." Or: "Why worry what you will be after death before you know what you are now?"¹

The one thing that a man is absolutely certain about is his own existence. He may come to believe that the world outside him is real or unreal, that he is sitting at a solid table, as his senses tell him, or at a cluster of whirling electrons, as the nuclear scientists tell him, that there is or is not a God, that other people really exist or that they are imagined by him, like the equally real-seeming people he saw in last night's dream; but what he knows from personal, first-hand experience is his own existence.

However, from this certainty he makes a wholly unwarranted deduction: that he is a limited individual being, identical with or located in a particular psycho-somatic instru-

ment. Therefore he starts to worry what will happen to this hypothetical individual when, at death, the psycho-somatic instrument dissolves. Will it continue to exist without a body? Or will it get an ethereal in place of a physical body? Or will it take form as a new complex in a new physical body? It is no use asking the Jnani, the 'Enlightened', since he knows that these are unreal questions inasmuch as the hypothetical individual about whom they are asked never really existed.

This unreality of the hypothetical individual is the basic doctrine of anatta, no-ego, which forms the very starting point of Buddhism. Its final realization is the culmination of all religion. A religion like Christianity, which does not say outright that the ego does not exist and never has, comes round to the same point by insisting that it must be sacrificed. He who gives up his life (the hypothetical ego) for Christ's sake shall find it (the true, universal life of

¹ See the section on reincarnation in Ch. 1 of 'The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words', Rider & Co., London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

the Spirit); whereas he who clings to it shall lose it.

But to give it up is the hardest thing to do, even though one may be convinced theoretically of its unreality. A man clings so tenaciously to the false hypothesis of individual being that the religions have to lead him by all manner of devious ways to weaken it, attack it, cut away its roots of desire, curb its exuberant growth of indulgence. Ways of indulging it are called vices and banned; ways of curbing it are called virtues and extolled. Indeed, the one thing on which all religions agree is the need to discipline or deny it; and it may be that the common feature in all who renounce religion is its indulgence or, to use the fashionable term of to-day, its 'expression'.

This preoccupation with the hypothetical individual has even invaded religion, taking the form of wondering what will happen to it after death. Indeed, for many people religion has come to mean mainly beliefs and opinions as to what happens after death. Really this is an insignificant part of religion, as may be seen from the fact that two of the world's great religions, Judaeism and the original Taoism, said nothing at all about it. The modern exaggeration of its importance is a symptom of dangerous spiritual passivity, since by it religion comes to mean 'what will happen to me' instead of 'what I have to achieve'. As one of our contributors aptly remarked: "Nothing happens that is not earned. And what is earned can be earned as well before death as after."²

The act of dying will not of itself destroy the ego-illusion. It is not the body that is the obstacle to Nirvana or Realization, whichever one may call it, but only the I-am-the-body idea. That is why Bhagavan could affirm that there is no difference between realization in the body and realization after the death of the body. If the ego-illusion remains till the end of life, death will not destroy it; on the other hand, if it is already liquidated death will not revive it.

Since it is only the hypothetical individual or illusory ego that can undergo rein-

carnation, the question exists, as I have already said, only from the 'point of view of ignorance'. That does not, however, imply that it is completely invalid, inasmuch as posthumous states of being, although no more real than this life, are also no less real. It is best to wake up from the whole series of dreams, but for those who are unable to do so it is possible to describe their sequence. Nor is doing this a mere concession to curiosity. It has a positive value within its limited range of reality, since the dream-sequence, as long as it lasts, is shaped by the law of cause and effect, that is of karma, and it is salutary for people to understand that what they do in this life shapes what they will be and undergo later.

It is generally agreed in the various religions that those who have failed to awaken to Reality pass on from this life to a subtle state in which they reap the harvest of good or ill that they have sown. The impressions preserved in what the psychologists would call 'the subconscious' arise to form the environment and substance of a new world, just as they may during a dream. This is what is called heaven and hell.

Hindu teachers add, however, that this is not the end. How can it be? How could an individual state of reaping the harvest of a phenomenal life be frozen into perpetuity? After having thus enjoyed or suffered what has been accumulated, the person is born again into a new life starting at the level to which he had risen or fallen in his previous one; and in this new life again a harvest will be sown and will later have to be reaped.

The question of time, of how long the subtle state between a death and a new birth lasts, does not necessarily arise, since time is only a condition of this physical life. Even during this life it is possible during ecstasy or samadhi to experience timelessness. Moreover, dreams can skip about regardless of time. A dream may show the conditions of life of last week or of next week and another of ten years ago or twenty. There is

² 'Paradise and Nirvana' by A. Qutbuddin in the issue of July 1965.

no necessary time sequence between them. Similarly the duration of a subtle state between a death and a birth would be quite independent of the physical time-scale. And on its termination the next birth, like a person's next dream in this life, might take place at any point in the time-scale. There may be cases where, owing to some contingency, rebirth will closely follow death by worldly time, but it may be possible for a man's next birth to be situated at any time, earlier or later, just as his next dream can be concerned with any period of his life. A man who dies in England to-day may be reborn in Rome at the time of Caesar. But what is definite is that he will be born in the conditions which his living has made appropriate for him. That is to say that it is definite so long as the dream sequence continues and the law of karma applies.

It is generally said that there is no more rebirth for him who has awakened out of the dream of individual being into the Reality of universal Being; but it is never satisfactory to believe something just because it is generally said. That leads to arguments about doctrine. It is better to understand why it is said.

In the vast tapestry of manifestation the entire universe issues forth into form. Alternately it is re-absorbed into formlessness. Each individual life can be likened to a thread in the tapestry. So, if a person could see the whole chain of his incarnations, some of which, from the point where he stands, would appear to be causally past and others causally future, it would be as though one thread in the tapestry was lit up for him and he would say: "Look! here it comes up again, and here and here and here!" Once it might be brightly coloured and once murky, to one pattern central and to another peripheral, and yet weaving its own pattern of successive appearances as it ran

from one general pattern to another according to a scheme of development.

Indeed, there is a twofold pattern of manifestation. The pure being which in essence you are is manifested horizontally and vertically through space and time: horizontally it takes form as all the other beings of your present world, vertically as all the past and future incarnations of your present person. You stand at the intersection of the two patterns.

But when a man has realized his identity with the Being which is manifested in this entire panorama and which re-absorbs it, when, even in this lifetime, he has ceased to consider the body he wears 'his' or to suffer its destiny, it is similarly impossible for him to consider any other body or lifetime 'his' in any other generation or world-appearance. I say 'other' rather than 'future', for the word 'future' would re-introduce the idea of temporal succession and causation, which he has transcended. So far as he can be said to be embodied it is by the entire universe, since he is identical with the One Self which this shows forth.

He may look at other appearances of the thread in the world tapestry which his body is and say 'I'; he may say that it has been or will be or has performed some function or will do so, but all this is from the point of view of the onlookers, and if he also says that he has no incarnation, present or future, or that the whole world is his incarnation there is no contradiction. What has to be remembered is that a man does not become free from reincarnation at the moment of Realization but realizes that he was never bound by it; it is not as though one thread of the tapestry was cut and was therefore absent from 'future' patterns, but as though the entire tapestry was lit up instead of just one thread.

"Sleep is intermediate between two waking states, and in the same way death is intermediate between two births."

—SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

BHAGAVAN ON REINCARNATION

Culled from 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi' and 'The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words'.

Just as rivers lose their individuality when they discharge their waters into the ocean, and yet the waters evaporate and return as rain on the hills and back again through the rivers to the ocean, so also individuals lose their individuality when they go to sleep but return again according to their previous innate tendencies. Similarly in death also being is not lost.

* * *

See how a tree grows again when its branches are cut off. So long as the life source is not destroyed it will grow. Similarly, latent potentialities withdraw into the heart at death but do not perish. That is how beings are reborn.

In truth, however, there is neither seed nor tree ; there is only Being.

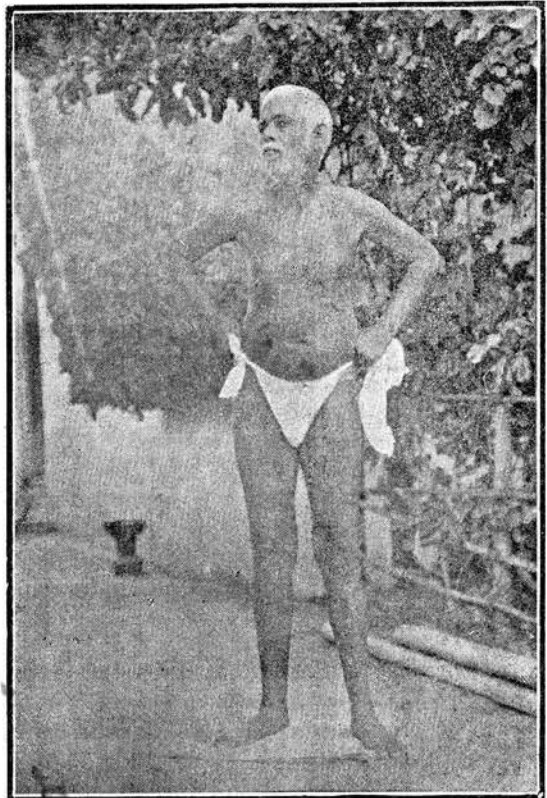
* * *

Question : How long is the interval between death and rebirth ?

Bhagavan : It may be long or short, but a Realized Man undergoes no such change ; he merges into the Infinite Being, as is said in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Some say that those who, after death, take the path of light are not reborn, whereas those who take the path of darkness are reborn after they have reaped their karma in their subtle bodies.

If a man's merits and demerits are equal he is reborn immediately on earth ; if the merits outweigh the demerits his subtle body goes first to heaven, while if the demerits outweigh the merits he goes first to hell. But in either case he is later reborn on earth. All this is described in the scriptures, but in fact there is neither birth nor death : one simply remains what one really is. That is the only truth.

* * *



Question : Is the Buddhist view that there is no continuous entity answering to the idea of the individual soul right or not ? Is this consistent with the Hindu doctrine of a reincarnating ego ? Is the soul a continuous entity which reincarnates again and again according to the Hindu doctrine or a mere conglomeration of mental tendencies according to the Buddhists ?

Bhagavan : The real Self is continuous and unaffected. The reincarnating ego belongs to a lower plane, that of thought. It is transcended by Self-realization. Reincarnations are due to a spurious offshoot of Being and are therefore denied by the Buddhists. The

human state is due to a mingling of the sentient with the insentient.

The birth of the I-thought is a person's birth and its death is his death. After the I-thought has arisen the false identification with the body arises. But if you cease to identify yourself with the body and realize the true Self this confusion will vanish.

* * *

Devotee : Even if I cannot realize in my lifetime, let me at least not forget on my deathbed. Let me have a glimpse of Reality at the moment of death so that it may stand me in good stead in the future.

Bhagavan : It is said in the Bhagavad Gita, Ch. VIII, that whatever is a person's last thought at death determines his next birth. But it is necessary to experience Reality now in this lifetime in order to experience it at death. Consider whether the present moment is any different from the last one of death and try to be in the desired state now.

* * *

Question : Is the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation right ?

Bhagavan : No definite answer is possible. Even the present incarnation is denied, for instance in the Bhagavad Gita.

* * *

Question : Isn't our personality beginningless ?

Bhagavan : Find out first whether it exists at all and after you have solved that problem ask the question. Nammalwar says : "In ignorance I took the ego to be the Self, but with right knowledge the ego is not and only You remain as the Self." Both the non-dualists and the dualists agree on the necessity for Self-realization. Attain that first and then raise other questions. Non-dualism or dualism cannot be decided on theoretical grounds alone. If the Self is realized the question will not arise.

* * *

Whatever is born must die ; whatever is acquired must be lost ; but were you born ? You are eternally existent. The Self can never be lost.

THE DREAM-SELF

By A. RAO

You dreamed you were a postman, say, last night :
And do you ask to-day if he still is —
The postman-you who never really was
But only seemed to be ?
It is so plain to see.

What was he then ? Had he a self ? a soul ?
Or was he just a mask you took ? And was
The dream with all the dream-folk he found real
A world no further true
Than in the mind of you ?

Why cling in vain to such a phantom self
Within the brief horizons of a dream ?
An intuition of eternity ?
Right — but whose ? The dream's ?
What is, or what just seems ?

LINES FROM 'A TESTAMENT'

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Section Two

Some there are who hold
Death is the end : nothing again to be,
Nothing to know ; for all your tale is told,
And that poor thing that rots in the dark ground
Is all that is of the once manifold
Lover of fair faces and sweet sound
Who trod the earth and thought that he was you.
There others are who see life girdled round
With brighter spheres of forms forever new,
As much more vivid than the earth-forms here
As peacock's throat than sparrow's dingy hue.
There (a spaceless 'there', as dreams appear)
Forces bred up on earth but out of sight —
Courage that goes straight on in spite of fear,
Or twisted guilt submerged from the clear light
Of conscious mind — rise and surround a man
In outer forms of terror or delight ;
His own brood, hidden for the earth-life span,
Now torturing his disembodied soul
Eternally if evil ; but for who ran
Life's race on earth to the appointed goal
Peace everlasting, bliss past words to tell.
Others declare that this is not the whole.
One season's harvest can't forever sell,
Or one life's balance, whether good or bad,
Consign eternally to heaven or hell.
Man's inner life materialises, clad
In incorporeal forms, they too admit ;
But thus the reckoning, whether glad or sad,
Is closed, books balanced : there's an end of it.
Thence he returns once more to life on earth,
At that same level he himself made fit
By use or misuse of his former birth :
Free once again to rise, or free to sink,
The architect again of his own worth.
Again the bell tolls ; again the brink
Of death is crossed to living more intense,
More heaven or hell, than earth-bound mind can think.
Thus a man's life brings on its recompense,
Rising before him. Inexorably the Wheel
Swings round from growth to harvest, from the dense
Earth-life that builds to regions that reveal
Can man increase in stature, till he feel
A brimming joy in what before was strife
And no more yearn to earth-ways, no more cling
To memory or desire, as with a knife
What there he built. And thus from life to life

Cut off all craving. Nothing again can bring
Rebirth or death or grief to such a one,
Free as the stars, free as the winds that sing
His glory on the hill-tops, beyond the sun,
In his own radiance gloriously bedight,
Absorbed unending in the Unbegun,
Beyond the parting of the day and night,
Changeless, he sees the changing world aright.

Section Three

Not equally at fault these views, The first
Alone is wholly wrong, The next contains
All that man needs of truth to be well versed
In his own interest and from petty gains
Followed by great loss to turn and seek
His heritage of bliss, purchased by pains
Prepaid but transient, in prospect bleak,
Like Muslim's dower for his unseen bride,
In retrospect nothing of which to speak.
The third view also can as well provide
Incentive and a way — all that men need.
Yet these three views of man, however wide
They move apart, all spring from the same seed
Of error, for they all alike declare
You are that sentient body whence proceed
Cravings like roots, like branches in the air
Thoughts and ideals, hedged by necessity —
Mere fantasy! No such thing is there!
You are pure Consciousness, Eternity,
Wherein birth, death and world are but such stuff
As dreams are made on. No hyperbole!
Just as a night-time dream seems real enough,
So long it lasts, within your mortal mind,
So your life's journey, whether smooth or rough —
Between deep hedgerows fragrantly entwined
With honeysuckle, all the air athrob
With singing of the birds, your steps combined
With those of loved companion, such as rob
Exhaustion of its pain, night of its fears,
Or over arid crags, where not to sob
For weariness were hard when the sun sears
And only thorn-trees cast a stunted shade,
While all ahead the naked shale appears —
All that same dream-stuff out of which is made
Your mortal self. All that is known or seen,
With you in it, a pageant is, displayed
Harmless in you, like pictures on a screen.
Awake! for dawn has set the sky aflame!
Awake from dreaming what has never been
To find the universe entire a game
Forever, new, you evermore the same.

THE HINDU DOCTRINE OF KARMA AND REINCARNATION

By PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

This is a characteristic Hindu doctrine. All schools of Indian philosophy, with the sole exception of the Charvaka, have admitted it. A remarkable point is that even Buddhism accepts it though it does not believe in a permanent entity which could migrate from one bodily existence to another.¹ The Epics and the Puranas reinforce the doctrine and bring it home to the minds of the generality by means of attractive stories which combine the artful narration of events with unobtrusive moral instruction. That man has to pay for his misdeeds in the shape of sorrow and suffering, that no one who indulges in wrongdoing can hope to escape its evil consequences, that punishment will overtake the sinner, if not here and now at least at some future time, that we are the architects of our own destiny, that we have to thank only ourselves if we find ourselves on a bed of thorns, and that wisdom consists in putting the best face on our troubles — these ideas have been so repeatedly borne in on our minds that they have become a part of our very being. They are handed down from generation to generation as a part of our national heritage. It never occurs even to unlettered persons to shift the blame for their tribulations on to other shoulders. That their lot in life is the outcome of their own deeds in a past birth lies most effortlessly on their lips. The fact that the people of this vast land are, by and large, so law-abiding and peaceful despite their poverty and a thousand other ills is to be attributed not a little to the continuous propagation of this doctrine.

It is a doctrine fully supported by the revealed texts (sruti), reasoning (yukti) and the experience of Seers (anubhava). Several passages in the Upanishads, especially the Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka, bear

on it. "He who entertains desires and prizes them is reborn in a place and environment best suited to their attainment."² "The self is identified with desire. What it desires it resolves upon; what it resolves upon it performs, and what it performs it attains to. Through attachment it attains the result of its performance (in a future birth)."³ "The essence of man is his volition: as he wills in this world, so does he become on departing from here."⁴ "Some souls enter into the womb and become embodied (as human beings), while others become inanimate objects, according to their actions and thoughts."⁵ "As a man behaves and acts, so does he become; by doing good he becomes good and by doing evil he becomes evil."⁶ "Those who have been of good conduct here will quickly attain a good birth — that of a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or a Vaisya; but those who have been of evil conduct will attain an evil birth — that of a dog or a pig or a chandala."⁷

When the soul departs from the body "it is accompanied by its knowledge, work and past experiences."⁸ Impressions are left on it by the actions performed by a man throughout his lifetime. Every action leaves its impress not only on the nervous system but also on the soul. The oftener we perform an action the stronger and more well defined the impress becomes, until in the

¹ However the 'permanent entity' envisaged by Hinduism is only permanent and an entity within the domain of Maya, which is itself impermanent and unreal, so that the difference between the two doctrines turns out to be rather one of expression than fact.—(Ed.)

² *Mundaka*, III, II, 2.

³ *Br. Up.*, IV, IV, 5-6.

⁴ *Ch. Up.*, III, XIV, 1.

⁵ *Kath. Up.*, V, 7.

⁶ *Br. Up.*, IV, IV, 5.

⁷ *Ch. Up.*, V, X, 7.

⁸ *Br. Up.*, IV, IV, 2.

end it becomes a tendency (samskara). Under the influence of these acquired samskaras men feel themselves impelled, as by an outer force, towards certain courses of action. We may even feel helpless against them; and if unfortunately they are of the wrong kind we indulge in wrong-doing almost against our better judgement. Arjuna gives expression to this feeling when he says: "What impels a man to commit sin, O Krishna, in spite of himself, driven as it were by some force?"⁹ And the Lord Himself admits that "all beings follow their nature (prakriti). What can repression do?"¹⁰ It will be remembered that when Ravana's grandfather advised him to retrace his steps and restore Sita to her Lord the latter replied that he would rather break in two than bend before anybody. That was his nature and no one could overcome his nature.¹¹ Evil-doers often take cover under this excuse.

If a man's tendencies are, fortunately, of the right kind they lead to good actions which are beneficial to himself and others. Such people go on doing good without even being conscious of it. It comes as natural to them as breathing. They expect nothing in return. The samskaras which they have inherited from their own past make it easy for them to lead a life of service. Heredity and environment may have something to do with it but the most important factor is one's own samskaras. In spite of noble parentage and helpful surroundings, many sons do not live up to expectations, while the contrary is also true: that a profound philosopher or inspired poet emerges from an unpromising environment. It is also a familiar sight to see one son achieve world fame while others born of the same parents remain obscure. These may look like vagaries but are not really so. Over and above heredity and environment there is the legacy of the past which the individual carries with him in his transmigratory experience.

To clinch the point we may refer to the phenomenon of precocity. We sometimes come across boy prodigies who take to

some special study such as mathematics or music like fish to water and make rapid progress with little effort. The way they go about it looks more like picking up old threads than learning something new. "By his former habit he is led on in spite of himself," says the Lord.¹² If we can argue from effects to causes,¹³ we are compelled to believe that these exceptional men of genius bring a rich heritage with them when they enter into the conditions of another bodily existence.

What it comes to, then, is that the soul which arises in a new body does so, as the English poet says, "Not in entire forgetfulness, not in utter nakedness" but carrying with it its own accumulated tendencies. These do not actually inhere in the soul for, according to Hindu teaching, this is untouched by good or evil. It is pure Consciousness which stands apart and simply witnesses the vicissitudes through which the individual being (jiva) passes. If the tendencies do not inhere in the soul they must inhere in something else, for without a substrate or vehicle they could not pass from one bodily existence to another. Since the gross physical body is burnt to ashes after death (or is buried and decays) we are driven to the conclusion that there must be some other vehicle. This is said to be the subtle body composed of the finer essence of the five elements. The Taittiriya Upanishad speaks of the soul as being encased within five sheaths one within another like the skins of an onion. These are known as 'kosas'. The outermost is known as the sheath of matter (annamaya kosa). This is identified with the physical body (stula sarira). The next three, known as pranamaya, manomaya and vijñanamaya kosas, comprise the subtle body (sukshma or linga sarira). When the soul, due to primeval ignorance, identifies itself with this subtle body it is known as the individual being

⁹ Gita, III, 36.

¹⁰ Gita, III, 33.

¹¹ Ramayana, Yuddhakanda, sloka 11.

¹² Gita, VI, 44.

¹³ As from the prosperity which they enjoyed King Dīlīpa's subjects argued that the policy of their ruler must be essentially sound.

(jiva). It is this jiva which transmigrates from one bodily existence to another, carrying with it all its acquired good and evil tendencies.

On leaving the body, the jiva, without loss of time, enters another kept ready for it and quite suited to the working out of the karma which has come to fruition. "Just as when a king is touring the country the people of the village which he is expected to visit wait for him with various kinds of food and drink and dwelling place, so is a suitable body and fit environment kept ready for the jiva."¹⁴ He enters this immediately after putting off the previous body. "Just as a caterpillar on a stem of grass goes to the end of it and then takes hold of another support and draws itself forward on to it, so does the self throw aside this body, take hold of another support and draw itself to it."¹⁵ Commenting on this passage, Sri Shankara makes the point quite clear. "The impressions called past experiences stretch out like a caterpillar from the body, while retaining their seat in the heart, and build another body in accordance with past actions; and when the new body is ready they let go their grip on the old."¹⁶

In the physical realm no disturbance can take place without corresponding repercussions. This is what we mean by saying that every cause has its effect. Sometimes the effect may occur almost immediately and in other cases in the more or less distant future. That every event has its cause and that nothing can occur without a proper and sufficient cause are converse statements of the same law. Karma and reincarnation are an exact counterpart of the law of causation which holds on the physical plane. No man can do wrong and expect to get away with it. Punishment will surely overtake him sooner or later, if not in this lifetime then in another. Just as corn takes time to ripen for harvest, so wrong actions take their time to recoil on the doer. Reincarnation is therefore the logical complement of the law of karma. The wrong-doer may escape the policeman but cannot escape the life to come. When punishment in the shape of

suffering and sorrow overtakes a man wisdom lies in seeing the hidden hand of justice in it. There is no ground for complaint. We lie in the beds we have made for ourselves. We have therefore to endure our tribulations cheerfully and learn a lesson from them. In the same way also the good deeds we do take time to produce their results and we should not be greedy for quick returns.

If an upright man is not immediately rewarded or a wrong-doer enjoys a gay and prosperous life we need not feel frustrated or lose faith in dharma. The present misfortunes of the former and prosperity of the latter have both to be traced to antecedent causes. They must be attributed to the karma built up in a previous life, while what is done in the present lifetime will bear fruit in a future life. We have to take a long-range view, and faith in the law of causation compels us to posit a past as well as a future for man. Belief in past and future births is therefore a logical necessity.

Countless are the births we have already passed through, although we do not remember them. The physical brain, which is the seat of memory, is destroyed at death, and this accounts for the inability. There are some, however, who are able to recall their past births. The Upanishad mentions the instance of Vamadeva.¹⁷ In the Gita¹⁸ the Lord says that he remembers his past births although ordinary people are not able to. We know in a general way that we have

¹⁴ *Br. Up.*, IV, III, 11-12.

¹⁵ *Br. Up.*, IV, IV, 3.

¹⁶ This does not prevent the intervention of a state of heaven or hell, since such state need not be subject to the physical time-scale. As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, Sri Ramana Maharshi answered when asked about this: "If a man's merits and demerits are equal he is reborn immediately on earth; if the merits outweigh the demerits his subtle body goes first to heaven, while if the demerits outweigh the merits he goes first to hell. But in either case he is later reborn on earth. All this is described in the scriptures, but in fact there is neither birth nor death; one simply remains what one really is. That is the only truth." — (*Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 573).—Ed.

¹⁷ *Br. Up.*, I, IV, 10.

¹⁸ IV, 5.

gone through previous periods of probation, though not in detail. The differences that we see between men in their intellectual and other attainments cannot be explained otherwise than by the *samskaras* which they derive from their past lives.

How many lives still await us we have no way of knowing. It depends on the amount of karma that has yet to be worked out. However this amount is not a fixed quantity but is constantly being exhausted from one side and added to from the other. Apart from the stock already accumulated (*sanchita karma*), there is that which is now being made (*agami karma*), so that by selfish activity we are creating new burdens for ourselves. In this way, when the karma to be worked off in this lifetime (*prarabda karma*) is exhausted its place is taken by another that has been accumulated, and so it goes on. It looks like a self-perpetuating, never-ending affair. Caught in its vortex, it looks as though we should be going round and round in an unending circle. Hindu writers generally compare the *jiva's* transmigratory career to a limitless ocean, the ocean of *samsara*.

However, it can be both mitigated and brought to an end. The way of mitigating it is by regarding it as opportunities for self-purification and for getting rid of ingrained vices. These are deep-rooted and die hard. Long and continued discipline is necessary to eradicate them. The Lord says in the Gita: "If a yogi strives with diligence he is cleansed of all his sins and, becoming perfect through many births, he reaches the Supreme State."¹⁹ In another context he says: "At the end of many births the man who knows seeks refuge in Me, realising that Vasudeva is all."²⁰ Repeated births are not therefore to be regarded only as a punishment but also as opportunities for spiritual advancement.

The process of return can be accelerated by right knowledge of the Self. Such knowledge can bring the transmigratory career of the *jiva* (that is the ocean of *samsara*) to an end at one stroke. We emerge from the endless circle of *samsara* the moment we realise that the true Self of us has nothing to do with the causal body (*karana sarira*), subtle body (*sukshma sarira*) and physical body (*stula sarira*) that are caught in it. The pure Self has to be disengaged from its adventitious encumbrances. This can be effected at any moment. It lies with us. Only we must put in the required effort.

Thus, strange as it may seem, the Hindu doctrine of karma and reincarnation fills us with hope and resignation at the same time. With regard to the past, what we have done is done and is irrevocable. We must pay the penalty and accept the punishment in a spirit of resignation. But determinism ends here. So far as our future is concerned, it is entirely in our hands. We can make or mar it and there is no compelling reason why we should do the latter. It is a superficial view to suppose that we are the slaves of our past and that there is no getting out of it. The Lord says in the Gita that the *samskaras* come into play only if the *buddhi*, *manas* and *indriyas* (intellect, reason and senses) co-operate with them. If the *indriyas* are allowed free rein they run after objects. The *samskaras* feed on objects through the instrumentality of the intermediate links. *Buddhi*, *manas* and *indriyas* belong to the *jiva*, the lower or individual self. But man has a higher Self, and if he reminds himself of this he can control the lower self. If the sense organs are restrained the *samskaras* will have nothing to feed on and will consequently become ineffective. A man will then be a free agent to shape his future.

¹⁹ VI, 45.

²⁰ VII, 19.

"The grip of the ego can be loosened by not adding new *vasanas* to it." — SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

DEVAYANA AND PITRIYANA

By BHAGAVAN DAS

To say simply that the Sanatana Dharma or "Eternal Harmony", which Westerners call "Hinduism", teaches reincarnation would be simplifying matters too much. There are various possibilities according to what use a person makes of his life.

In the first place, the Jivan-Mukta, Liberated while living, is obviously not born again. Bhagavan Ramana confirms in "Self-Enquiry" that there is no difference between the Jivan-Mukta, Liberated while living, and the Videha-Mukta, Liberated after death of the body. He also said that after attaining Moksha there is nothing more to attain, nothing beyond. But even without this confirmation it would be obvious that one who has awakened to Reality cannot be plunged back again into illusion by the mere destruction of the psycho-somatic instrument which is part of the illusion; having realized that he is not a phenomenal object, he will not again imagine himself to be such.

Next there is the case of those who, on leaving the body, take the Devayana or Divine Path to Union or Videha-Mukti, never again to return to the suffering and limitation of birth as a phenomenal being. Of them Sri Krishna says: "Having attained to Me the great ones do not return to birth, which is the domain of suffering and impermanence, for they have entered the Supreme State."¹ The same assurance is contained also in the Upanishads: "There a non-human person meets him and conducts him to Brahma. This is the Divine Way, the way leading to Brahma. Those who go by it do not return to the world; indeed they do not return."²

Exalted, though less complete than this, is the state of those who attain at death to the heaven known as Brahmaloaka where they abide in a lofty state of bliss, free from insecurity and becoming, until the end of this cycle of manifestation. This is the

heaven of Brahma, the Creator, who is referred to as "Saguna" or "with qualities" and thereby distinguished from the neuter noun Brahman, which is Nirguna, that is qualityless or "beyond the gunas". Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the masculine Brahma is the manifestation of the neuter Brahman. Just as one school of modern astronomers hold the theory of alternate expansion and contraction of the universe, so Hindu traditional cosmology teaches the alternate manifestation and dissolution of the cosmos, comprising not merely the physical universe but higher and lower states of being also, heavens and hells, with all their gods and men and demons and other celestial, earthly and infernal beings. These alternate phases are known as the Day and Night of Brahma. Brahma, the Presiding Intelligence of the cycle, is re-absorbed at the end of it and manifested forth again at the dawn of the new cycle. "Knowers of Day and Night know that a thousand ages make up the Day of Brahma and a thousand ages his Night. At the dawning of that Day all things stream forth from the Unmanifest, and at the coming on of night they sink back into that same Unmanifest."³

Those who attain to Brahmaloaka are thus established in a state of bliss and set free from rebirth with all its suffering and insecurity throughout the whole duration of this cycle or Day of Brahma. This is the state equivalent to the monotheistic conception of "heaven".

The complete cycle, that is the alternation of Day and Night of Brahma, manifestation and dissolution of the universe, is contained within the Ultimate Unmanifest of Nirguna Brahman: "But beyond this Unmanifest is

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, VIII, 15.

² *Chandogya Upanishad*, IV, XV, 5.

³ *Bhagavad Gita*, VIII, 17, 18.

another, the Eternal Unmanifest, which perishes not when all things perish. This Supreme State is called the Unmanifest Imperishable. That is My highest abode. For those who attain to it here is no return."⁴

But do those who have lasted out the cycle in Brahmaloaka attain to it? Two possibilities are mentioned: that they may be absorbed in Nirguna, the Eternal Unmanifest, with no more need for rebirth, or that they may re-enter the round of births and deaths in a new cycle. Krishna Bikshu quotes Bhagavan as referring to the former possibility in *The Mountain Path*⁵ of July 1965. Also the passage from the Chandogya Upanishad quoted above indicates it. The latter possibility is affirmed in the Bhagavad Gita: "From Brahmaloaka downwards, all worlds involve rebirth. ... After repeated births, this same multitude of beings merge helpless again at the approach of Night, and they issue forth at the dawn of Day."⁶

Swami Nikhilananda mentions both possibilities in his Introduction to his translation of the Upanishads⁷ "Though identified with all minds and the entire universe, Brahma is also described as the presiding deity or governor of a special plane, or heaven, known as Brahmaloaka, the Plane of Brahma. This is the most exalted realm in the relative universe, and may be compared, in a general way, to the heaven of the dualistic religions. Those fortunate mortals who, while living on earth, worship Saguna Brahma with whole-souled devotion, meditating on their identity with Him, proceed after death to Brahmaloaka, where they dwell absorbed in contemplation of Saguna Brahman. There they experience uninterrupted peace and blessedness and take part in the cosmic life of Brahma. They are not affected by any of the shortcomings of the other relative planes, such as disease, pain, thirst or hunger. These inhabitants of Brahmaloaka do not come back to earth, but at the end of the cycle become absorbed, together with Brahma, in the attributeless Brahman, and thus attain final Liberation. This is described as "kramamukti" or Liberation attained by stages. There is

another class of devotees who also attain to Brahmaloaka after death but come back to earth for a new embodiment after reaping the results of their meritorious actions."

All the possibilities mentioned up to here, it will be seen, are above the normal course of reincarnation. Those who take this normal course are said to follow the Pitriyana or Ancestral Path, not the Devayana or Divine Path, coming to the light of the moon instead of to Brahma, and from there returning again to birth in the world. "Knowers of Brahman, departing hence by fire, by light, by daytime, in the bright fortnight of the moon and the ascending course of the sun, attain to Brahman. Yogis who go forth by smoke, by night, in the dark fortnight and in the declining course of the sun pass hence to the light of the moon and return again. These two paths, the light and the dark, are held to be eternal. By the one a man goes forth not to return again; by the latter he returns."⁸

It will be seen that the Pitriyana is not the path to hell or punishment, except insofar as a return to life in the world is itself considered punishment. It is less blessed than the Devayana, from which there is no return at all, but it is the path of all the vast range of persons who are reborn whether to an auspicious or an inauspicious birth.

Having outlined the journey of such persons to the plane of the moon, the Upanishad says briefly: "Having dwelt there till their karma is exhausted, they return the way they came."¹⁰ This brief, cryptic statement implies that Chandraloka, the plane of the moon, is the state where the harvest of karma created in the preceding earth-life is reaped before the soul returns to rebirth. It will be heaven or hell according to whether the karma accumulated was good or evil. One could say that it will be one's own

⁴ *ibid.*, VIII, 20, 21.

⁵ Page 148.

⁶ *Bhagavad Gita*, VIII, 16 and 19.

⁷ Allen & Unwin.

⁸ Page 48.

⁹ *Bhagavad Gita*, VIII, 24-26.

¹⁰ *Chandogya Upanishad*, V, X, 5.

inner state manifested outwardly. To attempt to compute its duration in terms of earthly time would be idle, since subtle or mental duration, even on this earth, differs from physical duration. What is important is that it is the state where what one has laid up for oneself rises up before one.

However, the harvesting or repayment that takes place there still leaves a person what he was when he died, that is to say a being subject to karma and with the same inclinations he had before. It does not give him Enlightenment, however rapturous the experiences may be, nor, however frightful, does it exorcise his evil inclinations. This shows the terrific importance of life on earth, for neither in heaven nor hell can spiritual progress be made and Release attained, but only during earth-life. He who experiences the heaven or hell he has prepared for himself still remains the same person who prepared it. Therefore, when the time comes for rebirth, there is, as it were, a second reward or punishment. Having been rewarded with the raptures of heaven or punished with the pangs of hell during the intermediary phase of Chandra-loka, a person is again rewarded or punished

by being launched forth into life again on the level suitable to what he made of himself in his previous life. As the Upanishad briefly says: "Those whose conduct here has been good will quickly attain some good birth — as a Brahmin or Kshatriya or Vaishya. But those whose conduct has been evil will quickly attain some evil birth — as a dog or a pig or an outcaste."¹¹ Nor is there any one but oneself whom one can blame for this double punishment or thank for this double reward, since it is simple cause and effect. One who has become the sort of person to be attracted to a certain level of experience will be drawn by his own nature to that level. No outside force will intervene to push him to any other level, either higher or lower.

The Devayana is the path of the few heroic conquerors, the Pitriyana that of the many who are reborn. The Upanishad speaks of a possibility even lower than the Pitriyana. A human birth is a great boon; it should not be thrown away in ignorant, sensual and egoistic living. If thus wasted it is not easily to be acquired again.

¹¹ *ibid.*, V, X, 7.

BHAGAVAN'S TEACHING ON AHAM VRITTI

By N. R. RAJAGOPALAIYER

The essence of Sri Bhagavan's teaching, in the practical sense of what an aspirant need know, is earnest and one-pointed enquiry into the source of Aham Vritti. If the mind is turned inward to this enquiry, the vasanas or latent tendencies become extinct and, in the absence of reflection, the reflecting medium, i.e. the mind, also disappears, being absorbed into the Light of the One Reality.

Self-enquiry really means intense inward-turning of the mind. What it finally leads to in its quest of the source of Aham Vritti is the Heart Itself, which is the undifferen-

tiated Light of Pure Consciousness into which the reflected light of the mind is completely absorbed.

The Jnani's lakshya is the Heart, which is the Self, because he is identical with that undifferentiated pure Consciousness referred to in the Upanishads as Prajnana which is actually Brahman, the Absolute. There is no Brahman other than Prajnana.

Aham Vritti can best be described as a current or vibration of awareness of being. It is centred in the heart at the right side but may pervade the whole body. (Editorial Note)

THE QUESTIONS OF NACHIKETAS

By MADGUNI SHAMBHU BHAT

The Kathopanishad, one of the most important of the 108 greater Upanishads, deals with the true nature of man and with what happens to him after death. It is woven around, or rather grows out of the story of Nachiketas.

His father, a Brahmin, performed a sacrifice which involved giving away all his possessions. Nachiketas made a nuisance of himself criticising the poor quality of the cattle given away and then said : "A son too is property so who are you going to give me to ?"

Exasperated, the father replied : "Oh, I'll give you to Yama."

Yama is the God of Death.

Nachiketas, taking his father at his word, went to Yama. Yama was away on his errands when the boy arrived and it was three days before he returned so the boy had to wait three days for him. During these three days he fasted and, when Yama did get back, he offered Nachiketas three boons to atone for this discourtesy. For the first Nachiketas asked that his father's anger might cool down and any anxiety he

felt at his son's absence be appeased. For the second he asked to be instructed in the mysteries of the fire sacrifice. And for the third he asked Yama to teach him what happens after death. Who should know if not Yama ?

Yama first tried to avoid answering this last question, offering the boy instead all manner of prosperity and a long and successful life, but Nachiketas was firm. Finally the answer was given. Yama mentioned two possibilities : Rebirth and Release. "If the buddhi is yoked to a distracted mind it loses discrimination and remains ever impure ; then the incarnate soul fails to attain its goal but enters the round of rebirth. But if the buddhi is yoked to a restrained mind it possesses discrimination and then the incarnate soul attains that state from which there is no rebirth" (I, III, 7).

Later he mentions still a third possibility, this time lower than rebirth. "Some souls enter a womb for rebirth and some enter into stationary objects, according to their works and knowledge" (II, II, 7). It is possible to fall below rebirth as well as to rise above it.

GIVE UP RE-BIRTH

Kingdoms, sons, wives, bodies and pleasures have been lost to you birth after birth in spite of your attachment.

Have done then with prosperity, desire and good works. The mind found no peace in them in the dreary forest of the world.

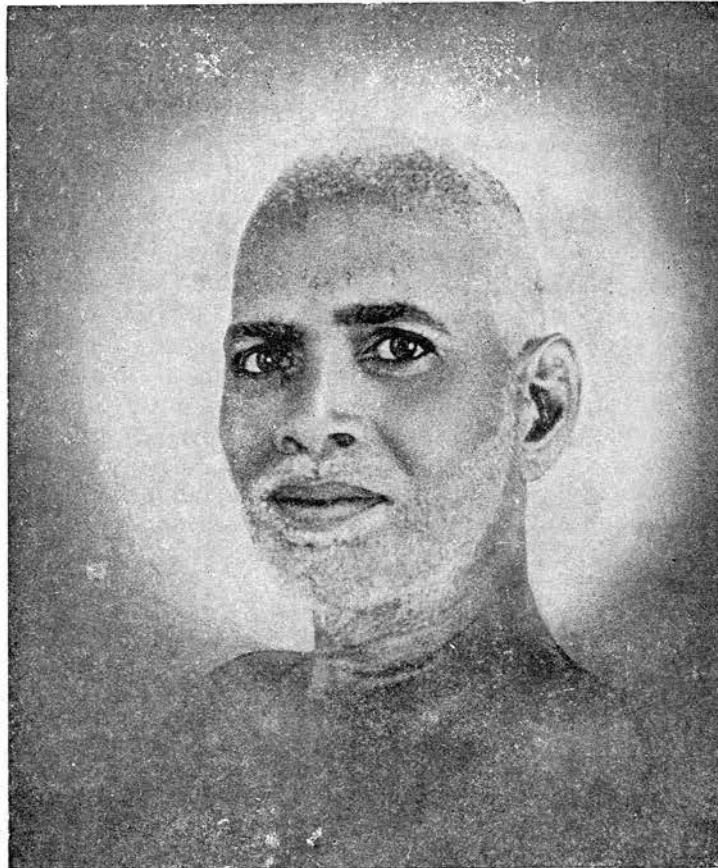
For how many births have you not done hard and painful work with your body, mind and speech ! Therefore now at least desist.

— Ashtavakra Gita, X, 6-8.

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI AND THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHIC TRADITION

By HIS HIGHNESS SRI JAYA CHAMARAJA WADIYAR BAHADUR,
Maharaja of Mysore.

In the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita an interesting question is raised by Arjuna. It is about a person who, though endowed with faith, becomes diverted from the path of yoga and who consequently fails nothing like a fall for such a person either here or hereafter. He adds further by saying that such a one takes birth in a noble or enlightened family. And there, aided by spiritual impressions acquired by him in



to achieve self-realization. "Does he not perish", asks Arjuna, "like the split-cloud, deprived of both God-realization and worldly joy?" Lord Krishna meets the question squarely¹ and answers that there is

previous births, he finally reaches the supreme spiritual state.

The answer given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna is the only explanation for Maharshi

¹ Verses, 37-45.

Ramana's achievement of spiritual enlightenment at a very early stage of the saint's life, and though he had no training for it under the guidance of a spiritual teacher or knowledge of the necessary philosophic discipline.

Sri Ramana's life thus illustrates the truth of the Indian philosophic tradition established centuries ago, that a man sincerely given to spiritual endeavour, but who for some reason strays away from that path, will not lose altogether the fruits of his labour. On the other hand he will have the good fortune of being born in a family of devoted men, and there, will continue his efforts at self-realization. This is based on the maxim that "No one who works for God-Realization meets with an evil destiny".² In having this experience of the Supreme at an early age, the Saint of Arunachala was rivalling the great feat of Dhruva, son of Uttanapada, who succeeded in having a vision of the Lord even as a young boy.

Dhruva was not the only Puranic personage whom the Saint of Arunachala tried to emulate. He tried to do what young Nachiketas of the past did. Like Nachiketas, young Venkataramana, who later came to be called Sri Ramana, desired the way to conquer death. The fear of death suddenly took possession of young Venkataramana and the lad decided to solve the riddle of life. By reflecting on the problem of life and death and by careful experiment, the young boy understood the cause for the fear of death and the way of overcoming the grief caused by this dire calamity. He realised that it was the physical body that really perished and that the consciousness within the body survived. In other words, young Venkataramana understood the great truth that there was an inner Being, a Reality that persisted even after death and that this great principle was the witness of all the changing conditions of the physical body. In short, by an intuitive flash he became aware of the nature of the true Self.

Thus Sri Ramana came to know that the Self was entirely different from the body,

the senses and the mind. Answering a devotee who was curious to know the nature of the Self the Sage once said: "You ought to understand that by the Self neither the physical body nor the subtle body is meant. What you are told is that if you once know the Self within which all ideas exist, not excluding the idea of yourself, of others like you and of the world, you can realize the truth that there is a reality, a Supreme Truth which is the Self of all the world. You now see the Self of all the selves, the one Real, the Supreme, the eternal Self as distinct from the ego or individual being which is impermanent. You must not mistake the ego or the body-idea for the Self." And, just as he found the difference between the Self which was eternal and was constituted of pure consciousness and the body which was perishable and made up of matter, he also discovered the difference between the Self which was the pure spectator and the senses which suffered the same fate as the body. As for the mind, it was only an internal organ of sense and did not differ in any way from the rest of the senses. Summing up the difference between the Self and faculties, the Sage said: "I am not this physical body nor am I the five organs of sense perception: I am not the five organs of external activity, nor am I the five vital forces, nor am I even the thinking mind. When all these are eliminated, that which remains separate and alone by itself, its very nature Sat-chit-ananda, Existence-consciousness-bliss, that am I". Not less insistent was he in pointing out the necessity of completely eliminating the ego and reaching the egoless state.

In arriving at these conclusions independently, the great Saint was only confirming statements of the philosophic treatises of the past. The **Kathopanishad** had pointed out that it must be man's endeavour to distinguish the Self from the body.³ The **Prasnopanishad** had drawn a vivid distinction between the Self and the other elements by saying: "the mind and what is an object of the mind, intellect and what is an

² Gita, VI, 40.

³ Gita, VI, 17.

object of intellect, Self-consciousness and what is an object of Self-consciousness, thinking and what is an object of thinking — all these repair to the Supreme soul for dwelling.”⁴ The Bhagavad Gita had put forth a strong plea for the elimination of the ego by saying it was only the ignorant man who thought: “I am wealthy, born in a good family; who other is there like me? I will perform sacrifices; I will give in charity, I will enjoy myself.”⁵

Having thus become a Realised Soul, Sri Ramana Maharshi lead from the moment of realization the life of a **Sthitaprajna** or one of steadfast wisdom. He “discarded all desires of the mind and felt satisfied in the Self through the joy of the Self.”⁶ He became a true yogin, concentrated on the Spirit within and unattached to all things of the earth. Not that he did not take any interest in the life around him. Indeed it was his earnest desire to help all men around him who aspired to a divine life of spirituality and wisdom. The gates of his Ashram were open to everyone to come and find spiritual solace and obtain solutions of their moral problems. He read the daily papers and useful journals; and he kept himself well informed about men and things around him. We learn that on a certain occasion, the Sage started reciting lines from Saint Manikavachagar and soon felt so moved emotionally that he shed a few tears. On another occasion he seems to have corrected one Tenamma who committed an error in reading a passage from the Ribhu Gita and who was under the impression, like others around her, that he was in deep meditation. The love and tenderness of Sage Ramana became proverbial; and he won the confidence of even the animals of Ramanashram. His affection for the cow of the hermitage, Lakshmi, was remarkable. After the manner of an **avadhuta** or a God-minded devotee, he suffered without protest all incidence of pain. His conduct in silently enduring the blows of thieves who broke into his Ashram reminds one of the conduct of the great **avadhutha**, described in **Bhagavata**. All these activities of the Sage go to show that he was not trying to keep him-

self aloof from society, but was in it all the time. Only he was dwelling in the Self even when he was associating with worldly activities after the manner of a typical man of steadfast-mindedness (**Sthitaprajna**).

Indeed he did not believe in withdrawing himself from society completely. Such a move did not fall in line with the theory of Self which the Sages propounded. Talking of retirement and solitude on a certain occasion, he explained: “Abiding in the Self is solitude because there is nothing alien to the Self. Retirement must be from some one place or state to another. There is neither the one nor the other apart from the Self. All being the Self, retirement is impossible and inconceivable.” The Maharshi was keen on pointing out the universal presence of the Self and the necessity on the part of man to do his best to realize the Self. Nor was it a difficult process according to him. For he said in his characteristic quiet way: “The Self is always there. You have only to remove the veil obstructing the revelation of the Self. Once you realise the Self it becomes your direct and immediate experience. It is never lost.”

Sri Ramana was most logical in his approach to the problems of Self-realization. He did not stop merely at calling upon devotees to attempt Self-realization; he went further and explained the method one ought to take in order to realise this supreme goal.

He maintained that control of mind, curbing of desires and ethical ways of life were general aids for realization and emphasised meditation (**dhyana**) and enquiry (**vichara**) as the two essential ways of achieving the purpose. He taught that meditation or dhyana is regular battle, for it is an effort to keep hold of one thought to the exclusion of all else. Continuing his observations on meditation he observed: “When meditation is well established, it can no more be given up.” As for enquiry, he said that it

⁴ Gita, IV, 8.

⁵ Gita, XVI, 15.

⁶ Ibid., II, 55.

was earnest Self-enquiry that really hastened the knowledge of the Self.

It is interesting to note in this context that the Sage of Arunachala was focussing the attention of the religious-minded on two important lessons which the **Upanishads**, the **Gita** and the **Brahma-Sutra** taught on the problem of realization. The **Upanishads** and **Gita** repeatedly speak about the utility of meditation; and the **Gita** in particular speaks eloquently of the yogi or the person who practises meditation. Krishna calls upon Arjuna to become a yogi for such a one was "superior to the ascetics and superior even to those versed in sacred lore. In fact, he was superior even to those who performed actions with motive."⁷ As for the importance of enquiry, the **Brahma-Sutras** of Badarayana make it the starting point of Vedantic study. The opening sutra of that text says: "Then, therefore the inquiry into Brahman."⁸

All this should not be interpreted that the Sage of Arunachala had nothing new to offer to the development of Indian Philosophic thought or that he just taught what the ancient Indian seers had done. It only shows that the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi rested firmly on the foundations of the early philosophic thought of India. The contribution of Sri Ramana was unique in the sense that he approached the problem of Self-realization from a new angle. He did not worry much to make the point that the soul and the Supreme were identical, though he had complete faith in the doctrine. He was more keen on drawing attention to the natural state of the soul. To a devoted enquirer he said: "Self-enquiry, 'who am I?', is a different technique from the meditation: 'I am Siva' or 'I am He'. I rather emphasise self-knowledge for you are first concerned with yourself before you know the world or its Lord. The 'I am He' or 'I am Brahman' meditation is more or less mental, but the quest for the Self of which I speak is a direct method and is superior to it". Explaining the theory of natural state, the Sage said: "Consciousness is the Self of which everyone is aware. No one is ever away from his self and therefore

everyone is in fact self-realized; only, and this is the great mystery — people do not know this and want to realise the Self. Realization consists only in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realized. It is not anything new to be acquired. It must already exist or it would not be eternal, and only what is eternal is worth striving for." In other words the Sage was saying that the soul in its natural state was **Sat-chit-ananda** and that man had to realize this by enlightenment and removal of ignorance. The Sage himself brought out the significance of the theory of natural state when he said, "To remain without question or doubt is your natural state ... the Self is always there. You have only to remove the veil obstructing the revelation of the Self". And in this theory of the natural state, or original state, as it is also known, the Guru or the spiritual teacher did not find an important place. The Sage himself had no spiritual teacher and did not believe that one was absolutely necessary for an aspirant. He maintained that there was but one **Guru** and that was one's own Self: "One must not look upon the Guru as a person; he is not anything else than the real Self of the disciple. When the Self is realized, then there is neither Guru nor disciple". The theory also did not give an important place to analysing the causes of pain as do other philosophic systems. Rather, it insisted on removing human pain and suffering.

A remarkable feature for which the Sage of Arunachala became famous was the great silence he maintained. For a time after he obtained Realization, he remained silent. It was only during the latter part of his life that he broke his silence. Of course, **mouna** or silence was considered a penance⁹ by people of the past. Lord Krishna pointed out that one of the characteristic features of a devotee was **mouna** or practice of silence.¹⁰ But what is to be noted is that Sri Ramana made it his chief instrument for Self-realization and for communicating his teaching,

⁷ *Gita*, VI, 46.

⁸ *Brahmasutra*, I, I, 1.

⁹ *Gita*, XVII, 16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, XII, 19.

although it may look odd to say that he taught in silence. The Sage himself spoke highly of this holy practice and said : "That stage which transcends speech and thought is **mouna**, it is meditation without mental activity. Deep meditation is eternal speech. Silence is ever-speaking ; it is the perennial flow of language". When visitors came to him and told him their problems he did not always answer but sometimes merely smiled at the devotees silently. And this conduct on the part of the Sage worked ; for many a visitor has admitted that his problem was solved somehow. Surely, this kind of silence on the part of the Sage was more creative.

Such was the unique personality of Sage Ramana. Like all other Sages of the past,

this Saint of modern times desired to help those who sought to progress on the path of spirituality. While some of his methods look strange, his object was always to make a man better and to make human society holy. The life and teachings of the great Saint Ramana, thus bear out the saying of the **Bhagavata** :

"Yoga or Sankhya or righteousness or a study of the Vedas or asceticism or renunciation or sacrifice or good deeds do not captivate me. Neither vows nor worship nor holy places are able to capture me. I can only be won by the fellowship of saints, which brings to an end all attachment."¹¹

¹¹ *Bhagavata*, II, 12, 1.

OUTER CHANGE AND INNER POISE

By IRMGARD GEORGE SCHULTZ

Looking at the sky with its millions of twinkling stars, we may often wonder how many of them still exist, since everything in the universe is in mutation. The evidence of our senses deceives us. Stars that we think we see may be thousands of light years away and the light they once emitted be still travelling towards us when they themselves have already perished. The whole universe alternately takes form and perishes. Kalpa and Pralaya the Hindus call the process. The ancient Germanic Edda also knew of it.

"In primeval times when Ymir lived
There was no sea, there was no earth,
no sky there was,
Nothing was to be seen but a yawning
abyss without life".

Then the giant Ymir created the earth. But after millions of years a mutation took place described by the Edda as the end of the world :

"The sun becomes dark, the earth sinks
into the sea,
The bright stars fall crashing from the
sky : the end of the world is come."

Then a new era :

"The earth arises once more in eternal
green from the sea,
All evil disappears and a Power from
above ends all fighting."

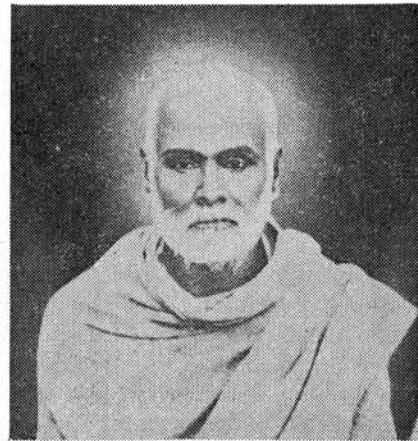
Similar destruction and renewal is described in the Bible, in the 'Book of Revelations'. "Fire fell from the sky and consumed all. And I saw a new sky and a new earth, for the first sky and the first earth had perished, and the sea was no more ; and I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem."

Everywhere change and mutation. And the same in human life with its passing clouds of light and shadow. The same with human death and rebirth. Few indeed there are who can keep their inner poise when death approaches, when the sun of life becomes dark, the stars fall and everything the flesh is heir to is taken away ! The only way is to give up all the wishes of the human self and remain untouched in the noise of the world, feeling only the pure sense of being in the heart, is union with the Absolute which remains unaffected by the creation and dissolution not only of a human life but of the entire universe.

NARAYANA GURU

By JOHN SPIERS

The whole of Kerala knows about Narayana Guru. At least two million Malayalis as well as a large group in South Kanara acknowledge themselves as his followers. The Guru's birthday, which takes place in the lion month (August-September) around the harvest festival time of Onam, is an official holiday. On New Year's Day thousands of devotees go on a pilgrimage to his shrine at Sivagiri, near Varkala, some twenty miles north of Trivandrum. The math there is the headquarters of the Sri Narayana Dharma Sangham, a body of sannyasins who have looked after the properties left behind by the Guru since his death in 1928.



There are dozens of temples, from Mangalore to the Cape which were installed by him. In the Guru's name there are many large colleges as well as several missions and dispensaries. An organization called the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, more familiarly called the SNDPY (wrongly believed to have been founded by the Guru) plays a big role in the communal politics of Kerala.

Apart from these social and religious establishments, there is the Narayana Gurukula, a Guru-disciple family under the founder and head, Nataraja Guru who, as the spiritual successor and sat-sishya of Narayana Guru, has dedicated his life to the way and the teaching of the Guru. This institution has a contemplative basis, with ashrams and centres in many parts of India, as well as overseas, in Singapore, France, Belgium and the U.S.A. It has been my privilege for nearly twenty years to be affiliated to this growing Guru-family which is directly linked with Narayana Guru under the traditional method of transmission of teaching from Guru to disciple (Guru-sishya parampara). This was known in the ancient world of Europe where the

ashram-schools transmitted philosophic wisdom from the time of Thales for over a thousand years, until the Christian emperor Justinian outlawed these institutions in the sixth century A.D.

The basic biographical facts about Narayana Guru may be briefly stated as follows : He was born in 1854 in Chempazhandy, a small village near Trivandrum. His father was a farmer. The boy Nanu was of a retiring and studious disposition. Despite caste obstacles, he managed to secure a mastery of Sanskrit. He was drawn to the philosophic life and wandered, searching, meditating and studying, over a period of years about which very little is known, except such items as his living in a cave on a hill near Kanyakumari, and his association with a wise man known as Chattambi Swami, and with an expert in the esoterics of hatha yoga called Thykkad Ayyavu. To the extent that they confirmed his own insights they can be called his Gurus.

By the time he was thirty our subject became revered as a recluse sitting under a tree by a stream ; and people sought him

out more and more because of the kindly advice he gave. He began to take on the role of a Guru, and signed himself as such. He led a public life from this time until his death at the age of seventy-four.

The word Guru, which simply means a destroyer of darkness or ignorance, upsets a lot of people who see authoritarianism which disagrees with their sense of equality and justice. But the highest wisdom, known in India as Brahma-vidya (the science of the Absolute), which is a way of life as well as a body of knowledge, demands at least the disciplined attention which even ordinary teachers with any expertise must insist on in their pupils, for otherwise not even the very notions of equality and justice could be taught. The true Guru also, it may be said, teaches a freedom from all tyranny, and an equality and justice which goes far beyond the relativistic forms of these values which today are mere debased currency. In India there is a religious freedom which has no fixed creed to bind it together, but from the Himalayas to the Cape, covering both orthodoxy and heterodoxy, one grand connective principle has been respected for all teachers of spiritual freedom. Guruhood viewed in this correct way transcends the social world of belief or caste distinction.

As most of the Guru's followers were drawn from the bottom levels of the strictly theocratic society of the Travancore and Cochin of those days, the Guru had to face right away this endemic disease called caste.

Wisdom crosses all man-made frontiers. Wise men have come from all ranks of life. Equally, kings and proletarians have sat at the feet of wise men. Narayana Guru was at one and the same time conservative in his respect for wisdom traditions, and revolutionary in revaluating, restating, and presenting afresh the perennial truth. In the Dhammapada the Buddha revalued the notions of brahmin and pariah (outcaste) in terms of behaviour types, and much later Vyasa in the Bhagavad Gita amplified this conception while at the same time saying that a wise man sees a holy brahmin, an ele-

phant, a dog and even a dog-eater as the same. Narayana Guru went to the heart of the matter by invoking biological proof, equating caste (jati) with species. He summed it up in one of his best known works in Malayalam (except for the first verse which, for reasons of poetic justice, he wrote in Sanskrit) which is worth quoting here in full. It is called Jati Mimamsa.

CASTE CRITICALLY EXAMINED ¹

1. Man's humanity marks out the human kind
Even as bovinity proclaims a cow.
Brahminhood and such are not thus-wise ;
None see this truth, alas !
2. Of one God, of one faith and of one kind is man ;
Of one womb, of one form ; difference here there is none.
3. Within a species, is it not, that offspring truly breed ?
The community of man thus viewed, to a single caste belongs.
4. Of the human species is even a brahmin born, as is the pariah too ;
Where then is the difference in caste as between man and man ?
5. In bygone days of a pariah woman the great sage Parasara was born,
As even he of Vedic-aphorism fame of a maid of the fisher-folk.

Verse two has become a slogan among the Guru's followers. But the full composition reveals the scientific approach of the Guru. The last verse refers to Veda-Vyasa or Badarayana, author of the Brahma-sutras, recognized by the most orthodox brahmins as among the holiest of their Gurus. There is a touch of humour in bringing in evidence from the canonical scriptures to show the absurdity of common closed-in notions of caste. The Guru gave a final touch to the situation by training untouchable boys to be temple priests. With their clean dress,

¹ The translations are by Nataraja Guru

ability to chant in Sanskrit and conduct ritual properly, their vegetarian diet and disciplined ashram behaviour, they were indistinguishable from their brahmin counterparts.

Religion too came under the scrutiny of the Guru. He declared that it did not matter what religion a man followed, provided it made him a better man. To pit one religion against another was wrong. It only brought both into disrepute. He once declared there could be as many religions or beliefs as there were human beings. The sense of the numinous or the holy was the common principle to be found everywhere.

The Guru's sense of humour was seen on one occasion when he called attention to some devotees who were offering flowers and fruits to his own portrait in a shrine. "Look at that", he remarked to a group who gathered round him, "Here I stand in reality without my breakfast and still waiting for it; but my painting gets all the elaborate ritualist attention. That is due to the exaggerations of religion!"

The Guru composed nearly fifty works in Sanskrit and Malayalam. He wrote simple prayers as well as profoundly philosophical poems. The *Atmopadesha Satakam* (One Hundred Verses Addressed to the Self) is a guide to self-understanding full of original illustration. For example, two verses provide a "laboratory proof" of the sameness of the Self in all:

"Who sits there in the dark? Declare!"
says one;

Whereupon another, himself intent to find,
in turn

Asks, hearing the first: "Who may you
even be?"

For both, the word of response is but one.
The repeated "I, I" contemplated from
within

Is not many but remains one; divergent
egoity

Being multiple, with the totality of such
The Self-substance too continuity assumes.

Another major work of Narayana Guru is called *Darshana Mala* (A Garland

of Philosophical Visions). This is in Sanskrit and consists of one hundred verses, arranged into ten chapters. It covers the whole of Brahavidya (the Science of the Absolute), from various points of view (darshanas), from cosmogony to Nirvana, dealing with epistemology, ontology, adoration (bhakti), action (karma) and other topics, bringing all together in a unified framework which has the Self or the Absolute as its norm, standard or principle. This work cannot be quoted piecemeal. It is a monumental treatise.

Despite his great learning as a model Guru and teacher of the science of the Absolute, the Guru was a man of plain and simple ways, insisting on cleanliness, orderliness, and common sense. He preferred direct contact with perhaps some poor but sincere peasant, to the noisy fuss of public gatherings presided over by VIP's.

In writing this thumb-nail sketch of Narayana Guru, I have chosen to treat him as a reasonable man and a Guru who stood for the highest wisdom or spirituality for which India has been famed. In doing so, I have tried to avoid the social and historical aspects, because the river of time runs fast and what seemed important at one period loses its significance later when fresh problems emerge out of the flux of relative events. Not that relative happenings should be undervalued. But they tend to obscure the eternally significant in the subject. I have also avoided all comment on the miraculous with its exaggerations of piety, ecstasies and wonders. Not that these things do not exist, but I consider them secondary features to the main theme of a contemplative scientist or scientific contemplative for whom the wonder of the Absolute was always present, but who, at the same time, cautioned his followers about the dangers of psychism. My subject was neither a social reformer nor a Christian saint. He was a Guru, that is the beginning and the end of the matter; and he belongs to mankind, as an embodiment of the wisdom which he re-stated in such a way that all might benefit.

In conclusion, readers of **The Mountain Path** with its non-rivalistic emphasis on sustaining the same wisdom as manifested in the Maharshi, may be interested in the following stanzas which Narayana Guru composed on a visit to Bhagavan Sri Ramana in 1916 and which obviously had the Maharshi in mind : It is called Municharya Panchakam :

THE WAY OF THE RECLUSE

1. For the hermit whose attachments are gone,
His arm, makes it not for him a pillow ?
The earth whereon his footsteps fall
Gaining sin-dispelling power,
Makes it not for him a couch ?
For such as he, what use of goods here ?
Ever merged as his mind is in the verity
of 'That thou art'
His bliss transcends inclusively all
forms of joy.
2. Desireless as he is, for nothing ever asking,
Partaking of food brought to him by chance
The body just to sustain ;
From all cares free, sleeping on the thoroughfare,
Ever immersed in the vision of the Self,
The hermit, attaining to the unity of
life and Self-supreme,
3. In discourse the recluse excels,
But often restrained in words, he is seen
here as one ignorant,
Wandering, sitting, or standing still ;
Having once come to this changing
body, sanctioned by time,
He ever contemplates the state
Of Selfhood's uncut Consciousness
supreme.
4. Outside the scope of what is spoken of
as existing or non-existing,
As unthinkable, ungraspable, minute,
not-short, stainless or supreme,
Immobile, erect, or most exalted,
He seeks to attain that all-fourth
(turiya) state
'Turning away from both this and that
As one who aims properly
To reach beyond both being and non-
being.
5. Let him live in his own home, or in the
forest,
Or at the water's edge — no matter —
With mind ever fixed in the Absolute
The Yogi ever dwells, seeing all here
in terms of Selfhood ;
Like a mirage in a desert land.
He enjoys bliss, that Silent One
Contemplating that Absolute supreme
which is beyond all compare.

THIS

By L. P. YANDELL

No problems —
Just 'me'.
No 'me' —
Just 'This'.
Ah — This!

WHAT IS REINCARNATED ?

By DOROTHY C. DONATH

What is "reincarnation" — and who or what reincarnates ?

Dear to the heart of modern man, and of Western man in particular, is the cult of the individual — of the personal ego who struggles his way through life seeking to overcome not only the obstacles in his own career, but the forces of nature as well — looking outward for "fresh fields to conquer," seldom inward save toward a vaguely envisioned "soul" which he has been taught to believe he is, or has — hoping for eternal rewards in heaven if he is "good", or fearing eternal punishments in hell if he is not. To him, this one life is the sum of his human existence ; "evolution" he relegates to the phenomenal worlds ; "eternity" has little meaning for him save in terms of a "final judgment" and his own personal fate.

How very circumscribed is this view — how lacking in opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge, for continued growth, for development of inner potentialities and the unfolding of Wisdom, for realization of the essential spiritual nature of man, and of Enlightenment itself ! Growth, in the full evolutionary sense, cannot be accomplished in a day — and "a day" is all that the limited span of one short earth-life can represent on the cosmic scale of eternity. Enmeshed in this belief, what answer can there be to the physical, mental, and environmental inequalities that confront children new-born into the world ? How account for their different paths and ends, except to say that "blind fate" or some arbitrary Power outside of ourselves has capriciously thrust them, willy-nilly, into a world not of their own making ? Would a human parent knowingly afflict his children with such a burden ? How much less would the wise and immutable Law of Life decree such punishments to its many manifestations ?

But there is another and very different view and one that has had a long history even in many of the philosophies of the West — that of reincarnation, or successive rebirths to allow for spiritual evolution through man's own efforts over a sufficient length of time. This view can be divided into two main schools of thought : let us consider each one carefully.

According to the first, "reincarnation" means the successive rebirths of an ego-soul, monad, or entity, inhabiting a new body each round, and carrying forward a process of individual evolution (or sometimes retrogression) depending upon the thoughts and consequent actions that dominate it in each succeeding life, until eventually it returns, disciplined and enlightened, to the Source from whence it came. The controlling force here (as in other views as well) is Karma, action and reaction, or the Law of Cause and Effect, which governs the "fate" of each individual according to the uses he makes of his privileges as a thinking entity with free will to follow either "good" or "evil" paths.

This doctrine of an enduring, personal self — passing from life to life no matter how variously "clothed" — appeals to those who still cling to an ego — however rarified — who still cling, however unwittingly, to the "little self", and cannot yet envision a higher SELF in which each one realizes his true identity with Universal Consciousness and ceases to differentiate between me and thee, this and that, knower and known, and all the dualities that seem so real on the relative plane of ordinary human thought. This doctrine of a discrete, reincarnating entity contains its own contradiction, for how can unity with the Divine Source, the Absolute, ever be realized while belief in a separate self remains ?

According to the second view, "reincarnation" signifies a carrying forward under the Law of Karma, not of an illusory, personal ego-soul, but of the life-force, the stream of consciousness—the character—built up in each succeeding life on preceding causal foundations, and creating in its turn the Karmic forces which will affect the course of its future incarnations. They deny the doctrine of an enduring ego—which to them is as perishable and transient as the body it is presumed to inhabit. They compare the reincarnation process to the lighting of a new candle from the flame of an old one—the flame goes on, but the candle is consumed. Each newly kindled flame takes its character from the preceding one, but is not identical with it, nor is the candle the same.

No one, however, disputes the fact that Karma underlies the reincarnation process. Breaking free from this Birth-and-Death cycle—the attainment of Nirvana—can only be accomplished by the will to seek and unfold one's own Enlightenment, the effort to uncover that Reality which lies latent, buried in most of us under layers of spiritual ignorance and delusion as to our real nature and the meaning and purpose of life.

Which of these two schools of thought provides the most logical answer to the reincarnation problem?

While one must reason from the standpoint of his own understanding at any given time and level, I do not believe that merely doctrinal questions, or even semantics, are of primary importance here—for the basic realizations gained over many thousands of years by the seers and saints of all the world's great religions are in essence the same. Let us consider some of them, and continue with the question: What is it that reincarnates?

It is evident that all the component elements of the reincarnation process are in a continual state of flux, or becoming—nothing is static or "fixed"—and that the moving force behind it all must be a mental one—not on the relative and human, but on the Cosmic and spiritual scale. Let us call it

MIND for want of a better term, for we must use words and concepts in the course of a discussion, although these are only stepping-stones, "intellectual approximations", as someone has said, "to what, in the end, must be realized intuitively."

It is obvious that the physical body and its senses, which dissolve at death, cannot reincarnate. Then what of this personal self, this "I" on which most of us set such great store? Let us, for the sake of argument, call its elements "The Five Skandhas," or "The Five Aggregates", as the Buddha did. These consist of (1) the physical body and its senses—already considered and dismissed; (2) feelings and sensations (dependent upon the body and its senses); (3) emotional reactions or volition (dependent upon feelings and sensations); (4) perceptions leading to memory (dependent upon all that preceded them); and (5) consciousness. Take all these away at death, and what have you left? Certainly nothing that can be called a "self". Here no thing remains to reincarnate.

Is there something more?

In the living being a constant interaction is taking place between the Five Skandhas—and "action" and "reaction" is the heart of Karma. What is it that animates this stream of consciousness, this character of which we have spoken and, for that matter, the force of Karma itself? Let us go back to the term we first used—MIND, Consciousness—the Source and Ground from which both logic and intuition tell us that all manifestation must arise. Some call it "The Void", or "The Plenum Void"—THAT from which all manifested things emerge (although it does not consist of them), and to which all manifested things return. Allied with this, and forming the bridge between them, is the Ālaya, or Store Consciousness (in a sense akin to the "Collective Unconscious" of Western psychology), where the memories of man and of all sentient life lie waiting to be tapped when the time is ripe. Here we find wheels within wheels, symbolized in Buddhism by "The Wheel of Life", turning purposefully and slowly in the natural course of evolution, turning more

rapidly as the enlightened mind and will follow the Path and depart not from it. Thus we see that MIND alone is unchanging, and the Ground of our being, alone, eternal. All life, as an emanation of MIND, partakes of its nature, and so continues in repeatedly manifested forms until Ultimate Enlightenment—Nirvana—frees us from the Wheel of Birth-and-Death.

Due to the limitations of language we must use the personal pronoun when speaking of "his" or "my" former incarnations, of "his" or "my" future ones; but the little "I" is as transient as the body that clothes it. To speak of one who reincarnates, if we are not careful in our thinking, draws us back to the stultifying concept of

a permanent ego-soul and all its concomitant illusions. But identification with Universal Mind, Spirt, Thatness, or Thusness—the Ground of all being—opens for us an endless vista of Consciousness far beyond anything conceivable by the little self—a Consciousness beyond either good or evil, diversity or unity—inexpressible, and only to be gained through Ultimate Enlightenment itself.

We carry our future in the palms of our hands today; and so there is hope and final certainty of an unending vista of LIFE, of a supernal State of Consciousness whose glimmerings, even now, lighten our inmost hearts as each travels his Path toward the Goal.

All these mantras have intrinsic power in them and when you chant them continuously they create in you harmonious vibrations. Your disturbed mind becomes calm and serene. Even diseases in the body disappear. Inharmonious vibrations in the body cause ailments. The chanting of the mantra brings in balanced vibrations and removes all distempers. First it must be applied to control and harmonise the mind. You will be filled with divine harmony. By chanting the mantras you will see that discordant vibrations give place to harmonious vibrations. Irritability, bad thoughts, distractions, all disappear. Your wild nature is tamed. All selfish desires and instincts are subdued. You become a completely changed person.

— SWAMI RAMDAS, *God-Experience*, p. 113-4.

* * * *

The wise declare that there is really only One Immutable Being. When you relinquish passions the One remains, the many disappear.

— Avadhuta Gita, 1, 22.

* * * *

God has become that which I am and has made me that which He is. — JACOB BOEHME.

I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA

By GLADYS DE MEUTER

Saint Anselm, consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 1093, once spoke to an abbot in charge of bringing up youths in the cloister : 'Solid food is given to one who is able to digest it, but a babe, if deprived of its milk and fed such fare would most certainly not benefit, but choke on it. We may apply this to enquirers after Truth who must be given spiritual sustenance according to their inner capacity to receive. The advanced may be offered the solid food of patience in adversity, returning good for evil and nurturing love for one's foes ; whereas the babes in spiritual training must receive kind encouragement, gentleness, understanding and loving patience. In this way, you will by Divine Guidance, lead both the weak and the strong to God.'

There are many paths leading to the Summit, and pilgrims seeking Truth are given sustenance according to their temperament and state of development.

The wise pilgrim does not indulge in satisfying mental curiosity and refrains from asking questions pertaining to the ego and its activities. Having accepted the truth that I AM pure BEING, with neither beginning nor end, but everpresent in the Eternal Now, he is intent on eradicating the source of selfishness, misery and discord which he knows to be none else but the spurious 'I' or ego.

The aim of religion is to annihilate selfishness in order to attain selflessness or that Perfect Equanimity where the 'I-I' shines in luminous splendour.

The wise pilgrim also refrains from condemning the viewpoint of others, but understands that in time they will no longer require the ladder which aided ascent. If the seeker is not able to grasp the highest Truth, then the doctrine of reincarnation is expounded. The law of causation is explain-

ed : 'As a man sows, so shall he reap.' Earth is likened to a school-room to which the jiva returns until the lessons have been learnt and duality transcended to embrace Reality.

When Jesus walked among the hills of Judaea and word spread among the people that a great prophet was newly risen, many wondered whether the Nazarene was Elias or some other holy man who had been dead for centuries.

That Jesus possessed knowledge of this belief we know from the question which he put to his disciples : 'Whom say the people that I am ?' When speaking of John the Baptist, Jesus stated : 'But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, and have done unto him whatsoever they listed'. And those whose inner ears were opened, heard and understood the words of the Master.

At the second council of Constantinople, A.D. 553, the doctrine of reincarnation was proclaimed a heresy : 'Whoever shall uphold the mythical doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, and the consequent opinion of its return, let him be anathema.'

Those who reject the Law of Karma whereby Man receives the just payment of his sowing, are not able to reconcile themselves to the teaching : 'God is Love'. They encounter sorrow, pain, hatred and violence on this earth-plane and consequently attribute this disharmony to an awe-inspiring Judge Whose fearful hand deals out death and destruction as well as life and happiness. That the Sovereign Power remains aloof from the ego-world is beyond the understanding of some, yet this truth has been taught throughout the ages by the Masters.

Gautama Buddha uttered these significant words : 'By one's self evil is done ; by one's

self one suffers ... Both purity and impurity belong to one's self ... wealthy indeed is he who enjoys the riches of the Path — the wealth of those who are ever intent on seeking the Highest Truth.'

And Sri Ramakrishna said: "Beyond Maya, vidya and avidya is Brahman. The world consists of the illusory duality of good and evil but Brahman is beyond these.' You may enquire: 'How then can one understand pain, misery and sorrow?' The reply will be that these concern only the jiva — Brahman is not at all affected by them. Just as a snake may inject poison through its bite yet remain unaffected by the poison it carries, so is Brahman beyond the illusion of duality."

Meister Eckhart, the Christian mystic states: 'There is within the soul a Spirit, beyond the fringe of time and the world ... itself wholly spiritual — nameless and formless It is One alone.'

Beyond the limitations imposed by an unreal ego, lies infinite freedom where space, time and causation do not exist. The renunciation of 'I' and 'mine' is the Way to attain liberation from an imaginary bondage.

Jesus says: 'He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.' What is meant here,

is that the ego must be crucified so that resurrection or awakening from the tomb of ignorance may take place. Unless Man detaches himself from desiring things found in this evanescent world he will continue to slumber in ignorance, and will carry the heavy burden of transient joys and suffering until such time as Grace grants Self-Knowledge.

To concern oneself with the comings and goings of the ego is not wisdom, for although Man may seek to understand the mystery of birth and death, in truth neither birth nor death takes place. There is no Liberation to be attained or Self to be Realized. Tat Tvam Asi — 'Thou art That' — Absolute Being! I AM remains unaffected by the apparent rebirths of the ego, and the ardent follower of Truth who wishes to be released from the bonds imposed by the impostor 'I' must release himself from the thought that he is the body or that the thought-world is his Self.

Surrendering to that Peace Which is Eternal, and which passeth all understanding, the pilgrim may watch the shadow-play of the ego with the vision of the Wise who teach that this ego-life is but a dew, a dream, a bubble — the tinkle of a camel's bell. It is the Lila of the Lord, and in the words of a living Saint: 'a game of Love.'

The reason cannot attain to Him or name Him or know Him ... nor can any affirmation or negation be applied to Him ... He transcends all affirmation as the perfect and unique cause of all things, and all negation by the pre-eminence of His simple and absolute nature, free from every limitation and beyond them all.

— PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS.

* * * *

If, then, a man sees himself become one with the One, he has in himself a likeness of the One; and if he passes out of himself as an image to its archetype he has reached the end of his journey. This may be called the flight of the alone to the Alone. — PLOTINUS.

CAUSALITY AND REBIRTH

By DR. W. J. HENN COLLINS

THE MIDDLE WAY IN CLEAR WORDS

Offered with gratitude and respect to the memory of the Masters Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti who composed the verses and commentary of the *Prasannapada Madhyamakavrtti*.

Shall I say it again? In order to arrive ~~there~~,
To arrive where you are, to get from ~~where~~ you are not,
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not.

— T. S. ELIOT,
"East Coker".

The method of critical analysis ~~has~~ always been central to Buddhism and its basic doctrines of Anatman and Pratitya Samutpada are the outcome of this. The Buddha analysed a living being into its component elements. Thus existence was analysed into five groups of the sensuous (rupa), consciousness (vijñāna), discrimination (saṃjñā), feeling (vedāna), and volition (saṃskāra). It was analysed as a whole, i.e. consciousness with all that of which it is aware. The result was that a permanent entity (atman) could not be found. The component elements went to form only a nominal entity subject to perpetual change, but the finding of only impermanent phenomena is not the same as denying an unconditional ultimate reality which the Buddha actually affirmed. An existence was thus regarded as a continuously flowing stream of discrete moments made up of elements of the five groups. There was no underlying substance to these moments. This conception has been likened to a cine film. It contained nothing permanent or substantial. The momentary elements were conceived as obeying causal laws. But this conception was adapted to

the character of elements which could neither change nor move but only appear and disappear. Causation was called dependently co-ordinated origination (pratitya samutpada) or dependent existence. Causality was thus assumed to exist between moments only, the arising of every moment being co-ordinated with the momentary existence of a number of other moments, "If there is this, there appears that."

Buddhism denies substance and all that it implies. Existence is momentary, unique, discrete, with no abiding entity. Substance and what is universal or identical is rejected as illusory, due to wrong view (avidyā). Admittedly, considerable difficulty was encountered in fitting in this theory with the doctrine of Karma and rebirth. This may be regarded as a Modal view of reality. This is one of the two main currents of Indian philosophy. The other is the Substance view of the Brahmanical tradition having its origin in the atman doctrine of the Upanishads. Here reality is conceived on the pattern of an inner core or substrate, identical or immutable though

surrounded by impermanence and change. In the Advaita Vedanta, its most radical form, the reality of appearance, change and plurality is held to be false. The Sankhya and the Nyaya uphold a substantial rather than a modal view. Taking substance as real makes for unity and integration of experience. It also makes perception, memory and personal identity easier but change more difficult to explain. Suffering and bondage are due to the wrong identification of the atman with anatman :

"Identifying the self with this non-self—this is the bondage of man, which is due to his ignorance, and brings in its train the miseries of birth and death. It is through this that he considers the evanescent body as real, and identifying himself with it, nourishes, bathes and preserves it by means of agreeable sense objects, by which he becomes bound as the caterpillar by the threads of its cocoon."

(Shankara. *Vivekachudamani*, 187)

The fully developed abhidharma metaphysic is a consistent and comprehensive system based on the modal or anatma standpoint. If the problem for the systems based on the substantial or atma position is how to account for change, difference and plurality, here it is to account for the appearance of permanence, identity and universality. To account for apparent difference in the one case and identity in the other, both make use of the agencies of avidya and maya, the veiling and projecting powers of wrong view (*mithya-drsti*).

Thus two consistent and logical systems of metaphysics have been built on the opposing concepts atman and anatman. After more or less argument and debate, an acute and objective mind must have come to the conclusion that the fault did not lie with this or that system, but that the inherent contradiction was due to Reason attempting to describe the unconditioned in terms of the empirical. Such an antinomical conflict results when speculative metaphysics attempts to extend the forms of thought beyond their proper field.

The realization of this insoluble contradiction between the two standpoints led to the emergence of the Madhyamika dialectic. The systems of the atma tradition represent the thesis and the abhidharma system the antithesis of the dialectic. This is a form of the same conflict as an attempt to answer Vacchagotta's questions on ultimate things to the Buddha would have elicited. It was left to Nagarjuna to develop the Madhyamika to its full extent. Reason involves itself in deep and insoluble conflict when it tries to go beyond phenomena to seek their ultimate ground. Any fact of experience when analysed reveals the gaping flaws in its seeming homogeneity. It loses every meaning except in relation to other entities, but these in turn depend on others and so on *ad infinitum*. Everyday commonsense declines to pursue this as irrelevance. Philosophical systems owing to their attachment to a particular view are blind to these flaws. Those who maintain the world has a real existence are wrong, because on deep penetration the world with all its manifold phenomena is found to be essentially relative and therefore ultimately unreal. And those who advocate non-existence or non-being are also wrong because they are denying even the phenomenal reality of the world. Eternalism and Nihilism are both false. Intellect gives us four categories — existence, non-existence, both and neither and involves itself in sixty-two antinomies. It cannot give us Reality. Reality transcends all the categories and at the same time transcends all the antinomies. But it has to be directly realized through spiritual experience. In it the subject-object duality which is the basic cause of suffering is transcended.

Before the mighty strokes of Nagarjuna's destructive dialectic, which was later continued by his able commentator Chandrakirti, the entire structure of the phenomenal world collapses like a house of cards when the phenomena are held to be real in themselves. However considered as phenomena from the empirical standpoint making up our everyday world they are real enough. Such phenomena are the individual subject

and external objects, space and time, matter, motion and causality, also the Four Noble Truths.

Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti did not attempt to sustain a point of view — or build a system of philosophy — except it might be said the negation of all views. They concentrated on showing up the inconsistencies and contradictions in the views and philosophical systems of others.

Because of the central position of pratitya samutpada in Buddhist thought it is not surprising that the Madhyamika or Shunyavada school should devote particular attention to causality. Pratitya samutpada is interpreted as shunyata.

The Buddhist, Brahmanical, Sankhya and Jaina systems all agree that the principle of causality governs all phenomena. Before the advent of the Madhyamika or Shunyavada, it was taken as ultimately real. Thus the problem of the Madhyamika was to show that causality and other categories were of empirical value only. They are a convenient description for the texture of phenomena. This conclusion Shunyavada establishes by showing that all the possible ways in which causality and the categories can be understood under the terms of identity, difference or both or neither, are riddled with contradiction. It is obviously necessary to differentiate between cause and effect, and yet at the same time to identify them. Thus their relation cannot be conceived as identity, difference or both, nor is it no relation.

Four alternative views are usually considered regarding causality. The effect may be considered as the self-expression of the cause, or caused by factors other than itself, or both, or neither. The last alternative amounts to a denial of causation, as it means that things are produced at random. The third alternative is really a compound of the first two. This leaves the first two as the principal alternatives to be considered. Self-production, or the identity of cause and effect (satkarya vada) is the Sankhya view of causation. Buddhism holds the opposite view that they are different (asatkarya

vada). Dialectical criticism discloses the inherent flaw in each conception.

Self-production or the identity of cause and effect will first be considered. A thing cannot arise out of itself. If the effect is already existent in its cause, it is already an existing fact requiring no further production; if the effect does not exist in its cause, nothing can produce it. Nobody says the son of a barren woman was a king. But the entity produced must be different from its cause. If cause and effect were identical, how is one to function as cause and the other as effect? If it is supposed that initially the cause was potential and then it becomes actual, a change of states rather than substances taking place, the question then becomes what brings about this change of state? This question is very pertinent with regard to the primeval matter (prakriti) of the Sankhya. What causes it to pass from the state of pure potentiality to manifestation, if not the self (purusha) which is however held to be radically separate from the primeval matter?

Turning now to causality in the Abhidharma, which is based on the view of asatkarya vada (production from another — non-identity of cause and effect) four kinds of causes or conditions (pratyayas) are usually enumerated in Abhidharma treatises. The Abhidharma of the Sarvastivadins which was criticised in particular by Nagarjuna will be considered here. The four causes or conditions are hetu, alambana, samanantara and adhipati. They do not bear much resemblance to the Aristotelian fourfold division of causes. The hetu is the direct cause corresponding in some respects to the material cause. It is defined as that which directly brings about the result, for example, the seed producing a sprout. Alambana is the object-condition which is taken as the cause in the production of knowledge and mental (citta and caitta). All samskṛta and asamskṛta dharmas can act as alambana pratyaya. The samanantara is the immediately preceding moment of cessation of the cause before the arising of the effect. The adhipati pratyaya is the indirect influ-

ence which one dharma has over another. It is not merely the dominant condition but the comprehensive and universal cause. Any entity or dharma exerts an influence over all other entities except itself. The adhipati pratyaya is thus wider in scope than all the pratyayas, including the alambana which conditions only mental phenomena. It is a co-present cause. No single entity is held to be the cause of an effect. This is criticised by the Madhyamika in addition to the fact of the cause being different from the effect. God, prakriti, time and chance are not held to be causes.

A cause is so named because an effect depends on it. But as long as the effect is absent it cannot be held to be a cause. On the other hand, the cause cannot have anything present as effect, as a cause of an already present effect would be purposeless. If entities are interdependent and relative as are cause and effect they have no self-existence and they cannot exist as separate entities. What lacks self-existence cannot be a cause and a non-existent thing cannot disappear as it is already a non-entity. Thus an effect can neither have causes nor be without them and conversely, causes neither produce an effect nor are without an effect. Since the Abhidharma assumes non-identity of cause and effect, regarding hetu it may be said, owing to lack of relation between the two, in principle anything might be produced from anything; a pebble might sprout into a plant, otherness to the plant being present in the pebble as well as the seed. As to the alambana as object condition for mental dharmas, the latter are considered entities separate from their objective support or counterpart. If the mental dharma is already present, the object support is superfluous; if the mental dharma is absent there can be no relationship between the two. The samanantara as the cessation of cause immediately precedent to the effect cannot produce an effect because it cannot disappear owing to its inherent lack of self-existence. The adhipati as the general influence of all entities may be defined as "that being, this appears", but if entities are relative they lack real existence, and the for-

mula becomes meaningless. An entity existing by itself in its own nature retains the state and form natural to itself. Being already present it does not depend on other entities. It does not come into being. Consequently, something which has a fixed nature of its own cannot dependently originate. But as dependent origination is postulated this can only apply to entities lacking self-nature which are causally impotent. Accordingly pratitya samutpada is meaningless except in a phenomenal sense.

Reincarnation or rebirth is just one example of pratitya samutpada, and since in Buddhism existence is regarded as made up of unique discrete entities following one another very rapidly with no underlying abiding entity, it is clear that this can only be taken as having truth from an empirical point of view. In fact many Buddhists are reluctant to use the term 'reincarnation' as this implies that there is an abiding entity which continues through a series of lives. 'Rebirth' is however rather taken to imply that the chain of existence is of seeming reality only. This may indeed be true, but how it comes about according to abhidharma theory, for the reasons already given, remains inexplicable. The assertion that there is no abiding entity, if rigorously adhered to, also makes the doctrine of karma unworkable in spite of elaborate attempts to gloss over the need for an enduring life continuum to take responsibility for and experience the results of past karma.

As causality in the Abhidharma view is not self-becoming but requires the co-operation of several factors (pratyayas) in producing an effect, the question arises as to what it is that makes the various factors which by themselves are disconnected entities into relevant causes and conditions? And if some other factor were assumed as bringing about this condition, what is it that makes this factor, too, a cause? This clearly leads to an infinite regress. This difficulty is peculiar to all theories of external causation which take the causes to be several. Buddhism does not accept God or other conscious universal co-ordinating agency. In

none of these four *pratyayas* can the so-called effect be found. And if it does not exist in them, how can it be produced out of them?

While accepting the traditional Brahmanic view of the saving power of knowledge, there is also the tendency in Buddhism to limit positive knowledge to the minimum and put on one side all questions irrelevant to gaining liberation from *dukkha*. This check on theoretical speculation is a secret of the vigour and potency of the teaching. The *Madhyamika* reinforced this tendency.

The concept of a middle path is applicable to religion in general. Here the one extreme is that man can work out his salvation on his own without any help from outside, the other that he can achieve nothing by himself. The position taken varies with the religion and its particular stage of development. In early Buddhism and the Theravada, man is expected to work out his own salvation. It may not be possible to find a complete explanation for the swing of the pendulum in Buddhism, but the destructive dialectic of Nagarjuna and his school must have been influential. The effect of the Shunyavada was to produce an indeterminacy into phenomena and their relationships. For "all things have come into being, not of themselves and not by another and not without a cause." Confidence in the light of human reason to discover ultimate truth was no doubt shaken by this. The pendulum swung almost to the opposite extreme from its original position.

"Just as a man who is blind from birth cannot see the sun, just so are men in the throes of conventional conceptions, they do not perceive the Buddha directly, but wish to detail (*prapancayanti*) him conceptually. Only by them he cannot be seen directly (*aparoksa-vartin*), Buddha must be regarded as the Cosmic order (*dharma*), his Body is the Cosmos (*dharma*). The essence of the Cosmos is incognisable, it is impossible to know what it is conceptually. The reality of the Buddha is the reality of the Universe, and as far as the Buddha has no separate reality (*nihsvabhava*), neither has the Universe any apart from him. All the ele-

ments of existence, when sifted through the principle of Relativity (*Shunyata*), become resplendent. All the millions of existences (*bhutamkoti*) must be regarded as the Body of the Buddha manifested in them. This is Relativity or *Shunyata*, the climax of Wisdom" (*Prajnaparamita*).¹

According to this new point of view, liberation cannot be gained by any rational system of knowledge, but only by the saving grace of the Tathagata with his Triple Body, first to become a Bodhisattva and then a Buddha. The necessity is to serve the Buddha in all beings and all places, and to become devoid of self to make room for the Self of selves. This teaching might be summed up as "If I give the Buddha all I am, he will give me all he is."

Ignorance as the motive power behind the process of dependent origination acquires a new and concrete sense. It becomes essentially that kind of ignorance which hides the highest completest truth (*Shunyata*) by its belief that it is accessible to ordinary knowledge and thought, and by its failure to realise that logical deduction (*kalpana*) represents a falling-away from *Shunyata* into duality and suffering.

It must not be thought that the consistent application of Nagarjuna's dialectic to all concepts, relations and things produces a nihilistic attitude. Rather it produces a basic serenity and stability manifesting as a disinterested benevolence accompanied by tolerance and forbearance from opinions and judgments. It might well be termed "*apatheia*,"² a condition free from suffering as being no longer subject to self-centred passions.

It is not a state of apathy or insensitivity but on the contrary the indescribable radiance of *Shunya* or *Prajnaparamita* when the clouds of *Avidya* and *Maya* are swept away.

The *Madhyamika* is surely deserving of more consideration than it receives at the present time, representing as it does the maturity of critical analysis. And more than

¹ Buddhist Conception of Nirvana, p. 45.

² Not the insensibility of the Stoics, but disinterested love — passionless passion.

any other system it truly represents a
Middle Path.

This one Reality eternal
Has been revealed by the victorious
Buddha

The lion of mankind :
It is not born, it does not live.
It does not die, does not decay,
And merged in it are all the beings !
If something has no essence in itself,
How can it then receive an essence from
without ?

There are therefore no things internal,
There are also no things external

But everywhere present is our Lord.

This absolute condition of quiescence,
Where every individual disappears,
Has been revealed by the real Buddha,
There is in it no individual life

whatever.
There you will stroll from birth delivered !
You will then be yourself the Saviour,
And you will save the hosts of living beings !
There is no path discernable whatever,
There you will live from birth delivered,
And, free yourself, deliver many
beings !

— Arya-Ratnakara-Sutra,
Buddhist Conception of Nirvana, (p. 180).

THE DANCE

By ALTA YATES

He who dances,
arms lifted in rounding smoothness
against the music of the sky.
He for whom the deep reverberating drum
of silence pulses
For whom the myriad
of small things move,
He waits —

Amid the dark stirrings of lifted fear,
the bittersweet joy of hidden quest,
Turn inward and up
in widening spirals of ascension.

He waits —
Poised within the rhythmic flux
of hot scintillating light,
Wreathed in the white flame
of latent power.
And the cold emptiness
of unlit I
swings in slowing arcs
beneath.

He waits —
A still presence
that dilates
from the engulfing shadow
of immensity
to a bright point,
the minute dancer
that moves as self ;
Waits —
for the sudden leap,
the hollow fall
From crouching fear to full serenity.

THE TIBETAN DOCTRINE OF INCARNATE BUDDHAS

By BODHICHITTA

The Tibetan doctrine of what are commonly called 'Incarnate Buddhas' is a development of the general Mahayana doctrine of Bodhisattvas. A Bodhisattva is one who has overcome the ego but still refrains from waking up into realization of Nirvana in order to help other beings on their journey thereto. Indeed, the full Bodhisattva vow is not to withdraw from samsara till all animate beings have first been saved. Now it is not to be supposed that this can be accomplished in one lifetime; therefore the vow must imply either survival in a disembodied state or continual physical reincarnation.

The former of these two possibilities is widely envisaged in Far Eastern Mahayana. For instance, the practice of invoking the name of Amitabha (Chinese O-Mi-To-Fu) is said to be based on his vow to save all who call upon him and bring them to the 'Western Paradise'. It will be apparent how close this doctrinal development brings Mahayana, both in theory and practice, to theistic religions, whether monotheistic or, since there are a plurality of Bodhisattvas, polytheistic.

In Tibet the possibility of perpetual return is also developed. A Bodhisattva who has exerted a beneficent influence within a certain limited sphere, for instance in the control of a certain monastery, may return again and again in human form to continue the same work. Despite technical differences, this is fundamentally equivalent to the Hindu doctrine of Avatars and the Christian doctrine of a Son of God.

When Hindus declare that a certain Master is not a saint but an Avatar, what they imply doctrinally is that he is not a man struggling upwards on the path of return who has at last, in this lifetime, made the final break-through to Deliverance but

a Being who has voluntarily descended into human form to help others on their upward path. Therefore he should have no sadhana, no struggle towards Enlightenment, in this lifetime but should simply awaken in childhood or at adolescence into the Enlightenment which he deliberately discarded for his venture into the stormy seas of samsara to rescue those struggling therein. This also explains why Christians attach so much importance to the tenet that Christ was born "without original sin", which means without the obscuration of Enlightenment which normally necessitates spiritual effort. Similarly, those of the Maharshi's followers who regard him as an Avatar (and they are many) maintain that his brief Awakening into Enlightenment at the age of 16¹ was effortless. In parenthesis it may be added that the followers of Ramakrishna have a more difficult case to make in representing him as an Avatar, since they have to explain away the long and violent sadhana he made.

It will be seen then, that there is nothing unique in the Tibetan doctrine of what are known as 'Incarnate Buddhas'. When I referred to technical differences between that and the Hindu doctrine of Avatars, what I had in mind was that as soon as the 'Incarnate Buddha' quits one mortal tenement at death he immediately takes birth in another which, as it begins to exercise discrimination, recognizes people and objects from its previous life and recollects occurrences, whereas the Hindu Avatar is not limited either in time or space to the immediate environment of his predecessor or expected to inherit physical memories.

The Hebrew doctrine of return recorded in the Gospel of St. Matthew as being con-

¹ For an account of which see 'Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge', ch. 11, by Arthur Osborne, published by Rider & Co., London.

firmed by Christ is in this respect similar to the Hindu. It will be recalled that when Christ revealed himself to his disciples they protested, somewhat puzzled, that the guardians of the law taught that before the Messiah could appear the Prophet Elias must first return. Jesus confirmed this teaching but added that Elias had indeed come but had not been recognized. "Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist."²

This doctrine of return, in whichever form one may find it, adds complexity to the general doctrine of reincarnation. What is it that continues from one birth to another and what is provided anew each time? Obviously the bodily form is new. But this implies that the temperament and mental aptitudes are also new, in fact the entire psycho-somatic instrument, since both medical science and astrology show that physical, mental and temperamental traits go together. A man cannot have the physical make-up indicated by one horoscope and the temperament indicated by another, the body of Aries and the disposition of Taurus. And in actual fact, the records show that the successive incarnations of the Dalai Lama (the most conspicuous and therefore the best documented case of such chains of incarnation) have differed widely from one another in build and character, physique and temperament.

At the other extreme, it is not sufficient to maintain that what reincarnates is

pure Being or the Self, because that applies to all beings and would leave no difference between a reincarnation of one Bodhisattva and another or of Krishna or Rama, or of Moses or Elias—or indeed between them and any other form assumed by the One Self.

This implies the existence of beings that are not individualised by the ignorance born of desire, as are mortal men, but at the same time are not universalized in Oneness with the Self, that is in Nirvana. There is indeed evidence of such on earth in a human state. Those who knew the Maharshi in his lifetime were quite convinced that he was in a state of constant conscious Identity with the Self; and yet they did differentiate between him and other such conscious manifestations of Identity—Shankara, say, or Christ or Buddha. If this separateness in Identity can exist with a body, why not without? The Maharshi was quite categorical that there is nothing beyond the state of Jivan-Mukta, Realized while embodied, nothing more to attain, no difference between the Jivan-Mukta and the Videha-Mukta, Realized after death. What more could he possibly attain by death, when Identity is realized already? And what could he lose? Only physical modes of apprehension; and these are already felt to be a restriction. So if we can conceive of such a being embodied, why not disembodied? Then why not re-embodied?

² *St. Matthew*, XVII, 10-13.

Whatever could be done from the pseudo-centre of a "self"?

What can not be done from the ubiquitous centre of total self-absence that is no-where?

From where there is no doing, no doing is needed; from where there is nothing, no thing arises, but everything is. — WEI WU WEI.

AN INCARNATE ABBOT EXPLAINS

From a speech by Trungpa Trulku Rinpoche given at Roselaleham.

After the death of the previous Abbot of Surmang, my monastery, the monks sent a deputation to His Holiness Gyalwa Karmapa, the head of our particular school of Tibetan Buddhism, asking him whether he could tell them where their Abbot had taken birth again, so that they could bring him back among them. Gyalwa Karmapa spent several days in meditation, and finally gave them the answer that their Abbot was a young child living in the village of Geje, in a house facing south; that the family had two children and a brown dog. After some difficulty the monks found the house and the young child, who was myself.

I am told that as the monks came in and presented me with the traditional white scarf, I behaved in exactly the right manner, although I had never been taught how. Also that I recognised various objects that had been the possessions of my predecessor, shown to me among others of the same kind. Eventually they were convinced that I was the eleventh Abbot Trungpa and they brought me back to Surmang.

Shortly after that I was formally enthroned as Abbot, though of course, all my duties were performed by an elder monk acting as regent. I was put into the charge of a tutor, and continued to see my parents from time to time. I began learning about religion from my tutor, who told me about the life of Gautama the Buddha and about his teachings. At the age of eight I began my first simple meditation.

From then on I learned more and more about the various meditations of our school. I received instruction from two of the great Gurus or Teachers of Eastern Tibet. One of them, Chentse Rinpoche, is now in India and is still my Guru. Sometimes I lived in the monastery and sometimes away from it, in retreat. Every monk of our school

spends several years in solitary meditation, during that time living, sleeping and eating in one small room. Meditation is really the heart of a monk's life, for in it he discovers and experiences the actual truth of the teachings he has before known only intellectually.

I do not want to speak about the particular techniques of meditation. There are many and they are adapted to suit the needs of all kinds of individuals. I want rather to speak about the reasons for meditation and its essence, for meditation is not necessarily a matter of sitting cross-legged and motionless for long periods of time, it is something that may be practised, consciously or unconsciously by anyone at any time.

You will be able to draw parallels to what I shall say both from the beliefs and practices of other religions and from your own experiences. We are all human beings, and our existences present similar problems and similar possibilities. As Milarepa, the great sage and poet of Tibet, sang from the tops of the mountains,

'I am the goal of every great meditator,
I am the meeting place of the faithful,
I am the coil of birth, death and decay.'

But to begin at the beginning, each one of us may be struck at one time or another by the inadequacy of our way of experiencing the world. We feel that something is missing, that our attempts to explain and to organise our lives and to provide ourselves with an emotional security are doomed to failure, and are indeed in themselves contradictory to the nature of things; that in our simply fulfilling our own desires we are cheating the Universe.

Meditation is the attempt to remove those aspects of our natures in which our awareness of life is limited and confined, and to

experience a new depth. Upon what does our everyday picture of the world depend? It depends not upon things themselves but on our reactions to them. We project outwards on things our own hopes and prejudices, and order our separate world accordingly. Meditation is a gradual loss of these private worlds, and realisation that our true natures lie hidden in the heart of the Universe.

It is one of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism that things in themselves are without substance. They are all, like flowers, springing up suddenly out of nothingness and again withering. The world of things, or the appearance of things, is a kind of puppet show, a masquerade; in itself it possesses a kind of demonic energy, but it can give no lasting satisfaction to the heart. In meditation we begin to cross the threshold between appearance and reality.

Many of us will have thought like this, but will also have experienced how difficult this threshold is to cross. All unconsciously, the world of appearances exercises a certain fascination. Everything in its appearances releases a small charge of energy, and our ignorant minds, feeling dissatisfaction with their existing states, leap to swallow this charge. Thereafter, the imprint of the object remains fixed in the memory, as, if the experience was in some way pleasurable, the mind desires a repetition of it; if it was unpleasant, the mind will reject any repetition of it, and a negative force is set up.

Meditation consists in seeing the world for precisely what it is; this can be done only when one remains quite unaffected by hatred or desire. One observes dispassionately one's reactions to things, and gradually the passions of greed and hatred are driven out of one's system. Instead of reaching out after one thing and another, one becomes calmer and more self-possessed; one uses the strength thus released to eliminate, gradually, distracted and discursive thoughts as they arise, and brings oneself into a state of clear, one-pointed awareness. One begins to experience greater freedom, and to find room to move about in, one no

longer heeds one's hopes and fears, and one lets go the burden of them. Becoming nothing, one becomes everything, and suddenly it may happen that one is left for a moment still, and before one is infinite space and through one, and around one, the reality flows unobstructed. As Milarepa says,

'As happy as the current of a great river,
So is the sage who enjoys the stream of
thought.'

This is possible for everyone, but clearly it requires certain qualities in us, and it requires time to come to fruition.

We need first of all to have clearly in our minds what we are trying to do. Our basic assumptions influence us far more than we realise, and we must become thoroughly steeped in the ideas and the attitudes of the spiritual life before we can begin. I had to memorise a large portion of our scriptures and repeat them by heart to my tutor.

As well as study, we need determination and integrity. Each one stands before the threshold of eternity, alone with himself. He cannot rely on any created thing. Each one of us can forge a true vessel only out of himself; others may help us, but in the end it is we alone who are responsible. Gradually we have to realise the agony of our mistakes, our failure to understand, and we have to have the courage to come out of prison.

Then, beyond this solitude, one thing else is needed. Just as everything in the world of appearance releases a charge of energy, so also does everything in eternity. That energy, indeed, is far stronger because it has been purified of the stain of greed, hatred and material illusion. The thought is not a thought of anything, it is a thought which in itself is pure energy, passing into and through everything unobstructed. So when we purify our minds, a force is built up from which each one of us can draw, and in the light of which each one can examine himself. In the monasteries and hermitages of Tibet, I could feel this strength in operation, and it was something of which we were all part. If I may be allowed to say so, I

feel this atmosphere lacking in the cities and together, we may join in making a spirit that even in many churches of this country. But some may call new and some may call old, I hope very much that during our time here but which in itself abides for ever.

— By Courtesy : *The Layman.*

VERSES FROM SRI MURUGANAR

Translated By PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN

(63)

Without the body, the world is not.
Without mind, the body is not.
Without knowledge, mind is not.
And without being, knowledge there is none.

(64)

To meet the needs of various minds
The Master spoke of various doctrines.
Ajata is the only doctrine
He taught as from his own experience.
(Ajata = No birth)

(141)

The truth they know not who assert
That power and peace are poles apart.
Peace attained by inward search
Is what the world beholds as power.

(260)

Do not spread out the mind inquiring
"Who may you be?" and "who he?"
Turn it inward questing
Steadily, keenly, "Who am I?"

(279)

Birds in the sky and fish in water
Dart and leave no track behind.
And none can trace the path by which
The sages journeyed to the Self.

(283)

Who in the golden temple of awareness
Instals Siva, the form of pure awareness,
And offers him the worship of awareness,
His awareness is the Truth supreme.

(296)

Awareness is non-attachment,
Awareness purity ;
Awareness is propinquity to God ;
Immortality ; freedom from fear ;
Awareness is
Everything and all there is.

AN INTRODUCTION TO JAPJI

By Lt. Col. KARAMCHANDANI

Guru Nanak Sahib, the founder of Sikh religion was born in 1469 A.D., in the village of Talvandi, (now called Nanakana Sahib) in what is now W. Pakistan. It is not the intention of this introduction to go into the merits of the religion which Guru Sahib founded. All that I wish to say is that he was a householder who at the age of about 30 years renounced the world and went all over India and the neighbouring parts of the world, like Arabia, Central Asia, Egypt etc., and propounded his cult. When this mission was over he went back again and settled in Nanakana Sahib in about 1529 A.D. as a householder. He had a wife and two children ; but the honour of Guruship descended on a disciple Bhai Lahna by name, who became the second Guru, Angad. The Gadi passed by merit to Bhai Lahna, who was chosen by Guru Nanak in 1539 A.D. Just before his death Guru Sahib showed that it was not necessary for the disciple to receive initiation in the orthodox manner, although he did stress the need of a Guru and his upadesa.

His Japji which is the bible of the Sikhs and which every devout Sikh reads daily, emphasises the two aspects of religion, the horizontal, which produces a harmonious way of life, and the vertical which produces saints. The horizontal is the ethical aspect which covers the first 7 Pauris and equips the mind to fly on the track of gnosis. The 19 Pauris take the seeker into realms of reality through stations of Sravana (listening), Manana (meditation) Nididhyasana (absorption), and Tat tvam asi (That thou art) — the aphorism of Samaveda.

The spirit bloweth where it listeth and let him catch it who will. Guru Sahib's urge is preaching self-enquiry while living the life of a householder with love in heart and mantram in mind. The practical disciplines of feeding the lower into the higher prin-

ciple, that is, objects of senses (rajasic activity) into the fire of senses (sattvic activity) in the like kirtan (music), literature, creative art etc., which Lord Krishna calls yajna (Gita IV : 32, 37), but which Guru Sahib calls tap tao (Japji XXXVIII) are preliminary steps on the vital ladder.

Again Guru Sahib's truths are clothed in a celestial type of rhythm, so that the whole Guru Grant Sahib can be sung, is an epical marvel of creative art and literature. Guru Sahib's ideas on reincarnation are spiritual secrets so manifestly laid bare that I would like here to quote what he says in Pauri XX of Japji. "Just as our foot collects dust and dirt by walking through dusty and muddy fields, so also the mind accumulates samskaric dust and dirt by peripatetic wanderings through development of consciousness in the course of evolution from past lives. This dust is in the form of sinful life of the senses, a by-product of the separative ego, covered by desires. And just as earthly dirt covering the feet can be washed away with water, so the sanskaric dust covering the mind can be washed away by devotional chanting of the name of the Lord."

Guru Sahib stresses that it is you alone who are responsible for your actions, and you cannot blame God. As you sow, so do you reap. If you sow to the flesh you reap corruption, if you sow to the spirit, you reap life everlasting. Therefore it is always you. By your thoughts and actions of today you are determining your Karma of tomorrow. By your sowing today you are determining your reaping of tomorrow. Thus if you do not obey rules of health and fall ill, do not blame God ; if you disobey rules of traffic and meet with an accident do not blame God, and if you disobey rules of scripture and lose inner peace do not blame God. God's grace is as free as the sun's rays. If

you pull down the shade and do not feel or see the sun, it is your action not God's. God's grace is always there available and if you do not get it, it is because you have cut yourself off from it. He winds up this Pauri XX as follows: "And the result is that what is sown is reaped. Nanak sayeth that this keeps the Divine Law operating, and the Time-spirit bearing stream of happenings, death, birth and death — the infinite perigrination." (vide Japji P. 48 essayed by the Author, reviewed in **The Mountain Path** of October 1964).

Re-emphasised in Pauri XXXIV. Guru Sahib's views about reincarnation give a pointer to the doctrine of Karma, i.e. man evolves exactly according to his actions — the process being unbroken by death and passing into the next life. What strikes one as most patent is his thesis, that inevitably every sin, whether of omission or commission, brings forth punishment. It has nothing to do with God, because God is too pure to behold inequity. Punishment or reward has

to do with the law of cause and effect — karmic law. We set in motion that which comes to us. If we sow to the flesh it comes in the form of corruption, if we sow to the spirit it comes back to us in the form of life everlasting. It is a feed-back system like cybernetics. It is we who do it, not God. If we put into the machine an inferior kind of cloth, the clothing will also be of an inferior kind, if we use inferior leather, the finished boots will also be of an inferior kind. Therefore set not in motion today what will return to you with evil consequences tomorrow, because while you are living the human life you are setting into motion the law of cause and effect. This is what Guru Sahib means when he says "these various natures and colours (bodies of men) are determined by their respective actions — good and bad. So far as God is concerned He is True and so is His court True [vide Japji, p. 93, Pauri XXXIV, and p. 15, (Pauri IV) essayed by the author, reviewed in **The Mountain Path** of Oct. 1964]

A man asked the Maharshi to say something to him. When asked what he wanted to know, he said that he knew nothing and wanted to hear something from the Maharshi.

Maharshi: You know that you know nothing. Find out that knowledge. That is liberation (**Mukti**).

*

*

*

The One Eternal Reality exists everywhere ; how then can there be any idea of unity with it or separation from it ?

— Avadhuta Gita, VII, 7.

*

*

*

The soul in all the various forms of life is One Soul, an omnipresent Identity. — PLOTINUS.

*

*

*

The now-moment in which God made the first man, and the now-moment in which the last man will disappear, and the now-moment in which I am speaking are all one in God, in whom there is only one now. — ECKHART.

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF REINCARNATION†

By SAGITTARIUS

The question that concerns Christians with regard to reincarnation is: if it is true why didn't Christ teach it? It can be parried by the counter-question; if he didn't why did some of his early followers believe that he did?

A Spiritual Master is apt to be an intensely practical man. He is on earth to do a job: to lead men from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality, as the Upanishad puts it. Not only is elaborate doctrinal theory not essential for this, but it can be an actual distraction. Argument about theory is a facile alternative to spiritual effort, and by it one can sidetrack both oneself and others. It was Buddha who flatly refused to answer theoretical questions on the ground that they would not help one to escape from suffering to Enlightenment — and what mountains of subtle dialectic his followers have piled up! Christ was equally reticent — and how many of his followers have killed or imprisoned one another over points of theory that he kept silent upon and therefore obviously did not consider important. People who knew the Maharshi personally report that he too was averse to answering questions of sterile theory. I hope **The Mountain Path** will not degenerate into a forum for academic discussions of his doctrine.¹

Returning to the question of Christ: he threw out hints enough for those of his followers who could understand the ultimate truth of Identity — bidding them be perfect as God is perfect, telling them that only he who lays down his life will find it, telling them that the kingdom of heaven was within them — others in plenty. But for those who could only understand heaven and hell he said little — that there were many depart-

ments in heaven, that there would be pain and lamentation in hell; very little, but how much the theologians have spun out of it!

Christ never affirmed reincarnation but he also never denied it; so if it was implicitly assumed by the Jews of his day his not denying it is tantamount to acceptance. And there are signs that it was. To quote from an old book, 'Lux Orientalis' by Joseph Glanvill: "Few speculative truths are delivered in Scripture but such as were called forth by the controversies of those times; and pre-existence was none of them, it being the constant opinion of the Jews, as appears by that question, 'Master, was it for this man's sin or his father's that he was born blind?'² ... for except they supposed that he might have sinned before he was born, the question had been senseless and impertinent. Again when Christ asked them whom men said he was they answered that some said John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremias or one of the Prophets,³ which sayings of theirs suppose their belief of a metempsychosis and consequently of pre-existence. There, one would think, were very proper occasions for our Saviour to have rectified his mistaken followers had their supposition been an error."

Perhaps the idea has spread since Eastern doctrines began to be more widely known in the West that acceptance of their doctrine of reincarnation would mean rejection of the traditional Christian teaching of heaven and hell, but that is not so. Hinduism and Buddhism also teach heaven and hell.

Their teaching is that, so far as there is an individual being (and individual being is

¹ Not as long as the present editorship continues. — (Ed.)

² *St. John*, IX, 1-4.

³ *St. Matthew*, XVI, 13-14.

no less real after death than before, but also no more) it reaps the harvest it has sown on earth in a state of heaven or hell and then, having done so, returns again to a new life on earth to build up new karma. There is no need to go farther afield than **The Mountain Path** to substantiate this statement, since it is clearly indicated in the article by the Dalai Lama on Tibetan Buddhism in the issue of April 1964.

Now suppose this is true? It seems a more likely supposition than that it is not true. Why didn't Christ also teach it? Why should he? For those who could understand the essential doctrine of Identity it was not necessary. For those who could not he taught as much as was needed: that there would be a reckoning after this life. So far as hope and fear can be an incentive that was enough to know. Those of real understanding did not need it anyway; those who did need it would be no better off for knowing what comes later on: they would only have more to wrangle about.

Some Christians, it is true, say that the Christian belief in heaven and hell is different and cannot admit of subsequent rebirth, since it implies eternal heaven and hell. It is painful to have to argue about this because the very assertion of it shows such a dismal lack of understanding; also because it does not help at all on one's spiritual pilgrimage. But having undertaken

to write for a journal one cannot always extricate oneself from barren theory.

Instead of arguing, let us simply examine what this belief implies. That innumerable beings exist outside God. That God, therefore, is not Infinite, being limited by the exclusion of them. That they are eternal with regard to the future but not with regard to the past, since God made them but made them immortal. (And surely it flies in the face of both reason and experience that anything should have a beginning but not an end!) And that this God, dwelling among the innumerable other beings, everlastingly rejoices some of them and torments others — and everlastingly does not mean for a million years, but everlastingly in an eternity in which a million years are no more than a snap of the fingers, without hope, without possibility of reparation, with no relief ever, endlessly, endlessly — on account of their use or misuse of opportunities during their microscopic span of earth-life. Is it necessary to say more?

Far better to emulate Christ in not discussing such matters. Those who have ears to hear, as he put it, will leave aside argument and devote their lives to the struggle to be perfect as their Father in heaven (which is within them) is perfect. For those who have not, Christ said all that was necessary when he told them that there would be a reckoning. Dialogue and discussion will not save them from it.

The one Inner Self of all beings shapes itself into form after form and is also outside them. — **Kathopanishad**, II, 2-10.

*

*

*

"There is only one consciousness, which subsists in the waking, dream and sleep states. In sleep there is no 'I'. The 'I'-thought arises on waking and then the world appears. Where was this 'I' in deep sleep? Was it there or was it not? It must have been there also, but not in the way that you feel now. The present is only the 'I'-thought, whereas the sleeping 'I' is the real 'I'. It subsists all through. It is consciousness." — **SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI**.

TRACES OF REINCARNATION IN THE WEST

By H. SEBASTIAN GUBBINS

Reincarnation is commonly thought of as an Eastern doctrine, but it is by no means exclusively so. It was probably not the accepted belief of the common man in Western antiquity, as it is in Eastern countries, but it was the tradition of the philosophers from Pythagoras to Plato and, through him, to Plotinus and the Gnostics and neo-Platonists.

Pythagoras is recorded not merely to have believed in reincarnation but to have known several of his previous incarnations and those of his companions. Diogenes Laertius declares in his life of him: "He was the first, they say, to declare that the soul, bound now in this creature, now in that, thus goes on a round ordained of necessity." Actually, he may have been the first among the recorded philosophers but the doctrine was already current in the Orphic cult that prevailed before his time. Plato postulates it quite unequivocally: "Know that if you become worse you will go to the worse souls, or if better to the better; and in every succession of life and death you will do and suffer what like may fitly suffer at the hands of like."¹

The neo-Platonic mystic Plotinus formulates the doctrine quite explicitly. "It is a dogma recognized throughout antiquity that the soul expiates its sins in the darkness of the infernal regions, and that afterwards it passes into new bodies, there to undergo new trials. When we have gone astray in multiplicity, we are first punished by our wandering away from the path, and afterwards by less favourable conditions when we take on new bodies. The gods are ever looking down upon us in this world. No reproach we bring against them can be justifiable, for their providence is never-ending; they allot to each individual his appropriate destiny, and that is in harmony

with his past conduct, in conformity with his successive existences."² It will be seen from the above that not only does he affirm the doctrine but maintains that it was recognized throughout antiquity. Moreover, both he and Plato speak of it as the impersonal, inevitable justice of the law of cause and effect, equivalent to the Hindu law of karma. Although he refers to "the gods", he is describing an impersonal process in which, as he says, each individual receives his appropriate destiny in harmony with his past conduct.

The Hebrew neo-Platonist Philo in the great philosophical metropolis of Alexandria not merely postulated reincarnation but recognized, as do the Upanishads and the Gita, that it is only the lower path, for those who fail to take the higher path of return to Oneness. "The company of disembodied souls is distributed in various orders. The law of some of them is to enter mortal bodies and after certain prescribed periods to be again set free. But those possessed of a diviner structure are absolved from all local bonds of earth."

In classical Rome the doctrine was proclaimed by the poets (many of whom were under direct or indirect Pythagorean influence). Aeneas in Virgil's "Aeneid"³ is shown the souls of the dead and told that, after drinking from Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, they will return again to earthly bodies with new courage and enterprise, forgetful of their former frustrations. Ovid's "Metamorphoses" are largely on this theme. "The soul wanders about, coming from one place to another and assuming any body. It passes from animal to human bodies and also from men to animals, but no expanse

¹ "Laws", Book I.

² Second Ennead.

³ Book VI.

AN INTRODUCTION TO JAPJI

By Lt. Col. KARAMCHANDANI

Guru Nanak Sahib, the founder of Sikh religion was born in 1469 A.D., in the village of Talvandi, (now called Nanakana Sahib) in what is now W. Pakistan. It is not the intention of this introduction to go into the merits of the religion which Guru Sahib founded. All that I wish to say is that he was a householder who at the age of about 30 years renounced the world and went all over India and the neighbouring parts of the world, like Arabia, Central Asia, Egypt etc., and propounded his cult. When this mission was over he went back again and settled in Nanakana Sahib in about 1529 A.D. as a householder. He had a wife and two children ; but the honour of Guruship descended on a disciple Bhai Lahna by name, who became the second Guru, Angad. The Gadi passed by merit to Bhai Lahna, who was chosen by Guru Nanak in 1539 A.D. Just before his death Guru Sahib showed that it was not necessary for the disciple to receive initiation in the orthodox manner, although he did stress the need of a Guru and his upadesa.

His Japji which is the bible of the Sikhs and which every devout Sikh reads daily, emphasises the two aspects of religion, the horizontal, which produces a harmonious way of life, and the vertical which produces saints. The horizontal is the ethical aspect which covers the first 7 Pauris and equips the mind to fly on the track of gnosis. The 19 Pauris take the seeker into realms of reality through stations of Sravana (listening), Manana (meditation) Nididhyasana (absorption), and Tat tvam asi (That thou art) — the aphorism of Samaveda.

The spirit bloweth where it listeth and let him catch it who will. Guru Sahib's urge is preaching self-enquiry while living the life of a householder with love in heart and mantram in mind. The practical disciplines of feeding the lower into the higher prin-

ciple, that is, objects of senses (rajasic activity) into the fire of senses (sattvic activity) in the like kirtan (music), literature, creative art etc., which Lord Krishna calls yajna (Gita IV : 32, 37), but which Guru Sahib calls tap tao (Japji XXXVIII) are preliminary steps on the vital ladder.

Again Guru Sahib's truths are clothed in a celestial type of rhythm, so that the whole Guru Grant Sahib can be sung, is an epical marvel of creative art and literature. Guru Sahib's ideas on reincarnation are spiritual secrets so manifestly laid bare that I would like here to quote what he says in Pauri XX of Japji. "Just as our foot collects dust and dirt by walking through dusty and muddy fields, so also the mind accumulates samskaric dust and dirt by peripatetic wanderings through development of consciousness in the course of evolution from past lives. This dust is in the form of sinful life of the senses, a by-product of the separative ego, covered by desires. And just as earthly dirt covering the feet can be washed away with water, so the sanskaric dust covering the mind can be washed away by devotional chanting of the name of the Lord."

Guru Sahib stresses that it is you alone who are responsible for your actions, and you cannot blame God. As you sow, so do you reap. If you sow to the flesh you reap corruption, if you sow to the spirit, you reap life everlasting. Therefore it is always you. By your thoughts and actions of today you are determining your Karma of tomorrow. By your sowing today you are determining your reaping of tomorrow. Thus if you do not obey rules of health and fall ill, do not blame God ; if you disobey rules of traffic and meet with an accident do not blame God, and if you disobey rules of scripture and lose inner peace do not blame God. God's grace is as free as the sun's rays. If

THE HERO OF MYTHOLOGY

By SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN

The Hero of mythology and allegory is a figure who stands for something quite special in human development. To understand him we must appreciate that the inner core of man is an eternal being belonging to the timeless world and descending to the world of matter in order to break through its deceptions and make good his path of return. The hero is one who undertakes this goal consciously and makes it the deliberate purpose of his life. His decision to do so brings upon him trials and ordeals, turning his life into an allegorical journey the end and purpose of which is discovery of and union with his own higher Self symbolised by marriage with his Lady (Penelope, Ariadne, Portia, Rosalind). Every great myth is concerned with this timeless theme. It is the eternal allegory and any soul at any time or place can choose to set forth upon the quest, knowing that the decision will call down ordeals and tribulations upon him. The goal of every hero is the same, however variously symbolised, as Golden Fleece or Sangraal, lost heritage or Beloved: the mountain has only one peak. The trials will vary according to the needs of each life: the mountain path can begin from any point around its base. The path of regeneration is always a heroic way even if the setting of life is humble. The essential thing is to recognize the existence of the Higher Self with which each one of us must sooner or later unite, no matter after how many births. But 'only the brave deserve the fair'; the hero is he who is prepared to waste no more lifetimes but sets forth deliberately and valiantly in his very life to achieve the Supreme Goal. Our civilization has forgotten the existence of the Goal and therefore lost the true concept of the hero and his task.

We need to remember Plato's view that true education of the adult demands "the

habitual vision of greatness". I will quote here a verse from Yeats's 'Sailing to Byzantium' which gives the real inspiration for our later years:

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder
sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore have I sailed the seas
and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

Byzantium for Yeats represents the realm of higher knowledge and intuition, and the voyage to it is the quest for attainment.

Fuller understanding comes if we grasp the idea of repeated earth lives. When, after the death of the body, we move into a realm of expanded consciousness, we shall have a vision of the life we have led. The soul will then experience how it has fallen short of what it should have achieved, how it has hurt others and by its selfishness has done harm and thereby hindered its own possibilities of growth. An inner impulse is thus implanted in it to set right the wrong and harm for which it is responsible. This will be impressed into the soul as a trait of character, an urge to overcome the flaw in the personality. Before descending again to earth it will be shown its task and urged to 'remember'. In the obscurity of earth it will forget, but the trait of character will, out of a subconscious drive, draw the person into situations of suffering and temptation where the flaw can be mended. In this sense the sorrows and calamities of our life, with the people and events who are involved in them, will be seen to be brought upon us by our own inner planning.

But there is more to it than this. If on a higher level we plan our ordeals and trials it follows that there must also be implanted in the soul the power necessary to overcome them. This is axiomatic and to recognize it is most essential. Our sufferings and trials are not the meaningless blows of chance but a destiny planned and directed by our own higher selves for our essential character-therapy. As we face each trial in the allegorical journey through dark forest or perilous sea we are given strength to overcome it, tapping springs of eternal power. The power may not be apparent until facing the ordeal. Our conscious mind will be unaware of it, but if we can react with joy and affirmation to a trial the power will be forthcoming, as by magic. This is co-operation with a higher world. It is a technique of 'heroic' action. To quote Hopkins: "I did say Yes to lightning and lashed rod". If we do not grasp the deeper meaning of the soul's trials we may indeed fall into despair and imagine that all is meaningless hardship, "A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," as Macbeth found it after his failure. For to say that the strength to overcome is implanted in us does not mean that every one must overcome. There are many who fail on the quest — heroes who are vanquished, weaklings who are daunted by perils they might have overcome. He who achieves is indeed a hero. He learns to say 'Yes' in positive and courageous reaction to opportunities offered where before he might have held back in timidity. It is a way of valour and joy, adventure and exploration into the unknown. Every myth, every fairy story, most great drama and all epic poetry is concerned with the symbol of the 'hero'. The myths speak to us in symbolic form of timeless truths intensely relevant to our life, far more so than any of the academic philosophies we elaborate.

Shakespeare's plays, if we look at their hidden allegory, all reveal the same truths. All the old plays are concerned with kings and princes. The heroes are all noble. This is because all old drama is concerned on the allegorical level with man falling from his

divine origin and seeking to return, like the prodigal son, to the world from which he had fallen. His essential royalty and nobility is symbolised outwardly. Each one of us is called upon to become royal within ourselves. The temple is our own body into which the Spirit can descend. The kingdom which we are called upon to rule is that of our own life. The true nobility is of those who have consciously set forth upon the mountain path.

Let us look briefly at the tragedy of Hamlet as the hero who failed. But let it be clear that this is only one of many possible interpretations. A symbol can have manifold different meanings. If for you it holds some life-enhancing significance who can say that your interpretation is wrong, even if it is different from that held by some one else. He is a highly self-conscious intellectual summoned to undertake the path of regeneration. His task is to take over a kingdom occupied by a usurping monarch and thereby revenge his father and free his mother from domination by the usurper. Seen allegorically, the kingdom is himself. "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" — in himself. The false, unaspiring aspect of the personality rules, wedded to his mother, that is to the instinctual nature which is debased and calls for regeneration. In interpreting a myth we must see the whole setting as the personality and all the characters as themes or aspects of it. The temptations and trials reflect the flaws of character to be overcome. Hamlet, a university intellectual, is summoned by an exalted being from the other world. His noble father's spirit in arms (that is his earlier untutored spiritual intuition that was once wedded to his instinctual life before he fell into sophistication) tells him of his warrior task to avenge the murder and redeem his debased mother. Hamlet was 30, that turning point when a man so often begins to see the meaning of life. In an overwhelming flash of vision he sees what he has to do, what is the purpose of life for him, he sees before him the hero's path of self-regeneration. The ghost calls on him to "Remember me!" He cries:

hero returns again to the quest with the wisdom learned from his failure deeply engrained in him.

Othello and Brutus both brought on to themselves a hero's death. The ordinary death is a fulfilment of a karmic debt with causes in the past. The hero who kills himself owing to failure on the path is working towards the future. Such a death differs profoundly from the normal suicide arising out of cowardice.

There is also an initiatic death on the path, the death of the lower self, but this does not involve death of the body and is not failure but the gateway to achievement. This is in accordance with Christ's sayings that a man must be born again of the Spirit and that only he who gives up his life shall find it. The initiatic or spiritual death and rebirth may take place at the same moment as physical death, in which case life's purpose has been consummated and no physical rebirth is needed. There is a great and difficult poem by Manley Hopkins called 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' which describes such an experience. Through the horror of the storm a nun is heard calling "Christ, Christ! Come quickly!" Hopkins recognizes that she had seen the actual presence of the Christ in the wild waters and that He had staged the shipwreck as an ordeal so that this soul could take the ultimate step of surrender to Him. We must understand that the heroic sacrifice of the nun, receiving the Christ into herself in her death, actually helps forward all who came in touch with her or who, even now, read of her deed. Thus in the final verse we read :

Our King back, oh, upon english souls !
 Let him 'easter' in us, be a dayspring
 to the dimness of us,
 Be a crimson-cresseted east,
 More brightening her, rare-dear Britain,
 as his reign rolls,
 Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high
 priest ...

Tolkein has created a great and fascinating piece of mythology in his work 'The Lords of the Ring'. It symbolises the conflict between forces of light and darkness and the final volume is called 'The Return of the King'. This is the task for all of us, the ultimate return of the King into his kingdom in our own hearts. That is the end of the hero's fight.

All great mythology and poetry when rightly understood is concerned with the hero myth. If it gave the inspiration for great art in the past it can do so again. We rediscover the truth that the core of man belongs to a timeless divine world, descends from it into the journey of life and must consciously undertake the great adventure of return. This has been forgotten in our civilization and a devastation of culture is the result with all its tendency to denigration and debunking. When rediscovered, this knowledge of the higher self of man becomes not only an inspiration, restoring meaning to life, but a source of power flowing into the heart and mind. Creative activity will result. Once this spiritual source is tapped it must grow into art form, revitalising poetry and painting, architecture and sculpture. The truths of the Spirit speak with power into all aspects of life. The re-emergence of the hero symbol could act with transforming effect through our society. Yet the battleground is within each human heart. Though the soul's trials appear to come at us from outside, as in the events and characters of a Shakespearean tragedy, the conflict and conquest is within. We fight against the darkness in ourselves. As soon as we see life's journey as a living allegory the emphasis is changed. It is not what happens to us that matters but the way we respond to it. We learn to say 'Yes' to lightning and lashed rod, and meaning and joy is restored to life. In the long view destiny is always kind. The purpose of it all is the transformation, the metamorphosis of the soul, taking a step onward in consciousness out of its own inner initiative.

279

RENEWED OPPORTUNITY

By CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

Behind the hidden fact of Reincarnation lies the secret of renewed opportunity. A given life on earth which in the eyes of history seems to have been one of misuse, selfishness, even of betrayal of the Spirit can in subsequent lives reveal a reversal which then converts this same individual into a being of supreme dedication and spiritual service to humanity. It is a deeply sacred thought.

For who, in our time, has not met both in individuals and in the crises and events of our epoch men of supreme almost satanic selfishness. Yet it would be wiser to recognise the evil exactly for what it is — mis-used power.

Intelligence, strength, talents, capacity for concentrated work, one-pointed powers of will and ambition are FORCES which are being used for materialistic and selfish purposes alone. They are ignoring the right evolution of Humanity and are contemptuous of God and the Divine inherent in all creation. Were these forces once placed consciously in the unselfish service of humanity their strength would be incalculable.

History has recorded such personalities. Cain and Judas are two examples, and Saul who made the reversal in one lifetime into St. Paul of the Gospels. Ponder the significance of the two mothers, one of St. Francis, the other of St. Augustine. Both women, whose deep piety and hope for their sons may have been the very presence these strong men needed to help them dedicate their lives. In a similar sense all who hold faith and love for their fellowman in a period of darkest unselfishness and materialism act as spiritual mothers to humanity. Their devoted love may well prove the inspiration which illumines incarnations to come. None can estimate the greatness of future lives once this reversal from the self-centered ego to the awareness of the Divine Whole of creation has been consciously

undertaken. Too often the life of the Spirit is wrongly considered as a private concern. Whereas, when all mankind is one, nothing which concerns a fragment of that unity is separate from the whole. In this sense the illumination of the individual acts as a partial lifting or awakening of the whole. Or in the words of the Christ they become the leaven which leavens the lump.

When Reincarnation is fully understood it will then be viewed not merely as a teaching of repeated earth lives or the working out of destiny and self-created karma for man's evolution and gradual perfection but in a far deeper sense men will be grateful for the renewal of opportunity which lies behind reincarnation. Particularly for this opportunity to perfect himself into the image of God, for the opportunity to review after death his entire life as judged from eternal values not the values of one egoistical, separate individual entity, and for the opportunity to bring with him into the next incarnation forces that can create a reversal and in subsequent lives one-pointed spiritual living as his contribution to God.

We have had in our time the recent death of one such consciously dedicated man, Albert Schweitzer. His life indicates the human potential. All over the earth other souls of similar or superior stature live and work, often totally unknown and acting as a hidden leaven. Some are teachers, some leaders in social or philanthropic work, some educators or artists in different fields, some writers, some scientists, some in politics, some in ashrams and monasteries, some in industry or business and some in private life. Each is making his hidden contribution after many lives of preparation for his task. Not all of these are openly in evangelical life. Once even these illumined souls stood on earth subject to the temptations of free will and the ego and ignorant of the true

inner meaning of life. For each of these in some life came the moment of questioning, of struggle, or suffering, or examination and remorse. Then finally at last the inner alliance to the eternal.

When one fully comprehends this then the ability to forgive, to pardon, to understand, to be patient, which all the great

spiritual teachers have shown is more fully comprehended. It is this faith in the right evolution of humanity, in the adjustment of wrong acting or living or thinking that Reincarnation provides. As one thinker said : "It is not atonement, it is at-one-ment". When Man realises he is at one with God and all is God then he has made his reversal.

STRANGE CASE OF THE POLLOCK TWINS

By KENNETH BRASS

Two young girls in England have just faced a scientific attempt to prove they have returned from the dead.

An Indian professor, conducting research on reincarnation, made a 7,000-mile trip to Britain after reading about the girls in an Australian newspaper.

He is convinced that twins Jennifer and Gillian Pollock, aged seven, of Whitley Bay, Northumberland, can help solve the riddle of rebirth and communication with the dead, and he tells me that he may soon visit Australia to seek "more examples of reincarnation."

He is Dr. Hemendra Bannerjee, 38, director of the Department of Parapsychology at Rajasthan University in Jaipur. (whose investigations concerning the rebirth of a girl in Saurashtra were reported in *The Sunday Standard* a few weeks ago.)

The girls' father, Mr. John Pollock, a 45-year-old sales supervisor, thinks they are reincarnations of his daughters, Joanna, eleven, and Jacqueline, six, who were killed by a car as they skipped hand-in-hand to Sunday school in 1957.

The twins, born 17 months after the accident, closely resemble Joanna and Jacqueline, but, most significant of all, they have similar birthmarks and can recall almost perfectly the circumstances of their sisters' deaths,

Gillian has a coin-sized birthmark on her hip, identical in colour, size and position to one Jacqueline had.

Jennifer has an inch-and-a-half forehead scar identical to one Joanna had, yet Jennifer has never been in an accident that could have caused it.

During his long interview with the girls, Dr. Bannerjee talked to them about their school work, games, thoughts and dreams, and he verbally re-enacted the accident. All their comments were tape-recorded for data processing.

Dr. Bannerjee plans to return to England in May and take them to the scene of the accident to record their reactions.

The girls' father said : "I have never been a man to believe blindly. I always seek proof in everything.

"And in the case of the twins I believe we have proof beyond doubt that they are genuine cases of reincarnation.

"Last year my wife and I accidentally overheard them talking about the crash that happened before they were born.

"They also knew how to find their way to a playground in Henham Village, nearby. The other girls used to go to the playground whenever we went to Henham, but Jennifer and Gillian had never been there before."

Dr. Bannerjee said the twins' case was one of the most interesting he had heard of.

Courtesy : *The Sunday Standard*.

FROM THE GANGES TO THE AMAZON

By JEAN BUTLER

In Lima, Peru, about twenty years ago, a friend of mine who was deeply interested in psychical research came to see me one day, in a state of considerable excitement. He gave me a letter to read which had come from a priest posted in the jungles of the Amazonian region of Peru. The letter described the village where the priest lived as a tiny one consisting of about twenty mud-huts and inhabited by Kechua and Aymara Indians, none of whom spoke a word of Spanish. Not only were they ignorant of the national language, but also they were ignorant of the very name of their country. They were accustomed to saying that they lived "in the high place", or "on the bank of the river" which, to them, was their country. In view of this plus the fact that the priest was the only literate person in the village there was no possibility of any fraud or deception on the part of the correspondent.

He wrote that an Aymara couple had come to him in despair, bringing with them their small son, seven years old. They explained that he must be possessed by an evil spirit because he claimed that he wanted to go back to his parents in Banaras. On being asked where Banaras was, he stated, unhesitatingly, "India." The parents, of course had never heard of India, since, to them their country was "on the bank of the river." The priest questioned the little boy who told him in detail that he had just remembered his home in Banaras. He gave the name of his father and mother; the name of the street and a description of the house. He added the information that his father was a rich Brahmin who had given him a little goat-cart as a birthday present when he was seven. He was warned that he could play in the inner courtyard of the house but was not to go out into the street. When it was getting dark the little boy got bored with

the courtyard and decided to disobey his father and try his cart out in the street. He was killed by a motor car almost immediately. On his seventh birthday in Peru it had gradually begun to come back to him. He gave his Indian mother's maiden name and also described, in great detail, her appearance and even a silver necklace that she wore "like a collar". The little boy kept saying over and over again that he wanted to go back to Banaras.

The priest was dumbfounded because he knew, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that there was no possibility of any attempt at fraud or deception on the part of such simple, illiterate and primitive people. He wrote at once to my friend asking that he make an investigation of the case.

My friend, Augusto, a lawyer, wrote to the Municipal Authorities of Banaras asking for information about the Brahmin family the boy had described; also asking the maiden name of the Brahmin's wife and the number of children they had had, both living and dead. He stated that he would like to get in contact with them in order to give them information "about a matter which would be of great interest to them". Several months went by and we were packing up to leave Peru for good when, one morning, our friend came rushing in with a letter from Banaras stating that the Brahmin and his wife had been located; that they were living in the same house and had several living children, but that the oldest son had been killed by a motor-car on his seventh birthday. All the other details, including the mother's maiden-name were exactly as the boy had described them.

About a week later we left the country for good and have never heard the end of the story, although an account of it was published in one of the newspapers in Lima.

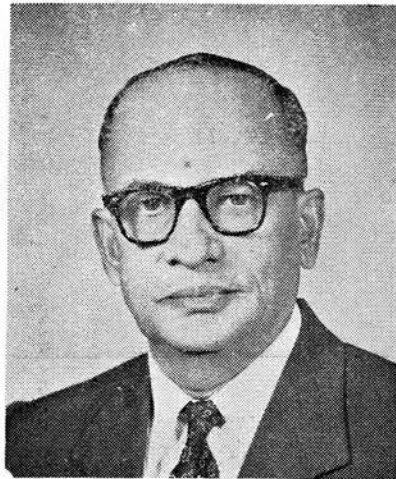
HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By K. K. NAMBIAR

How I came to the Maharshi? I wish I knew the answer! I know I didn't go to the Maharshi to seek any particular boon; nor did I go to him grief-stricken seeking solace; nor to get cured of any bodily afflictions. Perhaps, it was just curiosity—curiosity for anything supernatural. From my childhood, I had felt an urge to meet spiritual men, "yogis" and "sannyasis", some of whom demonstrated extraordinary physical feats and performed so-called miracles. The earliest recollection I have is of an ochre-clad yogi who floated on water and later stood on his head and did quite a number of difficult asanas, attracting a large crowd of admirers around him. I remember clinging on to this man late in the evening until all others had left him asking him to

of several types. One of them 'slept' on a cotton rope tied to two rafters, and another slept on branches of trees, and so on. 'Maharshis' I had only read of in Puranas—of benevolent Vasishta and Viswamitra, the hot-tempered Durvasas, and the wandering Narada who delighted in creating some mischief or other. But when I heard of a living Maharshi whom people could go and see and talk to, I must say I was truly sceptical.

My first introduction to Maharshi was through a little green booklet—a Malayalam translation of "Who am I". It was 32 years ago. I browsed through the booklet and got a general idea of the theme, which at that time did not carry much conviction to me. A few weeks later, the President of the Salem District Board under whom I worked as an Assistant Engineer at that time suggested a trip to Tiruvannamalai to see a Maharshi, who, in outward appearance looked a 'householder', ate, drank, and lived like one. From Salem we did the journey by car. We were shown into the hall where Maharshi reclined on a couch. We prostrated before him and sat down on the floor at some distance. No words passed between us; but I felt an indefinable sense of peace in his presence. My scepticism gave place to a sense of awe and reverence. I might have sat there for about an hour perhaps and wanted to bask in his presence longer; but on a sign given by my boss, I had to get up and prepare to leave the Ashram. Before doing so, I prostrated again before Maharshi and fervently prayed that I might have more opportunities to have his darshan. Opportunities I had because my brother-in-law Dr. P. C. Nambiar got posted to Tiruvannamalai as Doctor-in-charge of the Government Hospital. My sister Madhavi amma, a devoted soul, used to visit the Ashram quite often, and I too made a few visits from Dharmapuri to which place I had got transferred by then.



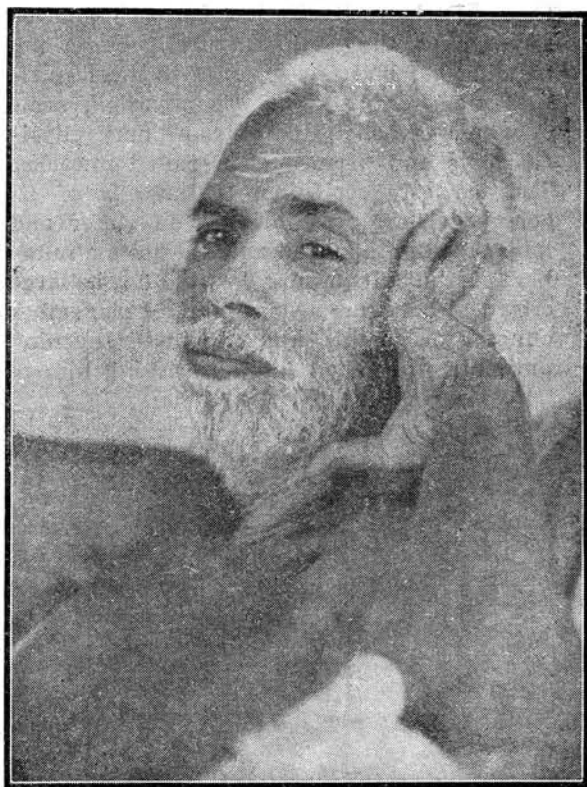
teach me some of those feats. I must have been about 10 years old then. He taught me some pranayams and did a sort of 'initiation' by exerting some pressure on the lids of my closed eyes by his first and middle fingers which made me see some sparkling lights, on reopening of the eyes! Later, I had opportunities to see yogis and sadhus

On one of these occasions, I made a small contribution for a 'Bhiksha' at the Ashram, which meant that all those present were to be fed sumptuously when Bhagavan also would share the meal along with them. At about noon, the bell sounded announcing 'Bhiksha' time and people started queuing into the dining hall—a large thatched shed at that time. The person leading the queue occupied the last corner seat and the second next to him and so on. When the queue stopped, I found that I was to sit right in front of Sri Bhagavan! This lucky coincidence gave me great satisfaction. Bhagavan seemed to sense this and rewarded me with a gracious smile. Soon people came with rice and other preparations. Bhagavan was to be served first. When rice was brought before his leaf, a small ball of rice rolled into his leaf even before the person had started serving him. Bhagavan looked at me smiling and said: "It falls by itself". This remark from Sri Bhagavan, I must say, gave me supreme delight and I can still recall the ecstasy I felt while partaking of that meal right in front of Sri Bhagavan and face to face with him hardly a yard separating our leaves. I felt that the morsels I ate were all Bhagavan's prasadam. That was the happiest meal in my life.

It is needless to say that by now my scepticism about a living Maharshi had all vanished like mist before the rising sun. From Dharmapuri I was transferred to Tirunelveli on promotion. I was now more distant from Tiruvannamalai. I started reading more about Maharshi and accepted the position that he was Lord Subramanya in human form. I prayed to him again and again to give me more opportunities to have his Darshan.

My prayer was answered miraculously. I got posted to Tiruvannamalai itself. It all came about in a most unexpected manner in February 1936. The then Government of Madras embarked on an experiment of bifurcating the large districts for more efficient administration. In this process, the District of North Arcot was divided into two, and the headquarters of the southern

half was fixed at Tiruvannamalai. The District Officers had to be duplicated. I was chosen as the District Board Engineer for "Tiruvannamalai District", and asked to start an Office at Tiruvannamalai Town itself. I had not even dreamt of such a thing until I received the posting orders. Was it not Bhagavan's Grace to have actually taken me over to his abode in this unexpected manner? Sceptics might call it just one of those coincidences that happen to everyone



some time or other; but to me it was an unmistakable blessing from Sri Bhagavan, who, in answer to my prayers, had in this way given me opportunities to have frequent darshan of him, to wash off my sins of omission and commission, and to derive such spiritual benefit, as I was fit to receive in his immediate presence.

I took full advantage of the situation and seldom failed to visit the Ashram on days I was at Headquarters. Needless to say I

felt that a gradual change for the good was taking place in me. There was hardly anyone who hadn't sensed the subtle influence of frequent visits to the Ashram and Darshan of Sri Bhagavan. Here, I might narrate an anecdote concerning a senior colleague of mine. His name was Sri Mallappa Rajugaru. When he came to Tiruvannamalai, I took him to the Ashram with me on three or four consecutive days. The next day when I went to his residence to take him along with me, he excused himself that he would rather stay at home. When questioned further, he stated that frequent visits to the Ashram might bring about a change in him and that he might develop a distaste for worldly things and ultimately renounce his job which he was not prepared to do. I might say, here, that this colleague of mine was well known for his zest for eating and pleasurable living, but he had certainly misjudged the possible consequences of his contact with the Maharshi and the Ashramites. Bhagavan never insisted upon anybody renouncing his job or changing his walk of life. If anything, it became easier for one to bear the burden of one's own responsibilities in life. I could testify to this from my own experience, and the statements of several other devotees.

By this time, I had picked up courage to talk to Bhagavan now and then. One of the

first things I did was to place on record my complete surrender to him, accepting him as my sole refuge in future. I wrote this in Sanskrit verse on a small piece of paper and after prostrating before him as usual placed the slip of paper near his feet. Bhagavan took it up, read it with a smile, and gave it back commenting on the parody I had made in the sloka. When I resumed my seat, Sri Bhagavan was steadily looking at me. The gracious look directed at me set my mind completely at rest.

From that time onwards my faith in Bhagavan grew stronger and stronger day by day. Hardly a week passed without some incident or other to strengthen my faith, and some indications to show that Bhagavan was looking after me. Though Bhagavan did not perform any miracles as such, miracles just happened all the same. One might call them fortuitous coincidences; then they were most extraordinary coincidences—call them what you will. I have seen dozens of them; some involving others, and some experienced by myself. Space permitting in these columns I shall endeavour to narrate some of them at least in future articles to be contributed to this Journal, for the benefit of the readers who might not have had the privilege of seeing such incidents first hand.

The Knower cannot become an object of knowledge.

—Shankara, **Taittiriya Upanishad**, 3-10-4.

*

*

*

In some cases, although outwardly no change is visible, grace works. You want to break a big stone. Suppose after twenty blows it breaks. After giving one blow if you look at it, there is apparently no change. But the molecules inside the stone are affected. Every blow does its work and is necessary for the breaking of the stone at the twentieth blow.

—Swami Ramdas, **God-Experience**, p. 146.

HOW THE MAHARSHI CAME TO ME

By MUDr. ROBERT FUCHSBERGER

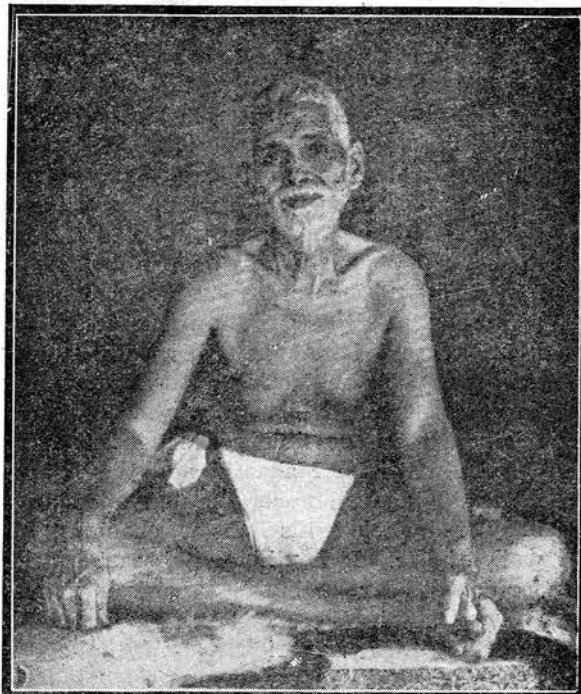
Twenty years ago, in July 1946, it occurred to me that the 50th anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana's arrival at Tiruvannamalai was approaching (Sept. 1, 1946). I wrote a letter to Sri Bhagavan which I posted on the 5th of August. It ran thus :

'Bodily far away from Arunachala, but spiritually at Bhagavan Sri Ramana's feet, I am just thinking with reverence that half a century has passed by since the young Venkataraman came to Tiruvannamalai. O Maharshi ! I take the liberty of celebrating this date as Sri Bhagavan's real birthday. I celebrate it by throwing myself in the dust at Sri Bhagavan's feet yet with more reverence, awe and humility, and by trying to listen to Maharshi's voice in my own heart.'

After sending this letter I continued my routine life, filled during the day with professional work, followed by a sound, dreamless sleep during the night. In the morning and evening I always devoted some time to meditation. This normal flow of events was interrupted one night in the middle of August by a mysterious event.

Suddenly Sri Bhagavan appeared before me in my sleep. It was a very vivid dream in which I saw Sri Bhagavan's figure, which was familiar to me from a picture that I had received from the Ashram. The whole head was surrounded by a halo of silver light which illuminated not only Sri Bhagavan's face, but also the whole space around. But the most fascinating were Sri Bhagavan's eyes : dark, motionless and deep like the mysterious depth of the fathomless ocean, full of wisdom yet at the same time full of love and understanding. Fascinated by these eyes I could do nothing but look into them and into the abyss of transcendental wisdom which they conveyed.

I do not know how long this dream lasted, but it was so vivid and thrilling that I woke.



Nevertheless the vision continued in the same form and intensity as during sleep. I sat up in my bed still gazing at the vision. I opened my eyes but there was no change ; still those piercing eyes, that motionless look. The bedroom was lit up by the light emanating from Sri Bhagavan's head. My academically trained mind began slowly to exercise control ; I closed and opened my eyes alternately, I looked at my wrist-watch — it was half past twelve — and looked again at Sri Bhagavan. The vision still remained unchanged. Then I lighted my night lamp ; now I saw Sri Bhagavan with open eyes only vaguely, but with closed eyes as well as before in the darkness. So I again turned out the light and sat in bed gazing at Sri Bhagavan, until after some time the vision began slowly to fade away. Then I lay down and immediately fell asleep.

The next morning peace and bliss that passes understanding filled my heart; this state continued in spite of daily work and trouble.

On 23rd August I received a letter from Sri Ramanashram, posted on the 15th, in which there was an invitation to the Golden Jubilee celebrations and a few lines signed by Sri Niranjanananda Swami. The Sarvadhikari acknowledged the receipt of my letter, which was placed before Sri Bhagavan and informed me that the letter would find a place in a volume which would be published on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Sri Bhagavan's arrival at Sri Arunachala.

This book — the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir* — I received only two years later. I found my letter in it under the little: 'At Sri Bhagavan's Feet.'

What really happened when my letter arrived at Sri Ramanashram and was placed before Sri Bhagavan, I came only to know 18 years later when Ramanashram book depot published the book *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam* by Smt. Nagamma. The author writes this in English translation in chapter 61:

'Amongst the letters received by the ashram today (the 16th August 1946) there

was one in English from a devotee in Czechoslovakia. Seeing it Bhagavan affectionately told us all about it and read it out in the hall. The gist of it is (here follows the above letter. Then Smt. Nagamma continues) "While all of us were expressing our delight on hearing the contents of that letter, Bhagavan said with a face radiant with benevolence; 'We do not know who he is and what his name and native place are. He never came here. How has he managed to know that it is full fifty years since I came here? He has written a letter full of devotion. From what he has written it looks as if he has read about my life and understood it. This letter has come unexpectedly. That is how things happen. See the peculiarity! Where is Czechoslovakia and where is Tiruvannamalai? What are we to say when a person who has never been here writes thus?'"

The kindness with which Sri Bhagavan received my letter I take to be a confirmation about the vision in August 1946. I consider it to be the Guru's mouna diksha or initiation by silence, though I experienced it like initiation by look. But what matter such differences in the realm of Spirit? Certainly it was a manifestation of Sri Bhagavan's Grace.

A Telugu Pandit asked Sri Bhagavan about nishkama karma. There was no reply. After a time Sri Bhagavan went up the hill and a few followed him, including the pandit. There was a thorny stick lying on the way which Sri Bhagavan picked up; he sat down and began leisurely to work at it. The thorns were cut off, the knots were made smooth, the whole stick was polished with a rough leaf. The whole operation took about six hours. Everyone was wondering at the fine appearance of the stick made of a spiky material. A shepherd boy suddenly put in his appearance on the way as the group moved off. He had lost his stick and was at a loss. Sri Bhagavan immediately gave the new one in his hand to the boy and passed on.

The pandit said that this was the matter-of-fact answer to his question.

SOME REMINISCENCES

By KUNJU SWAMI¹

After spending about twelve years in personal attendance on Bhagavan, I began to feel an urge to devote myself entirely to sadhana, spending my time all alone. However, I could not easily reconcile myself to the idea of giving up my personal service to Bhagavan. I had been debating the matter for some days when the answer came in a strange way. As I entered the hall one day I heard Bhagavan explaining to others who were there that real service to him did not mean attending to his physical needs but following the essence of his teaching: that is concentrating on realizing the Self. Needless to say, that automatically cleared my doubts.

I therefore gave up my Ashram duties, but I then found it hard to decide how in fact I should spend the entire day in search of Realization. I referred the matter to Bhagavan and he advised me to make Self-enquiry my final aim but to practise Self-enquiry, meditation, japa and recitation of scripture turn by turn, changing over from one to another as and when I found the one I was doing irksome or difficult. In course of time, he said, the sadhana would become stabilised in Self-enquiry or pure Consciousness or Realization.

From my personal experience, as well as from that of others within my knowledge, I can say that before recommending any path to an aspirant Bhagavan would first find out from him what aspect or form or path he was naturally drawn to and then recommend him to follow it. He would sometimes endorse the traditional stages of sadhana, advancing from worship (puja) to incantation (japa), then to meditation (dhyana), and finally to Self-enquiry (vichara). However, he also used to say that continuous and rigorous practice of any one of these methods was adequate in itself to lead to Realization. Thus, for instance,

when one adopts the method of worship, say of the Shakti, one should, by constant practice and concentration, be able to see the Shakti everywhere and always and in everything and thus give up identification with the ego. Similarly with japa. By constant and continuous repetition of a mantra one gets merged in it and loses all sense of separate individuality. In dhyana again, in constant meditation, with bhavana or deep feeling, one attains the state of Bhavanatheeta, which is only another name for pure Consciousness. Thus, any method, if taken earnestly and practised unremittingly, will result in elimination of the "I" and lead to the goal of Realization.

Once some awkward problems concerning Ashram management cropped up. Without being directly concerned, I was worried about them, as I felt that failure to solve them satisfactorily would impair the good name of the Ashram. One day two or three devotees went to Bhagavan and put the problems before him. I happened to enter the hall while they were talking about them, and he immediately turned to me and asked me why I had come in at this time and why I was interesting myself in such matters. I did not grasp the meaning of his question, so Bhagavan explained that a person should occupy himself only with that purpose with which he had originally come to the Ashram and asked me what my original purpose had been. I replied: "To receive Bhagavan's Grace." So he said: "Then occupy yourself with that only."

He further continued by asking me whether I had any interest in matters concerning the Ashram management when I first came here. On my replying that I had not, he added: "Then concentrate on the original purpose of your coming here."

¹ For an introduction to whom see our April, 1966 issue, p. 217.

TRUE-SEEING

By WEI WU WEI

Hello, what are you worried about?

How do you know I am worried?

God, or whoever it was, gave you a face for some reason or other? Birds not caught! My only 'face' is the original one that I had before my father and mother were born—and it can't look worried!

Right! And the worry?

I've come to the conclusion, and finally, that Bob what's-his-name is not only a bore, but a mean and selfish sort of bastard! Don't you agree?

Why should I? You describe *your* Bob what's-his-name: *mine* is not likely to be identical.

Damn it all, there is only one Bob in question, and we are both talking about *him*!

I am unable to agree! There are as many Bob what's-his-names as there are people who know him, plus one.

Metaphysically speaking perhaps, but the familiar phenomenal Bob is surely whatever he is!

Nonsense! There is no such being. What you are referring to is absolutely no thing whatever; 'he' is as devoid of objective existence as anyone else.

As you or me?

Of course.

Then what is he?

He is an image in mind. You have just described what he is according to your image. In my image he appears slightly different, and less objectionable. His own 'Bob'—as he appears to himself—is probably the hell of a fine fellow!

But there must be something that he really is!

Nothing whatever, absolutely *no thing*. He has, rigorously, no objective existence or being. He is only appearances in mind,

interpreted diversely in a space-time context.

But whose appearances?

Ours: he appears to each of us as each of us sees him. What else is there for him to be?

Very well, but his? His own appearance to himself?

That also is a concept, nothing but a concept—his is not different in kind, but only It is not a dose of salts! Just an almost in interpretation. You are supposing that his own is something factual, but it is not.

Would anyone believe that?

Probably not—unless he saw it. Conditioning is too strong.

Then who could take it?

It is not a dose of salts! Just an almost painfully obvious fact.

To whom?

Only to whoever can see that it must be so, that so it is, that it is fundamental, the very heart of how things are.

And when he sees it, what then?

If he really sees it—for hearing it or reading it is not seeing that so it is—he surely at the same time sees through everything that needs to be seen through—for all the rest follows.

Each of us needs to see it for himself and in his own way?

Each of us knows it for himself—if he is looking from the right direction.

And what is that?

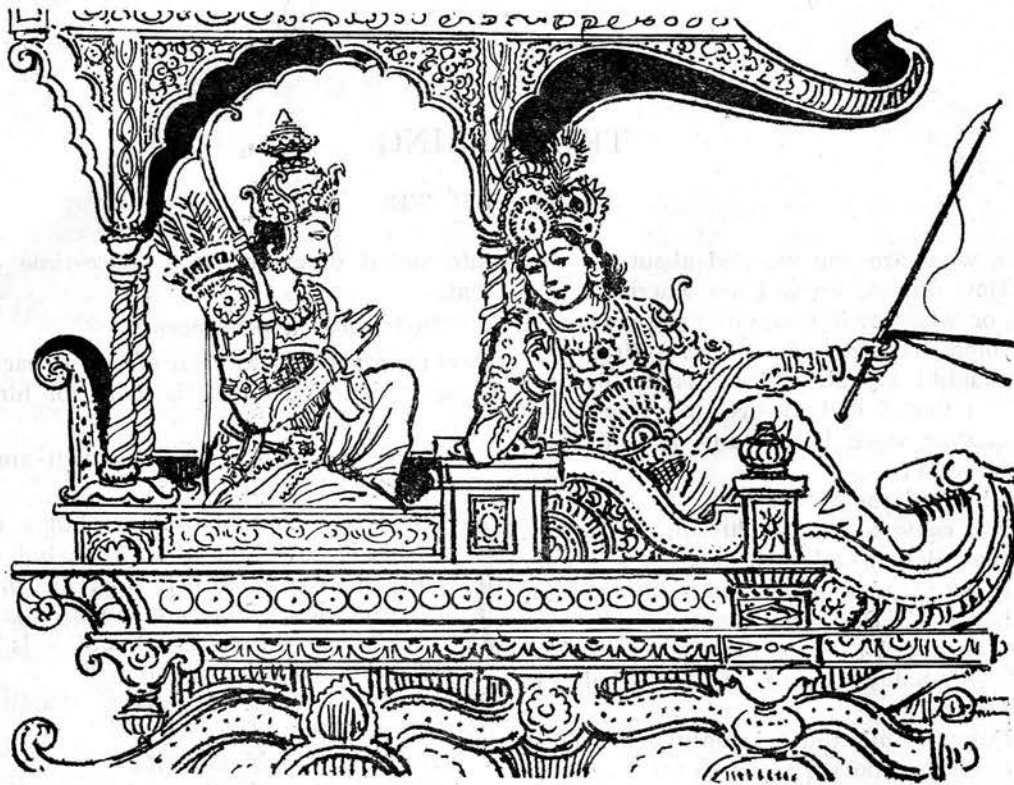
From whole-mind, always from whole-mind.

Can one always do that?

Once should be enough. Let this one be it. It is better than all the ko-ans and conundrums that have ever been invented.

Why is that?

There is nothing artificial about it! It is just plain true-seeing.



The Bhagavad Gita

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

CHAPTER EIGHT

Since this whole issue of *The Mountain Path* is concerned mainly with reincarnation we are giving here the chapter of the Gita which has most to do with that subject instead of the next in sequence. In our next issue we shall take up the next in sequence, that is Chapter V.

1

Arjuna asked :

What is Brahman ? What is the self of man ? What is karma, O Supreme Being ? What is the reality of the world and what the reality of heaven ?

This and the following verses are hard to translate on account of their technical terminology. *Purushottama*, the emphatic form of *Purusha*, meaning "male person" or "the Spirit" (in contradistinction to "Prakriti" meaning "Substance" or "Primordial Nature") we have translated "Supreme Being".

2

What is the meaning and manner of sacrifice in this body, O Slayer of Madhu ? And how are You to be realized at the time of death by the self-controlled ?

3

Sri Bhagavan replied :

Brahman is the Imperishable (akshara) Supreme (parama). One's own nature (svabhava) is said to be the self of man (adhyatma). Karma is the name given to the force which creates beings.

4

Perishable (kshara) nature (bhava) is the reality of the world (adhibhuta) and Purusha (the Cosmic Being) the reality of heaven. The basis of sacrifice in the body am I, O Best of the Embodied.

5

Whoever at the time of death dwells on Me alone while giving up the body, he attains to Me. Of this there is no doubt.

6

And whatever the mind dwells on at the end while giving up the body, O Son of Kunti, that does one become, being absorbed in it.

Hence the importance attached in all religions to the state of mind in which a man dies. The Maharshi warned, however, that it is no use leaving it till death, because if the mind has not already been brought under control it will rise up uncontrollably at death. This explains the need for the next verse.

7

Therefore at all times remember Me and fight. Your mind (manas) and understanding (buddhi) surrendered to Me, to Me shall you surely come.

8

He who holds his mind unwaveringly to this yoga of constant practice comes to the Supreme (parama) Divine (divya) Being (Purusha), O Son of Pritha.

9, 10

He who, at the time of death, centres his life-force between the eyebrows, with a firm mind endued with devotion and the power of yoga, and remembers Me, the Sage, the Ancient, the Ruler, Smaller than the smallest yet Supporter of all, Inconceivable of form, Effulgent as the Sun, Transcending darkness (of tamas), he attains that Supreme Divine Person.

11

I will briefly describe to you that state which knowers of the Vedas call eternal (akshara), which passion-free Sages enter,

and in quest of which men observe celibacy (brahmacharya).

12, 13

He who, at the time of leaving the body, closes all the gateways of the senses, fixing his mind in his heart and his life-breath in his head and, remembering Me, utters the Divine Monosyllable OM, he attains the Supreme State.

14

To him who dwells constantly on Me alone in fixed attention I am readily accessible, O Son of Pritha.

15

Having attained to Me, the Great Ones (Mahatmas) do not return to birth, which is the domain of suffering and impermanence, for they have entered the Supreme State.

16

From Brahmaloка downwards, all worlds involve rebirth, Arjuna; but on attaining to Me, O Son of Kunti, there is no return to birth.

17

Knowers of Day and Night know that a thousand ages make up the Day of Brahma and a thousand ages His Night.

The word used here for "age" is yuga, but it is not used to mean one of the four sections of a manvantara, as in the term "kali-yuga". The Day and Night of Brahma are the alternate phases of manifestation and dissolution of the universe. "Brahma" here means "God the Creator", not 'Brahman, the Absolute.' As Bhagavan indicated in the explanations reported on pp. 148-9 of *The Mountain Path* of July 1965, Brahmaloка is the highest of the heavens but still subject to dissolution at the end of a Day of Brahma, so that one who abides in it is brought back to rebirth, whereas, as Sri Krishna says, in verse 15, one who has attained to Self-realization, which he there calls "the Supreme State" has no more return to birth.

18

At the dawning of that Day all things stream forth from the Unmanifest, and at

the coming on of Night they sink back into that same Unmanifest.

19

After repeated births, this same multitude of beings merge helpless again at the approach of Night, O Son of Pritha, and they issue forth at the dawn of Day.

20

But beyond this Unmanifest is another, the Eternal Unmanifest, which perishes not when all things perish.

The alteration of Day and Night, manifestation and dissolution, is on the background of this Supreme Unmanifest which is unaffected by either.

21

This Supreme State is called the Unmanifest Imperishable (avyakta akshara). That is My highest abode. For those who attain to it there is no return.

22

This Supreme Being (Parah-Purusha), O Son of Pritha, in Whom all beings are and Who permeates all this, is attainable by single-minded devotion.

23

Now I will tell you, O Best of the Bharatas, at what times yogis departing return again, and at what times they do not return.

24

Knowers of Brahman departing hence by fire, by light, by daytime, in the bright

fortnight of the moon and the ascending course of the sun, attain to Brahman.

The bright fortnight is from new moon to full, and the ascending course of the sun from the winter to the summer solstice.

25

Yogis who go forth by smoke, by night, in the dark fortnight and in the declining course of the sun pass hence to the light of the moon and return again.

The path described in verse 24 is known as devayana, "the path of the gods", and that in verse 25 as pitriyana, "the path of the ancestors". From the former there is no return to birth, from the latter there is.

26

These two paths, the light and the dark, are held to be eternal. By the one a man goes forth not to return again; by the latter he returns.

27

The yogi who knows these two paths, O Son of Pritha, is never deluded. Therefore, Arjuna, remain ever firm in yoga.

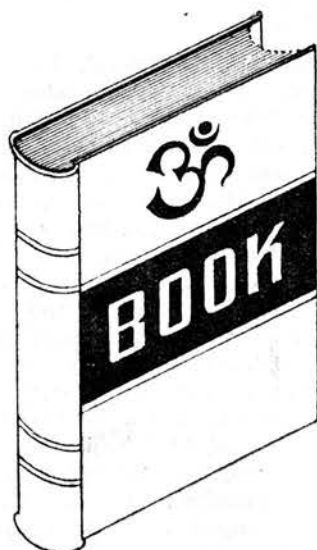
28

The Yogi who knows all this transcends the rewards of merit accruing from Vedic study, sacrifice, austerity and charity and attains the Supreme Primal Abode.

Here ends the Eighth Chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Imperishable Brahman"

You never enjoy the world aright, till the sea floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you.

— Centuries of Meditations, Thomas Traherne.



REVIEWS

REINCARNATION, THE RING OF RETURN:

By Eva Martin, (University Books, New Hyde Park, New York, pp. 306, \$5.00.)

We have here a fascinating anthology of quotations, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, dealing with reincarnation. The contents are divided chronologically and then each chronological section subdivided according to religion or country of origin. It might be said that Western and modern quotations are allotted a disproportionately large amount of space, but then we all know that the Eastern religions teach reincarnation and it is interesting to see how many of the philosophers, poets and other writers of the West also postulate it.

In Ancient Greece it was a tradition that flowed through Pythagoras and Plato down to Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists. Traces of it are found among the Hebrews in the Old Testament and also in the Gospels. It is found in some of the early Christians such as Origen. Roman commentators report its prevalence among the Celts.

In her introduction the compiler takes the optimistic view that we can only progress, not decline, insofar as a man can never fall back into any subhuman birth. This is reminiscent of the modern Christian tendency to believe in heaven but not hell or of the 19th Century belief in inevitable progress. There is no such guarantee. Freedom means freedom to fall as well as rise. That is why the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures warn so earnestly that a human birth is a very precious thing and should be used seriously for spiritual effort as it may not be easily come by again.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION

RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD: By D. E. Harding. (Heinemann, pp. 128, price 6s.)

MANY PATHS, ONE HEAVEN: By Nuri Mass. (The Writers' Press, 81 Prospect Road, Summer Hill, N.S.W., Australia, pp. 128, 22s. 6d.)

Comparative religion began with the 'Golden Bough' school, whose aim was to bring religion in general into contempt by linking it up with primitive superstitions. Later it fell into the hands of missionary-minded exponents (some of whom are still in the field), who sought to belittle all religions except their own. The two books now under review represent the new tendency to write with reverence and appreciation of all religions.

Messrs. Heinemann are to be congratulated on turning for the book on religions in their paperback adult education series to Douglas Harding, who is a 'Mountain Path' writer and a true mystic. He points out with equal skill the unanimous spiritual essence of all religions and its different mode of presentation in each one. And he does this in a manner admirably suited to such a series: that is as though talking to his readers rather than lecturing them.

In reading the chapter on Hinduism I was shocked at the amount of matter left out, until I reminded myself that he had compressed into some 120 pages information about the six major religions as well as an introduction and conclusion, and without any signs of compression; then I became amazed at the amount he had got in.

Perhaps it is hardly to be expected that a writer should be equally sympathetic towards all religions, and it is clear that Mr. Harding's sympathies go rather to the Eastern or metaphysical than to the Western or theistic. He would have done well to acquaint himself with what some Jewish mystics have to say about it before denying that ancient Judaeism had any mysticism. Mysticism is the essence of every religion; without it there is only the husk. Even of Christianity he asserts: "Clearly Christianity is not a mystical religion," although he later pays tribute to Christian mystics.

And he seems to have retained the traditional Western prejudices against Islam — that even Muslims do not regard Mohammad as a saintly character; that the later chapters of the Quran seem to be conscious thought, not revelation; that Jews and Christians are included in the Quran among the infidels and that the Muslims are incited to make war against them; that the Islamic conception of God is only transcendent and not immanent (although he actually quotes the Quranic verse: "God is nearer to man than his neck-vein"); that mysticism only arose some two centuries after the Quran; and others plenty.

On the whole, however, this book is much to be welcomed. It presents a profound view of the meaning and purpose of religion in simple language that all can understand. It is a great pity that it is a paperback with the pages only stuck together so that they start coming apart at the first reading.

The second book gives an appreciative and informative account of the major religions but is much simpler, being written, we are told, in line with the Australian school syllabus. We are not told that it has actually been prescribed for school use. It would indeed be heartening to find a country enlightened enough to teach its children what they ought to know about the world's great religions.

THE WAY OF THE WHITE CLOUDS: By Lama Anagarika Govinda. (Hutchinson, pp. 305, price 50s.)

Lama Govinda studies Tibetan Buddhism from within — the way a religion ought to be studied. His understanding of its vast resources is strengthened by reverence for its saints, and especially for his own Guru, Tomo Geshe Rimpoche. At the same time his book is free from the mystery-mongering that marred some earlier works on Tibet.

It is mainly autobiographical. He tells how intellectual appreciation induced him to choose the Buddhism of Ceylon. When he visited Tibet the powerful spiritual influence there turned him to Tantric Buddhism even before he was able to study its theory. His residences and travels in Tibet were partly for spiritual development, partly in an effort to preserve records of some at least of the treasures of Tibetan Buddhist art before it was too late. The pen and eye of an artist enable him to give some indication of the magnificence of Tibetan sculpture and art and of the stupendous mountain scenery, while his deep understanding enables him to point out the meaning of the iconography which an untutored critic could so easily misrepresent. In this work he was helped valiantly by his wife, Li Gotami. The result is a magnificent book giving, better than any other, an impression of the splendour that has been destroyed in Tibet.

Was the author being drawn back to the scenes of a previous lifetime in his devotion to Tibet? One whole section of the book is devoted to reincarnation of which some remarkable instances are given. It is a pity that he has succumbed to the temptation which seems to assail most Buddhists, of sniping at Hinduism. He represents "the way of the average Hindu mystic" (p. 114) as "regression to the state of unity" in comparison with the Buddhist aim "to be fully born". To retrace one's steps to the Source and discover (as Zen Buddhism puts it) one's original face as it is before one was born, is not "regression" but Realization of what is. And what of those whom the Buddha and his contemporaries referred to as 'non-returners'? Were they cases of 'regression'? In Hinduism and Buddhism alike, some Masters have promised to return for the well-being of their followers, while others have transcended the universe in which return and followers are possible.

It is a pity too that the author has not got some one to correct the sprinkling of grammatical mistakes that mar his English.

BUDDHIST MEDITATION AND DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY: By Douglas M. Burns. (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon, pp. 67, price not stated.)

"Buddhism does not deny the reality of material existence, nor does it ignore the very great effect that the physical world has upon us. On the contrary, it refutes the body-mind dichotomy of the Brahmins and says that mind and body are interdependent." Who are "the Brahmins"? And which of the many schools of the Sanatana

Dharma or 'Eternal Harmony' known to Westerners as 'Hinduism' does the author refer to as denying that "mind and body are interdependent"? It can hardly be any yogic or tantric school, since they rely largely on physical disciplines. It is a pity that so many Buddhist writers seem unable to expound their dhamma without setting up what they call 'Hinduism' or 'the Brahmins' as a sort of Aunt Sally to take potshots at. As for "the reality of material existence", the author should know that it is upheld by the school of Madhva as firmly as it is denied by that of Shankara, and — what is more important — it is recognized by Advaitins as being a question of degrees of understanding, not a problem to which one answer is right and the other wrong, as in mathematics. It does not behove an exponent of wisdom to condemn other expositions unstudied.

THE DHAMMAPADA WITH INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS, Pali text, English translation and notes; By Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. (Oxford University Press, pp. 194. Price Rs. 10.)

The Dhammapada has the strong ethical emphasis that one expects to find in Theravada texts. The present annotated translation of it was first published in 1950. The new, 1966, edition is the first to be printed in India. It has a competent introduction comparing the teaching of Buddha with that of the Upanishads. What gives it particular interest is that it is an appreciative edition of a scripture of one religion by an outstanding exponent of another.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BUDDHA, THE RELIGION OF REASON and MEDITATION: By George Grimm. (Akademie Verlag, Berlin, pp. 415, price not stated.)

George Grimm was one of the pioneers of Buddhist understanding in the West, and one of those who put Germany in the forefront in this enterprise. I say advisedly 'understanding' rather than 'studies' because, as Max Hoppe puts it in the preface to the present (1958) revised edition of this book, first published as far back as 1915: "It is evident that a teaching which sages in their hearts acknowledge is particularly shaky when it is subjected to the interpretation of scribes and scholars who lack that which the teaching first brings to life, namely the inner experience." Unfortunately some of the early interpreters of Buddhism to the West wrote in a spirit of deliberate ill-will, and even of those who did not, many lacked this essential inner experience. George Grimm is one of the

few who wrote with understanding. His book is a solid study of the essence of Buddhism, that is the truth of suffering and the Noble Eightfold Way by which to transcend it. It is a study undertaken with reverence and appreciation.

Apart from writing, Grimm founded the 'Altbuddhistische Gemeinde' ('Old Buddhist Community') at Utting am Ammersee as long ago as 1921. His book has now reached us in connection with this society's request to act as our agent for Germany. We are happy to be represented by such a society.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY: By A. H. Armstrong. (Methuen, University Paperbacks, pp. 242, price 12s. 6d.)

There must be something special about a book on philosophy that gets reprinted as a paperback twenty years after its first appearance. It is its human approach and very readable style that give so much appeal to this one.

Reading it impresses upon one that the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers ought to be studied by a historian familiar with true metaphysical teaching, as expounded, for instance, in the Upanishads. He might find that they were not making crude guesses at truth, as their Western historian is apt to presume, but giving their versions of a partially understood spiritual tradition, whether indigenous or foreign, with its true teaching of the unceasing change of manifestation, the Immutable Being behind it, and the journey of the individual through life after life on its way back to the Immutable. Even so-called opposites, like Heraclitus and Parmenides, may well be describing different flanks of the same mountain.

GOD IS MY ADVENTURE: By Rom Landau. (Unwin Books, paperback, pp. 255, price 8s. 6d., 1964.)

'God is My Adventure', describing the spiritual leaders of the West in the twenties and thirties, was a best seller in its time. The present new edition contains a brief postscript bringing it up-to-date. In this the author declares that there are no spiritual leaders in the sixties of like stature to those he has described in the thirties. He does not envisage the situation aright.

The spiritual leaders of the thirties whom he describes were to some extent individualists departing from the eternal and immutable truth underlying all religions, although appearing in different garb in each one of them. At the same time, another movement was taking place, of

which he does not seem to have been aware. This was the education of intellectual seekers in the West into this eternal and immutable truth through the books and articles of René Guénon. The result was the rise of an informed public who would not be impressed by the sort of teachers Rom Landau describes, but who sought the pure truths preserved alive in Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other teachings. There were other influences converging in this new trend also — the delving into Christian mystics by Evelyn Underhill, the universal Christian mysticism of Joel Goldsmith, the Zen expositions of D. T. Suzuki. Even Rom Landau himself found the strongest appeal in Sufi teaching — and not the modernised 'Sufism' to be found in the Europe of his day but the true classical tradition of Ibn Arabi. Above all, there is the influence of Ramana Maharshi, presenting the authentic teaching of the ancient Rishis in modern garb. Indeed, the quest for guidance in the West has attained maturity since the thirties.

INITIATION INTO YOGA: By Sri Krishna Prem. (Manisha Granthalaya (Pte) Ltd., 4/3B, Bankim Chatterjee St., Calcutta-12, pp. 43, price Rs. 1.50.)

Sri Krishna Prem (of whom there is an obituary notice in our issue of Jan. this year) was widely known and revered as a bhakta. Nevertheless, this little spiritual guide-book of his is almost exclusively in terms of mind control. One might, indeed, have taken it to be by a follower of the Maharshi except that it concentrates too much on investigation into thoughts rather than into the thinker. It is a cogent and lucid exposition. The term 'yoga' in it is used in a general sense, as in the Gita, with no reference to any specifically yogic path.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

REINCARNATION, AN EAST-WEST ANTHOLOGY: Compiled by Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston. (The Julian Press, New York, price \$6.50.)

This comprehensive and valuable book should be on the desk of every leader, teacher, churchman and writer, of all who instruct and who mould contemporary thought.

Clearly printed and attractively got up, it is a pleasant book to handle and easy to study. References are easily traced in the very complete index, while one glance through its table of contents shows what a wide range in time and space it covers despite its compactness.

It is interesting to compare this new-comer with Eva Martin's 'Ring of Return', first published some 40 years earlier though recently republished. What were then regarded as queer ideas are now much more widely known and accepted, as are the names of those who expound this ancient wisdom. Three quarters of the present book are culled from Western sources. Even of the first quarter (some 80 pages), only 22 are from the Orient, commonly reputed to be the sole home of this teaching. Excellent translations bring all peoples and periods to our desk in common array and clearly grouped. Much detailed study has gone into the Church's reputed stand at the momentous and disastrous Council of Constantinople in 553, throwing much new light on early Christian 'MacCarthy-ism' — with some surprising conclusions.

EBBANA BLANCHARD.

THE TANTRIC TRADITION: By Agehananda Bharati. (Rider and Company, London, Pp. 350. Price: Sh. 50.)

The chief merit of this book lies in its scholarly approach to the study of the Tantric tradition. But that is also its chief weakness, for excessive scholarliness and objectivity have not only rendered the work lopsided but have removed from the treatment of so inspiring and elevating a subject as the Tantra every vestige of interest. The author has taken great pains to collect a mass of material from various book sources, Indian and foreign, but from the welter of this rich data the true spirit of the Tantra has taken flight. This is indeed a pity, for the author, although not Indian by birth, is an initiate of a Hindu order, has lived in this country and has had an insight into the essential spirit of Hindu and Tantric lore. But, ostensibly, in line with many of the Western scholars of the present day, he has fallen victim to a method, a system, to which the subject of his study should subserve. These academic scholars are never more happy than when they dissect a living thing and lay bare its entrails calling the process by high sounding names like linguistic analysis, logical empiricism and other modern jargons. Their logical tool may be sophisticated enough to remove husk from wheat but usually only the chaff remains, the seed being thrown away.

To the credit of the author it must be said that his analysis of some of the crucial Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist tantric terms is a praiseworthy attempt; so is his comparative statement on the Hindu and Buddhist tantric tradi-

tions vis-a-vis the non-tantric Vedanta and Buddhism. It should, however, be borne in mind that there is no fundamental antagonism between the Tantra and the Vedas or the Upanishads as most such scholars would have us believe. Tantra is not a protestant faith, nor is its practice and discipline an attempted return to an earlier, pre-Vedic culture. On the other hand, Tantra is a continuation of esoteric discipline handed down by the Rishis of the Vedas but so modified as to meet the changing times and needs of a developing humanity. If the intuitive teaching of the Vedas was intended for a few, and the widening knowledge of the Upanishads for a larger section, the teaching and practice of the Tantra was intended for one and all, men and women alike, of whatever denomination or persuasion.

The chapter on Mantra covers a large section of the book and deservedly so. Mantra is in effect the soul of the Tantra. Mantra is not a senseless incantation of a jumble of syllables or words. It has its root in the occult perception of an Idea or truth vibrating with a dynamic power. The ancient seers of Mantras realized that each such sound-form has its particular deity that can be invoked by right concentration on incantation. But the Mantra, to be effective, must be imparted by a Guru to his disciple under right conditions; otherwise, it remains a word or words like other words of human speech. The author's exposition of this aspect of the matter is satisfying.

"Sadhaka and sadhana" is another chapter dealing elaborately with Tantric discipline in general and ritualistic practice in particular. But the author's elaborate discussion of the erotic symbolism and sexual practice of what is only a very small section of the left-hand path of Tantric tradition gives a totally distorted and disproportionate picture of the situation. As the author himself points out, one need not undergo the exhaustive, intricate and difficult discipline prescribed by the Tantra just in order to indulge in an orgy of fornication. The point that, like all other things in life, even sex, under certain conditions, can be harnessed for the purpose of self-transcendence is missed.

As we said earlier, the book gives a very large number of references and quotations — from books and living authorities. All told, the book is informative, crowded with detail of all kinds but it fails to breathe the life-spirit of the Tantra. It is a book without a soul.

M. P. PANDIT.

METHODS OF KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO ADVAITA: By Swami Satprakashananda. (Allen & Unwin, pp. 366, price 50s.)

The author of this work is the founder-head of the 'Vedanta Society' of St. Louis, Mo., USA, and a senior member of the Ramakrishna Mission. He has been working as a spiritual leader for the past twenty-six years.

The book deals with the epistemology of Advaita Vedanta and also, in the last two chapters, discusses the Mahavakyas or 'Great Sayings' of the Upanishads and the fruit of Brahma Vidya or Divine Knowledge. While the treatment of the Mahavakyas is very good, one wonders how it is relevant to the Advaita theory of knowledge.

The author bases his treatment of the pramanas or modes of knowledge on the 'Vedanta Paribhasa' of Dharmaraja but gives the views of other writers also wherever necessary. It is rather puzzling that he makes no reference at all to Mimamsa epistemology, which is admittedly the basis of Advaita epistemology. A comparative study of 'Sloka Vartika' with 'Vedanta Paribhasa' would have given us more information on the subject. Similarly, he ignores the theory of illusion propounded by the Bhattas and describes merely the Viveka khyati of Prabhakara, identifying it with Mimamsa theory. He discusses all the six pramanas, though dealing with perception and testimony more elaborately than with the others.

Western readers especially will find the appendices and bibliography extremely helpful.

The exposition of the pramanas is rather descriptive than argumentative and the reader is not troubled with unnecessary discussion. The book is a useful contribution to Indian epistemology.

PROF. S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

THE SURANGAMA SUTRA: Translated by Charles Luk. (Rider, pp. 262, 40s.)

The Surangama is a highly technical sutra, setting forth the ways of breaking through the five aggregates and the eight consciousnesses to attain enlightenment by exposing the unreality of the ego. It also describes the various posthumous states and conditions awaiting those who fail to do this. It is pre-eminently a sutra for the Mahayana Buddhist to study in detail, not for the philosopher or the non-Buddhist to theorise about. Charles Luk has rendered a great service in making it available to Western Buddhists.

BODHICHITTA.

OTHER BOOKS

THE MYSTERIES OF GOD IN THE UNIVERSE :

By H. S. Spencer. (Published privately at 18, Bandra Hill, Bombay 50, pp. 175. Rs. 1.50).

Mr. Spencer's book is mainly concerned with finding evidence of reincarnation in the monotheistic scriptures, Zoroastrian, Christian and Islamic. He strains the texts considerably in doing so.

A LYRIC OF LIFE AND A PSALM OF THE SOUL,

being Sri Shankara's Bhaja Govindam and Sri Kulasekhara's Mukunda Mala, rendered in English by R. N. Aingar and Mrs. J. D. Westbrook. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Bombay, pp. 24, 50 paise.)

This little booklet gives us in juxtaposition a famous song of Divine Knowledge and one of devotion to Sri Krishna. The rendering is in verse and is far more felicitous than most such attempts.

EPISODES AND EXPERIENCES : By Swami Krishnanand. (Shanti Ashram, Bhadrin, via Anand, Gujarat. pp. 179. Not for sale. Sent free on request.)

The adventures of Swami Krishnanand as he travels about India are told in a lively style that

is often hilariously though unintentionally humorous. Some of the episodes are interesting in themselves, and some enlightening, though less so than his previous collection entitled 'Sermons in the Storms', reviewed in our issue of Jan. 1965. The story of a ghost who atomises money in the coffers of black marketeers and re-materialises it for a famous South Indian Swami gives one to think.

AT THY FEET : By P. V. Bobde. (Published by the author, 36 Rambag, Indore, pp. 73, Rs. 2.)

This little collection of devotional pieces in poetic prose is reminiscent of Tagore, but unfortunately the mastery of English is not equal to that of Tagore and the romantic sounding style no longer suits the spirit of the age.

UPANISHADIC STORIES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE : By Swami Tattwananda. (The Bangalore Press, Post Box 507, Bangalore 18, pp. 122, Rs. 3.75.)

The Upanishads are the explicatory part of the Vedas. Their expositions are not in the modern style of philosophical theses but mainly through dialogue and story. In this little book Swami Tattwananda expounds some of these wise and witty stories of investigation as to the Self, reality, Brahma and discovery that they are all the same.

Mr. Paul Brunton, while reading **Upadesa Manjari** came across the statement that the ego, the world and God are all unreal. He desired to use a different word for God or at least a qualifying adjective, e.g., the Creative Force or personal God.

Sri Bhagavan explained that God means SAMASHTI i.e., all that is **plus** the Be-ing — in the same way as 'I' means the individual **plus** the Being, and the **world** means the variety **plus** Be-ing. The Be-ing is in all cases real. The **all**, the **variety** and the **individual** is in each case unreal. So also in the union of the real and the unreal, the mixing up or the false identification is wrong. It amounts to saying **sad-asad-vilakshana** i.e., transcending the real and the unreal — **sat** and **asat**. Reality is that which transcends all concepts, including that of **God**. Inasmuch as the name of God is used, it cannot be true. The Hebrew word **Jehovah** = (I am) expresses God correctly. Absolute Be-ing is beyond expression. The word cannot be replaced nor need it be replaced.



Ashram Bulletin

ARADHANA

April 18th was the 16th Aradhana day of Bhagavan by the Tamil calendar, that is the 16th anniversary of his leaving the body. By the Western calendar it is April 14th. As usual, there was a large and well attended celebration. Sri S. L. Silam, Lt.-Governor of Pondicherry, was there; also the International Tennis Champion Sri Ramanathan Krishnan, with his father Ramanatha Iyer and his father-in-law, a veteran devotee, Sri T. S. Sitapathi. For many years Sri Sitapathi, son-in-law of Janaki Mata (for an article on whom see our issue of January this year) was in Calcutta, but now he is back in Madras. This is the hot season, when foreign visitors are few, but even so, Mrs. Sofia de Mello from Germany was here and visitors from England and Australia.

There was the usual puja followed by distribution of prasada to the poor, after which the guests were invited to lunch by the Ashram.

In the afternoon a series of talks on the *Mahabharata* by Sri Purisai Murugesu Mudaliar (author of the article on 'Fire-Walking in South India' in our last issue) was inaugurated, with Sri R. K. Visvanathan, Reader in Physics at Annamalai University, presiding. At night there was a bhajan by Sri Jagadisa Iyer and party. Sri Om Sadhu's Tamil song 'Yar Jnani?' was distributed among the devotees.

BOMBAY

Shri Ramana Maharshi's teachings have a special appeal for the Christians according to Mr. Ian MacKinnon, Mg. Director of Glaxo Laboratories. Presiding over a function at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan this evening to celebrate the Mahanirvana of the Maharshi, he laid emphasis on the saintliness, essential simplicity of teaching and the serenity of appearance of the



Mr. Ian MacKinnon, Managing Director of Glaxo Laboratories speaking at the Bombay Aradhana celebrations.

Maharshi. The studies in Philosophy which Mr. MacKinnon had in Oxford have enabled him to understand the underlying unity of all religions of the world which perhaps had their origin to suit the fundamental needs of the different countries of the world.

Mr. M. S. Muthanna, General Manager, Bombay Telephones, who was the chief guest, brought home to the audience the essential simplicity of the Maharshi who shunned publicity but laid emphasis on meditation, solitude and self introspection.

Mrs. Mani Sahukar and Mr. Gopalacharya also addressed the audience bringing out the salient teachings of the Maharshi.

PALAKOLE

On 19-5-1966 morning at Sri Muralikrishna Ashram, Palakole; (West Godavari Dt.) aradhana of Alagammal (mother of Sri Bhagawan) and puja of Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was performed by Bhagavan devotee Sarraz Narasimharao.

In the evening a meeting of devotees was called and speeches delivered by Sri S. Nara-

simharao and Bhupathiraju Venkata Lakshminarasimharaju, on Bhagavan's teachings. The meeting came to a close with distribution of theertha prasadam of Bhagavan to the devotees present.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Our Delhi Kendra is growing from strength to strength. Some of its members have already begun to think that it is time it had its own quarters. A subscription list has therefore been opened to this end, and the following donations have been received :

Dr. (Mrs.) Dharma Chatterjee	.. Rs. 1,000
Sri R. Venkataraman	.. Rs. 1,000
Anonymous Devotee	.. Rs. 1,000

Guru Pooja

Guru Pooja was celebrated at *Observatory Bungalow, Lodi Road, New Delhi*, (which please note, is now the address of the Kendra) on 8th April. After pooja, parayana and singing of songs by and on Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, Swami Asishji spoke on his reminiscences of Bhagavan. As an engineering student, in North India, he first came across a book on Ramana Maharshi which led him on a journey to Tiruvannamalai. He particularly recalled the benevolent and transforming look of Bhagavan in the Asram Hall, when he went there to take leave at the end of his stay.

Speaking of the individual soul's effort and destiny, Swamiji said that one should completely surrender to the grace of Guru. While work in the outer world went on, the inner Guru drew the individual soul towards the ultimate destiny, that is the Self. Thus the outer and inner pilgrimages merged together.

Prof. K. Swaminathan spoke of the joy of approaching and appreciating Bhagavan through the poems of Muruganar.

Sri C. Ramaswamy, Director-General of Observatories, quoting Eddington to prove the compatibility of science and spirituality, argued that a sage like Ramana was a super-scientist.

Unveiling of Bhagavan's Portrait

On 8th April 1966, a portrait of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was unveiled at the Madras Higher Secondary School, Lodi Road, New Delhi, by Sri M. Bhaktavatsalam, Chief Minister of Madras. Sri Bhaktavatsalam commended the idea of the Kendra in presenting Bhagavan's portrait to educational institutions where teachers and

pupils would gain equanimity and self-confidence by looking at the calm, bright face and recalling



Mr. M. Bhaktavatsalam, Chief Minister of Madras unveiled the portrait of Sri Bhagavan. Next to him is Prof. K. Swaminathan.

the life and teachings of Bhagavan. He also recounted his visits to Ramanasramam, one of which was in the company of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

Other speakers were Prof. K. Swaminathan, Secretary, Ramana Kendra, Delhi, Dr. P. S. Lokanathan, Director-General, National Council of Applied Economic Research, and Shri R. Venkataraman, Deputy Controller-General of Defence Accounts.

SRI RAMANA BHAKTA SABHA, MADRAS

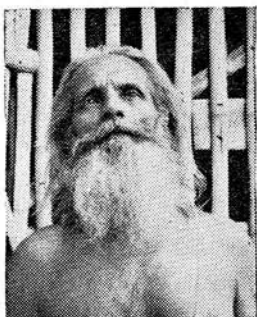
Guru Puja was celebrated on May 1, 1966 at 94, Mowbray's Road, Alwarpet. After Veda parayana, Sri M. P. Periasami Thooran, Chief Editor, Tamil Encyclopaedia, spoke on "clarity" as illustrated in the teachings of Bhagavan.

POONA

At Poona Sri Y. N. Athavale, an old devotee of Bhagavan, celebrated the Mahanirvana Day on Chaitra Vadya 13 at his Datta Mandir. In the morning there was Veda parayanam, puja and bhajan. In the evening Prof. Damle gave a talk. There was an appreciative audience of about 200 persons.

VISITORS

An interesting visitor has been Sri Shambhu Bhat, whose rather remarkable articles on 'The



Shambhu Bhat

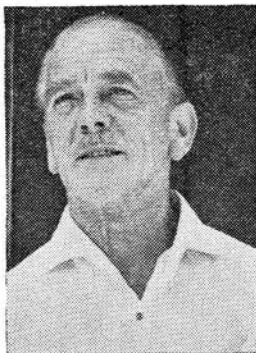
Sequence of the Upanishads' (Jan. 1965), 'Arunachala as Mandala' (April 1965) and 'Climbing Arunachala' (July 1965) readers will remember. We hope to have some literary fruit of his stay here.

* * *

We had a visit from Sri R. Venkataraman and his family. They are enthusiastic supporters of the Delhi Kendra and he gave us a heartening account of its condition — weekly meetings with some fifty to a hundred people attending and a programme of vedic chanting, talks, meditation and bhajan.

* * *

Despite the heat, the flow of foreign visitors has continued, the most conspicuous country of origin this time being Australia. Most of them were birds of passage. Only the Raphaels made a longer stay. Mrs. Raphael spent some weeks here as 'Willi Beets' four years ago, before there was a 'Mountain Path'. Now



Mr. Raphael

she has come back with her husband, Les. Both of them hope to come again.

* * *



Mrs. Raphael

Some of our American readers may be interested to hear that Prof. Eknath Easwaran, an occasional contributor to *The Mountain Path*, has started a new ashram of 'The Blue Mountain' Center of Meditation'

(Box 381, Berkeley, California) at: 285 Lee Street, Oakland, California. Informal evening talks are given, based on 'The Bhagavad Gita', the 'Teachings of the Buddha', the 'Upanishads' and the 'Yoga Sutra' of Patanjali. They are followed by a period of meditation.

MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

The Mountain Path now has an agency for Germany and Austria also. This is the Altbudhistische Gemeinde of Utting am Ammersee. We are told by our friend and life-subscriber, Dr. P. J. Saher (by whom an article on the subject is due to appear in October) that the Gemeinde is already an important centre of Ramana bhaktas.

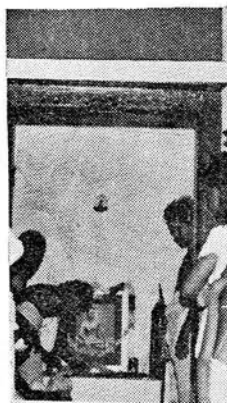
* * *

Our next issue is to be on SYMBOLISM, that of January 1967 on the QUESTION OF SUFFERING.

SKANDASHRAM

Skandashram, up on the sacred hill of Arunachala where Sri Bhagavan lived for seven years between leaving Virupaksha Cave, just below it, and taking up his abode at the site of the present Ashram, is a great attraction for visitors to the Ashram, especially to those from the West

who like it not only for the vibration of his Presence felt there, but also for the solitude and the pleasant shade afforded by the huge mango tree just behind it and for the fine clear water of the spring



Punyavachanam ceremony at Skandashram, after renovation. Above: Pooja at the inner shrine.



The ceremony of the sacred-thread in progress: Ladies go gay at such functions!

flowing perennially just beside it.

It was built out from a cave into its present form by the late Sri Kandaswami Gownder, an ardent devotee of Sri Maharshi, who levelled the ground with his own hands and built the basement whereon the superstructure was raised by the efforts of the late Perumalswami. After Sri Bhagavan came down to Sri Ramanasramam, not much attention was paid to Skandashram until 1940 when the grandson of the late Kandaswami Gownder carried out the necessary repairs.

Sri Sai Das, a resident of the Ashram, recently took up the task of renovating the Ashram and has completely white-washed it and repainted the woodwork. We are sure that the renovation will be appreciated by visitors.

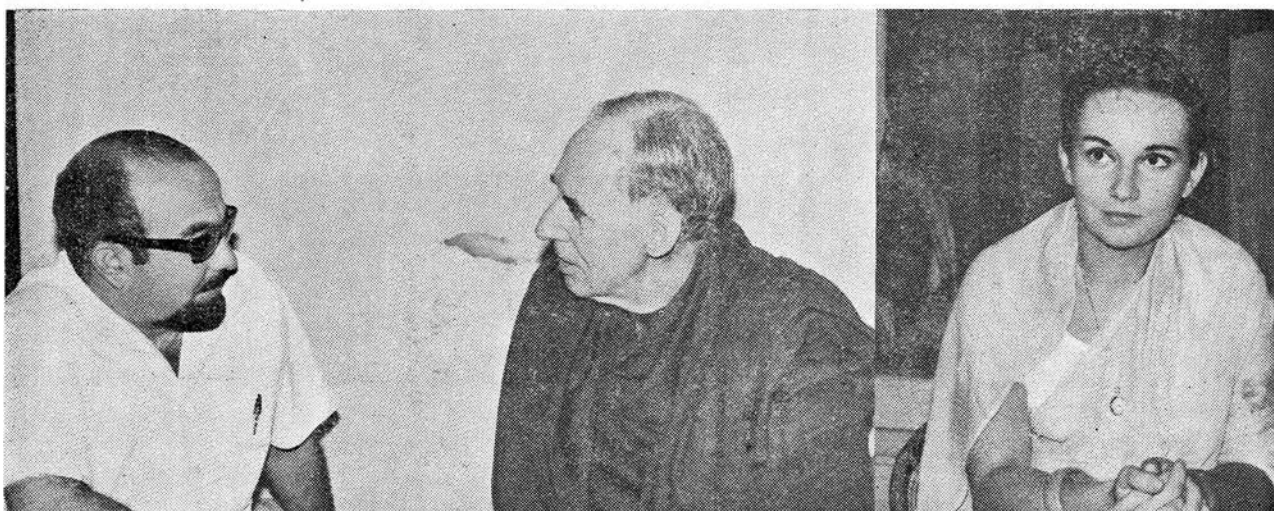
The traditional purification ceremony (punya-

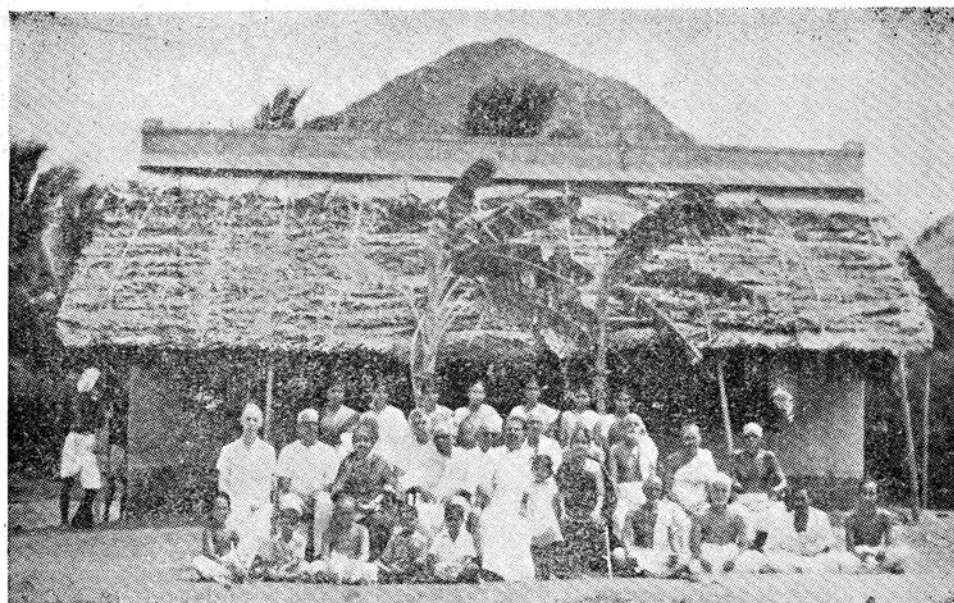
vacanam) was performed on 4th June, when several devotees participated in the function.

A DEVOTED FAMILY

Sri Munagala Venkataramiah, who later became Sri Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi — the author of 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi', the translator of 'Kaivalya Navaneeta', 'Tripura Rahasya' etc., most of them published by the Ashram — was a long-standing devotee of Sri Maharshi from the very early days of the end of the last century. All his relations and descendants have carried on this devotion to Sri Maharshi and this has now become the tradition in their family. The sacred-thread ceremony of his sons was celebrated at the Ashram during the lifetime of Sri Maharshi and now the grandsons

Dr. and Mrs. Caycedo speaking with Mr. Osborae at the latter's residence in Ramana Nagar. Dr. Caycedo is cultural attache of Columbia in India. He is exploring the possibilities of building a bridge between yoga and psychiatry.





Grihapravesam of Smt. Kamakshi's new house. The peak of Arunachala is seen blessing the house and its residents !

in their turn have had their sacred-thread ceremony in the Ashram before the Samadhi of Sri Maharshi in the traditional orthodox style on Wednesday 25th May, 1966. Four young boys of the third generation in that line had the initiation into Brahmajnana that day and we wish these young brahmacharis all the best in the quest of the Infinite, as also all material prosperity. We invoke Sri Maharshi's blessings on them.

GRIHAPRAVESA

Occasion was also taken then for the daughter and son-in-law of Sri Swami Ramananda Saraswathi to perform the grihapravesa of their house in Sri Ramana Nagar, very near the Ashram, in the grounds of which the body of the late Swami has been interred. When not occupied by them it is in the Ashram custody and we accommodate guests there. We wish Dr. O. Ramachandriah and Smt. Kamakshi Ramachandriah all happiness and may it be given them to reside near the Ashram after retirement from active service.

OBITUARY

JANAKI AMMAL

Nagaswami Iyer, the elder brother of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, passed away towards the end of the last century, sometime after Maharshi

left home for Tiruvannamalai. His widow, Janaki Ammal, lived thereafter with her parents for nearly a quarter of a century. She came to see Sri Maharshi in 1939 on the occasion of his Sashtiabdapoorthi (60th year). On that occasion, clad in the usual loincloth, Bhagavan jocularly remarked that he was very shy of appearing before his sister-in-law in the loincloth in which he used to do household chores at Madurai and Tiruchuli, and that, as if in punishment for the same, that self-same sister-in-law had made him only a loincloth-wearer and come to see him in that dress. From that time onwards Janaki Ammal had been living with her nephew, the present president of the Ashram. She breathed her last on Wednesday, 18th of May at the ripe old age of 87.

SANKARAMMAL

Widowed comparatively early in life and left with three children, Sankarammal came to see Bhagavan in 1936, having heard of him from the disciples of Sri Kulandai Swamigal of Madurai, an avaduta purusha, whom she was serving in Madurai. She came and settled down in the Ashram, in the year 1939 and left it very rarely to see her sons. She had been serving in the kitchen of the Ashram since then. She had learnt the works of Sri Maharshi in Tamil thoroughly and imparted them also to the children of the

present president of the Ashram and to other devotees.

Only once had she occasion to speak to Sri Maharshi, but that one occasion is worth recording. Once Bhagavan was repeating a verse in Tamil from 'Kaivalya Navaneeta' to the effect: "Praise be to the Guru, who for countless generations has been within me and guiding me and now has taken shape to initiate and grant me salvation." Thereafter Bhagavan left for the Goshala in accordance with his custom. Overhearing this verse from Bhagavan's lips, the next day Sankarammal approached Sri Bhagavan, for the first and last time in her life, and requested for upadesa, in reply to which Bhagavan quoted another verse from the same book, the gist of

which is: "O, Son, who have been wandering about like dust in a whirlwind, having forgotten your own self, know yourself and that is your support, and then you are free of all troubles. You asked and so I give this upadesa." Bhagavan then went back to the Old Hall. Sankarammal thereafter had no more doubts and nothing to ask.

For nearly 27 years Sankarammal served Sri Maharshi and the Ashram faithfully with little or no interval. She was ill for just a few days before she passed away at the age of 80 on Wednesday, 18th May at 7-30 a.m., a few hours before the sister-in-law of Bhagavan. Her cremation was largely attended by the devotees of the Ashram and the neighbourhood. May her soul rest in peace at the lotus feet of Sri Maharshi!

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.

We request readers to notify us of non-receipt before the end of the month of publication in the case of readers in India and within three months in the case of readers overseas. **Delayed complaints of non-receipt will not be attended to.**

Sometimes readers do not notify us of change of address in time and subsequently complain of non-receipt. We request readers to notify us of change of address so as to reach us one week ahead of the month of despatch. **Otherwise we cannot be responsible for loss in transit.**

Subscribers abroad are requested not to send the subscriptions in **currency** notes, but either by International Money Order, British Postal Order or cheques or draft on any bank in India, U.S.A. and U.K. They should be drawn in favour of **The Mountain Path** only.

Receipts for subscriptions are sent only with the journal and not separately.

Subscribers whose subscriptions end with the current issue for July 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.

Our Agents receiving subscriptions will distribute copies direct to such subscribers, and **not from us.**

July 1, 1966.

V. GANESAN,
Managing Editor.

INTRODUCING...

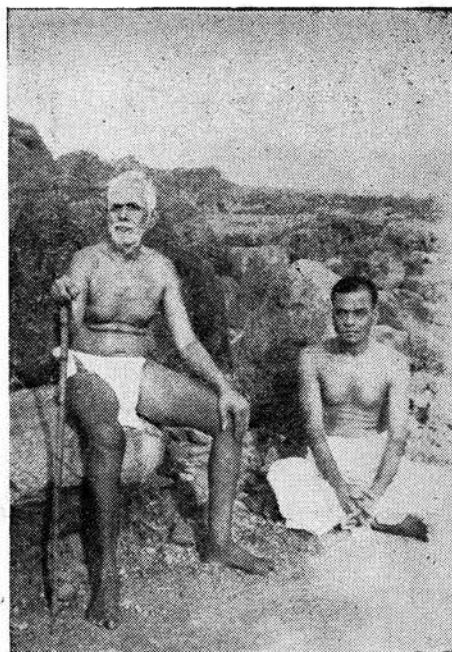
Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer

Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer whose native home is Tiruvannamalai itself, has been an earnest devotee of Sri Bhagavan from very early times. He hails from an ancient orthodox Brahmin family who for generations were well known in Tiruvannamalai for their traditional learning, discipline and piety. Endearingly known and called merely as 'TPR' by Sri Bhagavan and others, he has lived as one of Sri Bhagavan's 'family' here for decades. Unobtrusive by nature and silent in disposition, his has been an austere life of service and surrender at the lotus feet of Sri Bhagavan in whom he found his refuge and guide which was the haven of his desire. This he attributes to his purva-samskaras and the spiritual tradition of his ancestors.

Sri Bhagavan has narrated an incident of 1896, the year of his arrival in Tiruvannamalai, when he was staying in the precincts of Sri Arunachala Temple. TPR's grandfather, an elderly and pious person who used to visit him daily, one day, out of affection and regard, conducted him to his house and gave a ceremonial meal in the householder's manner. This was the only house which Sri Bhagavan entered to take biksha in the usual way after he had left his Madurai home. This information was given in full detail by Sri Maharshi himself.

Apart from the advantages of his traditional and parental discipline, TPR also received an English education which equipped him for the profession of law. This was far from his natural aptitudes or reflective bent of mind; however, in later years it proved a blessing in disguise as, from 1933 for over 10 years, some disgruntled persons embarked upon a spate of litigation against the Ashram and TPR unstintingly devoted himself and his time to defending the interest of the Ashram as an act of service till successful conclusion. This activity gave him still greater opportunities for close associations with Sri Bhagavan.

In his early days TPR ever felt a burning desire to come upon one who could truly harness his entire Being and guide him to greater strength. His learning and ancestral disciplines could not help understand the dilemma of life's activities — the pleasures of ordinary life and activity on the one hand and fear and misery of death seen all around on the other. He had come into contact with a few persons such as a Swami

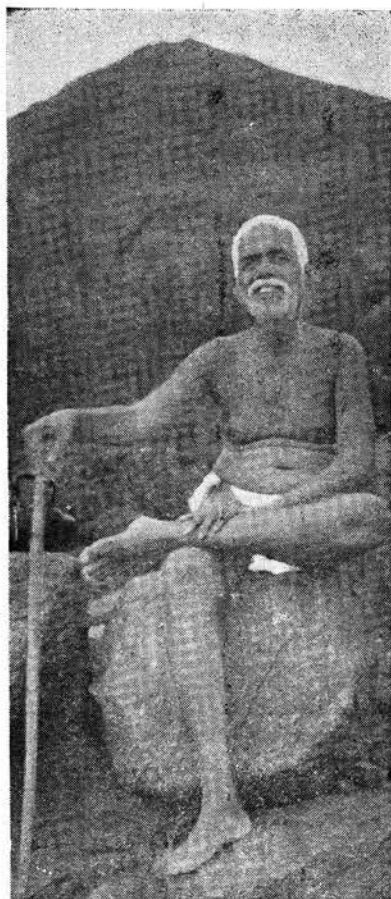


*Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer with
Sri Bhagavan*

of the Ramakrishna Order, Dr. Annie Besant and later Sri Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni,¹ who voluntarily gave him a mantra for japa, which he never used. It was in this state of mind, prompted by a close relative who was already a permanent inmate of the Ashram, that he inducted himself to Sri Bhagavan's presence. He had seen Sri Bhagavan many a time as a boy, when Sri Bhagavan was in his Hill abodes, but then prompted by simple curiosity or youngster's desire for the sugar-candy or plantains freely distributed in his presence. He had questioned a relative of his such as whether Sri Bhagavan would read into his mind and see into his past, present and future and so on. His relative bade him go to the Swami and ask him all these.

Then in TPR's own words: "I entered Sri Bhagavan's hall in this frame of mind and looked at him. That is all. Sri Bhagavan very graciously looked at me in all expectancy as it were, and full of benign compassion — yes, he looked into the very core of my Being. He was sensing my entire Being. I fell flat in prostration to him with an experience as totally consuming as it was convincing. A discovery that 'He' whom I was hankering for, all these years, who could sway my entire Being and guide my

¹ For an article on whom see our issue of April, 1965, p. 81.



energy, was here. So great, yet so simple was this. I rose up and Sri Bhagavan smiled again and bade me be seated. All the emotions, thoughts, surging doubts were nowhere! I felt, I had found my refuge, which was the greatest fortune of my life. It was a conviction born of instant experience by His grace."

The present Ashram, almost from its inception has grown and developed to his knowledge and he has been actively associated with every branch of its growth, while maintaining close contact with Sri Bhagavan and depending on him for guidance. Few have had this privilege of moving with Sri Bhagavan for so many years with the ease and freedom of a devoted son to an affectionate parent. This gave him ample opportunities of receiving instruction, and guidance

directly or indirectly from Sri Bhagavan. In later years, it also led to his being helpful in interpreting Sri Bhagavan's utterances to some of the western devotees and those who did not know Tamil.

He has a precious collection of books, including all Sri Bhagavan's writings from their earliest stages in manuscript form to the revised printed editions. Most of them bear Sri Bhagavan's touch and some contain entries in his own hand, by way of addition, alteration and correction. TPR was also instrumental in seeing through the press a few editions of Sri Bhagavan's early works, particularly the 3rd edition of '*Sri Ramana Nool Thirattu*' ('The Collected Works of Sri Maharshi' in Tamil).

It was during the period 1935 to 1945 that TPR had the best of his life at the Ashram, constantly benefiting from Sri Bhagavan's uplifting influence. Indeed, he felt by then that there could be nothing more important or useful for his future than to serve Sri Bhagavan till the end. When Sri Bhagavan's fatal physical affliction appeared for the first time, ending in an operation, and then recurred, TPR made up his mind and wound up his practice and interests in Madras. Thereafter he was fortunate enough to join the small band of attendants who looked after Sri Bhagavan's personal comforts and needs. During the whole two years the illness lasted, he stayed permanently with him, and the opportunities of service he had are treasured by him. He was helpfully assisting the doctors in attendance during the anxious months preceding the 14th April 1950, by his instructive guidance and meticulous attention to prescribed routines.

When asked to put in clear terms what he meant by the impact of Sri Bhagavan's grace on him, TPR said: "I am not left with any sense of want or void in internal strength. This is the direct result of a conviction instilled by experience by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan and it should be so with every one who has sought his Grace."

Like other old devotees of Sri Bhagavan, TPR shuns publicity. But any one coming in contact with him will immediately perceive how great his devotion to Sri Bhagavan is and how deep his understanding of his teaching. It is our good fortune that he resides here making himself available to all those who want to have a glimpse of what Sri Bhagavan IS and what the word 'Grace' can really mean!



Letters TO THE EDITOR

THE NEED FOR A GURU

To some of your ignorant readers your insistence on the inevitability of a *guru* seems to need explaining. May we ask for enlightenment?

When a *sadhu* looks into the eyes of his *guru*, what he sees (or does not see) is what is looking: which is the *guru* 'within'?

When he hears his *guru's* voice, what he hears (or does not hear) is what is listening: which is the *guru* 'within'?

When his *guru* touches him, what he feels (or does not feel) is what is sensorially experiencing: which is the *guru* 'within'?

When his *guru* speaks, what he cognises (or does not cognise) is what is cognising: which is the *guru* 'within'?

Is not this why there is no see-er, hearer, toucher, cogniser, no 'thing' seen, heard, felt, cognised, but I or 'I-I' manifesting? Which is the *guru* 'within'?

But where is the *guru*? I find all this when I look into the eyes of my cat. I would surely find it if I looked into your eyes or those of the Maharshi.

One of the greatest sages of China — Shen Hui, seventh Patriarch of Ch'an — said "Inseeing does not need a teacher. Based on such inseeing, a living being can attain buddhahood."

Wherein lies the discrepancy?

WEI WU WEI.

As the Maharshi often said, and as I explained in the last paragraph of my editorial of July 1964, the *Guru* is the *Self* in the heart, and it is possible for one who is sufficiently pure and concentrated to contact this inner *Guru* directly without the help of an outer *Guru*. In most cases, however, the influence of an outer *Guru* is necessary to lead one back to the *Guru* in the heart. Even Wei Wu Wei, if he had had the opportunity of looking into the eyes of the Maharshi, might

have found it different from looking into the eyes of a cat.

EDITOR.

* * *

THEORY AND PRACTICE

I should like to congratulate your excellent journal. Wishing it to go from success to success with each issue, scaling new peaks of achievement. There is absolutely no 'ego' on its pages.

But theoretically it is deceptively simple to pose the question, Who am I? Mount Everest looks very near. But to climb it is so difficult. Bhagavan has flown over its top in an aeroplane, which does not fall to every one's lot. Many people are carried away by academic discussion of his philosophy without any progress whatsoever in their daily lives. Armchair theorists with no elbow-grease propound their theories which cannot bring the truth an inch nearer to the hearts of their readers. I would therefore suggest

- (1) to open a column for questions on strictly practical aspects of Bhagavan's teaching, with editorial replies,
- (2) to invite articles for novices steeped in the ignorance of the material world.
- (3) to publish articles concerned with practical suggestions for *sadhana*, with individual experiences of various types.

In fact, I feel that less theory and more practice is what is needed.

SANANTHALER ALWAR,
Bombay.

I try to the best of my ability to combine theory and practice. In fact, some of our more intellectual readers were not too pleased with our April issue, because it leaned too far to the side of practice. Both are needed. In the 'letters to the editor' section any one is at liberty to ask

practical as well as theoretical questions, so no new section is needed.

EDITOR.

DESTINY

It is in no vein of criticism but with a view to getting a proper clarification that I am writing the following lines.

"Indeed, until the supreme, effortless state is attained, it is impossible for a man not to make effort. His own nature compels him to, just as Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita told Arjuna that his own nature would compel him to fight." (Editor's note on page 84 of the Sri Ramanashram edition of 'The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in his own words').

This explanation is given in a context where Bhagavan was discussing "effortless and choiceless awareness". In this connection, I am of the view (may be with limited understanding) that Bhagavan's reference was purely to mental effort (as we can tune our minds by effort) whereas you were citing Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna to fight, which is only physical effort, which cannot be avoided but is forced on us by Nature.

In a previous reply to my letter asking for clarification on 'Destiny' you expressed the opinion that, though everything is preordained, effort is necessary. Do you mean physical or mental effort? If physical, where is the necessity for our effort, since everything is preordained, though for want of mental strength we entertain endless plans? My conclusion on reading Sri Bhagavan's works is that whatever is our destined lot will come about in its proper time whether we will it or not, by our effort on the spot, which cannot be avoided. Hence where is the scope for our willed effort? Please throw some light on my doubts.

C. SRIDHARA RAO,
Secunderabad.

The question of predestination is far too involved to answer in a few lines. Our issue of April 1967 will be largely devoted to it. However, it is impossible to draw a line between physical and mental effort. Physical effort is dictated by mental decision. And, under the symbolism of war, Sri Krishna was urging Arjuna to total spiritual effort. So long as you do not know what is predestined you have to make effort and, what is more, to make decisions.

EDITOR.

This letter is to express my appreciation for what is to me the finest edition so far of *The Mountain Path* (January, 1966). I have read every article through and although a few of them are too sentimental for my way of thinking, all are obviously sincere and contain that heartfelt spirit of understanding that is so sorely needed in the greedy world of today. Naturally the unenlightened hold many different views of the Master and state them accordingly, just as He gave guidance with various explanations, but those nearest the goal would seek only to join Him in the Silence.

There is, however, one discordant note in your Book Reviews which does not seem in keeping with the Maharshi's tolerant attitude towards the limited viewpoints of the "agnani", namely your sharp criticism of a Buddhist monk for what you term "traducing" other religions. If you will forgive my offering my viewpoint, it is that no one should be inhibited from exposing what he considers to be a weakness or obstacle to the search for the final Truth that is beyond intellect, even if he does represent the only major religion that has not contributed to "Man's inhumanity to man".

L. H. EWELS,
London.

I am encouraged by your appreciation of the January issue of our MOUNTAIN PATH.

When I spoke of Bhikkhu Khantipalo "traducing" other religions, I was referring to his book entitled "Tolerance" (one of the most intolerant books I have ever read) reviewed (not by me) in our issue of October 1964. In this book he cites cases of Hindu intolerance in such a way as to give the impression that they are a regular feature of Hinduism, whereas, by and large, it has been a remarkably tolerant religion — witness the continued existence (and not only existence but prosperity) of such defenceless minorities as the Jains, Parsis, Cochin Jews and Syrian Christians.

However, mere physical tolerance is not enough; there should be intellectual tolerance also: that is not merely allowing followers of other religions to live in peace but appreciating that their viewpoint, although different from one's own, may also be valid and their path lead to the goal. Hindus in general have this tolerance; Bhikkhu Khantipalo's book has not.

You claim that "no one should be inhibited from exposing what he considers to be a weak-

ness or obstacle to the search for the final Truth that is beyond intellect." But one may wrongly suppose something to be an obstacle to that search when it is only a different approach, and what one regards as "exposing it" may be regarded by its supporters as blasphemy or intolerance and provoke them to retaliate, thereby generating an atmosphere of hatred instead of goodwill between the religions.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating; the test of a religion is whether it can produce spiritual masters. If it can it is valid, because a wrong road cannot lead to the right goal. A religion that can produce a St. Francis or an Ibn Arabi or a Ramakrishna has the right teaching, whether it is one's own version of it or not. If one cannot appreciate it one can at least withhold judgment and maintain a respectful silence in the presence of the Holy.

This conception of intellectual tolerance is not new. The following quotation from the Buddhist Emperor Asoka in the 3rd Century B.C. (quoted from 'Religions of the World' by D. E. Harding, published by Heinemann) is a beautiful expression of it.

"His Sacred Majesty, the King, does reverence to men of all sects, whether ascetics or householders, by gifts and various forms of reverence ... The sects of other people all deserve reverence for one reason or another ... He who does reverence to his own sect, while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the glory of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect. Concord is therefore meritorious, namely hearkening, and hearkening willingly, to the Law of Piety, as accepted by other people."

It is in the same spirit that our reviewer of the book which Phra Khantipalo misnamed 'Tolerance' remarks in the course of his review that the author "has performed such a singular disservice to the dhamma he aspires to serve."

EDITOR.

HALLUCINOGENIC DRUGS

Recently there has been great publicity in London about a hallucinogenic drug called L.S.D.

When my brother and some of his friends who take it say that it enlarges their consciousness and produces greater awareness I find it very difficult to argue with them, although I feel strongly that it does great harm. It is not addictive and does not appear to have any visible side

effects. I wondered whether you think taking these drugs does actually hinder any spiritual development, and if so, how and why?

I would also be interested to know whether you think it is dangerous to give them to people who are mentally and emotionally unstable, as the type of drug is quite widely used to increase 'rapport' between patient and psychiatrist. There seems to be much ignorance about the real effects of these drugs — could you throw any light on the subject?

A DEVOTEE,
London.

I am not a medical man and am therefore not qualified to speak about the effects of hallucinogenic drugs. I should welcome a reply from any medical expert with experience of them among our readers.

I can, however, say that even when visions and experiences such as the expansion of consciousness are, so to speak, legitimately come by, without the use of drugs, they have no real spiritual value and therefore Bhagavan always refused to bestow them on seekers, as some Masters have done. What is required is to strengthen and purify the mind to the point that it can hold its state of expanded consciousness and eliminated ego permanently. This can be done by constant effort, discipline and remembering. The effect of drugs would be rather to weaken than strengthen the mind, making it passive where it should be active, and therefore would be rather to impede than hasten Realization.

EDITOR.

PRAYERS (1)

Your April number is a real treasure chest. For me, the essence of it is a dialogue between Bodhichitta and Dr. Krishnaswami on the one hand and Qutbuddin on the other. (And how well you did to put these articles at the beginning!) Although I approached the dialogue from the side of Bodhichitta, I must admit that Qutbuddin has the best of it. What effect this will have on my life and quest I do not yet know.

WILLIAM FOSTER,
London.

PRAYERS (2)

Every article (in the April issue) is of absorbing interest and provides much food for thought. It is an excellent idea to devote a number to the