

The
Mountain
path



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

vol. viii, no. 3, july 1971

There (in the heart)
rest quiet! Let the sea of
Joy surge, speech and
feeling cease, Oh Aruna-
chala!

— *The Marital Garland
of Letters*, verse 31.

Publisher :

T. N. Venkataraman,
President, Board of Trustees,
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

*

Editor :

Mrs. Lucia Osborne
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

*

Managing Editor :

V. Ganesan,
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

*

Annual Subscription :

INDIA	..	Rs. 6.
FOREIGN	.. 12sh 6d	\$ 1.50

Life Subscription :

Rs. 125	£ 12-10-0	\$ 30.
---------	-----------	--------

Single Copy :

Rs. 1.75	3sh. 6d.	\$ 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. VIII

JULY 1971

No. 3

CONTENTS

	Page
EDITORIAL :	
Much Ado about Psychic Powers ..	141
Sri Bhagavan on Siddhis ..	145
Garland of Guru's Sayings — <i>Sri Muruganar</i> ..	148
The Knower and the Magician — <i>T. K. S.</i> ..	149
<i>Vis-A-Vis</i> Occult Powers	
— <i>Lajwanti V. Ganatra</i> and <i>V. B. Ganatra</i> ..	151
Meister Eckhart — <i>Gladys De Meuter</i> ..	155
<i>Bhakti Marga</i> —The Path of Devotion	
— <i>G. L. N.</i> ..	158
Goddess Parasakti's Thousand Names	
— <i>R. Sadasiva Aiyar</i> ..	159
Devotion and Meditation — <i>N. N. Rajan</i> ..	163
<i>Sri Chakra Puja</i> at the Ashram ..	164
The Torah of the Void — <i>Rabbi Nahman</i> ..	165
The Heart — 'Alone' ..	166
<i>Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya</i> (Poem)	
— <i>Dr. Manuel Valenzuela</i> ..	167
How the <i>Mantra</i> came to me — <i>T. K. S.</i> ..	168
The Hall of Awareness (Poem)	
— <i>Wei Wu Wei</i> ..	169
The Spiritual Heart — <i>Madguni Shambhu</i>	
<i>Bhat</i> and <i>Dr. Manuel Valenzuela</i> ..	170
Feet Sweet — <i>paul rePS</i> ..	171
How I came to the Maharshi	
— <i>Jos. Fr. Haagen</i> ..	172
The Great Learning — <i>Fr. Thomas Merton</i> ..	174
Levels of Consciousness — <i>Sylvan Levey</i> ..	175
The World of Sri Ramana Maharshi	
— <i>Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan</i> ..	176
Sad-Guru's Grace — <i>Prof. U. A. Asrani</i> ..	177
Reminiscences of the early days with	
Sri Bhagavan — <i>D. S. Sastri</i> ..	181
Obeisance to the Saint of Arunachala	
— <i>Prof. Sher Singh</i> ..	184
His dynamic Peace — <i>Prof. K. Swaminathan</i> ..	185
Glory of Arunachala ..	186
Acts of Grace — <i>N. R. Rajagopalan</i> ..	189

CONTENTS—(Contd.)

	Page
Sri Bhagavan and Miracles	
— A. Devaraja Mudaliar	.. 190
Yoga Vasishtha Sara	.. 191
The Vedaparayana	.. 193
Book Reviews	.. 195
Ashram Bulletin	.. 201
Introducing 210
Letters to the the Editor	.. 211

Contributors are requested to give the exact data as far as possible for quotations used, i.e. source and page number, and also the meaning if from another language. It would simplify matters. Articles should not exceed 10 pages.

— Editor.

GRACE IN WORDS: The verse from *Forty Verses* (ULLADU NARPADU) in Tamil and Malayalam reproduced on the fly-leaf facing the frontispiece is the facsimile of Sri Bhagavan's own handwriting. The translation is a new free rendering into English by Prof. K. Swaminathan.

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. 6.80	
(b) Aden, Kuwait, Hongkong, Malaysia, Indonesia, Phillipines	15s	1.80
(c) U.K., France, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Monaco, Switzerland, East, South and West Africa	22s	2.70
(d) Australia, Denmark, Netherland, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden	30s	3.60
(e) North, Central and South America, Fiji, Hawaii, New Zealand	37s	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.

Contributions are accepted only on condition that they do not appear elsewhere before being published in *The Mountain Path*. They can be published later elsewhere but only with acknowledgement to *The Mountain Path*.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharsh

Grace in Words

ഗ്രന്ഥം:
മംഗല ശ്ലോകം:

അന്ധിനി പ്രഭവേൽ കിമത്ര യിച്ഛന്തഃ കിഞ്ചിന്ന ചേരന്തി സൽ
തദ്രിന്തഃ കിമ സത്വ മി വരഭവേ ജ്ജ്ഞിഹി തജിജ്ജം |
നിന്ദിനം ഹരിതത്രേതഃ ഹൃദദീപം പ്രേക്ഷാ മഥം കേതവഃ?
തദ്യുഗം സമവേഹി തന്മൽതമഃ സ്വഹൃദന്തഃ സദം ||

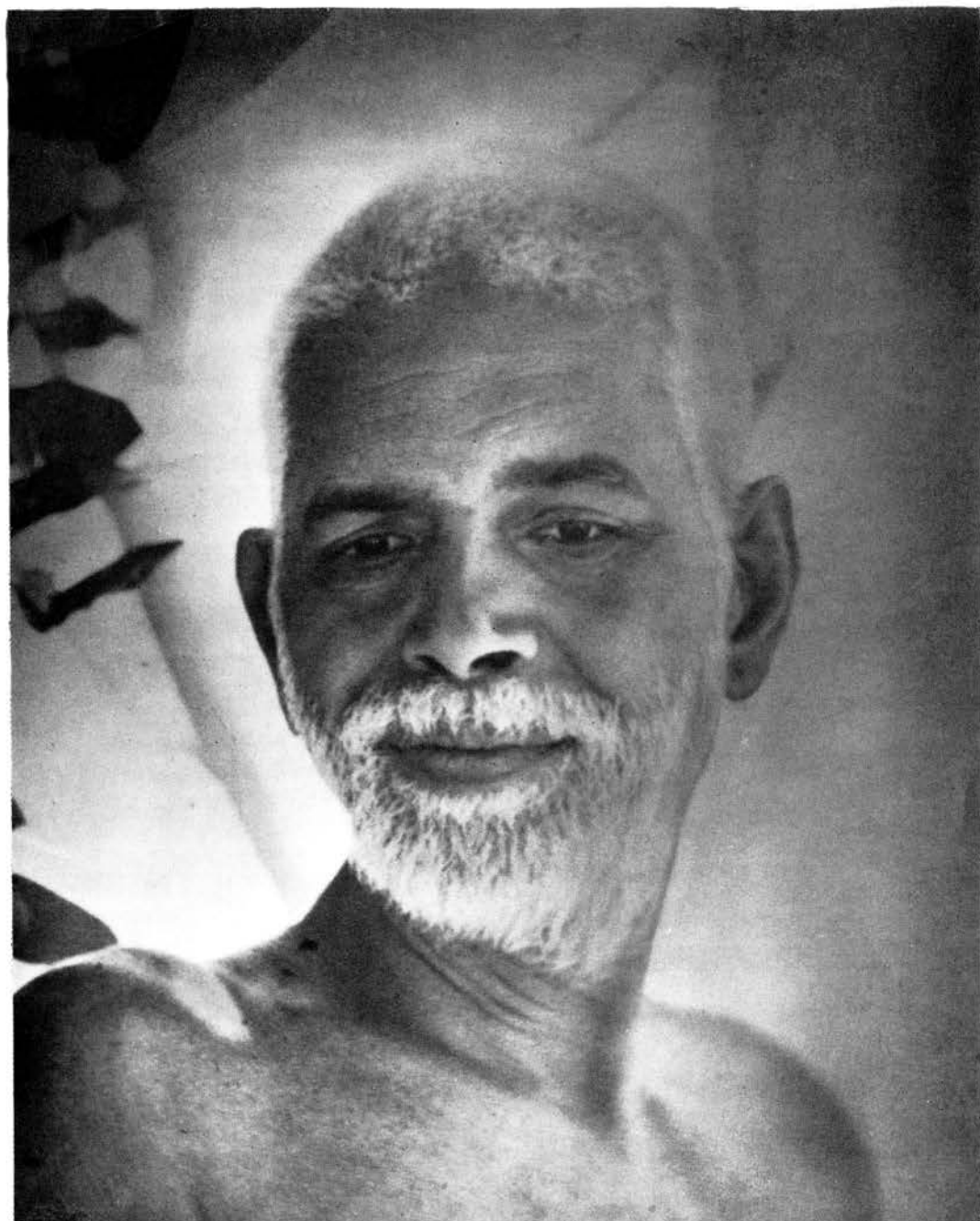
ഉപദേശ വിനയം:
മർദ്ദനം:

ഉപദേശ മൃഗണപുണ്യൻ ചുണ്ണതേന ചുണ്ണവെദേ
ശ്രുതേവേ ചുണ്ണതേന ചുണ്ണതേന - ചുണ്ണതേന
ശ്രുതേവേ ചുണ്ണതേന ചുണ്ണതേന ചുണ്ണതേന
ചുണ്ണതേന ചുണ്ണതേന ചുണ്ണതേന -

*Apart from Being, can there be
'Awareness' of Being?
Since That which 'Is' abides
Free of thought within the heart,
How or by whom can That which Is,
Whose other name is Heart, be thought of?
Thinking of it is but abiding
As that which Is,
As Heart within the heart.*

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI







THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: LUCIA OSBORNE

Vol. VIII

JULY, 1971

No. 3

MUCH ADO ABOUT PSYCHIC POWERS

.....

Editorial

WHAT are psychic powers or miracles if scrutinised? Certain actions produce effects that are not rationally readily accountable because they do not fall into the usual pattern, hence considered miraculous. What about the laws operating in nature taken so much for granted? The hydraulic system of a tree which no engineering skill could match? The slant of the earth which is just right to give us our seasons or else there would be continents of ice; the earth rotating at just the right speed or else our days and nights would be either too short or too long so that no vegetation would survive; the wonder of the cell which holds and carries the gene; one species changed into another, organic matter into body and intellect (in the shape of food) through the alchemy of the body, then into worms and black earth to begin again an ever recurring state of flux and flow. *Panta rei*. Great poets and artists have an intuitive insight into the miracle of the eternal art of creation. Van Gough saw it in painting a

sunflower, Blake in a grain of sand, Julian of Norwich in a hazel nut 'and so all things hath the being by the love of God' and 'the firmament sheweth His handiwork.'

Yogic methods and science have shown that all manifested worlds are based on vibrations and energy. If forms are produced by vibrations they can also be changed by changing the vibrations. 'Law reigns supreme in every sphere of the manifested universe and every natural phenomenon in its minutest detail is governed by law though miracles may seem to happen sometimes. Adepts of occultism who produce the so called miracles merely utilize laws which are unknown to us. Even they are not above the necessity of working according to the laws of nature' explains I. K. Taimni so lucidly in his *Gayatri Mantra*. He says further that it is a matter of scientific knowledge that we become aware of the external world through vibrations of different kinds. The whole manifested universe will be seen as an interplay of vibrations producing an infinite

variety of forms both gross and subtle which in turn provide vehicles for consciousness and enable it to function on different planes. So if vibration is related to both form and consciousness it should be possible through its agency to produce different kinds of natural phenomena. It is possible to develop certain *siddhis* or psychic powers as indicated in the *Yoga Sutras* and also to produce phenomena of the most trivial nature. It is just like any other science in which powers hidden in certain combinations of sounds can be utilized in different ways not always of a spiritual nature.

On the path of *Jnana* preoccupation and practice for acquiring psychic powers are not favoured by true Masters. The same applies to other recognized paths also though not to the same extent. During *sadhana* such powers may manifest incidentally and care will be taken not to display them to impress an audience. Sri Bhagavan says that Self-Realisation may or may not be accompanied by occult powers depending whether the person concerned had sought these powers before realisation. They may also be sought after Self-Realisation and gained for a definite purpose if called for by circumstances. However the force of Self-Realisation is far more powerful than all *siddhis*.

The practice of rites and incantations to acquire supernatural powers are not the means for attaining final Liberation which is the final goal of all seekers, for action can only produce action not cessation of action as Bhagavan expounds with his usual so terse simplicity in *Upadesa Saram*.

The yogic tradition of the *Tantric Vajrayana* in Buddhist *Tantric Yoga* lays more stress on practice and living experience than philosophical speculations on the paths of realising the Ultimate Enlightenment. The Kargyudpa School has carried on this tradition and its vast field of yogic knowledge envisages also the path with forms containing among others the practice of psychic powers concomitant

with the path without forms and without concepts in the unfoldment of the Buddha-Mind.

Such powers may manifest temporarily spontaneously in seekers in cases of dire need to the surprise of the seeker himself who never paid any attention to them. This is like a sign of protection by the ever-present Guru or Mother-Nature, a timely recollection may be the result of such practice performed in some previous incarnation fructifying in a given situation even though the seeker now follows the path of *jnana*. Such practices demand great endurance and deep concentration which on the whole could be used to better effect on the royal direct road. The attainment of supernatural powers like *Lung-yom* enables its adepts to traverse tremendous distances without fatigue in a sort of trance at extraordinary speed and with supernormal dexterity overcoming any obstacles on the way. This can be expedient in a country with a not very advanced system of locomotion in a difficult terrain. The yoga of psychic heat or inner fire, *Tum-mo*, has the side effect of physical heat very welcome and life-saving for scantily clad or naked hermits living in ice-cold regions in the Himalayas.

Swami Ramdas, who never had the slightest interest in supernormal powers, manifested them spontaneously when in a dangerous situation while scaling the peak of a high Himalayan mountain on his way to Jatashanker and other places of pilgrimage. In his book *In Quest of God* there is one such description: 'At last Ramdas came to the end of the summit. Here appeared on the extreme edge of the slope, something like a beaten track. Now he was standing on the brow of a tremendous precipice. (Swami Ramdas spoke about himself in the third person—Ed.) The bottom of the hill could be seen from this place straight down vertically many hundreds of feet below. Any attempt to walk upon the slope was a very dangerous experiment. But a strange fascination seemed to have seized Ramdas. He crept slowly upon the slope. His hold

was thin dried-up grass that grew on the hill. Both his hands were engaged in this task. He was now on the slope. It was a condition of the greatest peril but Ramdas was careless and fearless! Even when his foot slipped he remained unperturbed and somehow regained his precarious hold his lips uttering Ram's name, and thus he reached safer ground.' When once a fellow pilgrim questioned Swami Ramdas whether he cultivated powers of inducing dreams because he wanted to know from him the winning numbers of the Derby Sweep Swami Ramdas replied that he was quite ignorant of that sadhana and he only knew how to utter the name of Ram. Uttering the name of Ram he could spend nights in freezing temperature without being aware or affected by it.

Lama Anagarika Govinda describes one such incident in *The Way of the White Clouds*. During his wanderings in the mountains of Tibet he set out from his camp one cloudless day to paint. In search of ever more beautiful landscapes in the land of 'turquoise lakes and golden hills' he went too far over difficult boulder-strewn and dangerous ground including a swamp. By the time he had finished painting it was too late to return in the gathering dusk. It was not safe to spend the night there owing to wild beasts and it would have meant freezing, lightly clad as he was. So he jumped up to return at any cost. And now let us continue in his own words :

"It was no longer possible to pick my way between the boulders that covered the ground for uncounted miles ahead of me ; night had completely overtaken me ; and yet to my amazement I jumped from boulder to boulder without ever slipping or missing a foothold, in spite of wearing only a pair of flimsy sandals on my bare feet. And then I realised that a strange force had taken over, a consciousness that was no more guided by my eyes or my brain. My limbs moved as if in a trance, with an uncanny knowledge of their own, though their movement seemed almost mechanical . . . I was like an arrow that unfailingly pursued its course by the force of

its initial impetus and the only thing I knew was that on no account must I break the spell that had seized me.

"It was only later that I realised what had happened : that unwillingly and under the stress of circumstance and acute danger I had become a *lung-gom-pa* — a trance-walker — though far from being asleep." In this way he also went right across the swamp without breaking through and in due course, reached his camp.

A similar incident happened as per extract from *Our Quest* (still to be published) :

"Once I climbed Perumal (the Hill of Maha-Vishnu) in the Nilgiris lightly clad intending to return before dusk. The midday sun could be quite fierce. When I reached the top the panorama was so breathtaking in its wild grandeur that I decided to spend the night there come what may. A magnificent stag disappeared with one bound on seeing me but I never thought of the tigers whose prey it was. At night the temperature must have dropped to freezing point with fierce winds howling as if to sweep the top clean. I knew then why animals lie up in hollows. I also sat in a hollow meditating and freezing in turn. Suddenly I felt delightful warmth creeping up from the base of the spine to envelop the whole body not merely with physical warmth but with a feeling of indescribable well-being. The night passed imperceptibly. Suddenly there was dawn. I also later realised that it was a spontaneous case of *Tum-mo*."

Alexandra David-Niels has eerie stories to tell of men in the Himalayan regions skilled in palpably manifesting their thoughts and creating semblances or rather ghosts of themselves and others. In one case the creator of the ghost was unable to control or withdraw it resulting in most harrowing experiences. This is exactly what we all do constantly i.e., creating the ghost of an ego or separate individuality, unable to control it and so undergoing harrowing experiences under its tyranny till through *sadhana* and Grace we realise its

shadowy illusory nature and can be free at last. This reminds one of a story told by Bhagavan of an impostor who attached himself to a marriage party. Both the bride's and the bridegroom's parties bore with the disgraceful behaviour of the impostor each thinking that he was the guest of the other till unable to stand it any longer they started enquiries and the impostor getting wind of it made himself scarce. It serves as an illustration of the *vichara* (Self-enquiry) which is bound ultimately to make the impostor of the ego vanish!

Some lamas develop the power to master their dreams by realising the equally illusory state of waking and sleeping. They retain their normal consciousness during all these states and can enter them at will with foreknowledge of events in far away places. Modern science has come to the conclusion that the whole universe is just a form of energy or one great idea of the nature of thought and without objective reality. If

natural phenomena are ideas mentally manifested, extraordinary occult powers are of the same nature though not taken for granted. According to the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali: 'The thinking principle tinged by the knower and the knowledge is the totality of objects.' After stating in what way a very wide range of psychic powers including the conquest of elements can be achieved by various arduous ascetic practices it concludes by calling these powers no better than conjurer's tricks. A sufi saying expresses it succinctly from another angle: 'Everything on earth is but earth.'

"Whether powers are high or low whether of the mind or supermind they exist only with reference to him who has the powers; find out who that is" says Ramana Maharshi.

The greatest miracle is brought about when through *sadhana* we conquer all desires including those for *siddhis* and we purify all the vehicles so that they can be tuned into the state of pure consciousness which is the substratum of the eternal miracle of creation!

To the Maharshi

.....

By Lt. Col. Ottar Singh

Who am I?
Whence am I?
I must know
Ere I die
Oh! Ramana!

In deep Silence
 stilled
You will find
 the reply
In deep Silence
 stilled
Find in your heart
 'Who am I?'

SRI BHAGAVAN ON SIDDHIS¹

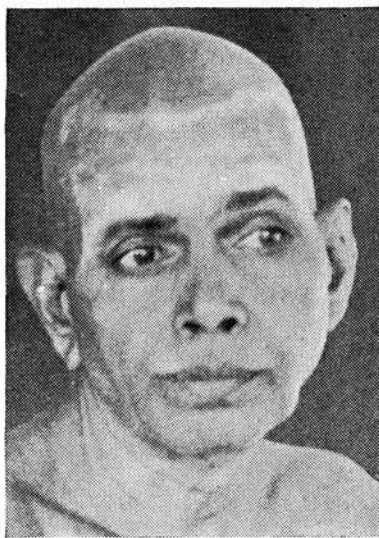
By
SRI BHAGAVAN

Disciple : What are the powers of supermen ?

Bhagavan : There are some foolish persons who, not realising that they themselves are moved by the Divine Power, seek to attain all supernormal powers of action. They are like the lame man who said : 'I can dispose of the enemy if someone will hold me up on my legs.'

Since peace of mind is permanent in Liberation, how can they who yoke their mind to powers, which are unattainable except through the activity of the mind — become merged in the Bliss of Liberation which subdues the agitation of the mind.

He that would abide in the Self should never swerve from his one-pointed attention to the Self or the pure Being that He is. If he slips or swerves away from that state, several kinds of vision conjured up by the mind may be seen ; but one should not be misled by such visions — which may be of light or space — nor by the *nada* or subtle sounds that may be heard, nor by the visions of a personified God, seen either within oneself or outwardly, as if they had an objective reality. One should not mistake any of these things for the Reality. When the principle of intellection by which these visions etc., are cognized or perceived is itself false or illusory, how can the objects thus cognized much less the visions perceived, be real ?



D. Can a yogi know his past lives ?

B. Do you know the present life that you wish to know the past ? Find the present then the rest will follow. Even with your present limited knowledge you suffer much. Why should you burden yourself with more superfluous knowledge ?

D. Does Bhagavan use occult powers to make others realise the Self or is the mere fact of Bhagavan's Realisation enough for that ?

B. The spiritual force of Realisation is far more powerful than the use of all occult powers. Inasmuch as there is no ego in the Sage there are no 'others' for him. What is the highest benefit that can be bestowed on you ? It is happiness, and happiness is born of peace. Peace can reign only where there is no disturbance, and disturbance is due to thoughts that arise in the mind. When the mind is stilled there will be perfect peace. Unless a person has stilled the mind he cannot gain peace and be happy.

And unless he himself is happy, he cannot bestow happiness on 'others' . . .

When asked if occult powers (*siddhis*) can be achieved with the divine state (*Ishvaratva*) as mentioned in the last verse of *Dakshinamurthi Stotra*, the Maharshi said :

'Let the divine state be achieved first, and

¹ Culled from *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

then the other questions may be raised.' No powers can extend into Self-realisation, so how can they extend beyond it? People who desire powers are not content with their idea of Pure Consciousness. They are inclined to neglect the supreme happiness of Realisation for the sake of powers. In search of these they follow by-lanes instead of the highroad and so risk losing their way. In order to guide them aright and keep them on the highroad, they are told that powers accompany Realisation. In fact Realisation comprises everything and the realised man will not waste a thought on powers. Let people first get Realisation and then seek powers if they still want to.

D. Is it not necessary or at least advantageous to render the body invisible in one's spiritual progress?

B. Why do you think of that? Are you the body?

D. No, but advanced spirituality must effect a change in the body, mustn't it?

B. What change do you desire in the body and why?

D. Isn't invisibility evidence of advanced wisdom (*jnana*)?

B. In that case all those who spoke and wrote and passed their lives in the sight of others must be considered ignorant (*ajnanis*).

D. But the sages Vasishta and Valmiki possessed such powers.

B. It may have been their destiny (*prarabdha*) to develop such powers (*siddhis*) side by side with their wisdom (*jnana*). Why should you aim at that which is not essential but is apt to prove a hindrance to wisdom? Does the sage feel oppressed by his body being visible?

D. No.

B. A hypnotist can suddenly render himself invisible. Is he therefore a sage?

D. No.

B. Visibility and invisibility refer to him who sees. Who is that? Solve that question first. Other questions are unimportant.

* * *

D. I have been interesting myself in metaphysics for over twenty years. But I have not gained any novel experience as so many others claim to do. I have no powers of clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc. I feel myself locked up in this body and nothing else.

B. It is right. Reality is only one and that is the Self. All the rest are merely phenomena in it, of it and by it. The seer, the objects and the sight are all the Self only. Can anyone see or hear, leaving the Self aside? What difference does it make to see or hear any one in close proximity or over enormous distance? The organs of sight and hearing are needed in both cases; so also the mind is required. None of them can be dispensed with in either case. There is dependence one way or another. Why then should there be glamour about clairvoyance or clairaudience?

Moreover what is acquired will also be lost in due course. They can never be permanent.

The only permanent thing is Reality; and that is the Self. You say "I am", "I am going", "I am speaking", "I am working" etc. Hyphenate "I am" in all of them. Thus I-AM. That is the abiding and fundamental Reality. This truth was taught by God to Moses: "I AM that I-AM". "Be still and know that I-AM God". So "I-AM" is God.

You know that you are. You cannot deny your existence at any moment of time. For you must be there to deny it. This (Pure Existence) is understood by stilling your mind. The mind is the outgoing faculty of the individual. If that is turned within, it becomes *still* in course of time and then "I-AM" alone prevails. "I-AM" is the whole Truth.

* * *

Sri Bhagavan : When a *vasana* (inherent tendency) is released and comes into play, it is associated with the light of the Self. It passes from the heart to the brain and on its way it grows more and more until it holds the field all alone and all the *vasanas* are thus kept in abeyance for the time being. When the thought is reflected in the brain it appears as an image on a screen. The person is then said to have a clear perception of things. He is a great thinker or discoverer. Neither the thought that is extolled as being original, nor the thing, nor the country which is claimed to be a new discovery, is really original or new. It could not manifest unless it was already in the mind. It was of course very subtle and remained imperceptible because it lay repressed by the more urgent or insistent thoughts or *vasanas*. When they have spent themselves this thought arises and by concentration the Light of the Self makes it clear, so that it appears magnificent, original and revolutionary. In fact it was only within all along.

This concentration is called *samyamana* in the *Yoga Sastras*. One's desires can be fulfilled by this process and it is said to be a *siddhi*. It is how the so-called new discoveries are made. Even worlds can be created in this manner. *Samyamana* leads to all *siddhis*. But they do not manifest so long as the ego lasts. Concentration according to Yoga ends in the destruction of the experiencer (ego), experience and the world, and then

the quondam desires get fulfilled in due course. This concentration bestows on individuals even the powers of creating new worlds. It is illustrated in the *Aindava Upakhyana* in the *Yoga Vasista* and in the *Ganda Saila Loka* in the *Tripura Rahasya*.

Although the powers appear to be wonderful to those who do not possess them yet they are only transient. All these wonders are contained in the one changeless Self. The world is thus within and not without. This meaning is contained in verses 11, 12, Chapter V of *Sri Ramana Gita*. "The entire Universe is condensed in the body and the entire body in the Heart. Thus the Heart is the nucleus of the whole Universe."

Therefore *samyamana* relates concentration on different parts of the body for the different *siddhis*. Also the *Visva* (the individual being in the waking state) or the *Virat* (totality of gross beings) is said to contain the cosmos within the limits of the body. Again, "the world is not other than the mind, the mind is not other than the Heart; that is the whole truth." So the Heart comprises all. This is what is taught to Svetaketu by the illustration of the seed of a fig tree. The source is a point without any dimensions. It expands as the cosmos on the one hand and as infinite Bliss on the other. That point is the pivot. From it a single *vasana* starts, multiplies as the experiencer 'I', the experience, and the world.

SRI BHAGAVAN : When I was staying in Skandasramam I sometimes used to go out and sit on a rock. On one such occasion there were two or three others with me including Sri Rangaswami Iyengar. Suddenly we noticed some moth-like insect shooting up like a rocket into the air from a crevice in the rock. Within the twinkling of an eye it had multiplied itself into millions of moths which formed a cloud and hid the sky from view. We wondered at it and examined the place from which it shot up. We found that it was only a pinhole and knew that so many insects could not have issued from it in such a short time.

That is how *ahamkara* (ego) shoots up like a rocket and instantaneously spreads out as the Universe.....

— Talks, p. 578. —

GARLAND OF GURU'S SAYINGS

.....

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

172. Two different hearts are mentioned,
One for rejection fit,
The other for acceptance.
The first one, to disregard,
Is the heart of flesh inert,
Object of sense-perception,
Lodged in the left side of the chest.
173. All-encompassing
Inside and outside both,
The Heart of Light to seers known
Is on the right.
But to fools body-bound
A heart of flesh in the left chest
Alone exists.
- (cf. *Supplement to Forty Verses*: 20. "The heart of consciousness is both within and without, with no inside or outside." It is not to be conceived as something in space, confined to the right side of the chest.)
174. If the soul's sovereign were not
Well enthroned in the spiritual Heart
Whence did the universal gesture come
Of touching the right chest when one
points to 'I'?
175. Indefinable as this or that,
The true Heart may be said to be the
mirror
Wherein all things appear ;
The pure "I-AM",
Self-shining Being, pure awareness,
Immaculate space supreme,
Perfect wholeness, stillness absolute.
176. The Heart-womb is the beginning of all
things,
Their middle and their end.
This firmament supreme
Is without form. It is only
True Being as Awareness.
177. Whoso has known this Heart
Knows no more pain
Nor sense of bondage ;
One with the Self, he has no notion
Of duality. Illusion gone,
Inward he turns and finds
The bliss supreme.
178. The sole support supposed to stand,
Infilling and enveloping,
This Heart is not within and not without.
The body which admits of in and out
Is but a concept of the thinking mind.
- (cf. Verse 3 of *Five Verses on the Self*. 'The body is in the Self, not the Self in the body. The cloth which supports the cinema is not contained in the picture. The spiritual heart is not to be taken as being in any part of the body.')
179. Adepts who have destroyed
Utterly the ego body-bound,
These alone perceive,
With subtle mind¹ illusion-free,
Heart's presence everywhere,
And so attain the highest.
180. Mutation and delusion ended.
What abideth is the Heart alone
Shining as pure, true Being only.
This is the world of bliss supreme
Longed for by the Gods in heaven.
181. Free of the notion "I am this body,
This one or that of three or five,"
The awareness of pure Being
Unattached and shining as the Self
Is the universal Power Supreme
Abiding in each living creature's heart.

¹ *Chit*, Pure Awareness, Universal mind. The union of *sat* and *chit* is the highest *ananda*.

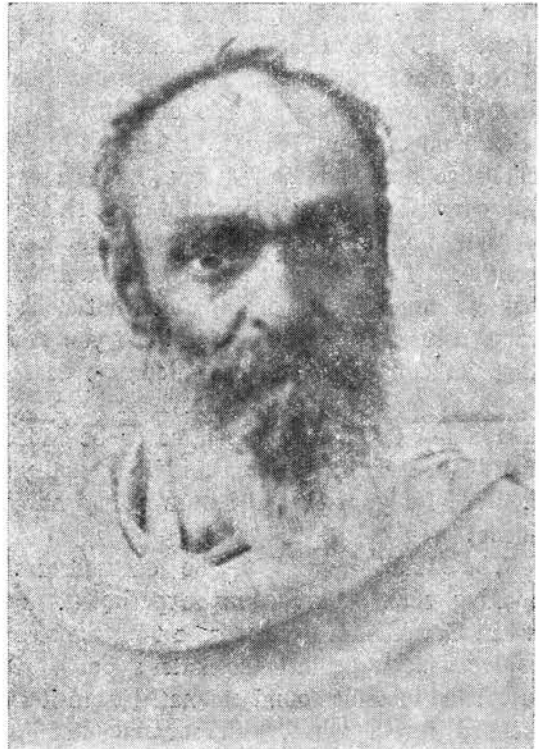
THE KNOWER AND THE MAGICIAN

By
T. K. S.¹

PEOPLE who visited Sri Bhagavan used to discuss with Him several aspects of spiritual life and also the attainment of psychic and magical powers (*siddhis*). Sri Bhagavan used to say that we are all *siddhas*, because it is only after very great efforts and penances that we have achieved this bodily existence. The purpose of this wonderful attainment is to achieve the greatest of all attainments — the pure Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. But if we use embodiment only to gain psychic powers, that is only to put on more fetters — golden chains for iron ones. All the same, fetters are fetters, and to remove those of gold you have to requisition the service of the supreme fetter-breaker, namely one who has attained *Nirvana*.

In the view of a Knower (*Jnani*), these powers are no more real than those gained in a dream. Suppose a beggar has a dream that he is a king ruling some kingdom. So long as the dream lasts, he has the pleasure and satisfaction of being the king, but the moment he wakes up he has to pick up his begging-bowl again to appease his hunger. So too, these powers satisfy only so long as they pertain to the existence of the inner nature. But when that is found to be non-existent, then will come the rude shock of finding these powers as essentially false.

To illustrate this principle, Sri Bhagavan used to quote the story, in the *Prabhulinga Lila*, of a great *siddha*, named, Gorakhnath, who after very great efforts of various kinds, had so perfected his physical body that it would not drop dead even for a thousand years. He put his body to various tests, and it stood them all well. Elated at this achievement he invited all yogis and *siddhas* to run his body through with a sword but when they tried to do so, it could not be cut or pierced. A loud



Sri T. K. S.

metallic clang emanated from it as in the case of temple bells! The *siddha* was so elated at the success of the tests, that it never occurred to him that his embodied state must still come to an end some day or other!

While he was feeling proud and happy in his fool's paradise, he heard of a great *jnani*, Allama Prabhu, to whom people were flocking in large numbers, to sit at his feet and imbibe the bliss of his presence. Needless to say, this *Jnani* was in fact Lord Sankara Himself incarnate in that form to help mankind. He explained to all who came to him that all our bodily experiences are false, being based

¹ For a note on whom see April, 1965 issue, p. 136, the late Sri T. K. Sundaresa Iyer.

on the non-existent separateness of individuality. The true state is one indivisible whole in all beings, on realising which all sense of opposites and multiplicity vanishes. In brief he was teaching that you are the Absolute Reality, the One unique Witness, One Being-Awareness and that duality is nothing but an illusion. To be That is realisation.

Now, our great *siddha* resorted to this Jnani's presence out of idle curiosity to see what kind of man He was, and if possible to challenge him and scoff at his teaching. He was surprised to find the Jnani a mere skeleton of skin and bone. He accosted him arrogantly : " They say you are a great *Jnani* who has overcome fear of death. But what a miserable sort of body you live in ! Do you think that with this body you can overcome death ? Look at me ! I am sure that I have so perfected my body that it can never be killed. Here is a sword ; try it on this body, and you will see for yourself the nature of my attainment ! "

The Jnani begged to be excused from making such a hazardous experiment. But when Gorakhnath persisted, he took the sword and struck it against the latter's body. As usual the metallic sound emanated from it and echoed for a while. In seeming humility, Allama Prabhu pretended to be greatly impressed saying : " It is indeed a great power

you have attained ; all glory to you ! But now that I have granted your request to test your body, you must now grant me my request to subject my body to the same experiment. Please take the sword and kill me with it ! "

The *siddha* was afraid to do this ; he said the Jnani would die. But the Jnani assured him that it would not matter if he did, as nobody would be held responsible. So the man struck with the sword at the Jnani's body. To his great surprise, the sword passed straight through it without affecting it in any way. Gorakhnath found that he could pass it from left to right, and the reverse, to and fro, and yet Allama Prabhu was in no way affected by it, as if the sword was passing through empty air !

This gave him a rude shock indeed and he burst out : " What is it that I have achieved after all ? I have only baked the pot, while you have the core of the deathless Being. Great Guru, pray take me as your disciple, and teach me to know the Immortal Self. " Saying this, the *siddha* fell prostrate at the feet of the Jnani, who accepted him as his disciple and taught him the Knowledge, beyond knowledge and ignorance.

Now this story was a clear illustration of the real state of Sri Bhagavan's imperishable Being, and all who loved Truth enjoyed it and felt blessed to hear it.

. . . Reality remains the same, eternal and unchanging, whether one realises it or not. One can, of course, understand the annoyance and frustration of philosophers who wish to grasp everything with the mind at being told that Reality lies beyond and behind the triad of knower-knowledge-known, which is like a mirage over it ; for obviously the mirage cannot penetrate to that which underlies it. That is why no easy answer can be given to them. Indeed, Bhagavan did not on the whole approve of questions about the meaning and nature of Realisation, because his purpose was to help the questioner and not to satisfy mental curiosity. He usually reminded people that what is needed is effort to attain Self-Knowledge ; and when it is attained the question will not arise.

— ARTHUR OSBORNE.

VIS-A-VIS OCCULT POWERS

By

LAJWANTI V. GANATRA and
V. B. GANATRA

THE deliberate pursuit of psychic powers is not favoured by sages and advanced sincere *sadhakas*. They discourage such practices deeming them an obstacle to realising Oneness of Being. Powers are in the realm of phenomena which are obscuring factors in self-realisation; on the whole dangerous ground to tread for those still on the way to stop the discursive activities of the mind in order to attain a one-pointed flow of awareness. In the course of *sadhana* powers may manifest spontaneously as a result of practices of concentration in previous lives. Great is the allurements of psychic powers such as knowledge of future events, understanding the language of birds or animals, making oneself invisible or tiny as an atom (*anima*), and its opposite (*mahima*) and many more! And great is the discernment of those who have the strength to withstand them. No doubt the acquisition of *siddhis* calls for great determination and perseverance resulting in concentration which could be used on the royal road instead of by-lanes.

In the editorial 'Higher Powers'¹ by Sri Arthur Osborne it is stated: "Spontaneous powers are not uncommon and it may be that in accordance with the nature of our time . . . they are becoming more common. In India there are cases of a wider range of powers appearing at an early age before there is any question of spiritual attainment.

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

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

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

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

Qua occult powers, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has stated that a man cannot realise God if he possesses even one of the eight occult powers. He quoted Lord Krishna teaching Arjuna "Friend, if you want to realise Me, you will not succeed if you have even one of the eight occult powers. This is the truth. Occult power is sure to beget pride and pride makes one forget God."

Sri Ramakrishna continued, "An egoistic person cannot realise God. Do you know what egotism is like? It is like a high mound where rain-water cannot collect; the water runs off. Water collects in low land. There

¹ *The Mountain Path*, April 1966, p. 131, 134.

seeds sprout and grow into trees. Then the trees bear fruit.

"People of small intellect seek occult powers. Power to cure disease, win a law suit, walk on water and such things. But the genuine devotees do not want anything except His lotus feet. The Mother showed me that occult powers are as abominable as filth. . . . People with a little occult power gain such things as name and fame. Many of them want to follow the profession of Guru, gain people's recognition, and make disciples and devotees.

"People cure diseases through occult powers. All this is miracle working. Only those whose spiritual experience is extremely shallow call on God for the healing of diseases.

"It is very hard for those who want occult power to have pure love for God."²

Professor G. V. Subbaramayya in the article 'Automatic Divine Activity'³ has recounted how he prayed to Sri Ramana Maharshi for the cure of his two-year-old daughter and how she was cured by Sri Ramana Maharshi's Grace, and then he met Sri Ramana Maharshi and enquired of him, "Bhagavan, did you not think that you must do something to save the child?" Straight came Sri Bhagavan's reply: "Even the thought of saving the child is a *sankalpa* (wish), and one who has any *sankalpa* is no *jnani* (realised man). In fact any such thought is unnecessary. The moment the *jnani's* attention is drawn in a certain direction there starts the *automatic divine activity* which itself leads to the highest good." The conversation was all in Telugu except for the phrase 'automatic divine activity' which Bhagavan uttered in English.

Sri Ramana Maharshi said on another occasion:

"In *Halasya Mahima* there is a chapter on the eightfold *siddhis*. There Lord Siva says that His *bhakta* never wastes a thought on them. Again, Lord Siva says that He never grants boons. The desires of devotees are fulfilled according to their *prarabdha* only.

When Ishwara Himself says so, what of others? In order to display *siddhis* there must be others to recognise them. That means there is no *jnana* in the one who displays them. Therefore *siddhis* are not worthy of any thought. *Jnana* alone is to be aimed at and gained.

"*Atman* (the Self) alone is to be realised. Its realisation holds all else in its compass. *Sakti, Ganapati, Siddhis* etc., are included in it. Those who speak of these have not realised the *Atman*."⁴

A North Indian visitor asked whether the *jnani* automatically acquired *siddhis* or whether he had to strive for them separately if he desired them.

Bhagavan replied: "Who is the *jnani*? If he is the body you see, then his *siddhis* will be shown to other bodies. But if he is pure awareness, from where will he get the *siddhis* and to whom will he show them?"

"Both the *jnani* and the *bhakta* (devotee) do not desire or work for *siddhis*; the former because he sees himself the All, and the latter because he sees his *Ishta Devata* — his favourite deity — the All; even his own action is done by this deity; he has no will of his own at all to impel action on his own initiative. Yet *siddhis* follow them both like their shadows. What greater *siddhi* is there than that of the Sage, who by merely sitting on his couch, attracts thousands of people from the four corners of the earth, hundreds of whom change their old modes of life and some even attain Godhood?"

"People see many things which are far more miraculous than the so-called *siddhis*, yet do not wonder at them, simply because they occur every day."⁵

Bhagavan has observed, as recorded in *Sat Darsana Bhashya*: "The highest *siddhi*

² *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, by M., 4th Edition, 1964, p. 508, 722, 858, 894.

³ *The Mountain Path*, April 1966, p. 160.

⁴ *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, 3rd Edition, p. 73-75.

⁵ *Guru Ramana*, by S. S. Cohen, 3rd Edition, p. 99-100.

is realisation of the Self, *Atma Sakshatkara*; for here, once you realise the truth you cease to be drawn to the path of ignorance.”

Sri S. Ramakrishnan, Editor, *Bhavan's Journal* in his article 'The Sage of Panrimalai, a *Siddha Purusha*'⁶ has stated: "In these days of scientific inquiry and rationalism, God has to be 'proved'. 'Except ye see signs and wonder, ye will not believe', said Christ (*St. John* IV. 48). This is what *Siddha Purushas* occasionally do. Through such deeds they inspire the skeptics and scoffers with faith in God. Swamiji says: 'Those who have realised God know the greatness of God. If only a man can attach himself to God, he would find it easy to do anything by His grace. When I beg of the Lord, Muruga appears before me. Lord Muruga is devoted to the devotees, slave of his worshippers — *Bhaktadasa*.'

"Swamiji does not however claim to be able to cure all ailments. He acknowledges the inexorability of what is ordained by God. 'I cannot cure all diseases. The person concerned must have divine grace for me to be able to do anything for him. My powers are limited by God's Will.'

"He was asked by press correspondents why he could not use his powers to cure the ills of the world. With characteristic candour, he replied: 'By God's Grace I have acquired certain powers to look into the past, present and future of individuals. I cannot do the same with multitudes. I am like a youth swimming in a tank. I have not yet learnt to swim in a river or lake, not to speak of the waters of the limitless ocean. I am still striving. If and when I succeed by greater *sadhana*, I may be able to answer your question.'

"Deprecating the mentality of people in questioning the why's and how's of miracles, Swamiji would much rather ask people to take the benefit of such divine powers in greater measure with faith and seek to question later, if necessary."⁷

We are unable to share the view that the performance of miracles is not to be ques-

tioned or that the display of miracles or occult powers is meant to create and does create faith in the faithless. According to our humble opinion, the faith if created, would not be long-lasting and could not be the *sraddha* spoken of in the *Gita*:

"Who has faith, who has conquered and controlled the mind and senses, who has fixed his whole conscious being on the Supreme Reality, he attains knowledge; and having attained knowledge he attains swiftly Supreme Peace." (IV. 39)

The *darshan* of a *jnani* has much more power to remove ignorance than the possessor of occult powers. This has been the experience of many seekers.

Coming to *Yoga Sastras*, Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* (Ch. III, No. 38, 51) read:

"These are obstacles to *samadhi*; but they are powers in the worldly state."

"By giving up even these powers comes the destruction of the very seed of evil which leads to *Kaivalya*."

Commenting on these aphorisms, Swami Vivekananda has observed⁸:

"When the Yogi has seen all these wonderful powers, and rejected them, he reaches the goal. What are all these powers? Simply manifestations. They are no better than dreams. Even omnipotence is a dream. It depends upon the mind. So long as there is a mind it can be understood, but the goal is beyond even the mind."

As to the oft quoted saying of Christ, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" and in view of the miracles performed by him, the following dialogue found in *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* (p. 20-21) is illuminating:

"D. Jesus Christ cured people of their diseases. Is that only an occult power (*siddhi*)?"

⁶ *Bhavan's Journal*, April 19, 1970, p. 20-26.

⁷ *Ibid.*, May 17, 1970, p. 89-90.

⁸ *Raja Yoga*, 13th impression, 1966, p. 249-50, 257.

“Maharshi : Was Jesus aware at the time that he was curing men of their diseases? He could not have been conscious of his powers.

“Moreover what are these powers for? The would-be occultist (*siddha*) desires to display the *siddhis* so that others may appreciate him. He seeks appreciation, and if it is not forthcoming, he will not be happy. There must be others to appreciate him. He may even find another possessor of higher powers. That will cause jealousy and breed unhappiness. The high occultist (*siddha*) may still meet a higher *siddha* and so on until there will come one who will blow up everything in a trice. Such is the highest adept (*siddha*), and He is God or the Self.

“Which is the real power? Is it to increase prosperity or bring about peace? That which results in peace is the highest perfection (*siddhi*).”

What Sri Aurobindo has said about the miraculous *Avatar* is also illuminating :

“A merely supernormal or miraculous *Avatar* would be a meaningless absurdity ; not that there need be an entire absence of the use of supernormal powers such as Christ’s so-called miracles of healing, for the use of supernormal powers is quite a possibility of human nature ; but there need not be that at all, nor in any case is it the root of the matter, nor would it at all do if the life were nothing else but a display of supernormal fireworks. The *Avatar* does not come as a thaumaturgic magician, but as the divine leader of huma-

nity and the exemplar of a divine humanity. Even human sorrow and physical suffering he must assume and use so as to show, first, how that suffering may be a means of redemption as did Christ : secondly, to show how, having been assumed by the divine soul in the human nature, it can also be overcome in that same nature, as did Buddha. The rationalist who would have cried to Christ, ‘If thou art the Son of God, come down from the Cross’, or points out sagely that the *Avatar* was not divine because he died and died too by disease — as a dog dieth — knows not what he is saying ; for he has missed the root of the whole matter. Even, the *Avatar* of sorrow and suffering must come before there can be the *Avatar* of divine joy ; the human limitation must be assumed in order to show how it can be overcome ; and the way and the extent of the overcoming, whether internal only or external also, depends upon the stage of human advancement ; it must not be done by a non-human miracle.”⁹

It is evident, as Sri Ramana Maharshi stated, that powers are not signs of true knowledge and may deflect people from the real quest. They are not a hindrance in *mukti*. They are a hindrance on the way to *mukti*. Since they are all exercised with the mind (mental projections) they are impediments to Self-Realisation.

⁹ *Dictionary of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga*, compiled by M. P. Pandit, 1968, p. 172-73.

All that is visible, clings to the invisible,
the audible to the inaudible,
the tangible to the intangible,
Perhaps the thinkable to the unthinkable.

— NOVALIS.

MEISTER ECKHART

By

GLADYS DE MEUTER

ONE of the most controversial figures to emerge in the golden age of mysticism during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was Meister Eckhart.

Born in Hochheim, Meister Eckhart entered the Dominican Order at an early age, became Prior of Erfurt, then Vicar of Thuringia, finally to receive in Paris the Licentiate and degree of Master of Theology in the year 1302.

So independent and strikingly original were the teachings of this remarkable man, that he was accused of heretical tendencies by the Archbishop of Cologne in 1325.

Brought before the Inquisition the fearless Eckhart was acquitted twice and his demise had already taken place when the Papal Bull condemning him was issued in 1329.

Although his fame was already established on the strength of his German writings alone, when Denifle brought to light the Latin works in 1886, a serious study of the whole of the mystic's teachings began.

They have yet to yield their intrinsic worth and beauty, but enough 'spiritual gems' have been revealed to place Meister Eckhart among the greatest mystics.

His works have been divided into two distinct groups: those of his Sermons in medieval German and the Latin writings which form the *Opus Tripartitum*, in which his doctrine is clearly expounded.

In a passionate effort to convey his mystical experiences, Meister Eckhart makes use of a vivid vocabulary, peculiarly his own.

The introverted mystical consciousness is termed 'The Birth of Christ in the Soul'. This may take place only when the mind has been emptied of its empirical contents.

There are striking parallels between Meister Eckhart's teachings and those of the Upani-

shads, compiled by seers in India about three thousand or more years ago.

While Eckhart speaks of the inward turning towards the 'core of the soul', so that 'union with God' may be attained, the Upanishads instruct the devotee about the individual self turning towards Brahman and thus realizing the Universal Self — that Self which the *Manḍūkya Upanishad* describes as being 'beyond the reach of the understanding, beyond the reach of the senses, beyond all expression . . . the pure unitary consciousness, wherein awareness of the world and of multiplicity is wholly obliterated. It is unsurpassable peace, It is the Ultimate Good. One without a second, It is — the SELF.'

The 'multiplicity' of the Indian seer is termed 'crowds' by Meister Eckhart.

It is only by turning away completely from these 'hosts' that the mind is in readiness to receive cognition of awareness itself.

In the tradition of other mystics, Eckhart strongly emphasizes the need for detachment, the uprooting of craving, of self-centred interest.

Paradox and hyperbole are generously used by Meister Eckhart in his exposition of the spiritual life. Among the most famous of his paradoxes is the one contained in a Sermon: '... the eye by which I behold God is the same as the eye by which God beholds me. My eye and the eye of God are one and the same — one in beholding, one in knowing, one in loving.'

The doctrine of the Trinity is brilliantly expounded by Eckhart, who identifies the Trinity with the 'threeness' or positive aspect of God; whereas the Godhead is identified with the negative divine.

The breadth and tolerance of Eckhartian thought is sharply outlined in these few words:

'... man's salvation has not been restricted by God to any particular way of life,' and '... it is not all men who can follow one way.'

Asceticism and renunciation are the rapiers which destroy carnality and egoity, and these Eckhart uses with the severity of the Adept initiating young souls.

The commandment 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart,' is here explained with beautiful simplicity by Meister Eckhart. He says: 'Therefore, if the heart is to be prepared for the sublimest of all flights, its goal must be that of a pure No-Thing; in this lies the greatest attainment that can exist.'

Suffering when rightly understood, is noble. Hence the teaching; 'Take heed, those among you who are thoughtful — suffering is the fastest steed who will bear you to perfection, for eternal bliss will be enjoyed by no one who has not taken their stand with Christ in the greatest bitterness.'

With extraordinary clarity, Eckhart depicts the stages which the seeker must traverse on the way to Perfection; yet, from the heights of the Ineffable is conveyed the wonderful truth that: 'It should be known to you that while the outward man may undergo trials, that inward man remains unaffected and immovable.'

EXTRACT FROM SERMONS

On the Just man and Justice

"There is neither 'before' nor 'after' in eternity. This is the reason why what took place a thousand years ago and what will take place a thousand years to come, are all one in eternity. What God wrought therefore, a thousand years ago, what He will do a thousand years hence and what He is doing now is solely one work. The man therefore who is lifted beyond time in eternity is active with God in the activity God entered upon a thousand years ago and the activity He will be engaged upon a thousand years hence. This is a matter of knowledge for the wise, and a matter of belief for the ignorant."

"Take note, the birth of God becomes manifest within us only when all the forces of our souls, which have been in bondage, become unhindered and free, and within us all intentions are held in

silence, and we are no longer troubled by our conscience — it is then that the Father begets His Son within us. We should hold ourselves unhindered and free of all forms and images, like unto God — we must denude ourselves, without similarity, just as God in Himself is unhindered and free."

"God is in all . . . I have often repeated that God is creating the entire world completely and wholly in this NOW."

"When speaking of the 'innermost' I mean the highest; when speaking of the 'highest' I mean the innermost."

"That which is past, present and future is God-created in the innermost of the soul."

* * * *

Loftily expressed is the Eckhartian description of the divine Birth in the soul which takes place when all is wrapped in tranquil silence.

"There is no action in BEING, and therefore, it is non-existent in the soul's essence . . . in the Core (of the soul) is the central SILENCE, the pure Peace."

In lucid and unique terms, Meister Eckhart stresses the point that union with God cannot be reached by any intellectual process, for it is from within itself that the soul receives cognition or awareness of its true being. Beyond thought lies the indescribable Truth of Selfhood which the master calls 'the darkness of unself-consciousness.'

Meister Eckhart goes on to expound his doctrine in his justly famous sermons:

"Do not imagine that you may apprehend God with your own intelligence. No natural light is needed to bring this about, for it is divine light which enlightens you. This natural light must in fact be wholly extinguished before God will illumine with His Light . . . the more you become like a desert, unconscious of everything, the closer you come to that estate."

* * * *

Soaring beyond space-time dimensions, Eckhart speaks of: "Nothing hampers the soul's knowledge of God as much as time and space, for time and space are fragmentary, whereas God is One. If the soul therefore is to know God, it must cognize Him beyond

and outside of space ; for God is neither this nor that — God is One.”

Among those who loved Meister Eckhart were those of his spiritual children to whose queries the Master answered in a series of TALKS given when they were grouped together :

“However mean the work, it is ennobled and rendered better by true obedience. The best in all things is brought about by obedience.”

“There must be no ‘I desire thus and thus’, or ‘this or that’, there must be a pure renunciation of what you possess. The very best prayer therefore that man can utter must contain no ‘Give me this virtue or this conduct’, or, ‘Lord, grant me Thyself or life eternal’, but ‘Lord, grant me nothing but what Thou desirest and do, Lord, whatever and however Thou desirest in all things.”

“Examine yourself, and where you find self, relinquish it ; this is the very best way.”

“You should also realize that the good will of God can never be lost, but the heart feels that it misses Him at times, and often we imagine that God has gone away.”

“A will is made true and perfect when it treads perfectly in the will of God, surrendering self-will . . . it is more profitable to recite one Ave Maria if one has surrendered self than to read a thousand Psalters without this surrender.”

* * * *

Irradiating the dynamic teachings of Meister Eckhart are tenderness and compassion which warm the heart with their messages of hope and comfort. This is brought to the fore in a discourse on ignorance or sin :

“It is rare one hears of persons achieving great things unless they have had cause to stumble in some respect.”

“Love cannot be mistrustful ; it finds everything that is good, trustworthy — Love completely annihilates sin as though it had never existed.”

Finally, the great mystic leads the seeker to knowledge that : “All creatures seek One, even the lowliest of creatures seek One, and the One is apprehended only by the highest.”

Then follows the ultimate instruction, clothed in noble simplicity : “Be one, so that you may apprehend God.”

In all cultures mention is made of ‘radiant darkness’ — that Light which is so dazzling that It appears to the uninitiated as darkness. In reality the novice takes this ‘excess of light’, suddenly flooding the soul, to be a ‘dark night’. Gradually however, as the novice progresses he becomes aware of what this supposed darkness really is.

Kabir describes in words of delicate loveliness his mystical experience of light : “The centre of the sky wherein dwelleth the Spirit, is radiant with the melody of Light. . . .”

The *Tibetan Book of the Dead* expresses it thus : “The pure Light of the Void.”

To Meister Eckhart, divine Light is contained within the dark, inert Wilderness of the Godhead — the Absolute Glory and Pure ‘No-Thing-Ness’ which must ever remain beyond the understanding of man, and yet which is.

The qualities of loftiness and sublimity irradiate the teachings of Meister Eckhart, true mystic indeed, who in terse, masterful words declares :

“BEING IS GOD.”

Two Kinds of Renunciation

Renunciation like everything else can be false or true. That is called false which is stimulated by the afflictions of the world. True renunciation is that of a man with everything in the world, lacking nothing, yet feeling all *that to be unreal*.

BHAKTI MARGA—THE PATH OF DEVOTION

By
G. L. N.

BHAKTI starts with a concept of God in some form or other. This path is considered by many easier than the path of *jnana* (knowledge). But in both it is the mind and heart that operate and are the means of realising the same goal.

In *bhakti* there is the *dvaitic* aspect of *jiva* (the individual) as worshipper and *Iswara* (God) as the object of devotion. When devotion reaches great intensity and the heart of the devotee melts in love its object becomes the Beloved and the distinction between subject and object ceases.

‘Unite with me to destroy (our separate identities) as Thou and me, and bless me with the state of ever-vibrant joy, Oh Arunachala!’

This is the inspired outpouring of Sri Bhagavan in *The Marital Garland of Letters* composed out of compassion for those struggling in *samsara*. Practising the path of devotion steadfastly, one-pointedly, purifies the mind and prepares the *jiva* for such a climax. Devotion takes the form of *bhajans* (devotional chanting), *puja* (worship), *japa* (repetition of sacred words or *mantras*) and *dhyana* (meditation). Selfless service follows in their wake. Each is efficacious in its own way according to the aptitude of the seeker.

The same applies to the deities worshipped. The One Self takes various forms. If we keep that in mind, then whatever worship is performed will only be worship of the Lord, the One Self. Silent *japa* in the mind is superior to repetition aloud. *Puja* and incantations can better be done in the mind also. *Dhyana* or meditation may start with an object or form

to arrest the wandering nature of the mind, like giving a chain to an elephant so that its trunk holding on to it ceases to move about. With practice concentration is gained and ultimately the subject and object of meditation merge, or meditation becomes devoid of conceptual thought, inhering in the Self. At first meditation is intermittent at regular hours, or off and on, gaining length with concentration and practice till it becomes continuous and spontaneous in a state of non-differentiation beyond thought. Ascetics have proclaimed this state as *Para-Bhakti* (supreme devotion). It is a state of perfect Being, or pure awareness. That is why Bhagavan says that our natural state is *meditation*.

Where there is real *bhakti* there will also be selfless service (*nishkama karma*). Where there is love there is also readiness to help. In *bhakti* when the attention is wholly directed to God ultimately one sees all creation as His form. It is stated that when the results of one's actions are surrendered to God in *nishkama karma* this will also take one to the path of Liberation through extinction of the ego. Abiding in God with form is devotion. Abidance in the Oneness of Being is supreme devotion.

Sri Bhagavan speaks of *bhakti*: ‘Like wax near fire, the mind by the fervour of devotion to God, melts and is freed of ignorance’ (*Navamanimalai*), and finally ‘like ice in water, turns into love and becomes one with God, the embodiment of love’ (*Aksharama-namalai*). ‘A *bhakta* is ever immersed in the Bliss of the Self’ (*Pancharatnam*).

“In order to enjoy everything, you require to find enjoyment in nothing.
In order to possess everything, you require to possess nothing.”

— St. John of the Cross.

GODDESS PARASAKTI'S THOUSAND NAMES (The Lalita Sahasranama)

By
R. SADASIVA AIYAR

THE *Lalita Trisati* and *Lalita Sahasranama* form the centre-pieces of the *Sri Chakra Puja* (the worship of Sri Chakra) performed at the Great Mother's Shrine in Sri Ramanasramam. To sit through that four-hour worship is an experience. The recital of the three hundred and the thousand Names holds us in a trance of deep silence.

The *Trisati* and the *Sahasranama* are both contained in the *Brahmanda Purana* and are integral parts of the *Lalitopakhyana* — the story of the upspringing, full-armed, of the Divine Power in the psyche to destroy the demon of *Ahamkara* (Egoity) called Bhandasura, Lalitambika, i.e. The Great Mother, transcendent in Splendour, Sublimity, Beauty,¹ is the dynamic aspect of Brahman. In the *Sahasranama* Reality is contemplated as Transcendent as well as Immanent, as the Plenitude of Grace, as "The Messenger of Lord Siva in the heart of man, as being worshipped by Siva Himself," as the Intercessor or Paraclete, as "Guru Supreme or Dakshinamurti in the heart, as the Embodiment of the entire line of Gurus. Herself the Ocean of Compassion, She resides in the ocean of nectar; in the flood of Her golden effulgence the Cosmos of infinite galaxies is engulfed." The description recalls Sri Bhagavan Ramana's apostrophe to Arunachala: "O Nectar-ocean of Compassion, in whose (infinite) circles of resplendence the entire Cosmos is swallowed up!" (*Five Stanzas to Arunachala*, Verse 1).

Essentially and centrally *advaitic*, the *Sahasranama* has yet a kindly eye on aspirants of all kinds and levels. While it declares that Lalitambika can be won only by turning inwards and hardly ever by outer worship (v. 213),² that She is in the secret cave of the heart



Goddess Lalitambika and Sri Chakra

(*guhya-rupini*), it also recognizes that even the *bhakti* (devotion) which regards God as other than oneself (*dvaita bhava*) leads to *Jnana*. When it says that the Goddess can be reached by *bhakti*, that She is caught in its spell (v. 92, 93) the word should be taken

¹ *Lalita* means "loveliness, effulgence, sublimity, exceeding sweetness"; *Ambika* means "The Mother of the Cosmos, who sums up in Herself the Power of *Ichha*, *Jnana*, and *Kriya*. (Will, Knowledge and Action).

² The numbers in brackets refer to the verse numbers in the Nirnay-Sagar edition.

in the monistic³ as well as in its dualistic sense. The *Sahasranama* also takes within its ambit Tantrism and Kundalini Yoga which go back to the remote past. Viewed in all these lights it is an ecumenic synthesis with a striking eclecticism.

Most of the Names have many meanings and their comprehension call for no common erudition in the great Scriptures, Puranas, Vedantic, and Tantric texts held authoritative. Fortunately we have the Commentary of Bhaskara Raya (17th-18th Cen.), the son of the then famous scholar, Gambhira Raya, Minister of the Bijapur Sultan. Bhaskara Raya was a scholar of extraordinary insight, with a learning that encompassed the entire heritage of spiritual lore of his day; on top of it he was a *siddha* of the highest order. Apart from the customary Panini, Yaksha and the lexicographers, he cites from nearly three hundred and fifty books to elucidate the complex of meanings. Our path in the commentary is illuminated by the *Brahma Sutras*, the *Upanishads*, the *Yoga Vasishtha*, the *Devi Bhagavata*, and *Mahatmya*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Suta Samhita*, from all outstanding Tantric texts, from the *Brahmanda*, *Padma*, *Devi*, *Linga*, *Kurma*, *Varaha*, *Vamana*, *Markandeya*, *Skanda* and other *Puranas*, and from many rare sources.

There runs through the earlier verses (52-115) a spiritual allegory and a scheme. The gods and sages, harassed by the demon, Bhandasura, invoke for his destruction the aid of the Great Mother by their oblations in the fire of Consciousness, *Chidagni*. From that fire rises up the Queen of the Cosmos, Lalitambika, all-armed, blazing in lustre like a thousand suns. Mounting Her million-rayed chariot She sallies forth to give battle to the demon. Attending Her are Her Premier Mantrini — the Power that comes of concentrating on one's own real nature (*purناهانتاتا*) and Her generalissimo, the Lord of Justice (*Dandanatha*). Her cavalry and elephantry (spiritual forces) are beyond calculation. Mantrini is seated in her chariot, *Geyachakra*.⁴ The Great Goddess has only to

glance at Her Lord, and Ganesa, the destroyer of all obstacles, is born; from Her finger-nails leap forth the ten avatars of Vishnu. The battle is joined. Bhandasura's son, Vishanga, — the poisonous attachment to the senses — is slain by Mantrini; while another, *Visukra* — the Jiva's identification of itself with the body — who causes never-ceasing sorrow, ever keeping us from turning to the Self, is despatched by *Varahi* (true discernment). The battle rages for some time, and eventually through the irresistible weapon of Siva, Bhandasura and his city (*Sunyaka*) are reduced to ashes. Now, the ego must not only vanish but spring up as the Self. Through the intercession of the Mother he rises up, bodiless as the Lord Himself. That is what the Myth of the incineration of Kamadeva by Siva's third eye and his phoenix-birth as *Ananga* through Uma's Grace signifies. He is restored to his own original state, that of Brahman, from which he had slipped into *jivabhava*. In a superb image the Goddess is described as "the sovereign herb that brought back to life *Kama* (the Jiva) who had been burned down by the ring-leader of the senses — namely the mind." (*Haranetra* means at once: "by Hara or Siva's eyes" and "by the leader of the senses.")

Seven verses follow describing the ascent of Kundalini — the Serpent Power — to the *Sahasrara*.⁵ In their wake come phrases that dwell on the *Nirguna Brahman* (the Absolute beyond attributes) and are linked up with the extinction of the six enemies in the heart of man; then Names setting forth the *Saguna* aspect, as the summation of all excellences, the meridian glory of all values, the zenith of all sovereignty; the greatest *mantra*, *tantra* and *yantra* the *ne plus ultra* of Beauty and Wisdom "in which nothing remains to be known." The pinnacle of all *Siddhis*, says

³ As defined in Sankara's *Vivekachudamani*, v. 31.

⁴ Symbolic of the identification of Brahman with the Self.

⁵ Later on verses 149-161 are also Tantric. Many terms in the *Sahasranama* have a Tantric significance, often over and above the ordinary ones.

the *Skanda Purana*, is that which is the fount of all delight, which is unaffected by the dichotomies of life — joy and sorrow, high and low, likes and dislikes, pains and pleasures, — which is limitless lustre and strength, untouched by sadness of any sort, which, being the Brahman-state, is eternally in *dhyana*.⁶ The Great Mother is this *Siddhi*. Present in the four states of consciousness, She transcends them all. And cosmically Hers are the functions of Creation, Preservation, Annihilation and Incipient Awakening — the first three being connected with the three states of consciousness.⁷

The Names flow on wave upon wave of melody, each word prismatic with overtones, not seldom with breath-taking imagery, and all profound in spiritual significance. They are the despair of the translator and the renderings here are but a pale *hortus siccus*. We are frequently reminded that the Great Mother's "form" is pure *Chit* (*Chideka-rasarpini*); that She is the subtle *Akasa* in the Heart; that She is the Inscrutable Self (*Ame-yatma*); that She is the *pranava*⁸; that She is the Bliss Eternal, that She is Knower, Knowledge, and Known — Meditator, Meditation, Meditated — all three in one. Her form is the oneness of Brahman and the Self.⁹ She is the Reality behind the world which, viewed apart from Her, is false. Along with this we are bidden to take hold of both the aspects, *Nirguna* and *Saguna*. She is *Sat* as well as *Asat*, *Para* and *Apara*, has form and no form. Devoid of both existence and the four kinds of non-existence, She is also the sovereign whose mighty armies are ubiquitous. The Light Supreme, our Home, and beyond the beyond, She also has the power to snap all bonds. If She is Fullness and Infinitude, in which there is no otherness (*Bhuma*), She is also the Ordainer of all creatures' life-journey.

The figure of the Cosmic Mother, with a yearning love and watchful solicitude for a child brooding over Her, imperceptibly slips into the mind when it envisages Brahman as

Love, Grace, Light, and Power. That is why even an Advaitic mystic like Saint Tayumana-var addresses a whole hymn to Uma, *Himavan's Beloved Child*. Nothing like the image of the Mother to come closest to our hearts. The worship of the Supreme Being as the World-Mother goes back perhaps to the dawn of spiritual consciousness in man. More than five thousand years ago we know that in the Indus Valley people prayed to the Mother-Goddess. The Rig Veda speaks of Her as *Aditi* — the Boundless One — "who is the sky, the air, father, mother, and son, who is all the gods . . . who is whatever hath been and will be born." (*R.V.* I-89-10). In ancient Egypt, the Mother of all the gods and the Goddess of Wisdom was known as Neith (or Neit), often confounded with Isis (Egyptian *Aset, Eset*). Engraved on Her temple at Sais were words challenging the mind by their import. "I am all that hath been, that is, and that will be. No mortal hath yet been able to lift the veil that covers me."¹⁰

In the Mediterranean world, during the second century after Christ, there arose, as Edward Conze tells us, the worship of Sophia, who, modelled on Ishtar, Isis, and Athene, embodied not only Sovereign Wisdom but also the idea of Magna Mater. It was contemporaneous with the age of Mahayana Buddhism in India which witnessed the sublime conception of Prajnaparamita as the apotheosis of transcendental Wisdom, the Mother of all the Buddhas. Along with Her, occupying a pride of place in the pantheon, was Tara. "Tara, from Sanskrit, *tarayati*, is the Saviouress who helps us to cross to the other shore, who removes fear and dread and who grants the fulfilment of all our wishes."¹¹ In China, down the ages, from the seventh

⁶ "Dhyana is our real nature" — Sri Bhagavan.

⁷ Thus the *Mandukya Upanishad* is compressed in a single verse.

⁸ *Triakshari, Aum*.

⁹ *Brahmatmaikya-swarupini; tattvamartha-swarupini*.

¹⁰ See Plutarch in his *Isis and Osiris*.

¹¹ Edward Conze: *Buddhism*, p. 192.

century, the Buddhism of Bhakti has adored Amitabha's compassion as Kuan-Yin; "from the pitcher She carries fall the Waters of Life." As Gladys de Meuter¹² has pointed out, "the willow-spray with which the Mother is depicted denotes that asperging with the heavenly dew which awakens and purifies the soul." What a remarkable similarity of image between this and the depiction of the Goddess Saraswati, in the *Devi Mahatmya*, as "One who purges us of nescience, of all dross, with Her Divine aspergillum of *kusa* grass, adrip with Wisdom" (*kausambhaksharika devi*)! In Catholic Europe, in the Middle Ages, storm-tossed and agonized souls, on land and sea, cried for help to the Madonna, who was to them the Fount of Grace and the Cornucopia of all blessings.

Again and again in the *Sahasranama* comes the reminder that in the hour of darkness and danger, in the fell clutch of circumstance, the surest succour is the Great Mother. "Let but the corner of Her eyes throb ever so little, all fear is dispelled; the smile that irradiates Her face with unimaginable Light flings fear afar." "The moment a man seeks Me as his Refuge, saying, 'I am thine,' I grant him full protection from all dangers, from all enemies. That is my solemn promise" (the *Ramayana*, VI — 18-33, 34). It is to this declaration of Sri Rama that the epithets *Satyavrata* and *Satyasandha* allude. "Having quenched the threefold fires — the torments of body or mind, or those caused by nature — She pours on the Heart the moonlight of joy"; "Falling like a rain of nectar on the forest-fire of *samsara*, She gives us the cessation of birth, death and decrepitude."

Through the *Sahasranama* runs an under-chord of Guidance or Upadesa to the seeker. We are told that She is hard to reach by mere external worship but easily attainable by inner concentration or *atma vichara* (213). Our worship should be by the "great sacrifice" and the "secret sacrifice" of the entire universe — and the universe is but our thoughts

— by our oneness with Her; Her abode is where all thoughts cease (*viviktastha*).¹³ Intense and unremitting devotion is stressed again and again. "She is the Swan in the Manasa lake — the heart of the devotee — the dancer in that hall."¹⁴ *Japa* should be continued till it goes on spontaneously within, until, the senses bound down, the Self, — as Sri Bhagavan Ramana said time and again — repeats "*Aham, Aham*" like the continuous flow of ghee; for the Goddess is *Ajapa*. The aspirant should cultivate love and a friendly feeling towards all beings (166), develop an inner urge to all that is pure and noble (299). Let him not act with the thought that he is the doer — She is *naishkarmya*.

Though we have often to cling to the most exalted meanings, we are also confronted by the problem: "which meaning can we let slide into a corner, seeing that all are equally profound?" Take the Name that sets off the rest like the ringing of a bell — the bell that opens the palace of eternity" — *Om Sri Mata*. We contemplate at once the Mother Most Holy, the Mother of Lakshmi (*Sri*, meaning Lakshmi), the Fount of all Blessings and all Felicity; the Mother of Saraswati, the Goddess of *Jnana* (*Sri*, meaning also Saraswati); and Siva's Consort, Parvati, who put Her hand to His throat and prevented the World-Poison from rising to the head (*Sri*-poison, *mata*-one who sets a limit). Again, look at the word-pictures in *Padmasana* and *Bhagavati*. The first shows Her as Brahma seated on the Lotus, as the Dispenser of life's blessings, as the destroyer of the demon Padmasura; and the second asks us to remember in one breath all that makes for the crown of spiritual values and ends — *jnana* (wisdom), *vairagya* (dispassion), liberation, True Greatness, Inner Strength, Lordship; and more, that She is the

¹² In her article, *The Divine Prism (The Mountain Path*, Jan. 1969, p.).

¹³ Or, in those who discriminate between the Real and the Unreal (*Atma* and *Anatma*).

¹⁴ *Bhakta-manasa-hamsika*.

Genetrix of the Cosmos, that She is Lakshmi Herself.¹⁵

Sometimes a word-complex sounds so simple as to put us off its profundity. The ancient grammarian Vararuchi, notes that the term *adi* stands for number eighty and we know that *nidhana* means "death." What are "the eighty deaths" that the Great Mother frees us from? The *Linga* and the *Vishnu Puranas* between them speak of fifty-two *pasas* or bonds and twenty-eight *vadhas* or formidable hurdles on the path of *jnana* or Liberation. The fifty-two are too numerous for us to consider, but what are the twenty-eight drags in the human psyche? They are the eleven kinds of disability, the nine kinds of complacency, and the eight *siddhis* (or supernormal powers).

Elsewhere (in verse 138), a trite metaphor, "She is the moon that makes the water-lilies,

namely, the eyes of Her Lord (*Mahakamesa*) blossom with joy", conceals the verity that Divine Grace weans us from the base, fleeting pleasures of the senses, and in their place blesses us with the radiance of inexpressible *Ananda*.

Her Names are as it were Seraphs that take wing and fly away the moment they are touched by the interpreter's profaning finger. Let them, however, wing to the Feet of the Mother and implore Her to lift us above this vale of Darkness to Her Empyrean Light. Verily, the Great Light, will unveil itself till, though the Sad-guru's Grace, with mind turned inward, the Light alone will remain. Lalitambika is none other than that Grace.

¹⁵ Hundreds of names are so iridescent with meanings and so lovely in form as to make illustration a poor affair.

Devotion and Meditation¹

By

N. N. Rajan

A DEVOTEE (V.K.) referred to the contents of the 6th verse of *Upadesa Saram* (*chittajam japa dhyanam uttaman* etc.) fully translated, this verse reads: "The repetition aloud of His name is better than praise. Better still is its faint murmur. But the best is repetition within the mind — and that is meditation, above referred to."

Bhagavan explained: "At the initial stage to develop *bhakti*, *mantras* should be repeated aloud and only by such constant practice control of mind can be acquired. It will be felt difficult to control the mind and do meditation at the initial stage. Hence utterance of *mantras* aloud can be successfully accomplished at the beginning stage. For a novice silent

concentration cannot be achieved easily unless he has past merits (*purva-punya*) to his credit.

"Sri Tukaram and other great saints used to tie *salangai* (small bells) around their legs and hands and do *bhajana*, dancing and jumping with ecstasy throughout the night. But during day time they would remain in samadhi. Likewise without allowing sleep to overcome and devour our time mind should be concentrated on Ishvara.

"In the later stage *vichara* becomes very easy and itself includes all i.e., *sravana*, *manana* and *nidhidhyasana* — hearing, reflection and uninterrupted contemplation."

¹ From the author's diary, 18-12-43.

SRI CHAKRA PUJA AT THE ASHRAM

BHAGAVAN Sri Ramana Maharshi consecrated by His sacred touch the *Meru Chakra* at the Shrine of Sri Mathrubhuteswara and this is worshipped on *Masa Pravesa* (the first day of the Tamil month), Fridays and Full Moon days.¹ These Pujas have become popular and devotees (of Bhagavan) seeking fulfilment of their desires of one kind or another, have pujas performed in their names. *Sri Chakra Puja* in our land is an ancient form of worship. It is the worship of the Divine Mother, Tripura Sundari, for the blessings of life, temporal and spiritual.

The Divine Mother, Tripura Sundari, as the Heart of the manifested world is the Absolute *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (*nirakara*). As *Sakara* (with form) She is *Rajarajeswari*, *Maha Ragni* (the Great Empress) having Her Court in *Sri Nagara* (*Sriman Nagara Nayika*) and playing Her great *Lila* of enjoying Her One Indivisible Being by becoming the many in the manifest world. In this aspect, from Her Being, there is a becoming through Her *Iccha* and *Kriya Shaktis*. Through Her mere seeing, takes place the formation of the multiplicity of *Upadhi Anthakaranas*, into which She Herself enters as the *Atman* (Self) and sports through one and all of them. So this great Mother sports as *Saham* through all the *Jivas* and as *Soham* with Her own Absolute Being.

The worship of *Sri Chakra* gives us this Knowledge that on the canvas of the Absolute runs this scroll of pictures projected on It by Its own powers — the films, the seer, the light, — all being Herself alone.

The Brahmarupini Mother enters into all lives that She creates. In the body of the individual souls *Kundalini Shakti* which is a reflection of Devi's Power, rests coiled like a serpent at the bottom of the spine in the *mula-*

dhara. It wakes up through *Yoga* and goes up piercing the six *chakras* (*muladhara*, *swadhishtana*, *manipuraka*, *anahata*, *visuddhi* and *ajjna*) and breaking the three knots (*BrahmAGRANThi*, *VishnUGRANThi* and *RudrAGRANThi*). When it rests at the *Sahasrara*, the thousand-petalled lotus at the crown of the head, it rests in unity with *Sat-Chit-Anand*, *Parama Siva*. Then the whole system experiences the bliss of ambrosia or the elixir of life. This is the crown and glory of *Yoga*, the unity of *Siva* and *Shakti* or *Para* and *Jiva*. In the process of ascent, *Jiva-Siva* reaches *Para-Siva*, and the reverse of it happens in the descent.

Thus is experienced the Grace of the Divine Mother, *Parasakthi*, who blesses Her children with deliverance from the whirlpool of birth and death.

The fifty-one letters in the Sanskrit alphabet from *A* to *Ha* that are located in the *Sri Chakra* are also experienced within the body in the process of the *Yoga* and so each one of us is a *Sri Puri* by ourselves. In this process the yogi has his own *Kasi*, *Ganga*, *Yamuna*, *Chidambara* etc., etc., all in himself.

A *jivanmuktha* is the Essence of *Sri Puri*. He is the Ocean of Bliss, the Elixir of Life. Worship of the *Mukthapurusha* is as efficacious and more, as the worship of *Sri Matha* in *Sri Chakra*.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi used to tell us that *Arunachala* is a natural *Sri Chakra* and worship of *Arunachala* is the worship of *Devi* in *Sri Puri*. *Arunachala* is hailed by *Acharya Sankara* as being *Sri Chakrkruthi*

¹ Any devotee wishing to participate in the puja, which has been very efficacious, should send name, *nakshatra* (birth star) and *gotra*, together with Rs. 10/- to the PRESIDENT, SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI, SOUTH INDIA.

*sona sailam.*² So the worship of the *Sri Chakra Meru* at Sri Ramanasramam, consecrated by Sri Bhagavan, that is Arunachala, Himself, is very efficacious and confers all blessings that are sought.

May the Grace of Sri Bhagavan be on all that seek His Grace and of Sri Tripura Sundari in *Sri Meru* consecrated by Him!

² "The *Sona* (Arunachala) mountain which is in the shape of *Sri Chakra*."

THE TORAH OF THE VOID ¹

By

RABBI NAHMAN OF BRATZLAV
Translated by Z. M. SCHACHTER

Thus we speak of the void.
There is no way to realize
the void before the future
is come to be now.

There are
two kinds of
unbelief :
One kind
originates
the *outering* sciences.
The questions raised by them
are to be answered.
" Know what to answer
the unbeliever " :
Outer knowing is rooted in
the order of Holiness.

Once there was *light*,
much and powerful,
holy *light*,
and it was in vessels
— — too much *light*,
too much power — —
and the *vessels* burst !

When the *vessels* burst
the fragments
of Holiness
took form
becoming the *outered* sciences.

So,
even of Holiness
there is offal :
Just as there is sweat
and hair and excrement,
so Holiness too
has its offal.

Holy Wisdom, too, has offal,
Outered wisdom
is the offal of the holy.
And when this offal is used
to twist the world,
you have sorcery.

— to be continued.

¹ Continued from the previous issue.

Be he a philosopher, a mystic or a scientist, their varying disciples stress "introspection, to arrive at a knowledge of the ultimate immutable essence that under-girds the mutable illusory world."

— L. BARNETT, *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, p. 113.

THE HEART

By
'ALONE'

(Continued from the October, '70 issue)

One day (Now, I remember the exact day : it was *Kartika Purnima* when there was a function also on Arunachala mountain at Tiruvannamalai (though I was in Poona) — as this writing is close to the incident, so I remember the exact date.

I was in the process of waking on my sofa-cum-bed the time being 4 a.m. . . .

When thus naturally I was awake [I was not aware at the moment that it was *Kartika Purnima*] I felt some 'throbbing' which was — spreading — spreading (so to say), all-encompassing —

. . . . some [what word shall I use?] some throbbing — some 'heaving' — all over [this is not just sensorial perception] and, inside me, the same sort of thing, at my right-side heart.

[where previously I have had "experiencing"]

. . . . This time, it was in both regions (so to say), simultaneously

. . . . throbbing inside me at that particular spot (. . . . now it is in my entire body really entire body and the same feeling)

[as if the universe is also *my* body]

(— how can I express it? —)

At the same time — I mean, simultaneously — this was 'going on'

[Again also, excuse me for bringing in the personal element when I make fair the article at about midnight after some lapse of days perhaps, something of the same 'feeling' I am "experiencing" now, also]

Please to continue the article

This was (rather, is) not even 'simultaneously' but, *the whole* is throbbing, my body is the universe

[Kindly, bear interruption a little]

— I don't know what is what — ! a certain cool vibrating — throbbing — no burden as such, no violent (so to say), feeling in it

but a feeling of love (also) is in it

Here, in this matter, I want to commune to you one point !!

At this time, I did not (and I do not) 'remember' — [Please the verb : 'remember'] ('The One') who may be *really* 'responsible' for this present occurrence — [This also struck me (and, I am writing from memory, very much later)]

Only I was, *and now also* (— which is not and cannot be 'memory' —) (am) simply "enjoying."

Now, the 'arduous' part of it (and which is *very important*) is ahead!

["Arduous" in the sense which requires faith !]

This "The one" is moving — changing places —

— *but it is "the one" !!*

[Please see !]

The benefactor or the dispenser of grace at different times at different given moments may differ from one another *but, it is "the One"* who is the benefactor — or simply said, the entity "responsible."

[If you follow subtly]

'The mind' always wants to locate, ascertain, who the "entity" is

[Please]

[If 'space' permits the following may be added !]

. . . .

The sense of "the one" (or for 'the one') is an extra "enjoyment" [I am using the

word "enjoyment", not in the meaning of revolution —] ! and ('the mind') 'pleasure' (which is based on 'the mind', may even like that particular "person" that means, when 'the mind' is functioning)] [really, 'the one' does not remain as a 'person' when performing such a tremendous miracle]

'The one'
We may call, or name, or term "the one", for one who is "responsible" [I am using this word as a substitute for a benefactor, a gracious one though these terms are not at all applicable in case of 'the one' who brings about (though they will never say so) such a stupendous metamorphosis —

Please we — ('the one' is always within us) — in life and in LIFE. and, in life (— 'the one' —) has dimensions, not so in LIFE or BEING (with capital letters).

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

.....

By Dr. Manuel Valenzuela

From the slope of holy Arunachala
Look towards the golden red setting sun
Siva penetrating into the Earth
To quicken Her with His Spirit
He is Siva.
When the sun has gone down
The inner eye sees Him effulgent
In the womb of the Earth.

And thus when walking with measured step
Around the tomb
In it the very loved Master Sri Ramana
Lies buried in the sacred lotus *asana*
The inner eye sees Him
A golden red sun sunk in the Earth
To quicken Her with His spirit
And the heart feels Him
A warm spring of Grace
In Silence flowing . . . flowing . . .
The while his devotees
Around His tomb walk in *pradakshina*
Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya !



HOW THE MANTRA¹ CAME TO ME

By
T. K. S.

THE mantra *Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya* fascinated me greatly in my early days ; it so delighted me that I was constantly thinking of Lord Vasudeva. I had a premonition that this body would pass away in its fortieth year, and I wanted to have *darsan* of the Lord before that time. I fasted and practised devotion to Lord Vasudeva incessantly ; I read *Sri Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam* with great delight. Then when I read in the *Gita Jnani tu atmaiva me matam* (‘ In My view, the Jnani is My own Self ’) it went straight to my heart and the thought came to me : “ While I have at hand Bhagavan Sri Ramana, who is Himself Vasudeva, why should I worship Vasudeva separately ? ” Be it noted that all this was in my early days before settling down with Sri Bhagavan at His Ashram. So I wanted one single *mantra*, a single deity (*devata*), and a single scripture, so that there might be no conflict of loyalties. Sri Ramana Paramatman became easily the God to worship, His *Collected Works* the gospel ; as for the *mantra*, it struck me intuitively that *Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya* (Obeisance to Bhagavan Sri Ramana) might be an exact parallel to *Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya*. I counted the letters in this new

mantra, and was very happy to find it also contained twelve letters (in Sanskrit) ; I told all this to Sri Bhagavan, and He gave the *mantra* His approval.

Advanced practisers (*sadhakas*) may laugh at this and say : “ Why do you need a *mantra* while the Ocean of Bliss is there for one to be immersed in directly ? ” I confess that in this I was trying to conform to the traditional method of practice (*upasana*) which forms one of the main elements in *bhakti* (devotion). Sri Bhagavan has revealed His true nature as the All-Witness ; yet there is the explicit injunction that Advaita must be only in the attitude and never be interpreted in outer action.

“ Retain at heart always the sense of non-duality but never express it in action. My son, the sense of non-duality may apply to the three worlds but it is not to be used towards the Guru.”

— *Supplement to the Forty Verses on Reality of Sri Bhagavan.*

This is how the mantra *Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya* came to me !

¹ Please also see the *Ashram Bulletin* of this issue.

Maharshi : Several paths are taught in the Vedas to suit the different grades of qualified aspirants. Yet, since release is but the destruction of mind, all efforts have for their aim the control of mind. Although the modes of meditation may appear to be different from one another, in the end all of them become one. There is no need to doubt this. One may adopt that path which suits the maturity of one’s mind.

— *Self Enquiry*, p. 34.

THE HALL OF AWARENESS¹

By
WEI WU WEI

The Hall of Awareness is here where I am.
Wherever I look, it is around me,
It is unbounded and its ceiling is the sky.

It must needs be so, for I am alone,
And therefore all the world is in it.

It is infinite — since I am not finite,
It is intemporal — since I am not temporal,
For what 'space' and 'time' are — I am.

The Hall of Awareness cannot be seen from without :
It can only be apperceived from within,
Because I alone can *look*, and only you can *see*.

You will be welcome, enter when you will,
There is room for everyone, for all sentient-beings ;
You will find yourself at-home,
Truly at-home, as never before,
Because you have always been here,
Although you may never have noticed it !

You have only to remember who you are,
Which is just to stop forgetting,
For a split-second,
And you will find that you are I.

¹ This poem was sent to Sri Ganesan in response to his invitation to Wei Wu Wei to participate in the function of the inauguration of *Sri Ramana Auditorium* (referred to in our July 1970 issue, p. 168).

Latent Desires Have to Go

Will latent desires go when one lives in all comfort? In other words, how many after Janaka have lived as mendicant Friars in palaces?

Why should Buddha have renounced? Why should Swami Vivekananda ask us to roam like the rhinoceros, even as the lion not trembling at noises, even as the wind not caught in a net, even as the lotus leaf unstained by the water?

THE SPIRITUAL HEART

By

Madguni Shambhu Bhat and
Dr. Manuel Valenzuela

BHAGAVAN Sri Ramana Maharshi mentioned in his TALKS with devotees that the spiritual heart is on the right side of the chest :

'Between the two breasts, below the chest and above the abdomen, there are six viscera of various colours. Of these one resembles a lily bud and is two digits to the right of centre. This is the Heart (the spiritual Heart-Centre).

'It is inverted, and in it there is a tiny orifice wherein is firmly seated along with latent tendencies etc., an immense darkness. Thereon the entire nervous system has its support. It is the seat of the vital forces, the mind, and the light of consciousness.'

*Supplement to the Forty Verses
on Reality, p. 90.*

It is generally understood that the physical heart lies on the left side of the chest. As a matter of fact the heart resembles a lotus flower and hangs upside down with its major portion on the left side of the chest. Anatomists will agree that the whole of the heart does not lie in the left chest. It is placed slantingly with about one-eighth in the right chest, that is, a part of the auricle falls to the right of the chest. Medical research has found that the heart operates with stimuli given by a nucleus (of Aschoff-Tawara) having a tail of nerves called the fasciculi of HISS. This nucleus lies in the right auricle (and the fasciculi between the two auricles) to the right of the chest.

The Vedic *mantras* say that it is the heart centre that has to be worshipped for finding Brahman. It therefore agrees with what Sri Bhagavan said about the heart.

“Why should your occupation or duties in life interfere with your spiritual effort? For instance, there is a difference between your activities at home and in the office. In your office activities you are detached and so long as you do your duty you do not care what happens or whether it results in gain or loss to the employer. But your duties at home are performed with attachment and you are all the time anxious as to whether they will bring advantage or disadvantage to you and your family. But it is possible to perform all the activities of life with detachment and regard only the Self as real. It is wrong to suppose that if one is fixed in the Self one's duties in life will not be properly performed. It is like an actor. He dresses and acts and even feels the part he is playing, but he knows really that he is not that character but some one else in real life. In the same way, why should the body-consciousness or the feeling 'I-am-the-body' disturb you, once you know for certain that you are not the body but the Self? Nothing that the body does should shake you from abidance in the Self. Such abidance will never interfere with the proper and effective discharge of whatever duties the body has, any more than the actor's being aware of his real status in life interferes with his acting a part on the stage,” Sri Bhagavan.

— *Day By Day with Bhagavan*, p. 264.

FEET SWEET

By
paul rePS

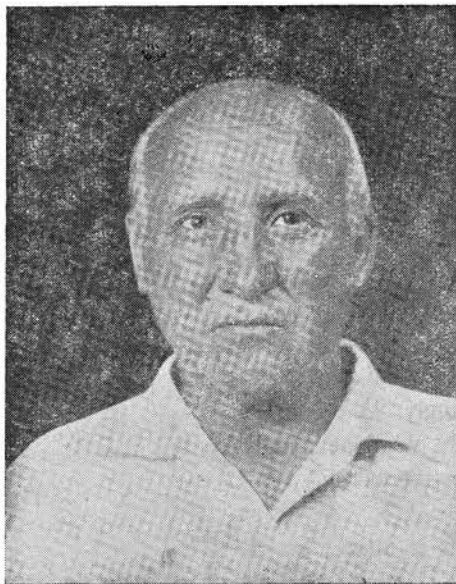
Suppose
 (everything we do is suppose)
 suppose
 I am going to do something
 or undo something
 (do in wake and undo in deep sleep and in deep wake)
 in either case rich currents of feel
 insweep my nerve network
 beyond my knowing.
 I meet you. You say to me,
 "I do not exist."
 I reply, "Well, if you don't exist
 how can you say you don't exist?"
 You answer, "I say it with my concept system."
 "Then you exist in your concepts
 and don't exist in your un-concepts,
 is that what you mean?" I ask you.
 You reply . . . but by now you are boring me
 ratiocinating and I think (to myself)
 "Until it's fun
 it's better
 left undone."
 (We like to play be-cause we feel and feel flows
 through and through.)
 Muslims say, have said, "Only Allah exists."
 Millions of them have said it feelingly
 strongly passionately wholeheartedly wholeheartingly.
 And if only Allah exists then I do not ex-ist
 outside of Allah who is All-ah!
 See? The simple hyphen ex-plains it all,
 EX-IST.
 No one is outside the inside.
 "Oh, well" I say to me "I am beginning to dull me."
 So instead of mouthing it I foot it,
 going into my feet and walking a way,
 pre-concepting in my feet sweet.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By
JOS. Fr. HAAGEN

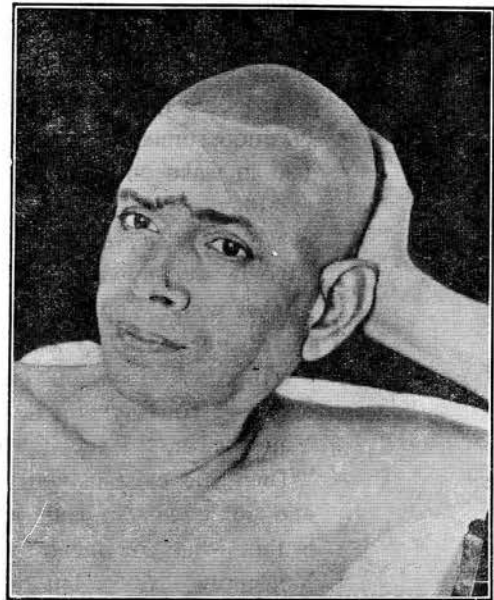
AS a young man I began to ask myself :
Why do I live ? Has life any sense ? Who
knows the truth and could show me the way
to it ?

I was seeking a reply in vain in religion and
philosophy. Many a night I spent disenchanted
with my consuming silent questions directed
to the stars : 'Where can I find help, what is
sin ?' I was convinced at the time that I was
the body. Later this conviction was shaken.
How can 'I' be limited to the body ? There
must be something much greater incomprehen-
sible, transcendental !



Jos. Fr. Haagen

In 1951 a friend introduced me to Paul
Brunton's book *Yogis* where I heard for the
first time about Sri Ramana Maharshi. Now
I knew where to seek. I cut out a picture
of the entrance to the thousand pillared *man-
tapam* with Arunachala in the background and
hung it over my bed. It worked. Gradually



I bought all the books available in German
about Ramana Maharshi : *Sri Ramana
Maharshi Leben und Werk* and *Gespraechen* by
Satyamayi, *Ramana Maharshi und der Weg
zur Selbsterkenntnis* by Arthur Osborne,
Auf den Pfad Sri Ramana Maharshi by Mouni
Sadhu.

I began to understand that given a genuine
Master a disciple must also be ripe enough
and have the necessary understanding and
fortitude to follow his teaching. I was not
quite ready in spite of my longing but Bhaga-
van's Grace and my striving widened my
understanding and it was His Grace that
brought me into contact with two angels who
maintained that they were only instruments :
Lucy Cornelssen (*Satyamayi*) was one of them.
It was thanks to her that I gained more under-
standing and could safely make my way to
India and return to my country.

When I first arrived in India I was bewildered, helpless, overwhelmed with a multitude of unusual impressions but thanks to the kindness and help of devotees, among them the President's son Ganesan,¹ I easily got over the initial difficulties. I would like to reciprocate the love and kindness that I received from all united in that abode of Love, Arunachala.

My most profound impressions came from three sources :

When I went to Skandasram a little way up the Hill I felt a very benevolent Silence, a living Silence which made me very happy and seemed all-embracing.

The small room in which Bhagavan attained Mahasamdhi contains all the things which He touched or used and a beautiful picture. There is also a very good picture in the old meditation hall and the new Ramana Auditorium. To meditate in these places one feels an all-pervading fullness of peace and happiness. Arunachala is the Heart of the Universe and everywhere, I was told by an old devotee.

I cannot finish without mentioning the lovely garden with a full wonderful view of Arunachala, and the abode where Mr. Arthur Osborne lived a life of utter devotion and selfless service. It leaves a deep impression, particularly his *samadhi* which seems living

amidst flowers and the twittering of birds in the overhanging branches of the fruit trees. He was Bhagavan's pure instrument spreading His teaching in clear and simple words which touch the heart of devotees in many corners of the world particularly in the West. The *samadhi*, symbolising absorption in Arunachala and the broken or transcended wheel of life, is in the garden facing Arunachala. Whenever I visited this sacred spot I had an indescribable feeling of happiness and peace. I spent beautiful hours there. Often Mrs. Ruth Hartman, a very sincere seeker and true devotee of Bhagavan, would be there and occasionally other visitors. Even Bonzo, the little playful half-grown dog, who followed us everywhere, remained still and at peace near the *samadhi* while we were meditating there, getting up only when his mistress did.

I would return in the evening to my very nice room through the windows of which one could perceive the peak of Arunachala and the monkeys in the trees. The Tamil country is as lovely as the people who live there.

So once more may I express my heartfelt thanks and may Arunachala bless the whole world !

¹ Ganesa or Vigneswara means the remover of obstacles.

To Arthur Osborne

By Lt. Col. Ottar Singh

O! Arthur, Arthur!
Where are you?
Where's the pen
The Path of Truth
With which you drew?

In your heart I'm with you
The pen is in hands
That Ramana'll guide too.
The Mountain Path
Yes, *The Mountain Path*
Guru's Grace is ever new.

THE GREAT LEARNING

By
Fr. THOMAS MERTON

THE *Great Learning* is by no means a matter of self-awareness, still less of hyper-subjective self-consciousness. It is objective and concrete and dynamic. It is a way of enlightenment, of clarification by *intelligent action*. It is a way of acting that clarifies reality by being itself clear, direct, definite and true, and thus bringing the agent into harmony with the objectively real, not in a metaphysical sense so much as in a practical, social and religious sense. And this contact with the real, the ethical *Tao*, is celebrated, solemnized, by rites. Moral action is at the same time contemplative and liturgical. Symbolic ceremony gives it a character of deeper realization. It is not only not automatic, nor the product of inert routine. It is more than merely spontaneous. It is the *fruit of spiritual awareness*.

This concept of awareness is often translated as "sincerity." Ezra Pound describes it (in the Chinese ideogram) as "the sun's lance coming to rest on the precise spot verbally." It is matter of *focus*, the sapiential clarification of what was hitherto unknown and inarticulate, the bringing forth of the unconscious and

the obscure into the focus of clarity by meaningful action at the right moment, with the right purpose, in the right manner, and with the proper splendour of rite, that is to say with sacred and aesthetic awareness.

This, to my mind, is a splendid and civilized concept of ethical action. It is magnificently human, contemplative, noble and productive. When one grasps this Confucian outlook on life and on human activity one realizes in a flash the deep meaning of Christian conduct — a meaning which has been to such a great extent emptied of religious content and emasculated by abstractness in our cerebral Western culture. It is quite clear, though, that this archaic Chinese concept accords with the unspoken presuppositions of a thought like that of St. Thomas Aquinas who, though he uses the technical language of Greek philosophy, is nevertheless fully concrete in this sapiential sense because he is a contemplative: not a Platonic contemplative in love with incorporeal essences but a Christian contemplative who sees the divine light in every being. For everything exists "insofar as it is known by God." (*Sun. Theol.* I, Q. xiv, a. 8).

The Old Hermit

A lonely hermitage on a mountain peak,
Towering above a thousand others;
One half is occupied by an old monk,
The other by a cloud!

Last night it was stormy
And the cloud was blown away;
After all a cloud is not equal
To the old man's quiet way.

— RYOKWAN.

LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

By
SYLVAN LEVEY

WHERE are we going? Whence have we come? Why are we here? How can we find happiness? These four questions have engaged the best efforts of many philosophers throughout history. Many have given up the quest for satisfactory answers, claiming that the mystery of life can never be solved. Others have given answers to the four big questions which vary according to the depth and clarity of the individual thinker, school of thought, or religion.

The correct answers to these questions have been taught through the ages by enlightened sages manifesting in the world to keep the light of truth from being extinguished completely by the ignorance of man. Their teachings have been clothed in different vocabularies (not languages) and forms according to the levels of understanding of the audiences to which they were addressed.

Every great soul has a unique mission, and thus the attempt to compare the theories of various teachers in detail often leads to confusion and seeming contradiction. Religions often spring up around the teachings of *jnani*s who were reformers and revealers of religious thought in their time, such as Lord Krishna, Buddha, and Christ. The "practical" men who organized those institutions seldom preserved the teachings of the original teacher in their pure form — and not always because of imperfect motivations: forms and concepts simply cannot serve as completely transparent vehicles for the highest truth.

Then there were those other saints — seldom known to any but their own limited band of *chelas* — whose roles were less well known. These agents of the cosmic plan

deliberately shunned the public stage, but were no less active for that reason. By their presence alone, many were speeded along their evolutionary spiritual pilgrimages, the balance of good in the world (*dharma*) righted, the earth's history influenced — and countless other results achieved, all shrouded in the mists of their silence.

The truth is one, but it is also infinite. Thus, what may seem like a contradiction between two sets of teachings will appear harmonious parts of a divine mosaic when viewed from a higher plane of consciousness.

The simplest level of the messages of the Masters appears in the form of the various scriptures, the bibles, and holy books of the social religions. These appeal to the earth-bound minds of the mass of mankind; they are often written in parable style, to attract the emotional aspect in a seeker.

For the more intellectual student, these very scriptures bear within themselves allegorical resonances, the true significance of which can be uncovered only by deep study and thought. For these souls theological commentary is of greater interest than literal meaning. They have been responsible for many illuminating insights into human spiritual history and moral lessons to be gleaned from a penetrating study of the religious writings of the various churches. They are also the creators of sects, even while the teacher himself may be still incarnated.

The deepest treasures of the wisdom schools are reserved for the mystics, the inner-core of the Master's disciples — to whom he discloses the truth unadorned by emotional or intellectual forms. To these chosen few is revealed

the truth as an intuitional *experience*, not usually oriented people can get at his deepest only as an intellectual insight which may mean by meditating upon his written words, be a necessary preliminary. In generations thus contacting the very vibration of the following the teacher's departure such spiri- Master himself.

THE WORLD OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

By

Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

Was He born? Did He ever die? While on earth
 Radiated consciousness, and still does. Birth and death
 Mark an interval : while ego by stealth
 Veils pure I-AM-NESS ; sense inputs connive
 Imagings of things concrete and things
 To which 'I' get attached as my own wealth.
 The 'gross I' grows expanding mundane girth ;
 The cycle goes on, pressing ego-drive.

Shoulders bent with care, head rent with fear
 Mind confused, and light of the Self diffused,
 While loyalties snap, and Royalties shun,
 The Effulgent Grace home you to Him, clear
 Shines the Self as Guru, enshrined
 More effulgent than the sun
 In the heart, ALL-THAT-IS.

Let Go

The student learns by daily increment.
 The Way is gained by daily loss,
 Loss upon loss until
 At last comes rest.

By letting go, it all gets done ;
 The world is won by those who let go !
 But when you try and try
 The world is then beyond the winning.

— From *Lao Tzu*.

SAD-GURU'S GRACE

(A Psychological, Para-Psychological and Factual Discussion)

By

Prof. U. A. ASRANI

THE January 1971 issue of *The Mountain Path* has very remarkably clarified the conception of the Sad-Guru's Grace. I am very grateful.

Let me confess straightaway that I have had considerable misgivings about this concept. The Guru is worshipped on the Guru Purnima Day. Even his feet are installed in marble for obeisance. Then again, implicit faith in him, expecting miracles from him, propagating them, and expecting further that his Grace will work a miracle some time in every believing disciple.

Such a cult may appear excusable, in some places like Sri Ramanasramam, where a great spiritual giant — in a way unique in Indian Spiritual History — lived for about four decades. But this cult is here, there, and everywhere; in all the hundreds of thousands of Ashrams, even where much lesser spiritual lights have shown or are shining.

It has all along occurred to me that some spiritual geniuses, like Bhagavan, may by a mere glance, or even in silence, influence some minds; so that they taste at once the bliss of Spiritual Silence, and thus get converted from materialistic hedonism — so rampant in these times — to a search within for peace, harmony and happiness. That is a very good start, and an easy one, worthy of being highly appreciated. But a dependence on the Guru, or his miraculous Grace, even thereafter, is it healthy? My own master — a *Brahma Jnani* — used to tell us: I am only a Sign-Post on the Road, indicating the way; Sadhana is your business; you cannot escape it!

There have been great disciples of great Masters in our own Spiritual History; but each such disciple had a distinctly different

individuality, originality and creativity of his own; he was not a mere carbon-copy of his Guru. Sometimes the disciple excelled the Master in certain personal traits or lines of thought and action, though self-realisation is identical. Why should it not be so? If a student of a great scientist can be a greater scientist, if a student of a poet or an artist can become greater than his master, why may not the disciple of a spiritual sage surpass his Guru in external usefulness, in reputation, in charisma, or in schemes of social or individual welfare?

Those who depend too much on the Guru feel considerably let down when, as inevitable, the call of Destiny resolves the body of the Guru into its molecules. Such dependent disciples feel then like a boat which has lost its boatman or broken its rudder. It is on this account, just to prevent the breeding of an inferiority or dependence complex, that many Mahatmas nowadays do not allow their disciples to touch their feet. Humility is good for pricking the bubble of self-conceit; but why keep on pricking an exploded bubble all life?

In esoteric circles of so many Mahatmas the teaching is kept secret. Knowledge of techniques is simply handed down from Master to disciple. Techniques may vary; shades and details elsewhere are likely to be different; but the man-in-the bondage of Maya is the same at the commencement of all genuine Paths; and the Free Sage, at the conclusion of all Paths, is also the same. A curtain of secrecy is necessary, of course, from extrovert materialistic scoffers, but why also from genuine seekers?

There is no secrecy in the teaching of even abstruse subjects like physics or mathematics.

for those who are duly qualified to learn them. Again a student chooses, after a full enquiry, his professor of Science. It will be foolish of him, to keep on changing his university or his professor every few months. He must have the faith and patience to secure from his professor all that he has to give. If he is a genuine professor he takes up the beginner and carries him on upto the D.Sc. He imparts to him the trick of the trade, of searching out Nature's secrets. Then the student is free to roam about the world of science. He may develop his own themes in his own way, follow new initiatives which occur to him or suit him; he may even excel his professor in his final attainments; but what stands in his stead throughout is the training in research work which his professor gave him. That is like the *sadhana* which the Spiritual Master, gives to his disciple.

All the above misgivings of mine were cleared by several passages and articles, in the January, 1971 issue of *The Mountain Path*. Psychology is not wrong in its criticism of Gurus and the Grace. It is the definition of the Guru in such cults which is erroneous. The Real Guru — the Sad-Guru — is not outside the disciple; he is not located in a particular human body. He is within the disciple's heart itself. Even if the disciple happens to be concrete-minded and requires a concrete symbol in human form to start with, he should not forget that the person of the personal or visible Guru is only a symbol. The real Guru, the Sad-Guru, is within us. He is our Cosmic Self, the Brahman, or God, as some people would like to call Him. 'The Divine Grace is vouchsafed to him only who has striven hard and one-pointedly.' The manifestation of the Grace depends upon the capacity of the vessel of the disciple, the quality of his relaxation from his anxieties, thoughts etc. 'Grace is ever present; Grace is the Self; you are never out of its operation. . . . Earnest efforts never fail.' The highest form of Grace is 'Silence.' 'Bhagavan always bade us, to seek the Inner Guru. The

love that we bore to the outer Guru, helped us to do so, and yet in a way, it impeded' — says Arthur Osborne. When Ramana Maharshi has himself said all this, and a man of Arthur Osborne's stature, reports his bidding, what further confirmation is needed? Maharshi would never make a definite statement that he (the person) was the Guru. The visible Guru's function is only to indicate the way to the Sad-Guru within us. See how cleverly he parried all questions about himself on this issue (p. 18, Jan. 1971 issue).

There is thus no actual difference between the psychologists and Ramana Maharshi on this point. It appears that the Really Awakened, the *Jivanmuktas*, have no quarrel with the knowledge we call mundane or with science. The higher knowledge includes the lower; it need not contradict it. It is only the beginners and those yet in the middle who distinguish between the two types of knowledge. I personally think that we have made artificial categories of Body, Mind and Spirit — as separate entities; then we assume that a psychologist cannot apprehend spirituality.

Psychologists in the West have by now gone far beyond the mere behaviorist and clinical psychologies which dominated the field upto the last generation. They have progressed upto the Third Force (Humanistic Psychology) and the Fourth Force (Transpersonal Psychology) in Psychology, of the late Dr. A. H. Maslow.

Para-psychologists, researching on well authenticated cases of Telepathy, Clairvoyance etc., have come to the conclusion, that they cannot help postulating a Cosmic Psychic Field, a sort of Mental Pool of the whole Universe, which acts on each and every so called 'Separate Individual Mind' and in return bears its reactions. Therefore, not only genetically, physically, dietetically and socially but also psychologically, the apparently separate individual is interlinked, it appears, with the Big Whole, the Cosmic, Dynamic Evolutionary Whole, very probably in the same way that the millions of our white blood

corpuscles are all interlinked and harmoniously organised within what we call the Human Body Organism. The exact way that Cosmic Psychic Field functions is still an enigma to the para-psychologists; but the interlinking and interactions are undeniable psychological facts. If we call that Big Cosmic Whole Spirit then you see how individual bodies and minds are possibly organised within that Whole; hence the knowledge of body and mind may be included within the Realisation of the Spirit, but will not be contradicted by it.

It is the same interlinking and interaction, on the Cosmic scale which explains quite adequately the adages like: 'Seek and you will find'; Or 'Knock and it shall be opened unto you!' Angels Unawares — as we often say — come and help us, not only in mundane affairs, but also in spiritual matters. Only a keen desire to progress, and the patience to wait, should be there. Quite a number of our great Spiritual geniuses had no visible Gurus; but some unknown strangers, or some events in life, pushed them forwards or inwards; just as the Bhairavi and Totapuri helped Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Who sent them? The same Cosmic Psychic Field. A good student seeks a capable professor; but a good professor also appreciates and welcomes a genuine seeker of knowledge. Both are psychically interlinked. After the Nirvana of the Visible Guru it is not absolutely necessary, that he should come again to guide his disciples in visions or in dreams. Some others, entirely unknown before, may cross the disciple's path. That is the present writer's personal experience. His personal or visible Guru entered his Nirvana as early as 1934. The writer was evidently not prepared till then; his deepest experiences and forward steps, were helped by others or by events and circumstances. The Real Sad-Guru is One for the whole world, and for all time — the same Cosmic Dynamic Evolving Whole.

Challenges of life, of body and mind, are there and will be coming and going as long

as the body lasts; some apparently insoluble tangles may also come. So, if the visible Guru be not there for guidance, some 'angels unawares' may come and help. Even if some tangles still remain let us play our spiritual game — like the rest of our game of life — as good sportsmen — searching for solution, but without tension or impatience. After all, what does it matter if the visible body of a seeker leaves some tangles for other visible bodies or for time to solve or dissolve after him. The individual is, in the expressions that we can comprehend, only a relatively ephemeral existence within the Cosmic Eternal Whole.

We need a Guru or an Ustad in Music and Fine Arts also. For grasping adequately the insights of criticism in poetry, music, painting and even in scientific subjects like atomic physics, relativity, quantum mechanics etc., a student must sit *near* his Guru — exactly as in the Upanishadic age the spiritual student sat near his master. The latter somehow, by actual contact and personal talks, communicates his insights to the student directly — a task which books alone could not have performed. Call such a communication of insight, a miraculous Grace or whatever else you like, but the communication is true of mundane subjects, quite as much as in spiritual ones.

There is of course a vital difference between the natures of the two insights, the mundane and the spiritual. The former insights are in individual subjects only, while the latter insight is far wider and probes much deeper into the very construction of our conceptual world — the *maya* of categories (*dwandva*), good, bad, mine, yours, his, even myself and others etc. — The whole spider's web of conceptions, which we have woven for our convenience, while growing under the influence of the common human culture. The pity of it is that our conceptions, originally meant to be only for convenience of comprehension, have become firmly concretised in our brains in the form of prejudices and prepossessions.

They cloud our very perceptions ; we mistake a rope for a snake (compare the subject of modern semantics). Spiritual culture yields a further Insight, that this self-woven spider's web is removable at first temporarily, and later even permanently. Some spiritual giants like Sri Ramana Maharshi have the capacity of communicating their spiritual Insight at deeper levels of the mind, but the necessity of such a communication — or the Guru's Grace — exists in some mundane subjects, quite as well as in the spiritual sphere.

In one sense, the communication of the Spiritual Insight is easy. The goal of the *Jivanmukta* State is also called *Sahaja* — i.e. Easy, or Natural. We have nothing new to acquire, as in arts, crafts and sciences. We have only to regain the innocence, the unselfishness, and the detachment, or in other words, the ideal mental health of a new born healthy baby ; he may weep, but he does not worry over the past or the future. We have only to de-automatize our conceptional categories (*dwandva*), our prejudices and prepossessions.

Just as pain or fever warns us about physical disease, and we rush to a physician for relief ; in exactly the same way the stress of modern complex life, its frustrations, anxieties

etc., make us conscious of our deficiency in mental health. They constitute the ever-present Sad-Guru, within us, reminding us constantly of what we lack. But unfortunately we do not co-operate with that beneficent Force. Instead of going to some competent Guru, and taking to Yoga — we try to drown our frustrations and anxieties in drinks, drugs, diversions and the like. That gives only temporary relief.

Even as we are, if only we could economise thinking, live always in the present, if only we can give up our poignant desires, and work like sportsmen, to the best of our lights this in itself will lead us to the path of sadhana to reveal our primordial *Jivanmukta* State which is already there with us. There have been Mahatmas, who acquired that State, merely by serving their Masters dedicatedly. Lord Krishna has given in his *Gita* a very simple alternative formula, that of *Karma Yoga*. I think spiritual paths for stilling the mind are also only a means ; the end is the *Sahaja* State. All that we essentially require is to cure the mind of its unhealthy pursuits and to relieve it of its unnecessary and extravagant tensions. Once the ideal mental health is secured, other facets of the *Jivanmukta* State (i.e., Liberation here and now) will follow.

Long Life

It is wisdom to know others ;
It is enlightenment to know one's self.

The conqueror of men is powerful ;
The master of himself is strong.

It is wealth to be content ;
It is wilful to force one's way on others.

Endurance is to keep one's place ;
Long life it is to die and not perish.

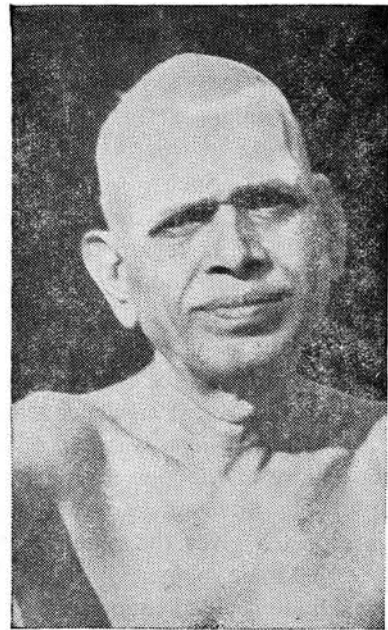
— From *Lao Tzu*.

REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY DAYS WITH SRI BHAGAVAN

By
D. S. SASTRI¹

DURING my first visit to the Ashram in 1941, I arranged for a *Bhiksha* — a thing which few visitors did because of the cost involved in giving a feast to all the inmates of the Ashram. I had a feeling of self-importance on that account. In the afternoon, however, when I was taking tea with two other devotees, one of them, Sri Narayana Iyer, Sub-Registrar, told Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer, Advocate, “Do you know who gave the feast to us all this morning? It is Sri Sastri who is by our side.” To this Sri Ramachandra Iyer remarked, “What does it matter to us who gives the *Bhiksha*? Sri Bhagavan has given our feed for the day and that is what matters to us.” That was a good lesson in humility and brought home to me the ever-present watchfulness of a real *jnani* who uses various means to cut off the heads of the hydra of egotism.

I did not know much about Hindu scriptures or philosophy. I wanted to study them with the help of a pundit and so asked Bhagavan whether I should begin with *Yoga Vasistha* or *Bhagavad Gita*. Someone had told me earlier that since the former deals with the *Jnana marga* which is that of Bhagavan, a beginning should be made with that book. Bhagavan, however, suggested the *Gita*. I was not altogether happy about it. Next day, after I left, Bhagavan told my sister Nagamma that beginners should read the *Gita* first to get an idea of the fundamentals of Hindu religion and philosophy and that *Yoga Vasistha* could be thought of later. That was duly conveyed to me. I therefore arranged with a pundit to give discourses on the *Gita* but before commencing we came to the Ashram to obtain Bhagavan’s blessings. Bhagavan



told us that the *Gita* should be studied carefully and without undue haste. Accordingly the discourses attended by a small group of devotees, apart from myself, lasted over a period of twenty months.

I happened to come to the Ashram a few days in advance for the Golden Jubilee Celebrations in September, 1946. A day after my arrival, I left for Vellore in the morning by car, on office work. The Ashram authorities requested me to pick up from somebody in Vellore a bagful of vegetables and other articles required for the jubilee celebrations and bring them back with me. It is usual for devotees to tell Bhagavan before leaving

¹ Introduced to our readers in our previous issue, p. 135.

Tiruvannamalai. For some reason I omitted doing so on this occasion. So Bhagavan thought that the Ashram authorities had sent me to Vellore on some errand and since Bhagavan does not like devotees to be disturbed by odd errands when they come to the Ashram for peace and quiet he showed his displeasure by chastising those in the Ashram office. My sister Nagamma tried to assure Bhagavan that I had gone away only on my office work as per programme but he was not convinced. As soon as I returned to the Ashram that night at about 7.30 I was asked to go straight to Bhagavan and explain matters which I did. Such was His solicitude!

As is usual with all devotees, whenever I had any doubts with regard to *sadhana* I used to ask Bhagavan and get them cleared. Once I asked whether the *Gayatri Japa* which I was in the habit of performing in the early morning was to be done slowly or rapidly. Bhagavan said it all depended on the purpose for which the *japa* was being done; if it was to achieve *sakti* (power) it should be done rapidly as the number of times the *mantra* is repeated gives the required power; if however the main object is to get into a state of meditation, it matters little whether the *mantra* is repeated slowly or rapidly as the repetition is only a means to an end. Some time later, I found that while repeating the *mantra* slowly I was losing the thread of it and would resume it only when I managed to remind myself of it. I enquired of Bhagavan whether such a lapse was due to forgetfulness or sleepiness and what I should do about it, so as to maintain the continuity of the *japa*. Bhagavan assured me that losing the thread of the *japa* and lapsing into meditation was neither forgetfulness nor sleepiness but that it was a favourable feature in *sadhana* and that I should continue this practice without any fear or doubt.

I wrote a book on banking entitled *Bankers' Advance Against Goods* which was published by M/s. Thacker & Co. Ltd., Bombay. I brought the first two copies of the book to

the Ashram, one for the Ashram library and one for my personal use and wanted to obtain Bhagavan's autograph on my copy. The Ashram office put its rubber stamp on them both and sent them to Bhagavan. As usual, Bhagavan perused them and put them aside. I asked for the autograph but it was declined. Bhagavan pointed out that the Ashram stamp was already on it and that should be sufficient. It was thereupon suggested that Bhagavan might at least write just one *aksharam* (letter) on it, like *Sri* or *Aum*. While again declining Bhagavan said that what there is (all existence) is one *Aksharam* and that it was impossible to commit it to writing. I was puzzled and could not help feeling disappointed when leaving. Next day Bhagavan wrote this famous *sloka* in Sanskrit on a piece of paper *Ekamaksharam hridi niranntaram bhasate svayam likhyathe katham*² and gave it to Nagamma to send it on to me which restored my equanimity.

At one time, I proposed that the Ashram should publish a journal, monthly or quarterly. I worked out all the details and offered to supervise the printing, publishing, despatching and all incidental work, the Ashram's concern being the editorial side of it. The *Sarvadhikari* and *Mowni* (who dealt then with all correspondence and publications) were convinced that this was desirable and feasible and so, one night at about 9 o'clock when all the devotees had left, we three approached Bhagavan to ask for permission. The *Mowni* explained in detail about the project and requested repeatedly Bhagavan's consent. Bhagavan, however, maintained a studied silence, and howevermuch we tried to get some indication from Bhagavan, we did not succeed. The project was therefore dropped!

Nagamma used to write letters (in Telugu) to me about anything of interest happening in the Old Hall where Sri Bhagavan sat with his

² "The One imperishable which is self-luminous is ever in the Heart. How to commit it to writing?" — (*akshara* means 'letter' as well as 'imperishable').

devotees. She was able to infuse her narratives with the living presence of Bhagavan. His replies to questions and utterances have always been of absorbing interest and import. The word of a *jnani* radiates power which can transform a seeker.

Thus her letters brought us his *darshan* in spirit though physically we were far away from Sri Bhagavan.

These letters were also much appreciated by other devotees who happened to read them

and they urged me to have them translated from Telugu into English so as to reach a wider public. This I did as a labour of love and they have been published under the title *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*.³ We continue visiting Sri Ramanasramam for shorter or longer periods and feel Bhagavan's presence, guidance and solicitude as before.

³ Available for sale at Sri Ramanasramam Book Depot, Sri Ramanasramam.

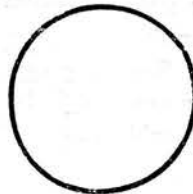
THE HUI MING CHING

(The Book of Consciousness & Life)

.....

By
LIU HUA - YANG

Without beginning, without end,
Without past, without future,
A halo of light surrounds the world of law (spirit).
We forget one another, quiet and pure,
Altogether powerful and empty.
The emptiness is irradiated by the light
of the heart and of heaven.
The water of the sea is smooth and
mirrors the moon in its surface.
The clouds disappear in blue space ;
the mountains shine clear.
Consciousness reverts to contemplation ;
the moon-disk rests alone.



OBEISANCE TO THE SAINT OF ARUNACHALA

By
Prof. SHER SINGH ¹
(Union Minister for Communication)

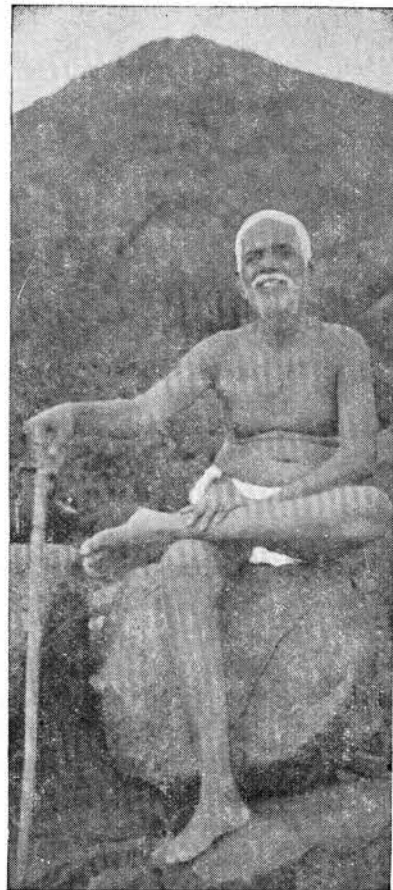
BHAGAVAN Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Saint of Arunachala, commands universal regard and respect. Among the sacred spots in India, Arunachala has always been given a pre-eminent place by devout Hindus. It is traditionally believed to be the physical embodiment of Lord Siva, who had appeared as a column of fire. But apart from poetry and tradition, it is the place where Sri Ramana Maharshi came as a boy and where he spent 54 years of his life and where he taught earnest seekers a unique technique of Self-enquiry which meets the needs and reconciles the claims of this age.

Instead of suggesting any *mantra* or *maha-vakya* or authority from the scriptures as an answer to the enquiry, he advised each seeker to discover for himself, not verbally or mentally, but through strenuous spiritual effort, the source of his being, "Who am I?"

The Sage of Arunachala is not a dogmatic teacher nor a religious propagandist or a reformer. He is really a spiritual scientist. He attained self-realisation through intense introspection while undergoing the experience of death and what survives it.

The evolutionary progress of Hinduism is mirrored in Sri Ramakrishna and the mathematical precision and depth of Hindu metaphysics are fully embodied in Sri Ramana's brief and compact treatises, *Upadesa Saram* and *Sat-Darshan*.

The Posts and Telegraphs Department feels privileged in bringing out a commemorative postage stamp in honour of this great Son and Saint of India and I trust that this stamp with the effigy of Sri Ramana Maharshi will



go to every nook and corner of India, nay the whole world and carry his message to all mankind!

¹ Extracts from the speech delivered by him at the Stamp-releasing function held at New Delhi on April 14.

For details of the function please see the *Ashram Bulletin* of this issue.

HIS DYNAMIC PEACE

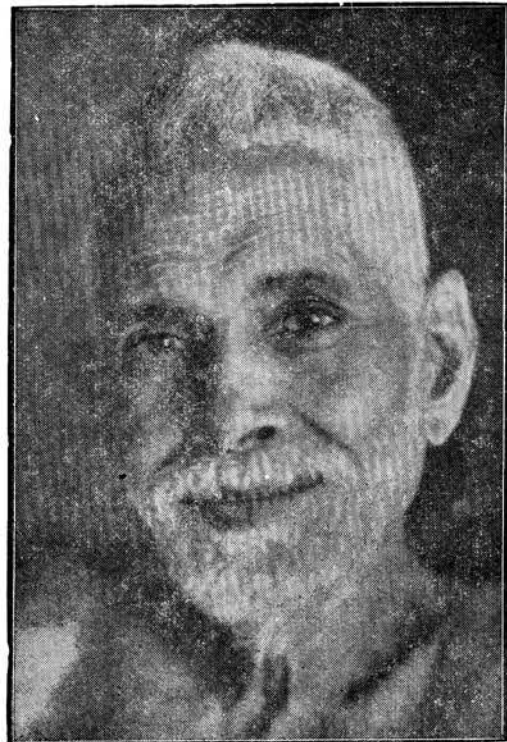
By
 Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN ¹
 (Secretary, Ramana Kendra, New Delhi)

THOUSANDS of devotees all over the world regard Sri Ramana, as *Bhagavan*, God-incarnate. Sri Ramana belongs to all mankind and none of us can claim a preferential share in the plenitude of his Grace. The release of this stamp with his effigy will turn millions of eyes towards the spiritual path of this ancient yet modern sage.

The essence of *advaitic* teaching is that *moksha* (liberation) is our natural state (*sahaja*) in the Bliss of absolute freedom from all limitations. This one should aim to experience in waking life just as egoless oneness is welcomed and enjoyed in the darkness of deep sleep. The Self, *sarvabhutashayasthitah*, is seated in the hearts of all creatures, taught Lord Krishna; the Kingdom of Heaven is in your heart, said Jesus Christ; and Sri Ramana's teaching turns our spiritual effort to realising Oneness of Being mainly through self-enquiry which can serve as a golden key to the Kingdom of Heaven, in our hearts and on earth.

In the Maharshi we have an actual historical, recent sage whose writings and recorded sayings provide the most precious "cross reference and confirmation" of the utterances of genuine Masters of all ages. The Maharshi's dynamic peace and his unbroken and unalloyed *Ananda* casts a spell on all who approached him whether children, animals, *sadhaks* or scholars.

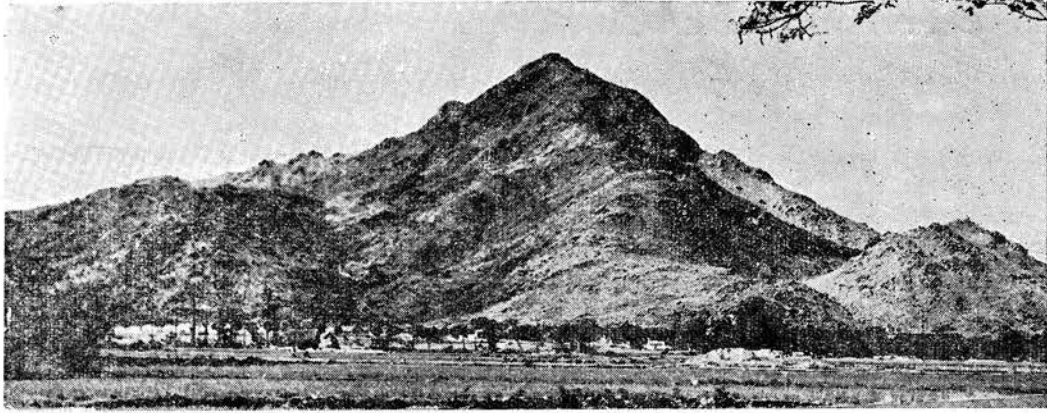
This peace can be felt even now in his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai (Arunachala) which remains the core and magnet for those who are drawn to pursue this greatest of all quests. His answers to questions clear the doubts of honest seekers. They have at the



same time a relevance to the latest findings of psychology, ethics and metaphysics.

His *Brahmastra* "Who am I?" admits of no verbal answer but sets in motion a sustained and fruitful process of spiritual enquiry and effort till it becomes effortless. Studying the books of and on the Maharshi and the quarterly journal, *The Mountain Path*, published by Sri Ramanasramam, practising his teaching, anyone can join the Ramana-circle (or rather Ramana-family) whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere!

¹ Extracts from the speech delivered by him at the Stamp-releasing function held at New Delhi on April 14.



GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM ¹

CHAPTER V

THE GLORY OF BRAHMA TIRTHA

BRAHMA CONTINUED :—

GODDESS Gowri, the embodiment of devotion to God, came forward to welcome Gautama, who had just then returned from the forest. Emaciated with the rigors of *tapas*, wrinkled with old age, with beard snow-white, wearing red-brown *rudraksha* beads, smeared with sacred ashes and clothed in bark, the sage was chanting *Vedic mantras* dear to Rudra as he reached the yard in front of the Ashram. His words were full and deep like those of Siva himself, overflowing with spontaneous universal love. The embodiment of devotion to Siva he resembled the sun, such was his lustre and benevolence. On seeing this great one coming with his band of disciples Gowri, in the shape of young creeper-like slim Uma full of Divine grace, folded her hands respectfully in order to do obeisance to him. When Gautama saw the Mother of all the worlds behaving in this manner he wondered greatly and restraining her himself bowed down to her. He said : “Gowri ! Welcome ! Auspicious Mother of the Universe ! Ocean of Mercy ! You seem to have come here under

the pretext of doing *tapas* yet you are here to shower grace upon your devotees. Oh Adorable One ! It looks as if I formerly left your presence only to be blessed with this opportunity of worshipping you here with all my disciples. Goddess ! but for a play of *maya* how can the universe come into existence ! However let that be. It would not be possible for anyone even to describe fully or to know the sport of your *maya*.” Saying this the old sage and devotees welcomed Ambika.

With humility and respect he offered her a seat woven of sacred grass, and water for washing her feet and for spiritual sipping, in accordance with the scriptural injunctions. After completing the worship he also took a seat at the bidding of the Goddess. Under the fervour of devotion bliss rose in him, his hairs stood on end and with eyes bedimmed with tears he said in a broken voice :

“ Ah ! This can be surely only the outcome of Sambhu’s boundless grace. He who loves his devotees has sent you here with the object of protecting His devotees. O Amba (Mother) ! Is there anything wanting or not attained after seeing you ? Bhagavati ! I know

¹ Continued from our last issue.

very well that it is only to make clear the greatness of devotion that the events on Kailasa, the penance on the bank of the Kampa, the command about Arunachala and your arrival at this devotee's Ashram took place. Embodiment of compassion! Be so gracious as to say what should be done hereafter."

On hearing the words of the all-knowing Maharshi, Ambika praised him and said joyfully :

"It is because your glory is so great that Siva the Lord of the devas commanded me to see you of all sages practising austerities. You alone have reached (mastered) the other shore of the *Agamas* and the *Vedas*. By your austerities you alone among the devotees of Siva have become most acceptable to Him. Siva said to me : 'I remain here as Arunachala' and commanded me to learn its glory from you. I have therefore come to practise austerities in the vicinity of Arunachala. By merely seeking you one will obtain the grace of the Lord. The object of taking birth in this world is that of conversing with the devotees of Siva, hearing the hymns in praise of Siva, worshiping the Linga etc. Therefore please tell me clearly all about the glory of this (Arunachala). You are as good as my father on account of your wisdom." On hearing Gowri speak thus, Gautama, the repository of austerities, meditated upon the Lord for some time and spoke thus :

"You ask me about the glory of Arunachala as if you did not know it! I know that you are the embodiment of all learning and the *maya* of Siva. Or perhaps you love to hear from devotees matters relating to Siva and his glory! To speak of the greatness of Siva is as auspicious as study and recital of the *Vedas*. My austerities and virtuous conduct have become fruitful only today. For by the grace of Hara and Gowri I am now going to describe the effulgent glory (of Arunachala) at the command of Siva and it is going to be listened to with faith. Listen, Bhagavati to this ancient

sacred subject known as the glory of Arunachala!

"Even if one had a million tongues it would not be possible to describe fully how the linga comprising the entire Arunachala emerged. Even if a million Brahmas were to come together they too could not describe the glory of Arunachala. Arunachala in this form was in former times worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu, Soma (the moon), Surya (the sun), Agni (fire), Indra and the other devas, *dikpalas* (the protectors of the quarters), *siddhas*, *charanas*, *yakshas*, *vidyadhars*, *gandharvas*, *nagas*, serpents, birds, divine sages, *siddha yogis* and others for getting rid of their sins and to obtain the fulfilment of their desires.

"This Lord of Arunagiri is capable of removing all the sins of those who merely see Him and fulfilling all the desires of those who worship him. He is capable of granting Liberation even to those who utter the word 'Sonadri' from a distance. It is well known that what is called 'Arunadri' is the embodiment of effulgence. Yogis meditate upon it and attain union with Siva (*Siva sayujyam*). Gifts, sacrifices, repetition of holy names made in its vicinity yield immeasurable results.

"In olden times Brahma and Vishnu who had come into existence from a tiny part of the effulgence of Siva became egoistic and wishing to assert their supremacy fought with each other. Then Sadasiva meditated upon by yogis wanted to subdue their pride and appeared in their midst as a blazing column of fire without beginning, middle or end, illumining the ten directions. They desired to ascertain what it was. So they assumed the forms of a swan and a boar respectively and proceeded towards the sky and the nether region. Seeing them tired and distressed, unable to find either beginning or end of the column of fire, Bhagavan the embodiment of compassion, pleased with their humility and remorse appeared before them in a concrete form with the object of granting the

boons desired by them. At their request Siva took the form of a motionless linga known as 'Arunadri.' This effulgent linga was duly worshipped by the previous ninety-six Brahma, creators of the worlds." Gautama further related how Tilothama was saved from the incestuous advances of Brahma who in order that he might look at her uninterruptedly while she was walking around him assumed in a moment four faces facing the four quarters. She however rose up into the sky in the form of a bird. But seeing Brahma chasing her in the form of a male bird, she sought refuge with Sonadri and cried out in fear: 'Lord of the Aruna Hill whose top and bottom could not be discovered even by Brahma and Vishnu! Saviour who protectest those who seek refuge with Thee! Save me!' Immediately a hunter came out of Arunagiri bow in hand. When Brahma saw the hunter before him, his illusion vanished. His mind having become purified he humbly prostrated before the Lord of Sonadri the saviour of all and said:

'Obeisance to the destroyer of all sins! Wearer of the Trident! Arunachala! Thou that yieldest to the votaries of thy votaries, Sambhu! Obeisance to Thee. Who except Thee can save Thy devotees? (from the results of unrighteous acts committed by them in ignorance). Universal Being! Please withdraw into Thy effulgence this great sinner who has violated dharma, or create another Brahma to continue the work of world-creation.' On hearing Brahma imploring in this manner Siva the embodiment of compassion threw off the disguise of a hunter and appeared

wearing the crescent moon. Bestowing His grace on Brahma he said:

'The time which has already been allotted to you by me will not undergo any change. Not even the greatest are free from the evils of desiring etc. Therefore, standing as you do at a distance, meditate upon the effulgent linga known as Arunachala and be rid of all your sins. All the evil produced by mind, speech and body will be destroyed the moment one sees Arunachala. This Arunagiri will remove all the sins of those who walk around it, prostrate themselves before it, remember it and offer flowers or praise it with devotion. Mountains like Kailasa and Meru are my places of abode, but this Arunagiri is truly myself. By merely looking at its top not only will all sins be destroyed but the eye of wisdom will also be opened.

'Once upon a time one of the Brahma who had come into existence through a tiny part of myself bathed in the *Pushkarini* (sacred pool) bearing his name and got rid of his delusion. You who are in the form of the world, you may also after bathing in the Brahma Tirtha and after offering flowers to me with folded hands silently go round the hill, get rid of your sin and be happy.' On hearing this Brahma took a bath in the sin-destroying pool and worshipped in the prescribed manner Mahesa (Siva) who stood in the form of a mountain. This Brahma worshipped Arunagiri with great devotion externally with a mind made pure by control (*yama-niyama*), got rid of his sins and became the lord of the world.

(to be continued)

..... Every gift implies unselfishness. That is the whole content of *nishkama karma* (unselfish action). It means true renunciation. If the giving nature is developed it becomes *tyaga* (giving up). If anything is willingly given away it is a delight to the giver and to the receiver. If the same is stolen it is misery to both. *Dana* (gift), *dharma* (virtuous deeds), *nishkama karma* are all *tyaga* only. When 'mine' is given up it is *chitta suddhi* (purified mind). When 'I' is given up it is *jnana*. When the nature to give away is developed it results in *jnana*.

-- Talks, p. 597.

ACTS OF GRACE

By
N. R. RAJAGOPALAN

Since Sri Bhagavan was a true *jnani* who would not attach any importance to miracles it may appear out of place to mention that he performed them. In fact when personal experiences were related in which devotees had clear evidence of his grace in action he attributed them to the power of their own faith which in effect discouraged the idea that he was behind them. But the supernatural powers of a *jnani* come out in *automatic divine activity* (Sri Bhagavan's own words). They can be related with gratitude by a devotee as in the following cases.

MANY instances have been recorded in which Sri Bhagavan moved with perfect ease with wild animals which happened to come near and restored calm to those devotees who felt fear at their nearness. Once when I had gone up the hill, not far from the Ashram, I faced a huge cobra atleast five feet long. Sri Bhagavan was coming up from behind and seeing my predicament he calmly addressed the cobra as he would anybody else bidding it to go away with the assurance that nobody would hurt it. The cobra did as told. On another occasion I found him holding a cheeta cub in his hands while it suckled its mother. It was a peaceful scene and Sri Bhagavan signalled me not to come too close.

Coming to other personal experiences these involved among other things my seeing him in dreams which induced a feeling of assurance and well-being or being saved by an unknown hand in dangerous situations.

Once when I was supervising the excavation of a deep well I lost my balance and was dangling in mid-air over the water when somebody appeared and firmly grasping my hands pulled me to the surface. When I looked round to see who saved me I found nobody but there was a flash of light. I had a copy of *Ulladu Narpadu* of Sri Bhagavan with me and I took it as his grace only.

A thief had once picked my pocket at Erode Railway Station and somebody quite

unknown to me recovered and restored to me my purse immediately so that I was saved the loss of money and valuable papers. When I was in a more serious predicament caught in a bad accident in a *jutka* (horse cart) on my way to the Ashram I was similarly saved by an unknown person and I did not even feel the pain of the injuries sustained.

The marriage of my daughter had been fixed and my nephew, a young boy was on the point of death. Apart from the tragedy of it if the boy were to die the marriage would have had to be postponed and I was in a fix. So I sent a telegram to Sri Bhagavan requesting his grace and in a few hours in which the telegram would have reached him the boy recovered and got up as if from sound sleep! Thus was the situation saved and all ended well.

I myself was near death from an infection leading to tetanus. My limbs turned stiff and doctors gave up hope. Bhagavan appeared in my dream again and touched my whole body. I felt an electric current passing through me and revived to the surprise of the doctors!

Much more than all these I can never forget the following incident: After the death of my wife I went to the Ashram and expressed my grief to Sri Bhagavan. He told me: "Why should you carry the burden when the train carries it. Keep calm. Everything will work according to the Will of God." This was great consolation!

SRI BHAGAVAN AND MIRACLES

By

A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR¹

WHEN Sri Bhagavan was living at Skandasramam on the Hill it was quite a common sight to see born enemies like the snake and peacock together in his presence without any sign of enmity. Cheetahs have visited him and while his attendants would rush inside in fear, he would remain on the verandah unconcerned!

I have heard from Sri Bhagavan's lips the details of two miracles. One was about a lady who alighted from the train in Tiruvannamalai at night and the driver of a horse-cart (*jutka*) instead of taking her to her destination took her to an out-of-the-way place intent on mischief or robbery. When she called out for help two police constables suddenly appeared on the scene and escorted her safely to her place. The lady who noted down their numbers went next day to the police station to reward and thank them but there they had no knowledge of the night's occurrence nor could the police constables and their numbers be traced!

Another story was about a cripple who used to make circuit of Arunachala Hill in spite of his disability. Once he got vexed with his relatives on whom he depended and he decided in disgust to leave Tiruvannamalai. On the outskirts a young Brahmin appeared suddenly before him and rudely snatched away his crutches saying: "You do not deserve these." Before the indignant old man could say something he found that he had regained the use of his limbs! His disability was obviously a sign of Grace. Sri Bhagavan said he knew this case personally remarking on its similarity to the case mentioned in *Arunachala Sthala Purana*.

I was rather partial to miracles and on rare occasions would be made happy to hear or



talk about them. Sri Bhagavan mentioned these instances saying that miracles occur even now. It was obvious to us that it was Sri Bhagavan himself who performed the miracles moved by compassion though he did these most unobtrusively.

However, Sri Bhagavan's attitude about miracles was always that they are a mode of activity and therefore the work of the mind. Once he passed his hands over the body of a child of a devotee, Sri Rajagopalan, which was already becoming stiff and blue from snake bite, saying: "You are all right, Ramana" (the name of the boy) and the boy recovered!

¹ Author of *My Recollections of Sri Bhagavan*, p. 120, from which these extracts were taken.

YOGA VASISHTA SARA¹

THE ESSENCE OF YOGA VASISHTA

Based on the translation made by SWAMI SURESANANDA

CHAPTER X NIRVANA

1. Supreme Bliss cannot be experienced through contact with the senses and their objects. The supreme state is that in which the mind is annihilated through one-pointed enquiry.

2. The bliss arising from the contact of the senses with their objects is inferior. Contact with the sense-objects is bondage; freedom from it is liberation.

3. Attain the pure state between existence and non-existence and hold on to it; do not accept or reject the inner or the outer world.

4. Depend always on that true reality between the sentient and the inert which is the infinite space-like heart.

5. The belief in a knower and the known is called bondage. The knower is bound by the known; he is liberated when there is nothing to know.

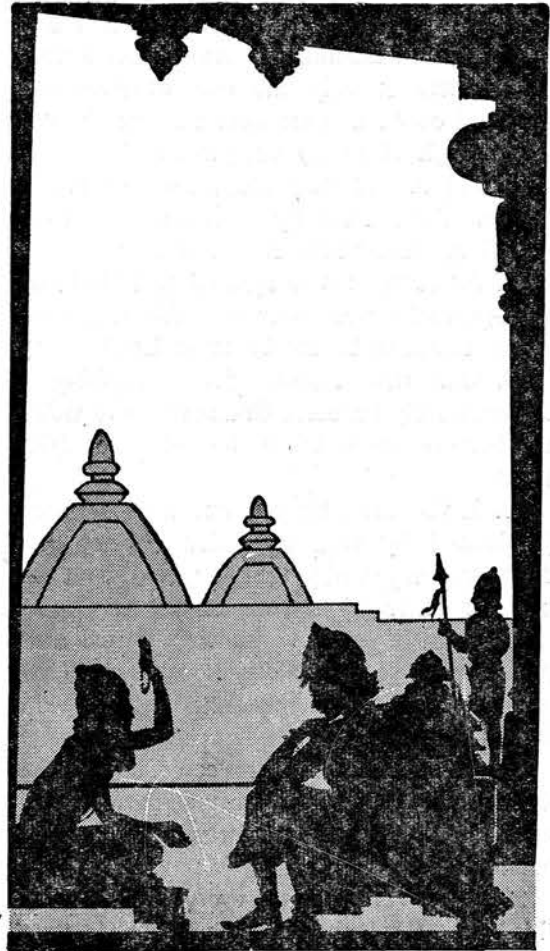
6. Abandoning the ideas of seer, seen and sight along with latent desires (*vasanas*) of the past we meditate on that Self which is the primal light that is the basis of sight.

7. We meditate on the eternal Self, the light of lights which lies between the two ideas of existence and non-existence.

8. We meditate on that Self of consciousness, the bestower of the fruits of all our thoughts, the illuminator of all radiant objects and the farthest limit of all accepted objects.

9. We meditate on that immutable Self, our reality, the bliss of which arises in the mind on account of the close contact between the seer and the seen.

10. If one meditates on that state which comes at the end of the waking state and the beginning of sleep he will directly experience undecaying bliss.



11. The rock-like state in which all thoughts are still and which is different from the waking and dream states, is one's supreme state.

12. Like mud in a mud pot the Supreme Lord who is existence and space-like consciousness and bliss exists everywhere non-separate (from things).

¹ Continued from our last issue.

13. The Self shines by itself as the one boundless ocean of consciousness agitated by waves of thought.

14. Just as the ocean is nothing but water the entire world of things is nothing but consciousness filling all the quarters like the infinite space.

15. Brahman and space are alike as to their invisibility, all-pervasiveness and indestructibility but Brahman is also consciousness.

16. There is only the one waveless and profound ocean of pure nectar sweet through and through (blissful) everywhere.

17. All this is truly Brahman ; all this is *Atman*. Do not cut up Brahman into 'I am one thing' and 'This is another.'

18. As soon as it is realised that Brahman is all-pervasive and indivisible this vast *samsara* is found to be the Supreme Lord.

19. One who realises that everything is Brahman truly becomes Brahman ; who would not become immortal if he were to drink nectar ?

20. If you are wise you would become this (Brahman) by such conviction ; if not even if you are repeatedly told it would be (useless like offerings) thrown on ashes.

21. Even if you have known the real truth you have to practise always. Water will not become clear by merely uttering the word *kataka fruit*.

22. If one has the firm conviction 'I am the Supreme Self called the undecaying Vasudeva' he is liberated ; otherwise he remains bound.

23. After eliminating everything as 'not this', 'not this', the Supreme Being (*lit-state*) which cannot be eliminated remains. Think 'I am That' and be happy.

24. Know always that the Self is Brahman, one and whole. How can that which is indivisible be divided into 'I am the meditator' and 'the others is the object of meditation' ?

25. When one thinks 'I am pure consciousness' it is called meditation and when even

the idea of meditation is forgotten it is *samadhi*.

26. The constant flow of mental concepts relating to Brahman without the sense of 'I' achieved through intense practice of Self Enquiry (*jnana*) is what is called *samprajnata samadhi* (meditation with concepts).

27. Let violent winds which characterise the end of aeons (*kalpas*) blow ; let all the oceans unite, let the twelve suns burn (simultaneously), still no harm befalls one whose mind is extinct.

28. That consciousness which is the witness of the rise and fall of all beings, know that to be the immortal state of supreme bliss.

29. Every moving or unmoving thing whatsoever is only an object visualised by the mind. When the mind is annihilated duality (multiplicity) is not perceived.

30. That which is immutable, auspicious and tranquil, that in which this world exists, that which manifests itself as the mutable and immutable objects — that is the sole consciousness.

31. Before discarding the slough the snake regards it as itself, but when once it has discarded it in its hole it does not look upon it as itself any longer.

32. He who has transcended both good and evil does not like a child refrain from prohibited acts from a sense of sin, nor does he do what is prescribed from a sense of merit.

33. Just as a statue is contained in a pillar (block) even if it is not actually carved out, so also the world exists in Brahman. Therefore the Supreme State is not a void.

34. Just as a pillar is said to be devoid of the statue when it has not actually been carved out, so also Brahman is said to be void when it is devoid of the impression of the world.

35. Just as still-water may be said to contain or not contain ripples, so also Brahman may be said to contain or not to contain the world. It is neither void nor existence.

OM TAT SAT

(Concluded)



THE BHĀṢARĀṢANA

SRI RUDRAM

SECTION IX

(Continued from our last issue)

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as those who live in rough tracts and also as those who travel over a well-trodden path.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as those who live in arid tracts as well as those who live in fertile plains.

Prostrations to Thee that wearest matted locks and comest forward to protect Thy devotees.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as those who live in cattle sheds as well as those who live in houses.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as those who lie on the bare ground as well as those who live in homes.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as those who live in inaccessible forests as well as those who live in caves.

Prostrations to Thee that dwellest in deep pools as well as in the dew drop.

Prostrations to Thee that dwellest in invisible particles as well as visible particles of dust.

Prostrations to Thee that art in the dry firewood as well as in the living tree.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as those who live in desert lands as well as those who live in meadows.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as those who live in large tracks of lands as well as those who live near rivers enhanced by waves.

Prostrations to Thee that art in the green leaves as well as the dry leaves.

Prostrations to Thee that appearest as the one who has taken up a weapon as well as the one who smites enemies.

Prostrations to Thee that tormentest others slightly as well as much.

Prostrations to Thee that assumest the forms of gods who grant riches to their worshippers and livest in the hearts of all the gods.

Prostrations to Thee dwelling eternally in the hearts of all the gods.

Prostrations to Thee in the forms of gods who fulfil the desires of aspirants.

Prostrations to Thee in the forms of gods who completely destroy sins.

Prostrations to Thee in the forms of gods who wander about as groups of Rudras.

SECTION X

Thou that punishest sinners! Thou that providest food for Thy devotees! Thou that appearest as a pauper! Thou that hast a blue throat and a ruddy complexion! Do not frighten these men and these cows. Do not let them die. Let not any one of them become ill.

O Rudra! Make our lives blessed with Thy auspicious form which is the great medicament for all ills as well as the means of attaining union with Thee.

Let us always keep in mind the thought of Rudra, the ascetic with the matted locks, the destroyer of foes, in order that all our men and animals in this village may fare well and flourish without sickness.

O Rudra! We prostrate to Thee. Make us happy. Bestow upon us the joy of Liberation. With prostration we worship Thee that destroyest our sins. May we attain the happiness and freedom from misery which

Manu, the Father (of the world), attained by Thy grace.

O Rudra! Do no harm (*lit.* kill) to our elders and children, nor to our young men nor to yet unborn children, nor to our fathers and mothers. Do no harm to our precious bodies. Do no harm to our infant sons. Do not cut short our lives. Do no harm to our cows and horses. Do not in Thy anger slay our warriors. We shall bring offering to Thee and worship Thee.

O God! Keep away Thy (terrible) form which is death to men and animals and warriors. Show us Thy gracious form. Protect us. Speak words of comfort to us. Give us the joys of this world and the next.

O Mind! praise Rudra who dwells in the heart ever youthful, terrible in destroying enemies, awe-inspiring like a lion.

O Rudra! Whom we praise! Be gracious to us embodied beings. Let Thy hosts destroy our enemies.

Let Rudra's weapons pass by harmlessly. Let his harsh and angry thoughts directed towards sinners pass by harmlessly.

Granter of boons! Bear with us who worship Thee and restrain Thy terrific aspect which destroys enemies. Make our children and our children's children happy.

Supreme Granter of Boons! Auspiciousness itself! Be Thou well disposed to us and do good to us. Come to us wearing a tiger skin leaving Thy weapon high up on a tree. Come to us adorned only with Thy bow, Pinaka.

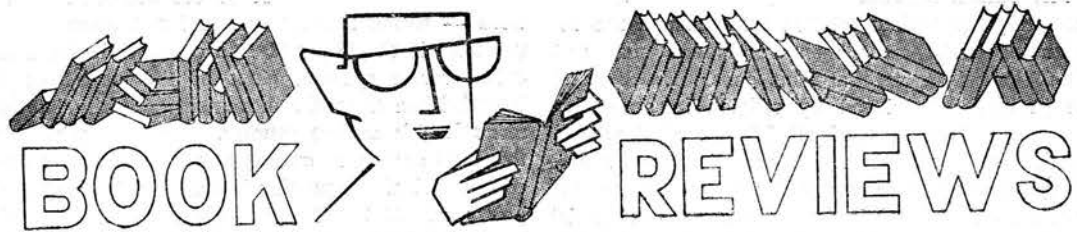
Oh Bhagavan! Munificent dispenser of riches! O god of radiant hue! We bow to Thee, Let Thy thousands of weapons destroy our enemies.

Innumerable weapons in thousands in Thy hands, O Thou All powerful, turn their edges away from us and render them harmless.

(to be continued)

“A beggar would be acting very foolishly, were he to go to the King's palace and beg for such insignificant things as a gourd or pumpkins. Similarly, a devotee would be acting foolishly, were he to appear at the threshold of the King of kings and beg for psychic powers, neglecting the priceless gifts of true Knowledge and Love of God.”

— SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA



BOOK REVIEWS

THE INCREDIBLE SAI BABA : By Arthur Osborne. Pub. : Orient Longmans Ltd., New Delhi. Pages 102. Price : Rs. 3-50 or 5 s.

This book was first published in 1957 and is appearing now in its second edition with an additional fairly recent episode under the caption 'Continued Presence'.

Sai Baba was indeed an incredible holy man, one of the strangest of all India. This book depicting his eccentric life is based on authentic reports of his devotees. He used his amazing supernormal powers in the sense : 'Unless they are shown miracles they will not believe'. Although he has countless devotees in India he is little known in the West, probably one of the reasons being his display of (to Westerners) unbelievable miracles with almost reckless abandon of which he said : 'I give people what they want so that they may start wanting what I want to give them' meaning real wisdom. He taught his Hindu and Muslim devotees according to their own faith occasionally bringing home his teaching with a bizarre sense of humour and unconventional ways of dealing with them interspersed with purely advaitic utterances. He was said to be a Hindu but lived in a mosque in Shirdi because a temple was not available for him when he first arrived there.

Sai Baba gave up his physical form in 1918 but he still appears mostly in dreams and visions to countless devotees all over India who turn to him as before in full faith that their prayers will be

granted. Sai Baba's assurance to this effect was quite categorical :

- 'I shall remain active and vigorous even after leaving this earthly body.'
- 'I am ever living to help those who come to me and surrender and seek refuge in me.'
- 'If you cast your burden on me I will bear it.'



Sri Sai Baba

As Swami Ramdas writes in his foreword 'The author, Sri Arthur Osborne, has done an invaluable service to seekers of Truth in the West by presenting this book to the world. . . . He is a saint of the highest spiritual eminence and a great spiritual master' whose teaching suited exactly the level of those who gathered around him. 'Ramdas earnestly wishes that this book should be in the hands of every spiritual aspirant and, for the matter of that, everyone whether he is a believer or non-believer, so that he can know how God reveals Himself in the form of a unique and fully inspired saint of Sai Baba's stature.'

LUCIA OSBORNE.

THE GOLDEN CORE OF RELIGION : By Alexander Skutch. Pub. : George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. Pp. 270. Price : 60 s.

Has humanity derived real benefit from religion? Has religion justified the tremendous output of feeling and energy and resources that man has poured into its cause? These are the questions the author starts with. And his answer is yes, more than yes.

Mr. Skutch approaches religion as a factor for promoting harmonious relation between man and his expanding environment, man and Nature, man and his fellow-beings, man and his gods. He discusses the positive role played by religion in awakening the sense of oneness of all life, at all levels of creation, and enlarging man's consciousness by way of appreciation, love and effort to ameliorate the conditions of life on earth. He devotes a special chapter to the transition of religion from its role of preservation to that of emancipation. "In religions of preservation, the tribe took precedence over the individual; there was little thought of saving a man apart from his society. In religions of emancipation, interest centres on the individual, who is promised freedom from pain and sorrow, everlasting bliss, if he will faithfully follow their precepts."

To summarise in his own words :

"More than any other human institution, religion has taught us to care, for our own souls or characters, for our fellow men, for the living world that surrounds us. Primitive religions directed men's care above all to the natural foundations of the tribal life; the advanced religions have been more concerned about caring for one's soul. In their totality, religions have directed our capacity for caring to nearly everything that needs, and is worthy of, our devoted service. In promoting and guiding this capacity, which more than all else gives us a claim to superiority over our brother animals, religion has made a priceless contribution to our spiritual growth and indirectly, to our material prosperity."

"Religion, more than any other institution, has persistently nourished our quenchless aspiration for a richer, more significant conscious existence, indefinitely prolonged." (p. 262).

What is the future for this religion? The future, concludes the author, lies in deepening the awareness of man, of the significance of life on this wonderful planet and his responsibility as the crown of Nature's evolution. "What we most need is deeper, more grateful appreciation of the wonderful world in which we dwell; the broadening and intensification of our capacity for caring; the heightening and steadying of our aspirations."

An understanding study of one aspect of religion.

PARAMAHAMSA SRI RAMAKRISHNA : By R. R. Diwakar. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Bombay-7. Pp. 322. Price : Rs. 4.

The life-story of Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna has been told by many in many languages. What distinguishes Dr. Diwakar's book is the perspective he brings to bear in the treatment of his subject.

He gives a rapid account of the deplorable conditions — social, religious, cultural and other — that prevailed in the 18th and 19th centuries in India and called for a spiritual giant of the stature of Sri Ramakrishna to head a movement of spiritual renaissance in this ancient country. How the saint filled this need and set in current a stream of regeneration of the soul of the peoples is described in detail. He points out that "If one surveys the main strains in the spiritual make-up of Ramakrishna, one finds the following three predominating: *Vaishnava bhakti cult*, *Saktism* and *Advaita Vedanta*. He inherited the first, cultivated the second at Dakshineswar, and Totapuri gave him the third. This does not at all mean that there was any compartmental or chronological development of these strains in him. In fact, they were all overlapping right from the beginning and the co-ordinating force was his intense yearning for realizing Reality in all its fullness and by all the available paths and means." (p. 123-4.)

And to help the reader to understand the full import of these influences and traditions he adds explanations of their different concepts, *sadhanas* and rituals. No significant detail in the life of the Paramahansa is left out.

Sri Diwakar underlines the humility of the Master, the directness with which his intuition operated and the God-love which flooded his being. He answers the many unthinking criticisms made by pseudo-intellectuals and arm-chair philosophers and records the splendid testimony provided by the life of the Prophet of Dakshineswar to the unity of all religions, to the oneness of the spiritual Truth.

A PHILOSOPHY OF MAN AND SOCIETY :

By Forrest H. Peterson. Pub. : Philosophical Library Inc., New York. Pp. 224. Price : \$ 8.50.

There are two ways of studying the growth of human societies, taking the individual as the starting point and the centre of reference or of looking at the problem from the collective standpoint, reducing the individual to little more than a constituent. The author of this book prefers the first approach and treats the society as a living organism whose life is drawn from the lives of men within it. Each society, he writes, is being continually reborn, the elements of its rebirth being contributed by the fresh energies of each new person or new generation. It is important to ensure that this contribution is rightly directed and fully absorbed. And this can be done only by an enlightened system of education which takes note of the fact that "three great forces combine in the continuous creation of the new society. These are the culture, the ideology and the technology."

The author studies the different theories of social progress put forward by thinkers like Hobbes, Comte, Hegel, Marx. He quotes with approval from Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History* :

"Human affairs manifestly mean, not medicine, but the humanities; not the organic chemistry, biology, and physiology of the human body, but the affairs of human beings in that spiritual aspect of humanity in which Man is a person with a consciousness and a will moving on the face of the waters of a subconscious psychic abyss, and not in the physical aspect in which man is a body whose chemical constituents can be analysed, weighed, measured and priced at their current value in the market for material commodities." (p. 167).

Any programme of education to be socially productive must combine the spirit of humanities with the technique of science. "Whereas success in science depends on how well man can submit himself to the data and standards of truth which are outside himself, humanistic endeavour is the outward revelation of man's inner being. It is the revelation of man's own intense personal creativity, of his subjectivity expressing itself in art, in music, in literature — in creative performance of any kind."

A book with vision.

SAINTS AND SAGES: By Swami Sivananda.
Pub.: Divine Life Society, 570, New Germany Road, Clare Estate, Durban, S. Africa. Pp. 182.
Price: \$ 4.

Blessed men and women who have awakened to divine Love and radiate it leavening the existence of their less fortunate fellow-beings, developed individuals who have risen above the tumult of dualities of life and live and act in the higher knowledge of the Truth of Oneness, have always appeared and guided humanity everywhere down the ages recorded by tradition and by history. Here are fascinating accounts of as many as forty of these saints and sages — compiled from the voluminous writings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati — prefaced with a spirited narration of the life of the author himself.

Beginning with Mahavira, Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammad, Zoraster, across mediaeval saints in Europe and Asia, down to the Teachers of the present times like Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo, Sri Ramana Maharshi, these pages narrate the journey of God in humanity. Each account gives the physical details of life, the legend and the special message.

While underlining the ethical and practical strains in the teachings of Confucius, for example, it is

recorded: "The study of human problems engaged his attention. One of his disciples asked him: 'O venerable Master! How can we serve the gods?' He replied: 'You do not know how to serve man, how can you ask about serving gods?' To a question about death replied, 'Beloved Chi-Lu! You do not know much about life, how can you expect to know about death?'"

The role of Bhagavan Maharshi in the spiritual evolution of Swami Ramdas is not widely known. We learn: "He (Ramdas) was standing in front of Sri Ramana Maharshi praying for his Grace. Bhagavan nodded his head as if to say that he had showered his Grace on this earnest aspirant. Now the new Swami Ramdas' whole body shivered with emotion. On leaving the Maharshi he went to a cave in the Arunachala Hill and spent twenty days in constant chanting of Ram-Nam, taking only a little rice which he himself cooked. At the end of this period he was blessed with a new vision. He saw his beloved Ram everywhere."

The classic declaration, *mahavakya*, of the Maharshi to Vasishtha Ganapati Muni is quoted: 'If one watches whence the notion of 'I' arises, the mind is absorbed in *That*: that is *Tapas*. When a Mantra is repeated if one watches the source from which the Mantra sound is produced the mind is absorbed in *That*; that is *Tapas*."

The accounts, however, are not presented in a chronological order. Some inaccuracies have crept in here and there. But these do not affect the appeal and value of the book.

M. P. PANDIT.

HINDUISM: DOCTRINE AND WAY OF LIFE:
By C. Rajagopalachari. Third revised edition, 1970. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. Pp. 101. Price: Rs. 3.

Facing the disaster that threatens the world today, Sri Rajaji finds that the authority of the state, externally imposed on people, is incapable of averting it. In his opinion, the internal urge of religion is needed for this purpose. But he knows that no religion that is contrary to science can be acceptable to modern men. That is why great powers have not benefited by their religion.

He asks the question: Is it possible at the present stage of human civilization to build a religious fabric around scientific truth as it has evolved and is still evolving? His answer is: "It is not necessary to build a new religion. In India we have a religion and a philosophy attached to it as old as civilization itself which is remarkably consistent with

science as well as politics." This religion, according to him, is Hinduism and the philosophy, Vedanta.

The author, as the title of the book indicates, takes religion without its forms and rituals. He confidently expects that "a knowledge of Hinduism will make Hindus better Hindus and Christians better Christians, Muslims better Muslims and all of us better citizens in a consolidated nation." Therefore, his approach to religion is not that of an evangelist, nor is his attitude syncretistic. He takes his stand on the spiritual aspect of religion. He admits that the claim may seem strange to outsiders, especially to those whose knowledge of Hinduism has been derived from the information supplied by the Christian missionaries of an older generation.

The claim of Hinduism rests on the finding that a code of ethics and a system of values were evolved by Hindus out of the religion and the philosophy known as Vedanta. The author emphasises the fact that "God of Vedanta is not an anthropomorphic creation — a conception against which the veriest tyro in modern science may launch a successful attack." Here we may remind ourselves of what the *Bhagavad Gita*, accepted as an authority for Hinduism by the author, calls *Adhyatma Vidya* — the science dealing with spiritual reality, and describes as the chief of all sciences.

Sri Rajaji highlights the liberal attitude of Hinduism by referring to the tradition of the religion according to which "it is not open to any Hindu, whatever be the name and mental image or concrete symbol of the Supreme Being he uses, to deny the existence of God to other denominations."

Sri Rajaji interprets *Moksha* as awakening to Reality from the dream of illusion (*maya*). He finds the ethic of Vedanta in the doctrine of rebirth, which implies that one passes through successive lives, rising or falling according to the moral and spiritual quality of the life lived. Vedanta teaches people how to rise steadily till the highest stage has been reached. So Sri Rajaji says, "Vedanta is spiritual eugenics."

Sri Rajaji explains Vedanta in his characteristic style which combines lucidity and depth.

PROF. A. C. BOSE.

THE REVELATION OF BAHĀ'U'LLĀ AND THE BAB : By Ruhi Muhsen Afnan. Pub. : The Philosophical Library, New York. Price : \$ 7.50.

Not many may be familiar with the thoughts and teachings of the two eminent Iranian philosophers, Bahā'u'llah and the Bab, who expounded in the last quarter of the last century the message of the absolute transcendence of God as source of supreme

forms and values, revealed down the ages by His successive prophets. The author points out that just as under the ancient Hebrews, Jerusalem became the place where divine "Presence" was deemed to rest, and from which illumination spread; just as during the spiritual hegemony of Zoraster the centre was in Media radiating from there to east and west; and later under Christian domination reverted to Palestine; again shifting to Hejaz during the Islamic phase, so in this age the centre is in the region of Carmel. It has to be noted that this place has special importance, despite the prophets being Iranian in origin, as the remains of the Bab, who was executed in Tabriz by the authorities to check the spread of his mission, are buried in a sanctuary on the eastern slope of Mt. Carmel and Bahā'u'llah too was buried nearby after his death in 1892. This is the focal point from which flows to the followers of the faith the truth regarding the nature and destiny of man.

Prof. Afnan, who has already to his credit several books on the influence of Zoraster and other prophets on Greek and modern thinkers, keeps to the same theme here too by emphasising that the revealed religions constitute successive manifestations of the same divine Purpose, pursued down the ages, to stimulate and guide the spiritual and cultural evolution of mankind, individually and socially. In this Book 1, (obviously the author intends to write a series on the subject), the limitations of Descartes' theory of knowledge is taken up for detailed consideration. The two basic Cartesian assumptions that immediate apprehension is a criterion of being and that all uncertainties — meaning thereby all that is not directly and clearly apprehended — can be eliminated are ably refuted, by harking back to the Socratic wisdom :

"As real wisdom is the property of God, human wisdom has little or no value, and the only wise man is he who realises that in respect of wisdom he is worthless."

After discussing in detail Descartes' doctrine of forms, his concepts of the reality of the external world and of God, the author proves that not only empiricism but even idealism and mysticism cannot impart certainty to man by establishing his spiritual and cultural life upon a secure foundation. Being essentially naturalistic, employing physical senses, intellect or intuition to unravel spiritual and cultural values and conceptions, these schools of thought, failing to transcend the field of nature, constitute the points of view of an observer, not of a creator who desires certain reality and actually produces it.

With the waning of the influence of the prophets, pagan systems of thought dispensing with revelation

soon find ready reception, creating newer problems and predicaments. Prof. Afnan has succeeded in his attempt to prove, by taking the Bab and Baha'u'llah as the guide, how these predicaments could have been averted if human thought had remained true to the primary premises which all the sacred Scriptures of the past had stressed.

ARGUS.

BHAGAVAD GITA : By C. Rajagopalachari.
Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7.
Pp. 128. Price : Rs. 3.

This tiny book is aimed at meeting a real need of the times. It is a matter of regret that the rising generation of Indians have begun to scoff at anything that smacks of religion. Neither the atmosphere at home nor the education that they receive nor the company they keep is conducive to the cultivation of an attitude of reverence, very necessary for the understanding and appreciation of the truths of religion. The author considers it a matter for regret that the young men and women of our universities know so very little about the *Gita* and the principles of Hindu Religion.

To give our young men and women some idea of the profound truths of the Hindu Religion the author has selected 246 verses from the *Gita* which he regards as one of the most authoritative sources of Hindu doctrine and ethics. He has classified these verses under suitable topics. In fourteen chapters he deals with the main topics of the *Gita*. The *slokas* are given in the original Sanskrit followed by an English translation. Brief explanatory notes are added whenever necessary.

The introductory chapter stresses the need to adopt a respectful attitude toward the study of religion whose principles are beyond reason and consequently incapable of proof by the objective methods usually adopted in the physical sciences. The concluding chapter sums up the teachings dealt with in the body of the book.

We wholeheartedly recommend the book for careful and respectful study by the rising generation of Indians to whom it may impart a more profound insight.

That the book is now in the fourth edition is proof of its popularity.

WHAT IS ADVAITA : By P. Sankaranarayanan.
Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7.
Pp. 242+XV. Price : Rs. 3.

The book under review is written by a scholar who has great experience in teaching philosophy to the B.A. degree and post-graduate classes. It is a presentation in English, with the necessary additions

and alterations, of a series of articles which he wrote some years ago for the Tamil monthly journal *Kamakoti Pradipam*. The aim of the author is to bring the essentials of *Advaita Vedanta* within the reach of the common run of readers. The presentation is confined to the fundamentals. But he might well have brought in a few more quotations from the writings of Sri Sankara or other well-known writers.

Besides the author's preface and a foreword by Sri K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer there are eleven chapters which cover almost the entire ground of *Advaita Vedanta*, including the clearing of some common misunderstandings relating to it. The author is well-advised in leaving out abstruse discussions relating to the *pramanas* (valid sources of knowledge) and the various theories of error. Similar discussions relating to the concept of *Maya* which is the main target of attack by the non-*Advaitic* schools of *Vedanta* are quite properly eschewed. Since the aim of the author is to prepare the ground for more detailed studies by those interested in the subject, he has done well in restricting the scope of his exposition to the essential tenets of *Advaita*.

In Part II the author shows convincingly that *Advaita Vedanta* did not start with Sri Sankara. Passages with chapter and verse are given from the *Mantra*, *Brahmana* and *Upanishad* portions of the *Vedas* to show that *Advaita* can be traced to the *Vedas*. The author has also referred to several writers on *Advaita* belonging to the pre-Sankara period. All that Sri Sankara has done is to place the teaching on a secure scientific footing by means of irresistible logic, apposite quotations from *Sruti* (*Vedas*) and *Smriti* (*Puranas*) and by reference to one's own experience. *Sruti* (*Vedas*), *yukti* (logic) and *anubhava* (experience) are the three pillars which support the edifice of *Advaita Vedanta*. Since Sri Sankara has given systematic treatment to the topics scattered in the *Vedas* and *Smritis*, and brought them together into a coherent whole, the system has come to be known as *Sankara Vedanta*.

We heartily recommend the book to all lovers of *Vedanta*.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER,

LORD HARNATH : Vol. 1 : *Adi Leela* : By A. Ramakrishna Sastri. Pub. : Girija Shankar, Principal, Ramananda College, Bishnupur. Pp. 224. Price : Rs. 3.

This is a detailed account of the boyhood and genealogy of Lord Harnath, the Bengali saint who lived not long ago and about whom a number of books have already been published. Very little of his

teachings find a place in this first volume. The later volumes may perhaps contain them. The book is needlessly long and the arrangement and presentation of matter far from satisfactory.

THE HOLY PANCHAKSHARA : By Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal. Pub. : A. V. Ramachandran, 'Revatee', 1st Road, Chembur, Bombay-71 AS. Pp. 103. (Price not stated).

This is a collection of the articles contributed to the *Bhavan's Journal* by Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal, a well-known *siddha* of Tamil Nadu and a devotee of Lord Subramanya. Although the title of the book is *The Holy Panchakshara* not all the articles relate to the *Panchakshara*. Some of them relate to Sri Krishna, *Kriya Yoga*, Indian culture etc. The articles on the *Panchakshara* explain its esoteric significance and will be of interest to those who practise the *mantra* after getting formal initiation from a competent guru.

M. C. SUBRAMANIAN.

PERIODICALS

SRI SAI LEELA : A Monthly. Published by Sai Niketan, 804-B, Dr. Ambedkar Road, Bombay-14 DD. Price : Re. 0-50.

This is a well-known Marathi magazine which is now bilingual with the introduction of an English section from April, 1971. The English section should reach a wider number of readers to whom the journal owes the duty of presenting the rich lore of the saint's teachings and anecdotes. On a perusal of the English section, however, one finds that the articles are all-too-brief and over varied topics which detract from the main aim of the journal of presenting articles having a direct bearing on Sri Sai Baba.

ASCENT : Published by the Yasodhara Ashram Society, Kootenay Bay, B.C., Canada. Sub. : \$ 3.00 per annum.

This is a bi-monthly publication of the above society carrying a number of illustrations besides a few articles and a brief book-review section.

FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

GURU PURNIMA (Vyasa Puja)	Thursday	8-7-1971
KRISHNA JAYANTHI (Gokulashtami)	Friday	13-8-1971
NAVARATHRI FESTIVAL (commences on)	Monday	20-9-1971
SARASWATHI PUJA	Tuesday	28-9-1971
VIJAYADASAMI	Wednesday	29-9-1971
DEEPAVALI	Monday	18-10-1971
SKANDA SHASHTI	Monday	25-10-1971
KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (commences on)	Monday	22-11-1971
KARTHIGAI DEEPAM	Wednesday	1-12-1971
JAYANTHI OF SRI MAHARSHI (92nd Birthday)	Sunday	2-1-1972
PONGAL	Saturday	15-1-1972
CHINNASWAMI ARADHANA	Sunday	30-1-1972
MAHA SIVARATHRI	Sunday	13-2-1972
TELUGU NEW YEAR DAY	Thursday	16-3-1972
SRI VIDYA HAVAN	Friday	17-3-1972
TAMIL NEW YEAR DAY	Thursday	13-4-1972



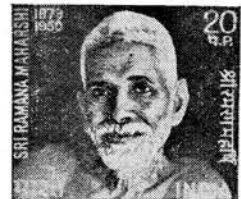
ashram bulletin

The neon sign board : *Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya*, is seen on top of the building at the right side.

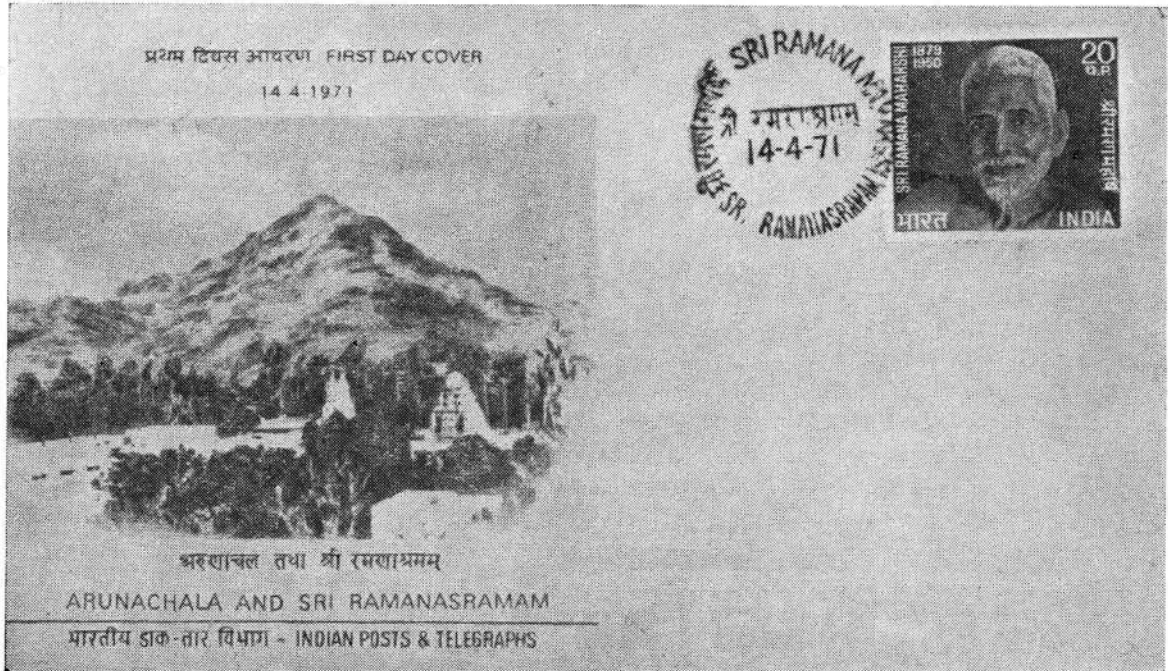
HOMAGE TO SRI RAMANA, The Great Master

.....
 COMMEMORATIVE STAMP RELEASED AT
 SRI RAMANASRAMAM, NEW DELHI AND BOMBAY

On April 14, the day on which twenty-one years ago our Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, attained *Brahmanirvana*, a colourful function was held at the Ashram, in front of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace, in the spacious *Ramana Auditorium*, in the presence of a vast gathering of devotees and visitors, when the Post and Telegraphs Department of the Government of India felt honoured by bringing out a special postage stamp, dedicated to the memory of Sri Ramana Maharshi, together with the First Day Covers and an excellent brochure, highlighting the life and teachings of the Master.



THE Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Sri B. D. Jatti, was the chief guest, who released the special stamp and addressed the gathering on the message of the Maharshi as unique and most practicable for all. He spoke at length on 'meditation' as taught by Sri Ramana as the most suited for all men for their spiritual upliftment. The need was great in modern times for spiritual institutions to influence the younger generation and turn them to the spiritual path. He commended *Sri Ramanasramam*, the abode of Sri Ramana Maharshi, as such a centre of Peace and Knowledge, drawing the



The First Day Cover, with special postal cancellation done at the Ashram itself on April 14. Such cancelled covers are available for sale from the Ashram.

young and old, without distinction of race and religion. He was very happy and felt privileged in releasing the special stamp in honour of Sri Bhagavan.

Sri V. J. S. Perianayagam, Director of Postal Services, Madras, specially deputed for the occasion, then presented Albums containing the special stamps of Sri Maharshi, to the Lt. Governor and to Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Board of Trustees, Sri Ramanasramam. Sri Perianayagam said that he was himself an ardent admirer of Sri Maharshi and felt honoured to take part in the function and present the Albums, at the very abode of Sri Ramana.

Earlier Sri T. S. Bathirajalam Pillai, Trustee, Sri Ramanasramam, welcomed the Chief Guest and the gathering. Sri S. P. Mukherjee gave a vote of thanks to the Chief Guest and the Director of Postal Services and to the Posts and Telegraphs Department of the Government of India. Sri Mukherjee specifically mentioned the invaluable services of our devotees in New Delhi, Sri A. R. Natarajan and Prof. K. Swaminathan, who have striven very hard to make this endeavour a great success, and expressed special thanks to Sri A. R. Natarajan for seeing to the get-up of the stamp and the admirable first day cover!

PRESIDENT SRI V. V. GIRI RELEASES THE STAMP IN THE CAPITAL

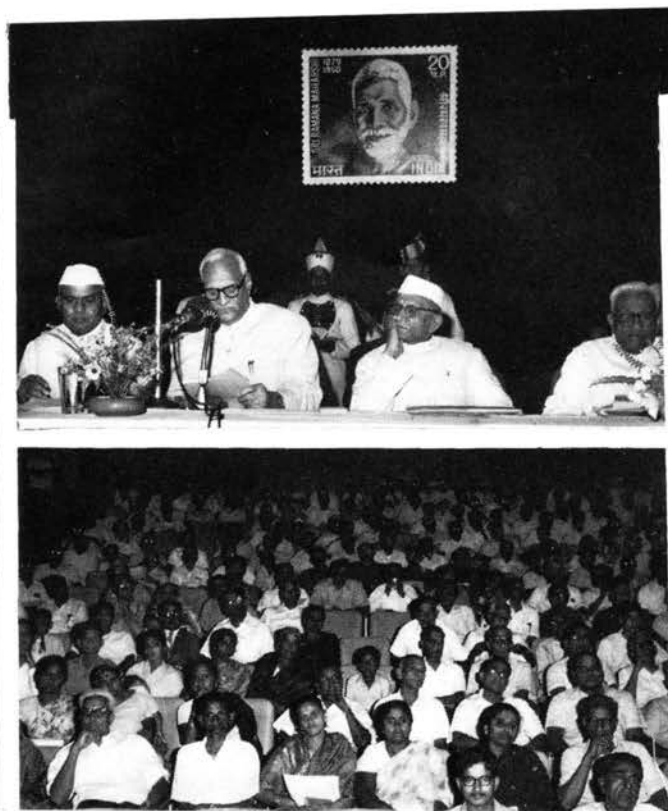
At a solemn function held on the same day — April 14 — at the Mavalankar Hall, New Delhi, the special Commemorative Stamp issued by the Posts and Telegraphs Department of the Government of India, in honour of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, was released by the President of India, Sri V. V. Giri, before a large gathering which included Sri Morarji Desai, President of the Ramana Kendra in Delhi, and hundreds of devotees of Sri Bhagavan. A large enlargement of the Stamp of Sri Maharshi to be released was displayed and a portrait of Sri Maharshi heavily garlanded and installed in front of the dais.

Commencing at 9-30 a.m., the function began with an invocation song rendered by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan and an introductory speech by Prof. K. Swaminathan, Secretary, Ramana Kendra.¹ Then Prof. Sher Singh, Minister for Communications, Government of India,¹ presented the Stamp Album to the President of India, Sri V. V. Giri, and requested him to release the Stamp.

¹ Extracts of the speeches delivered by Professors Sher Singh and K. Swaminathan, are published on pages 184 and 185 respectively.



The large photo of Sri Maharshi added grace and beauty to the Stamp-releasing function at New Delhi.



Top : Indian President, Sri V. V. Giri, speaking. To his right is Prof. Sher Singh, Minister for Communication and Sri Morarji Desai, President, Ramana Kendra, Delhi and Prof. K. Swaminathan, Secretary, are seen to the left of the President.

Bottom : A large gathering of devotees who attended the function.



Prof. Sher Singh presenting Sri Ramana Maharshi-Stamps to the President of India.



(Above) Sri V. J. S. Periyannayagam, Director of Posts and Telegraphs, presenting the Album of Stamps to the Chief Guest, Sri B. D. Jatti, Lt. Governor of Pondicherry.



(Top—centre) Sri T. S. Bathirajalam Pillai, Trustee, welcoming the guests and the gathering of devotees.



(Above) Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, receiving the Album from the Director of Posts and Telegraphs.



(Left) The Chief Guest, Sri B. D. Jatti, being received at the Ashram by its President and other devotees.

Releasing the special stamp, President Sri Giri, declared that he was happy to be associated with the function and said: "We in India have been the great inheritors of a civilisation and a culture which have indestructible values. We have been fortunate in our great seers who have been born in our country and who by their own example and by precept have assisted in keeping aloft these values and above all in showing the path to regain a state of purity and serenity of mind. Reform must start from within to be efficacious. Sri Ramana Maharshi belongs to this illustrious line of teachers and seers.

"A real teacher is one who by his very presence radiates peace and joy to those in his vicinity. I myself had such an experience with Sri Ramana when I met him in 1946. I was with him for half-an-hour; he did not utter a word, nor did I say anything. But when I departed, I felt that this silent meeting was so ennobling to the mind that I have always cherished that experience.

"To me personally, religion has been the religion of humanism. The spirit of man is all-pervading, and unless we can conquer our lower tendencies which hide it we cannot succeed in re-establishing a state of peace and security so necessary in an age of indiscipline, violence and disintegration of human and spiritual values. A Sage like Sri Ramana

Maharshi can dispel darkness and bring peace to those who follow him and to humanity at large.

"I have great pleasure in releasing this stamp dedicated to the memory of Sri Ramana Maharshi."

Sri L. K. Narayanaswami, Senior Member (Postal), P & T Department, thanked the Ramana Kendra, Delhi, and other institutions and individuals who had helped the department in bringing out the stamp, the first day cover and the folder and in organising the function. With the singing of the National Anthem the function came to a close at 10 a.m.

At BOMBAY

The President and Vice-President of Sri Ramana Jayanthi Celebration Committee, Bombay, Sri Nariman D. Sahukar and Sri Popatlal B. Kotak, respectively, deserve all credit for arranging the stamp release function within a very short notice. Sri P. V. Somasundaram, secretary of the committee, and Sri R. Venkataraman, member, spared no efforts to see to the success of the function. The Stamp of Sri Bhagavan was released by Dr. Hemchandra C. Gupte, Mayor of Bombay, on April 14, after Sri L. D. Bonnell, Director of Postal Services, Bombay, presented the Album to the Mayor, Sri Swami Shivananda Saraswati of the Ramakrishna Mutt, graced the occasion.

Shri L. D. Bonnell, Director of Postal Services, Bombay, presenting the Stamp Album, to Dr. Hemchandra C. Gupte, Mayor of Bombay, the Chief Guest. Also seen (from l. to r.) Shri Popatlal B. Kotak, Shri Swami Shivananda Saraswati, Smt. Gupte and Shri P. V. Somasundaram.



SRI BHAGAVAN'S BRAHMANIRVANA CELEBRATIONS

At THE ASHRAM

The 21st *Aradhana Day* of Sri Bhagavan's *Brahmanirvana* was observed this year on April 23, with great solemnity. A special feature of the day's programme was a *nagaswara* concert given by the well-known Sekal S. Ranganathan and party of Sri Seshadriswami Adhishtanam in Unjalur.

Yet another coincidence and special feature was added by Sri C. K. Anavema Reddiar of Anantarajupeta (A.P.) who after trying for a long time at last was able to secure a sapling of a rare variety of Banyan tree, identified as 'Krishna-Banyan' (*ficus-krishna*). Only a few such trees exist in India. Popular legend has it that Lord Krishna once folded the common banyan leaf (*ficus-bengaliensis*) into the shape of a cup to hold his stolen butter and that ever afterwards the tree bore only cup-shaped leaves, just as by Sri Rama's touch the squirrels carry the three stripes! Botanical research also appears to show that it is only a mutant of the common banyan which has permanently become a distinct species. The sapling brought by Sri Anavema Reddiar to be fostered in Sri Bhagavan's Ashram was duly planted in the premises of the Ashram compound and in the presence of all devotees.

The *Aradhana* functions were performed in the newly erected *Ramana Auditorium* and in front of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace. There was a large gathering of devotees as usual from India and abroad. The day's programme commenced with *Ekadasarudram* and *Mahanyasa puja* starting at 5-30 a.m., and with the milk offering worship at Sri Ramaneswara Mahalinga at 6-15 a.m. After breakfast the *Mahabhishekam* to Sri Bhagavan was performed to the accompaniment of Vedic chants of Upanishad *parayana*. *Arati* at the beautifully decorated Shrine came off at 11-30 a.m. Thereafter, the devotees and visitors were all treated to lunch. Poor feeding was done in a sumptuous way.

With the singing of devotional songs in the evening and with a good *bhajan* by Brahmasri Jagadeeswara Iyer and party in the night the celebrations were concluded.

At MADURAI

The 21st *Maha Samadhi Day* of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated at *Sri Ramana Mandiram* on April, 22 & 23. Sri T. K. Sundaram,



Asst. Secretary, Madurai Divine Life Society, welcomed the audience. Sri C. S. Deenadayalu, Executive Officer, Sri Meenakshi Devasthanam, inaugurated the celebrations and Prof. G. Sankararajulu of Madurai Agricultural College spoke on *Arunachala Aksharamanamalai*. Sri P. R. V. Ramanan, Secretary of *Sri Ramana Mandiram*, gave a vote of thanks to the Government of India and Sri Ramanasramam for releasing the postage stamp of Sri Ramana and honouring the Great Sage of Arunachala.

At RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Gurupuja was celebrated on April 25, at 27, Meena Bagh. After *Vedaparayana*, *Upadesa Sara* chanting and music, Prof. K. Swaminathan gave a talk on the harmony of *seva*, *dhyana* and *bhajana* in the worship of Sri Bhagavan.

At SAMBRE, BELGAUM

Aradhana was celebrated on April 25, by a large group of devotees at the residence of Sri P. R. Suryanandan. *Vedaparayana* was followed by *Upadesa Sara* and group and individual singing of verses composed by Sri Bhagavan, and other devotees. After *arati* and distribution of *prasad*, the gathering dispersed late at night.

At RAMANA BHAKTA SABHA, MADRAS

On May 2, Gurupuja was celebrated at "Dharmalayam", 94, Mowbray's Road, Alwarpet. After *Vedaparayana* and music, talks were given by Sri T. S. Narayanaswami and Sri M. P. Periasami Thooran.

At POONA

Sri Bhagavan's *Mahanirvana* Day was performed in Bhavusaheb Y. N. Athavale's new construction — a Meditation Hall — and in the Datta Sihan on the 23rd April. In the morning *Rudrabhisheka puja*, *arati* and *Brahmin-bhojan*, and in the evening recitation of *Bhagavad Gita*, *Upadesa Sara*, *Arunachala Pancharatna* were done. From 6 to 9 p.m., there were discourses on Sri Bhagavan by a few devotees. The function concluded with *bhajana* and prayer to Sri Bhagavan.

At KOLHAPUR

The Sat-sanga Mandala celebrated the 21st *Maha Nirvana* Day of Sri Bhagavan on April 23 with devotional fervour. In the morning *Rudrabhishekam* and *puja* were performed. In the evening there was a meeting of devotees and recitations of *Upadesa Saram* and *Vedic Mantras*. Pandit Balacharya Khuperkar, Prof. N. G. Deshpande, Smt. Y. Kul-karni and Smt. Sadalagekar gave talks on Sri Bhagavan and His teachings. Devotional songs by Sri Mahajan and party were followed by meditation and prayer. The function concluded with *arathi* and distribution of *prasad*.

At HOLLAND

R. P. Jaspers, Dickmansstraat, Overveen, writes on May 10, to say: "We in Netherlands can also look back at a very good celebration of the 21st *Brahmanirvana* of our Master. The programme was: dinner, reading out portions of Sri Bhagavan's works and meditation. We all experienced a very special silence and stillness and there was a mood of relaxation and love."

THE NEON BOARD

Sri Radhakrishnaswami of Bangalore (President, All India Sai Samaj), was at the Ashram during the middle of February, accompanied by Sri Doraiswamy, Managing Director, Kasyapa Trading Corporation, Bangalore. The Swamiji was pleased to suggest the putting up of a suitable Neon Sign Board for the Ashram, and Sri Doraiswamy readily consented to fabricate and supply the board, free of cost. The double coloured neon sign depicting in Tamil

the script *Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya*¹ (Obeisance to Bhagavan Sri Ramana) has since been erected by the Corporation in a prominent place over the terrace of Sri Mathrubhuteswarar Shrine facing the entrance and adding lustre to the Ashram building (as seen in the picture on page 201).

ASHRAM IMPROVEMENTS

The Ashram area is now well lit up with two mercury vapour lamps, one in front and the other in the rear. These lamps are the donations of Sri M. V. Sastri of Madras and Sri Sadananda-murthi of Bangalore.

The overhead wiring system of the Ashram electrical installation which were presenting an ugly appearance, has been replaced by a system of underground cables and Alkathene (PVC rigid) conduits at a cost of nearly Rs. 9,000. This improvement is conducive to efficiency and longevity, mainly avoiding the deterioration and damage due to weather conditions and monkeys.

We owe our gratitude to the kind services voluntarily rendered with devotion by Sri K. Padmanabhan, ex-trustee of the Ashram, who has been in charge of all these improvement schemes. He is, in fact, in charge of everything connected with engineering and construction work of the Ashram.

SRI RUDRA HOMA

The annual ceremony of 'Rudra Yashti' a regular feature for the past three years, being an anniversary of daily pujas to Lord Siva, parallel to *Sri Vidya Havan* which is an anniversary for Sri Chakra Pujas for Sakthi, took place on April 26, commencing at 5-30 a.m. and concluding at 11-30 a.m. It was largely attended.

NAMASANKIRTAN

There was a *namasankirtan* (chanting of the Lord's Name) for two hours from 8 p.m. on April 26, by Sri Avadhutendra Saraswathi Swami, popularly known as 'Raghuvaradasa' of Andhra Pradesh. He was accompanied by his devotees. The Swamiji has no Ashram of his own and is a wandering monk, revelling in *namasankirtan*. The function was well-attended by ashramites as well as people from the town.

The Swami gave us the pleasure of listening to his *bhajan* again, on June 3.

¹ For the importance of the *mantra* please see the article by T. K. S. on page 168.

MUSIC RECITAL AT DELHI

At a special function organised by the Delhi Tamil Sangam, *Srimathi Sulochana Natarajan* gave a good musical rendering of select pieces from the famous Tamil songs of Sri Muruganar, on May 22. Prof. K. Swaminathan, Secretary, Ramana Kendra, New Delhi, explained the songs to the audience, very appreciative of the whole programme.

* * *

CONTINUED GRACE

Sri Bhagavan appearing in dreams to some who have never even heard of him is by no means unusual though always of fresh interest to devotees when brought to their notice. A recent case is that of *Rajani*, a young girl of Andhra Pradesh who used to lose frequently her faculty of speech and was subject to mental blackouts. She was taken to various places of pilgrimage when orthodox treatment failed to give relief. A few years ago while on such a pilgrimage to Tirupathi she had a vivid dream of a hill at the foot of which a holy man told her distinctly: 'Go to Arunachala.' The holy man had appeared in her dreams several times before but she did not know who he was nor anything about Arunachala. When someone in Tirupathi explained that Arunachala was in Tiruvannamalai they came here to the Hill and holy man of her dreams. But on her way she again lost her faculty of speech. The moment she entered and prostrated before the Mother's Shrine where a *Sri Chakra Puja*¹ was in progress she uttered her first sound which was OM. The girl not only regained her speech but also a beautiful singing voice which she uses for *bhajans* (chants in praise of God). This year, Rajani, paid her third visit to the Ashram in April-May. So far there has been no return of her ailment and she considers herself permanently healed!

* * *

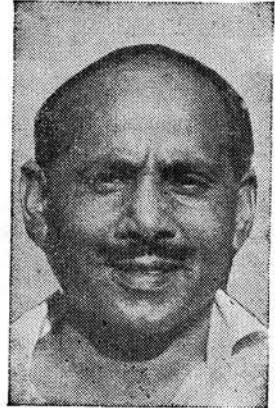
PILGRIMS

Major I. J. Taneja, who lives in Karimganj, Assam, came for a month (April-May) to spend his yearly holidays at Sri Ramanasramam. He writes:

"Being in the army, my job puts me in the midst of turmoil. Often I have to make decisions on the spot. The day-to-day handling of problems of men under command and office routine have increased and become complicated, apart from problems of family life. Under the circumstances the battery connected with all this has to be charged fully at least once a year, at the Source. Wherever I happen to be posted, I have, therefore, to rush to *Sri Ramana-Arunachala*, the day annual leave is sanctioned!

Sri Bhagavan has always been gracious to remove any obstacles on the way. My family accompanies me whenever possible.

"Every year that I come new experiences unfold with more intensity and frequency which must be due to more concentration and His Grace. No doubts are left and I am sent back with a deeper understanding!



Major Taneja

"When at the Ashram my daily routine starts from 3 a.m. and continues till 9-30 p.m. The stay is so blissful, that time passes almost imperceptibly. *Pradakshina* (circumambulation) around Sri Arunachala, especially during early morning hours, done in *dhyana* bestows spiritual benefits full of Grace. Spiritual knots get solved of their own accord. One feels in perfect unison with surroundings and care-free. On the way one visits the Arunachala Siva Temple conducive to peace of mind. While at the Ashram, meditation in the Samadhi Hall or at the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan brings one nearer the goal. The sound of the chanting of *Vedaparayana* lulls the mind and creates an atmosphere for concentration. Sri Mathrubutheswara temple, adjoining the Samadhi of Sri Bhagavan, when approached with reverence and love, gives one all the support that is needed.

"*Sadhana* continues unhampered if the teachings of Sri Bhagavan are followed correctly and with humility. Weaknesses revealed in oneself should be overcome ruthlessly with the knowledge gained. Earnest efforts always receive His Grace. What is required is perseverance, sincerity and intensity.

"At the beginning I first came to the Ashram in the year 1949. Prior to that I was never tempted by any holy place or guru. From that first visit up to 1958 I could not come regularly; but since the year 1959 I have been enabled to come for one month each year. There are no words to express the gratitude to the Lord who is RAMANA-ARUNACHALA-SELF, to whom I am further indebted for He has guided and protected me whenever the situation so demanded!"

¹ An article on this puja appears elsewhere in this issue.

Paul Rheinbay from Muenchen (Germany) who spent here about one month from March to April of this year writes :

"In December, 1966 I came to know for the first time about Sri Ramana through the book *Der Atem Indiens* by Hans-Hasso von Veltheim-Ostrau. Looking for more I found *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge* by Arthur Osborne and books by Heinrich Zimmer. The photographs of Sri Ramana gripped the heart and have remained constant companions ever since. Later I came across *Auf den Pfad Sri Ramana Maharshi* by Mouni Sadhu and *Sri Ramana Maharshi's Life and Work* by Satyamayi, also the translation into German of *Maharshi's Gospel and Maha Yoga* by 'Who'. All these books left a deep impression.

"The indescribable radiance of Arunachala from the moment I had the first view of this hallowed Mountain from the bus nearing its destination has remained an unforgettable experience.

"The poet Murugnar writes :

Let us meditate on Ramana, Teacher of Reality
Who abides within my inmost Self as I, as I,
Bringing in full measure the joy of Silence
Ending delusive pride.

Let us meditate on Ramana, Teacher of Reality."

* * *

Father Jesudasan visited the Ashram between June, 5 and 9. This was preceded by a visit of three brothers of his order. Their quest was to clarify and understand the inner meaning of vital tenets in Hinduism within the framework of Christianity. Their obvious earnestness and sincerity of purpose seems to have been rewarded according to the following lines left by Father Jesudasan who has contributed articles to *The Mountain Path*.

"I am happy and grateful to have had the opportunity, more correctly the Grace, of visiting and staying in Sri Ramanasramam for three days — a thing I had desired for five years. I think that these three days at the Ashram have been a kind of spiritual retreat from which will flow, I trust, strength and inspiration for a meditative life for many days to come.

Talking to a few of the ashramites, I was struck by their sense of God and their strong awareness of the reality of Grace and the exemplary earnestness which they bring to their meditation. Not to speak of the spiritual radiance that makes itself felt about the place, the presence and quest of these earnest seekers, *sadhakas* and *sadhus* have been of some help and inspiration amidst one's own doubts and difficulties.

I wish and hope to return here for a longer stay. Hospitality here is genuine. Om Bhagavan!"

I. JESUDASAN, S.J.

* * *

Dr. Manuel Valenzuela of Chile, who was staying at the Ashram translating Sri Bhagavan's works into Spanish for the past three months, left for Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, en route to his home in South America.

* * *

Smt. Suri Nagamma, author of *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, spent as usual two months (in a year) at the Ashram. She was devoting all her time to reading the works of Sri Bhagavan and writing her reminiscences to which devotees listened with great interest during reading sessions.

* * *

The family of Sri A. Devaraja Mudaliar, author of *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, is so very devoted to Sri Bhagavan that they spend the well-earned annual holidays quietly at His abode here. This year also in May, Sri Devaraja Mudaliar's son, Sri A. Dorai Raj, his wife, daughter and son-in-law, Sri Chandrarao Mudaliar and his family, spent a few days at the Ashram.

* * *

Mrs. Barbara Rose and David Lawrence, after a stay of 2 months at the Ashram, left for the States; they were almost in tears when they told the *Managing Editor* that they could not return to Arunachala — their 'Home' — for two more years.

We wish them well and say 'Sri Bhagavan is in your heart and everywhere.'

* * *

Here is an account of Charles and Anne Reeder's¹ return to Arunachala. Their devotion and faith in Sri Bhagavan is great enough to brave the hot season here coinciding with the birth of their first baby! They write :

"On returning home to the U.S.A. in the spring of 1969 we had the feeling that somehow we might be able to come back to the Ashram, and we were waiting for the right moment to reveal itself. At home in Mississippi we would from time to time receive letters from a devotee and close friend and this kept us in closer touch with Arunachala.

After about a year and a half of working and trying to let spiritual practice grow in everyday life, we felt the call to return to the Ashram. We did not want to come to Arunachala as a way of escaping anything, but as to a source of strength in trying to go deeper. We asked for a sign that this

¹ Please also see *Ashram Bulletin* of Jan. 1969, p. 66.



Anne and Charles with ANANDA.

was the right way for us, and within a day or two Sri Bhagavan made the path unmistakably clear to us. This coincided with our doctor's remark that Anne would be having a baby in April!

We had pretty good confidence that all would go well, so we just carried on with plans for the journey, travelling through Europe, where Arunachala-

friends received us with great warmth and arriving at the Ashram in late January. Everyone here was very kind to us, and that which was needed always seemed to appear at just the right time. Julianna Ananda herself appeared on Sri Bhagavan's *Mahānirvana Day*, April 14, at nearby Vellore hospital. Just as she was born thousands of birds were singing in the trees and below the window of the room! We felt Sri Bhagavan's strength and support all the way. Ananda first looked as though she had been rudely interrupted in the midst of a blissful vision, but she did just the right thing when first entering Sri Bhagavan's Old Meditation Hall a few weeks later — her hands somehow went up and folded in a gesture of *namaskaram* or *namaste* (thanksgiving)!"

CHARLES and ANNE REEDER, U.S.A.

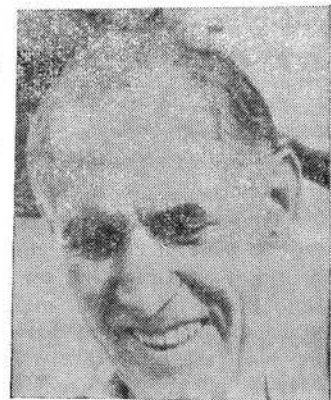
* * * * *

Smt. O. Kamakshi Ammal, daughter of the author of *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* and her husband, Dr. O. Ramachandriah, spent a week at the Ashram. Her brother, Munagala V. Krishnan, and his entire family, also joined Smt. Kamakshi Ammal and it was a happy family-gathering! It is really a happy occasion to have the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, spread all over the world, gather at least once a year in family-gathering at Arunachala and recollect the days spent happily in the presence of Sri Bhagavan.

* * * * *

There were a number of casual visitors from all parts of India and overseas countries, during this quarter, but we do not give their names as we have done in the previous issues for want of space. This does not mean any lack of interest. Arunachala is 'Home' to all comers!

On May 8, a year ago Arthur Osborne passed away to the great sorrow of all. This year, on the same day, the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, 'silently sat before his tomb' and paid their homage, also by singing 'Arunachala Siva, Arunachala Siva', in whom he has been absorbed! The fitting words of poet Harindranath Chattopadhyaya were recollected: "Arthur! You have not really gone away! Where will you go who ever served the summing up of life as taught to you by Ramana Who is a symbol of Eternal coming?"



OBITUARY

Gowri Ammal, a long-standing devotee of Sri Bhagavan, passed away on May 1. She was the daughter of Narayana Iyer of Pudukkottai, a well-known medical officer of that state and a great devotee of Sri Bhagavan since 1922. In the early days Narayana Iyer was a frequent visitor to the Ashram and was of much help during difficult times. Like her father, Gowri Ammal became greatly devoted to Sri Bhagavan and, during the last years of His physical illness, she came to live in Tiruvannamalai for some years. May her soul rest in Peace at Sri Bhagavan's Lotus Feet!

* * *

C. P. Nathan, who passed away on June 4, has been a long-standing devotee of Sri Bhagavan like his elder brothers, Sri Somasundaram Pillai and Sri Bhoganathan, who were all drawn to Sri Bhagavan's Presence much earlier. He comes of a family of great devotion and piety in the service of sadhus and saints like Sri Bhagawantha Swami and Sri Dhanananda Swami of Cuddalore. C. P. Nathan permanently settled down with his family in Ramana Nagar to facilitate his devotional life, and continued so till his end. In his last days he was bed-ridden. May his soul rest in peace. We convey our condolences to all the members of the bereaved family.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

New Additions

- Ten Commandments of the Arya Samaj* by Chamupati, M.A. : Jan Gyan Prakashan, 1597 Hardhyan Singh Road, New Delhi-5. (Re. 1/-)
- Mary Magdaline* by T. L. Vaswani (East and West Series Nos. 152-3): The Manager, 'East and West Series', 10 Sadhu Vaswani Path, Mira Nagar, Poona-1. (75 p.)
- The Temple with the Golden Dome* (East and West Series Nos. 154-6): The Manager, 'East and West Series', 10 Sadhu Vaswani Path, Mira Nagar, Poona-1. (Rs. 1-50)
- Sri Sivabhalayogi Maharaj* by Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao : Sri Sri Sivabhalayogi Ashram, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore-29. (Re. 1/-)
- The Wonder that was India* by A. L. Basham : Grove Press Inc., New York. (\$ 4-95)
- The Philosophical Life of the Senses* by Donald Burton Kuspit : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 3-95)
- The Way of Power* by Nicholas Rederey : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 6-00)
- Sequel to the Mysteries of God in the Universe* by H. S. Spencer and others : H. P. Vaswani, 1 Rajkamal, 795/3 Padamjee Park, Poona-2. (Rs. 10/-)
- Periyapuram* by J. M. Nallaswami Pillai : South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society Ltd., 6 Coral Merchant Street, Madras-1.
- The Hindu Standpoint* by Prof. D. S. Sarma : Madras Law Journal Office, Madras-4. (Rs. 2-50)
- Voice of Mother* (A selection of sayings of Mother Anasuya Devi) by E. Bharadwaja, M.A. : Matrusri Publications Trust, Bapatla, Andhra Pradesh. (Rs. 1-50)
- Garden of Flowers* by Carl Gordon Westerlund : Matrusri Publications Trust, Bapatla, Andhra Pradesh. (Rs. 2/-)
- Lord Haranath* (Vol. I), compiled by A. Ramakrishna Sastri : Can be had from : A Ramakrishna Sastri, 3/19-A Innispeta, Rajahmundry-2, A.P. (Rs. 3.50).
- The Holy Panchakshara* by Sri La Sri Panrimalai Swamigal : A. V. Ramachandran, 'Revatee', 1st Road, Chembur, Bombay-71.
- The Strange Voyage of Donald Crowhurst* by Nicholas Tomalin and Ron Hall : Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., Warwick Lane, London, E.C. 4. (Price in U.K. £ 1-90)
- A Philosophy of Man and Society* by Forrest H. Peterson : Philosophical Library, New York. (\$ 8-50)
- Sri Ramana Bhagavan* : By Sri K. R. K. Murthy, 1-8-7/13, Sarvodaya Colony, Chikkadpalli, Hyderabad-20, Andhra Pradesh. (Rs. 2).
- Gayatri* : By S. Viraswami Pathar, No. 1, Domic Buildings, College Road, Tiruchirappalli-2.
- The Golden Thread* : Edited by John Raymond Berry. Philosophical Library, 15 East 40 Street, New York, N.Y. 10016, U.S.A. (\$ 4.95).
- Schopenhauer : Essays and Aphorisms* : Selected and translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England (7s).
- The Buddha's Law Among Birds* : Translation & Commentary by Edward Conze. Bruno Cassirer (Publishers) Ltd., Oxford, England. (10/6 net).
- Saints and Sages* : By Swami Sivananda. Divine Life Society, 570, New Germany Road, Clare Estate, Durban, South Africa. (\$ 4).
- Brahmavadin* (Combined Annual Volume 1969 & 1970) : Brahmavadin Prakatana Samithi, Jaya Nivas, Old Veterinary Hospital Road, Basvanguidi, Bangalore-4. (Rs. 40).
- Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness* : Translated from French by Tehmi. Shri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

INTRODUCING.....

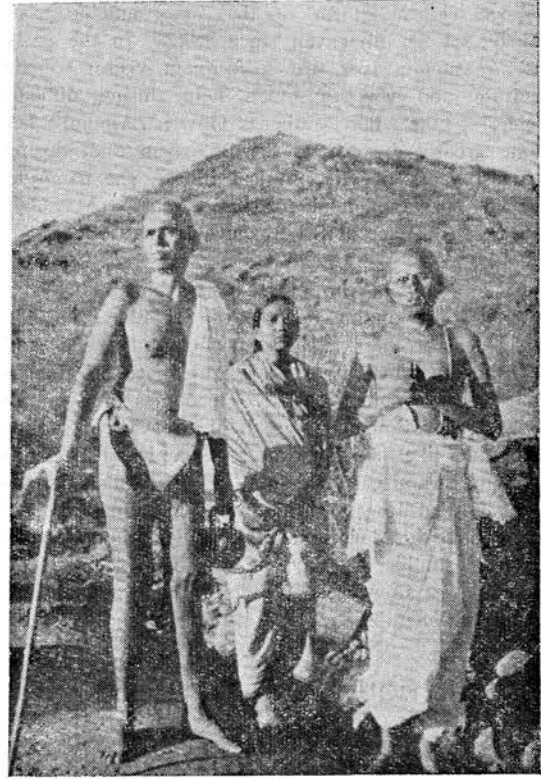
V. JAGADEESWARA SASTRI

SRI V. Jagadeeswara Sastri, one of the earliest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, is fortunately still amidst us today. Born in 1895 at Injikollai in Tanjore district in a family of great scholars, he became an adept in the Vedas and the *kavyas* at a very early age under the disciplined training of his own father, Sri Yagna Venkatarama Dikshitar and other scholars of repute. He took a prominent part in expounding Vedantic works in the presence of His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam where he became the *asthana vidwan* (chief scholar). His Holiness conferred on him the titles, *Atma Vidya Bhushana* and *Sastra Ratnakara*. Another of his titles is *Vidyalankara*.

His elder brother, Sri Yajnarama Dikshitar, also a great scholar, in Tamil too, taught *Tiruvachakam* of Saint Manickavachakar and other Tamil works to Sri Sastri. He used to take Sastri with him when visiting Sri Bhagavan. This paved the way for Sri Sastri to become an ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan and get to know other great devotees of those days, among them Sri Kavyakanta Ganapati Sastri. Sri Sastri's visits became progressively more frequent and he gained close association with Sri Bhagavan who always addressed him familiarly as 'Jagadeesan' (Sri Bhagavan used to address others including those very near to him with more formal respect and only four or five devotees had the enviable privilege of familiarity).

During the days Sri Bhagavan was in Skandasramam, Sri Jagadeeswara Sastri felt like writing a *sloka* and attempted it beginning with the word *hridayakuharamadhye* ('in the core of the Heart's cavity'). Unable to proceed further he stopped with it and implored Sri Bhagavan for the completion of the verse. Sri Bhagavan graciously completed this *sloka*,¹ that has become well-known for its enlightening content and *upadesa* not merely for Sri Sastri but for all seekers at all times. This is the subject matter for the second chapter of *Sri Ramana Gita* and this is inscribed in gold letters on the wall behind Sri Bhagavan's couch in the New Hall in front of Sri Mathrubutheswarar Shrine.

Sri Sastri produced many Sanskrit works of wide learning. He wrote a commentary on Sri Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram* and *Arunachala Pancharatnam* in Sanskrit. *Sri Ramana Sahasranama Sthuti*, a litany of 1000 names of Sri Bhagavan, His life-incidents, His teachings and His unique glory, was written during a period of critical illness from which he recovered by Sri Bhagavan's Grace, thanks to his deep faith and devotion! His recovery from such



Sri and Smt. Jagadeeswara Sastri

a grave illness was considered a great miracle. He was then staying in close proximity to Sri Bhagavan at the Ashram.

At the age of 77, Sri Jagadeeswara Sastri resides now in Madras with his wife and family and spends his time in useful service expounding the Upanishad and the Gita in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan at Mylapore and also handling classes in *Veda Bhashya* at the Sanskrit College. Very recently he was here at the Ashram during the last *Brahma-nirvana* day of Sri Bhagavan and the old devotees and ashramites were happy to meet him.

May Sri Bhagavan grant him many more years of happy and usefully spent life amidst us!

¹ "In the inmost core, the Heart
Shines as Brahman alone,
As 'I-I', the Self aware,
Enter deep into the Heart
By search for Self, or diving deep,
Or with breath under check.
Thus abide ever in Atman."

— *The Collected Works*, (1968), p. 145.



..... to the EDITOR

MORE ON THE 'NIGGER-IN-THE-WOODPILE'

I

Congratulations on another truly excellent number of *The Mountain Path* (April '71). . . . Thank you also for carrying out so carefully my little 'ploy' re. the 'Nigger-in-the-Woodpile.' I was attempting to find a bridge between the positive way of Vedanta and the negative 'way' of Ch'an. Bhagavan stepped over the valley by teaching — as I see it — the negative 'way' in a positive context, but only he could do that because to him they were not different. Vasistha also stepped over the valley so long ago.

The real caterpillar (the 'nigger') is the question "Who is doing all the things 'we' are called upon to 'do'." No one ever answers that question in Vedanta. Yet, is it not fundamental? Metaphysically, it is essential. As long as the question is posed in a religious context, I doubt if a serious answer can be attempted? . . .

WEI WU WEI.

Thank you for your encouragement. So long as one remembers that one is nothing but Sri Bhagavan's instrument or channel in 'doing' this work all will be well.

As to your little 'ploy'. From the previous exchange on the subject a very obvious and simple answer emerges: it is your 'nigger-in-the-woodpile' who is doing all the things 'we' are called upon to 'do' till he realises as living Truth his Source and Substratum and that as a separate entity he never was. In the April issue one of our subscribers considers this answer 'the quintessence of all Vedas and Upanishads'. This question has been answered in Vedanta and by Sri Ramana Maharshi and all genuine Masters: the Reality is Oneness of Being, there: the Self and nothing else; there are no

sentient beings to be delivered and yet the same Masters exhort 'we — us' to exert ourselves to the limit of our capacity to wake up from the dream of diversity not only intellectually. Whom do they exhort if not the illusory nigger-in-the-woodpile? It is a great thing to wake up intellectually but not enough. Some of the most renowned modern philosophers have not managed to do so even intellectually!

EDITOR.

* * *

II

I shall be very much obliged to you if you will kindly clarify the meaning of 'The-Nigger-in-the-Woodpile'. I could not find it in dictionaries, hence this request.

V. K. SAITAWADEKAR,
Jawahar Nagar.

The editor assumed that it was a case of mistaking dark places in a woodpile for someone hiding there like seeing a snake in the rope, but WEI WU WEI explains it as referring to a black caterpillar who lives on turnips and wood and produces what is called a saw-fly.

EDITOR.

* * *

LOCATION OF THE HEART

There is a specimen in Madras Medical College (Anatomy Section) Govt. General Hospital, which is a human heart literally on the right side of the chest. . . . When I saw this the verse *Ecclesiastes* 10:2 (the Bible)¹ came to my mind. . . . This specimen physical heart on the right side is nature's

¹ "A wise man's heart is at his right hand; that a fool's heart at his left."

writing indicative of the spiritual heart on the right side.

The spiritual enquiry starts in the realm of ignorance and on the basis of reason. . . . Every appearance being ideation solidified the spiritual right side heart can be considered solidified on the material plane for the sake of those who doubt. . . .

N. VENKATESAN,
Madras.

This is probably the only known 'ensample' of this kind and as you say, nature's writing or pointing finger in the realm of enquiry. The Maharshi was asked once by a visitor: 'How do you say that the Heart is on the right whereas the biologists have found it to be on the left'? The reply was that the spiritual heart is pointed out as the seat of the Self to denote the place whence the notion 'I' springs. It is a focussing point. Actually with practice when concentrating on the spiritual heart the heart-beats are felt on the right side till it ceases to have any location.

EDITOR.

* * *

VICHARA AND OTHER METHODS

I am hoping a devotee of Sri Ramana can answer a question I have concerning spiritual practice. The question being: Did Sri Ramana prescribe the practice of concentrating on the spiritual heart in addition to the practice of *Atma Vichara*? If so, exactly what were his instructions concerning concentrating on the heart?

FRED ACKERMAN,
U.S.A.

* * *

I would be grateful if you would clarify the following points: (i) Is it all right to follow other practices side by side with Self-enquiry in order to keep the mind one-pointed? such as devotion to a personal God and reading of Scriptures. Should reliance on such things be eventually transcended and if so, does this happen naturally without any actual effort to do so?

(ii) On the relative plane, if one does not actually meet a guru who has attained Liberation, is it good to regard the people we meet and daily events as a guide and as substitute for a living Guru, even if only to act as a corrective to egoism in oneself?

(iii) Is sleep regulation necessary?

A DEVOTEE,
London.

One can practice both the VICHARA and concentration on the spiritual heart from which the 'I'

notion springs, fully attentive to its vibration which becomes audible with practice and is an excellent focussing point till it becomes all-embracing.

Sri Bhagavan prescribed other means also apart from the VICHARA according to the aptitude of the seeker. The mind is restless and its nature is to stray into diversity. What helps to turn it back to its own inner knowledge — to its Source — is good, be it devotion to a personal God or reading Scriptures, whose essence is to indicate the existence of the Self, says Sri Ramana Maharshi. The predominant idea keeps off all others and helps concentration till the idea itself is also transcended, in due course, spontaneously.

The living inner Guru is never absent. You do not exist apart from Him and He is the very core of your being. So you can always turn to Him in all sincerity and there is sure to be a response. On the relative plane if one fails to feel the reality of the living inner Guru or find his outer manifestation the world itself becomes the guru and gives one, seeker or not, the right kind of knocks at the right time to turn one inwards and act as a corrective to egoism. However, there should be discrimination with regard to those one is inclined to follow as guides.

It is advisable to regulate sleep. The ideal is to get up at dawn, not to sleep during the day and go to bed reasonably early. When meditation is good it is more refreshing than sleep and then the hours of sleep diminish naturally.

EDITOR.

* * *

SAD-GURU IS ONE

The January *Mountain Path* has just arrived and as always it brings joy, wisdom and upliftment. We feel very strongly that Bhagavan's Grace is with you. . . .

"Sad-Guru is One" is truly inspired, so full of understanding and insight, what better summary than "The real Guru is in the heart, the task of the outer Guru is only to turn you inward to the Guru in the heart" and then your statement: "The impact of the Sad-Guru varies commensurate with the State of those who approach him." Only then the question arises in the mind of the seeker "Where is my outer Sad-Guru?"

. . . Is it then possible to reach *Moksha* through a truly Enlightened one? And how are we to know who he is? If we believe that many Sad-Gurus exist at one time, each one suitable for different types of dispositions, but each one as effective as another in his catalytic action of uncovering "the

innermost essence of all beings," does that mean that we have not found the true one? and what about the 'not perfectly clean pipeline' you quote in your article?

Also would the physical presence of a highly (but perhaps not perfectly) Enlightened One help on the path to the 'Ultimate Reality'?

ILSE and GERD LEDERMANN,

Australia.

Seekers vary considerably in their aptitudes to apprehend the Truth. Some may have to be approached through their imperfections like display of psychic powers or enveloping the utter simplicity of Truth with a veil of mystery and thus drawing them by means of their curiosity. So long as 'love and devotion of a SADHAKA is all-encompassing' and he sincerely desires Liberation, its purifying force will ultimately bring him to the feet of the genuine Sad-Guru who is one in all hearts but takes many guises. 'Knock and it shall be opened' Christ said. The Sad-Guru exists always but not many outer manifestations exist at one time. A Ramana Maharshi may appear to our eyes once in a millennium or a Buddha or Christ or Ramakrishna. Some of the present-day renowned gurus with thousands of disciples who came here compared themselves to rivers and Bhagavan to the sea, or the sun and they 'only stars in the day time.'

The guides are not 'each one as effective as another in his catalytic action.' Each SADHAKA finds his own level. The guides may be able to lead one only a few steps or give a few knocks to sharpen our discrimination through disillusionment. It is best to be guided to a true Master from the start but this will depend on the purity of heart which will give the necessary discrimination or strength of mind to follow the living teaching of one no more in his physical form. In the presence of a genuine Guru all doubts evaporate and the mind is at peace. But He is always present and watchful and more solicitous than we can imagine, Bhagavan said in reply to a question.

The utterances of a Sad-Guru even those faithfully committed to writing have power to transform. They are like seeds which will germinate sooner or later, whereas words of wisdom or pseudo-wisdom by lesser guides will mostly be good for the mind. This is the age of spiritual darkness when self-styled and genuinely self-deluded gurus abound. Even 'the devil can quote scriptures' and repeat words of wisdom but sooner or later he will slip up. There is ever-present Grace more so than ever at present. We are never out of its operation 'but it is found by practice alone though it is here and now' like coming out of the shadow to see the

sun. 'There is no cause for anxiety' Bhagavan assured a disciple and this applies to all sincere SADHAKAS.

EDITOR.

* * *

A UNIQUE JOURNAL

Mr. Osborne is no longer with us in *sangsara*. His writing has been such an inspiration to me that I have kept copies of *The Mountain Path* whereas I have cheerfully disposed of most of the many magazines which cross my table. There is a quality of genuine religious experience in this journal that is unique. It speaks from a level that reinforces the comments quoted in Gladys de Meuter's requiem... May I be allowed to say that I hope *The Mountain Path* will continue... It has always been more than a magazine!

JACK AUSTIN, Editor, *Western Buddhist*,

Surrey.

He is with us in spirit which can be a greater nearness than in SANGSARA — THE MOUNTAIN PATH is Bhagavan's concern and it will continue so long as it serves its purpose.

EDITOR.

* * *

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Inasmuch as the *Bible* is said to impart the Truth as revealed in *Advaita Vedanta*, the following must also be capable of being interpreted consistently, viz., (i) the second coming of Christ, (ii) two resurrections and (iii) two deaths. Further the *Bible* should be accommodating the doctrines of *karma* and rebirth.

Will you please explain the above points...

N. V.,

Madras.

A Benedictine father explains that "the 'first resurrection' could be taken as a resurrection to a new life which every Christian experiences at baptism. The second resurrection would then correspond to the second coming of Christ which could be interpreted as realisation of the true state of Being. The second death as explained in the BOOK OF REVELATION from which these ideas derive, would not be to resurrection but to judgment." This seems rather involved. Esoterically one might interpret the first deaths as pertaining to bodies and the second to the eradication of age-old VASANAS and stilling the mind. It is said in the BIBLE that one must die to attain life ever-lasting.

The concepts of heaven and hell and reaping the results of one's deeds obviously refer to KARMA.

As to the doctrine of rebirth opinions and interpretations are divided. The early Christians believed in KARMA and rebirth until the Council of Constantinople in 543 A.D., condemned this doctrine and its exponents against a good deal of opposition also from Virgilius who was Pope at the time. Origen was excommunicated for it and saints like St. Augustine and St. Francis of Assisi were among the believers. Nowadays opinions continue divided as the BIBLE could be interpreted either way.

EDITOR.

A PRE-GLIMPSE

The other day I had the following experience : between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. when I was sleeping and waking there was Illumination and within that Illumination anxiousness and "I AM". . . . After this experience I felt light and elated. Why this anxiety ? I shall be grateful for an early reply.

B. C. SHARMA,
Pratapgarh.

This appears to be a momentary pre-glimpse of Realisation between sleeping and waking still unsteady, hence the feeling of anxiety due to the fear of the individuality or resistance of the mind before extinction. Steadfast practice is necessary to still the mind so that this experience can steady itself in a mind not agitated by thoughts.

EDITOR.

SPIRITUAL QUESTIONS

. . . Please advise me if I can feel free to write to you regarding my experiences and about problems of a spiritual or philosophical nature. Such guidance would help maintain my mental peace. . . .

R. N. SIRDESAI,
Bombay.

Any one is free to ask questions on spiritual matters and it is considered Grace to be an instrument of some help to seekers.

EDITOR.

ARUNACHALA

By Suzanne Bautze

as fortune
would have it
we chanced to meet
on a horizon that
glowingly
yielded
the secret path
to the mountain
revealing
most graciously
the hallowed way
to its HEART
heralding
the miraculous dawn of
ARUNACHALA.

Sri Ramanasramam¹

Donors²

H. C. Ramanna, Bangalore
 Sadhu Brahmanyam, Madras
 Indra Mohan Chopra, New Delhi
 Dr. Sidheswar Nath, Varanasi
 R. D. Mirwani, Poona

MONTE CARLO

Terence Gray
 Mrs. Natalia Gray

GREECE
 Her Majesty Queen-Mother Frederika, Athens
 WEST GERMANY

Api Brenner, Berlin
 Peter Elsaesser, Mannheim

UNITED KINGDOM

Mr. & Mrs. C. Donovan, London
 Patricia Robinson, London

HOLLAND

R. P. Jaspers, Overveen

Sri Ramanasramam

Life Members—Indian

Parlapalli Venkata Ramana Reddy, Nellore, A.P.
 J. K. Athavale, Bombay
 Dr. G. Subramaniam, Madurai
 J. D. Dheer, Nasik
 U. Bhasker Rau, Madras
 P. Subbarao, Khammam, A.P.
 Jashbhai Hathibhai Patel, Bilimora, Gujarat
 S. M. Aswathanarayana Reddy, Davanagere
 P. Krishnan Nair, Calcutta
 Ganesh Balwant Joshi, Nandurbar, Maharashtra
 V. Y. Gaitonde, Madras
 Smt. Kamakshi Ammal, Bangalore
 T. R. Raghupathi, Calcutta
 Ghanshyam H. Babur, Bombay
 K. R. N. Swami, Calcutta
 I. K. Aga, New Delhi
 K. B. Kumble, Bombay
 Dr. P. V. Rustomji, Nasik Road
 Niladari Shikhar Basu, Calcutta
 S. Shree Shanker Prasad, Kollegal, Mysore State
 P. Maruthai Pillai, Madras
 V. Sundara Ramanan, Sri Ramanasramam
 V. Subramaniam, Sri Ramanasramam
 Smt. Lakshmi Venkataraman, Sri Ramanasramam
 Smt. Alagu Sundara Ramanan, Sri Ramanasramam
 Smt. Mangalam Kalyanam, Sri Ramanasramam
 Damodar H. Raheja, Madras
 T. K. Jagateesan, Ootacamund
 J. N. Venkatachalapathi, Davanagere, Mysore State
 R. K. Lal, Calcutta
 Miss D. D. Kolah, Bombay
 Smt. S. Rajammal, Madras
 Gandabhai G. Desai, Vyara, Gujarat
 S. Krishnamoorthy, Sri Ramanasramam
 R. K. Viswanathan, Sri Ramanasramam
 Srinivas Ramachandra Joshi, Dhārwar
 Samanthapudi Rama Raja, Narasaraopet, A.P.
 Sunil I. Damania, Bombay.

N. Sivaraman, Kota, Rajasthan
 Konda Sivakumar Reddy, Damaramadugu, A.P.
 D. C. Palekar, Bombay
 U. Chandrasekaran, Bangalore
 G. S. Sharma, Faizabad, U.P.
 Smt. R. Vajreswari, Tuticorin
 Sqn. Ldr. G. Swaminathan, Chandigarh
 R. Kumar, Madras
 K. B. S. Reddy, Bangalore
 R. M. Patel, Ahmedabad
 Smt. Susheela Sarathy, Madras
 Dr. P. Krishna Menon, Madurai
 Janakiram Sitapati, Madras
 Noshir Pestonji Wesmawalla, Bombay
 K. Subbaraya Trivedi, Madras
 Dr. M. K. Mukherjee, Trivandrum
 K. C. Sastri, Madras
 G. M. Hegde, Tyagli
 K. S. S. Rao, Bombay
 N. Subbarayalu Chetty, Prodattur, A.P.
 V. Srinivasan, Bangalore
 Umesh Dutt, Jullunder City
 Mangesh Venkatrao Nadgir, Bombay
 A. Subba Rao, Hyderabad
 Swami Ramananda Bharati, Madras
 K. S. Krishnamurthy, Gulbarga
 N. V. Subramaniam, Madras
 P. Chickmunisamappa, Bangalore
 K. N. Ramamurthy, Poona
 M. K. Billimoria, Bombay
 S. M. Alagirisami Pillai, Sivaganga,

¹ Continued from our July, 1970 issue, giving further additions of *Donors* and *Life Members* of the *Ashram* and *Life Subscribers* of *The Mountain Path*, enrolled afresh after June, 1970.

² Fee to become a Donor is: India Rs. 1,000/-; Foreign £125/- or \$300/-; to be sent to the President, Sri Ramanasramam.

Sri Ramanasramam

Life Members—Foreign

Alan Nichols, San Francisco, U.S.A.
 Dr. H. Brauman, Bruzelles, Belgium
 James Parker Washington, Province Town, U.S.A.
 Patricia Frietas, Honolulu, U.S.A.
 Heinz Andra, Schramberg, W. Germany
 R. Subramanian, London, U.K.
 Paul Reys, Paaulo, U.S.A.

Mrs. H. M. Iyer, Menlo Park, U.S.A.
 C. J. Patel, Nairobi, Kenya
 Ram Desai, Buffalo, U.S.A.
 Mrs. Donald Mc Neil, Rosemont, Pa, U.S.A.
 William M. Barry, Astoria, U.S.A.
 Mark Joseph Morison, Sydney, Australia

The Mountain Path

Life Subscribers—Foreign

R. D. Mirwani, Accra, Ghana
 Jean Dunn, Honolulu, U.S.A.
 James Parker Washington, Province Town, U.S.A.
 Flako-Romeo Herda, Berlin, W. Germany
 Miss Olga Gilgin, Berne, Switzerland
 Henri Winardi, Bogor, Indonesia
 Michael W. Raynolds, Queen Charlotte City, Canada
 John Key, Honolulu, U.S.A.
 Paul E. Herman, Kensington, U.S.A.

Paul Rheinbay, Munchen, W. Germany
 Mrs. Dorothea Graf von Matuschka, Stade,
 W. Germany
 Stephen Kime, Melbourne, Australia
 Mme. Vambery Rose, U.S.A.
 Vose M. Vidal, Madrid, Spain
 Edgar & Halima Graf, Switzerland
 Kenneth Grant, London, England
 William M. Barry, Astoria, U.S.A.

The Mountain Path

Life Subscribers—Indian

Henry S. Denison, Almorah, U.P.
 D. J. Buxey, Bombay
 R. C. Thakore, Bombay
 K. R. Rao, Bombay
 Dr. G. Subramanian, Madurai
 Lt. Col. Harbans Lall, C/o 56 A.P.O.
 V. Y. Gaitonde, Madras

S. M. Aswatha Narayana Reddy, Davanagere
 Damodar Raheja, Madras
 Yuvaraj Naganatha S. Pantsachiv, Poona
 R. M. Patel, Ahmedabad, Gujarat
 K. L. Arora, Pinjore, Haryana
 Sunit Bal Kher, Bombay

AN APPEAL

The devotees who are not yet *Life Members* of the Ashram are requested to become one by remitting a sum of Rs. 100/- (for India only) or £12-10-0 or \$30-00, to the PRESIDENT, SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI, S. INDIA, by a cheque or draft on any bank in the world, in favour of SRI RAMANASRAMAM.

Likewise, it is also requested of the devotees who are not yet *Life Subscribers* of our journal THE MOUNTAIN PATH, to become one by remitting a sum of Rs. 125/- (for India only), or £12-10-0 or \$30/-, to the MANAGING EDITOR, THE MOUNTAIN PATH, SRI RAMANASRAMAM, S. INDIA, by a cheque or draft on any bank in the world, in favour of THE MOUNTAIN PATH.