



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

The Mountain Path

Vol. IV

APRIL 1967

No. 2

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

"As (Universal) Mother,
it is Thy duty to dispense
Thy Grace and save me,
Oh Arunachala!"

—*The Marital Garland of
Letters*, verse 14.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Editor : ARTHUR OSBORNE

Vol. IV

APRIL, 1967

No. 2

PREDESTINATION

Editorial

THE same must be said about predestination that I said in a previous editorial about reincarnation¹: that the question can be discussed only from the point of view of ignorance, because from the point of view of knowledge there is no one to be predestined. I have illustrated this elsewhere. "It is as though a group of people who had never heard of radio were to stand around a wireless van arguing whether the man in the van has to sing what the transmitting station tells him to or whether he can change parts of the songs. The answer is that there is no man in the van and therefore the question does not arise. Similarly the answer to the question whether the ego has free will or not is that there is no ego and therefore the question does not arise."²

The problem that philosophers and theologians set themselves is unreal, being based on the false assumption of an ego to be predestined. In addition, it is insoluble, because the two alternatives are quite irreconcilable: if anything exists al-

ready in the Divine foreknowledge of an Omniscient God, then it cannot be changed by man's free will; if not then God does not know what is going to happen and is not Omniscient. If it is a cinema the whole story is already on the film, what has not yet been shown on the screen as well as what has been, even though the audience do not know what is coming; if it is an impromptu television show the operator also does not know what will come next.

The compromise that some theologians have found of suggesting that God has only predetermined important matters and left the unimportant for men to fill in is too unintelligent and anthropomorphic to merit refutation. In any case, who decides what is important? And on what scale of values? A young man is invited to the capital to be interviewed for a job abroad in the foreign service and decides to go — obviously an important decision since it will

¹ See the editorial of our issue of April 1966.

change his cultural and social environment, the person he marries, the children he fathers, the whole course of his life. On his way to the air-office to book a seat on a plane he meets a friend who invites him to go to the capital in his car with him and accepts — an unimportant decision which our suppositious Grandfather God might well leave to the young man to decide for himself. However, he does not get the job, so the important decision turns out to have been unimportant; but the plane he was to travel by crashes and all the occupants are killed, so the unimportant decision gives him thirty or forty more years of life and is vitally important not only to him but to the woman he is going to marry, the children he will father, their future wives and children and business partners, in fact to an unending succession of people, generation after generation. The whole theory is too absurd for discussion.

People cling to such absurdities because there is nothing a man finds more difficult than to face up to the truth of anatta, no-ego. Even those who accept it theoretically all too often find some way of avoiding its implications in fact. Perhaps this is partly because people imagine that the alternative to ego would be mere nothingness. And yet life itself proves that this is not so, since every one lives and experiences despite anatta. The only question is who or what lives and experiences. Actually the alternative to the illusion of an ego is the Reality of inexhaustible, radiant Being.

So long as the appearance of an ego remains, so long does the appearance of free will; in fact they are mutually dependant. Therefore the Maharshi said: "Free will exists together with the individuality. As long as the individuality lasts, so long is there free will. All the scriptures are based on this fact and advise directing the free will in the right channel."²

In the affairs of actual life one who has not realized anatta has to go by appearances and it makes practically no difference whether he believes in predestination or not; for since, in either case, he does not

know what is predestined, he has to make decisions and use his initiative, and he acts according to his nature in doing so. Any attempt to limit one's conduct on the pretext of predestination would involve the presumptuous and patently untrue corollary that one knows what is predestined. For instance, suppose you are sitting on the bank of a river when a child falls into the water; to say: "If it is its destiny to drown let it drown" would be a presumptuous supposition that that is its destiny. All that you know up to the moment of speaking is that it is the child's destiny to fall into the water within reach of an adult (yourself) who is capable of rescuing it. Since what is to happen is bound up with your own decisions, it makes no practical difference to you whether these do not yet exist or are simply not yet known to you: in either case you have to make them in ignorance of the outcome.

Bhagavan deprecated useless theory. In admitting the appearance of free will in the quotation given above he interpreted it as the importance of turning the apparent free will in the right direction. Similarly in admitting that actions were predetermined he turned that also to the need for right effort. "All the activities that the body is to go through are determined when it first comes into existence. It does not rest with you to accept or reject them. The only freedom you have is to turn your mind inwards and renounce activities there."²

Freedom to turn the mind inwards implies freedom to accept or recognize one's natural state of Realization. This invites the question so often asked whether the Realized Man also is subject to destiny. There is a traditional saying in this connection that if you shoot an arrow at a running deer and by the time it reaches its mark the deer has already moved away from the spot and another animal come there the arrow will pierce the other animal. The implication is supposed to be that if a man creates karma and then turns into a Realized Man the karma,

² 'The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words', ch. 2, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

speeding like an arrow to its mark, will strike the Realized Man, so he also must be considered subject to past karma, that is to destiny. But the example is not apt. On realizing one's true Self one does not change into a different being but simply realizes that one is not a being at all but simply Being; one attains freedom from identification with this or any other body-mind complex. The speeding arrow of karma may hit the body but one is not the body. The body is subject to karma but the pure being of one's Self is not.

Suppose a man has a vision of a past incarnation and sees himself a prosperous merchant whose only son is a waster and will ruin the business if it is handed over to him. He sees the situation with as much sympathy as he would a film on the screen but with no sense of personal involvement. It is not he who is wealthy or distressed or disappointed. Even in this lifetime, an elderly man looking back may see his failures and

successes, triumphs and follies of thirty years ago with an equal eye, free from emotion. Similarly a Realized Man sees repercussions that could be called destiny overtaking the body that he occupies, but it does not occur to him that they concern him and therefore he feels no emotion towards them. His body is subject to destiny but he is not.

Therefore when asked about destiny Bhagavan would sometimes turn the inert question into a dynamic one by telling you first to find out who it is that has free will or predestination, because that is putting you on the trail of anatta. "Find out who it is who has free will or predestination and abide in that state. Then both are transcended. That is the only purpose in discussing these questions. To whom do such questions present themselves? Discover that and be at peace . . ."³

Since that is the only purpose in such discussions we will end our discussion here.

³ Ibid.

The Man with One Foot and the Marsh Pheasant

By

Chuang Tzu

Translated by Fr. Thomas Merton

Kung Wen Hsien saw a maimed official
Whose left foot had been cut off,
A Penalty in the Political Game!

"What kind of man," he cried, "is this
one-footed oddity?
How did he get that way? Shall we say
Man did this, or heaven?"

"Heaven," he said, "this comes from
Heaven, not from man.
When heaven gave this man life, it willed
He should stand out from others
And sent him into politics
To get himself distinguished.
See! One foot! This man is different!"

The little marsh pheasant
Must hop ten times
To get a bite of grain.

She must run a hundred steps
Before she takes a sip of water.

Yet she does not ask
To be kept in a hen run.
Though she might have all she desired
Set before her.

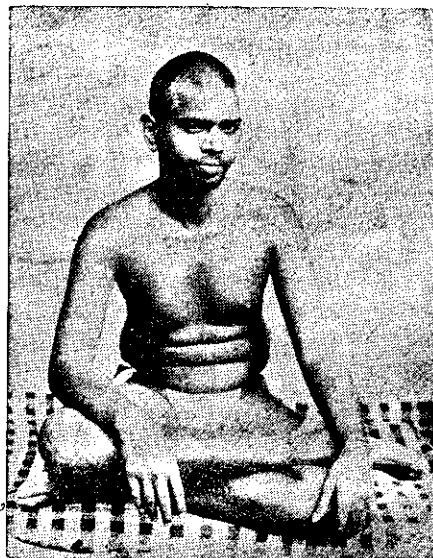
She would rather run
And seek her own little living
Uncaged.

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA ON DESTINY¹

The theory that the Maharshi taught was intended only to serve as a basis for practice. However the demand for practice brought in another branch of theory, that of free will or predestination, since there were not lacking people who asked why they should make any effort if everything is predestined, or if all men return to their Source in any case.

Question : Shankara says that we are all free, not bound, and that we shall all return to God from Whom we came, like sparks from a fire. If that is so, why should we not commit all sorts of sins ?

Answer : It is true that we are not bound. That is to say, the real Self has no bondage. And it is true that you will eventually return to your Source. But meanwhile, if you commit sins, as you call them, you have to face the consequences. You cannot escape them. If a man beats you, can you say : "I am free, I am not affected by the beating and feel no pain. Let him continue the beating" ? If you can really feel that, then you can do what you like, but what is the use of just saying in words that you are free ?



Bhagavan did sometimes make pronouncements which seemed superficially like affirmations of complete predestination.

Bhagavan : All the activities that the body is to go through are determined when it first comes into existence. It does not rest with you to accept or reject them. The only freedom you have is to turn your mind inward and renounce activities there.

Question : Are only the important events in a man's life, such as his main occupation or profession, predetermined, or are trifling acts also, such as his taking a cup of water or moving from one part of the room to another ?

Answer : Everything is predetermined.

Question : Then what responsibility, what free will has man ?

Answer : Why does the body come into existence ? It is designed for the various things that are marked out for it in this life As for freedom, a man is always free not to identify himself with the body and not be affected by the pleasures and pains consequent on its activities.

Question : Has man any free will or is everything in his life predetermined ?

The same question as above, but the answer differs according to the needs of the questioner. In fact if one does not bear in

¹From 'The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in his own Words', Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

mind what has just been said about the unreality of the ego it seems to be quite contradictory.

Answer : Free will exists together with the individuality. As long as the individuality lasts, so long is there free will. All the scriptures are based on this fact and advise directing the free will in the right channel.

Is this really a contradiction of the reply given earlier ? No, because, according to Bhagavan's teaching, the individuality has only an illusory existence. So long as one imagines that one has a separate individuality, so long does one also imagine its free will. The two exist together inevitably. In truth the ego has no free will, because there is no ego ; but on the level of apparent reality the ego consists of free will — it is the illusion of the one that creates the illusion of the other. That is what Bhagavan meant by saying that "as long as the individuality lasts, so long is there free will." The next sentence in his answer turns the questioner away from theory to practice.

Find out who it is who has free will or predestination and abide in that state. Then both are transcended. That is the only purpose in discussing these questions. To whom do such questions present themselves ? Discover that and be at peace.

* * *

Bhagavan : We are all really Sat-chit-ananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) but we imagine that we are bound (by destiny) and have all this suffering.

Question : Why do we imagine this ? Why does this state of ignorance come over us ?

Answer : Ask yourself to whom this ignorance has come and you will discover that it never came to you and that you always have been Sat-chit-ananda. One goes through all sorts of austerities to become what one already is. All effort is simply to get rid of the mistaken impression that one is limited and bound by the woes of samsara (this life).

Question : If what is destined to happen will happen, is there any use in prayer or effort or should we just remain idle ?

This is a concise form of the question that Bhagavan was so often asked, and the reply is typical in that it does not expound theory but prescribes what to do.

Answer : There are only two ways in which to conquer destiny or be independent of it. One is to enquire who undergoes this destiny and discover that only the ego is bound by it, and that the ego is non-existent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, by realizing one's helplessness and saying all the time : 'Not I but Thou, Oh my Lord !', and giving up all sense of 'I' and 'mine' and leaving it to the Lord to do what He likes with you. Surrender can never be complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is love of God for the sake of love and for nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation. In other words, complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through self-enquiry or through bhakti-marga.

* * *

Question : J. Krishnamurthi teaches the method of effortless, choiceless awareness as distinct from that of deliberate concentration. Would Sri Bhagavan be pleased to explain how best to practise meditation and what form the object of meditation should take ?

Answer : Effortless and choiceless awareness is our true nature. If we can attain that state and abide in it, that is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age-old vasanas (inherent tendencies) turn the mind outwards to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inwards and that, for most people, requires effort. Of course, every teacher and every book tells the aspirant to keep quiet, but it is not easy to do so. That is why all this effort is necessary. Even if we find somebody who has achieved this supreme

state of stillness, you may take it that the necessary effort had already been made in a previous life. So effortless and choiceless awareness is attained only after deliberate meditation. That meditation can take whatever form most appeals to you. See what helps you to keep out all other thoughts and adopt that for your meditation.

In this connection Bhagavan quoted some verses from the great Tamil poet and saint Thayumanavar, the gist of which is as follows. Bliss will ensue if you keep still, but however much you tell your mind this truth, it will not keep still. It is the mind that tells the mind to be still and it will attain bliss, but it will not do so. Though all the scriptures have said it and though we hear it daily from the great ones and even from our Guru, we are never quiet but stray into the world of Maya and sense objects. That is why conscious deliberate effort is needed to attain that effortless state of stillness.

Indeed, until the supreme effortless state is attained, it is impossible for a man not to make effort. His own nature compels him to, just as Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita told Arjuna that his own nature would compel him to fight.

Question : Should I try to make no effort at all ?

Answer : Now it is impossible for you to be without effort. When you go deeper it is impossible for you to make effort. If you can keep still without engaging in any other pursuits, well and good. But if that cannot be done what is the use of remaining inactive only with regard to Realization ? So long as you are obliged to be active, do not give up the attempt to realize the Self.

Meditation is a fight. As soon as you begin meditation other thoughts will crowd together, gather force and try to overwhelm the single thought to which you try to hold. This thought must gradually gain strength by repeated practice. When it has grown strong, the other thoughts will be put to flight. This is the battle always going on in meditation.

So long as the ego lasts, effort is necessary. When the ego ceases to exist, actions become spontaneous.

No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not your birthright. The few who succeed owe it to their perseverance.

Sometimes the question took the form of apparent conflict not between effort and destiny but between effort and Grace, for there were those who asked what use effort was if Realization was dependent on the Grace of God or Guru. Really, as the following quotations show, there is no conflict between the two.

Question : It is said that only those who are chosen for Realization obtain it. That is rather discouraging.

Answer : That only means that we cannot attain Realization of the Self by our own mind, unaided by God's Grace.

Question : Is Grace necessary for the removal of ignorance ?

Answer : Certainly, but Grace is always there. Grace is the Self. It is not something to be acquired. All that is necessary is to know its existence. In the same way the sun is pure brightness ; it does not know darkness, although others speak of darkness fleeing away on its approach. Like darkness, ignorance is a phantom, not real. Because of its unreality, it is said to be removed when its unreality is discovered.

The sun is there and shines and you are surrounded by sunlight ; still, if you would know the sun you must turn your eyes in its direction and look at it. Similarly, Grace is only to be found by effort, although it is here and now.

One may not be quite sure of God's Grace.

Answer : If the unripe mind does not feel God's Grace it does not mean that this is absent, for that would imply that God is at times not gracious, that is to say ceases to be God.

Question : The Upanishads say, I am told, that he alone knows the Atman whom the Atman chooses. Why should the Atman choose at all ? If it chooses, why some particular person ?

Answer : When the sun rises, some buds blossom, not all. Do you blame the sun for that ? At the same time, the bud cannot blossom of itself ; it requires the sunlight to enable it to do so.

Question : If the Supreme Being is omnipresent, as He is said to be, His realization ought to be an easy thing. The Scriptures, however, declare that without His Grace the Lord cannot even be worshipped, much less realized. So then, how can the individual by his own effort realize the Self, or the Supreme Being, except through His Grace ?

Answer : There was never a time when the Supreme Being was unknown or unrealized, because He is one and identical with the Self. His Grace or Anugraha is the same as the conscious immediacy of His Divine Presence or Prasannata, in other words Enlightenment or Revelation. One's ignorance of this self-revealing immediacy of Divine Grace is no proof to the contrary. If the owl does not see the sun that illumines the whole world is that the fault of the sun ? Is it not due to the defectiveness of the bird's sight ? Similarly, if the ignorant man is unaware of the ever-luminous Atman or Self, can that be attributed to the nature of the Atman itself ? Is it not the result of his own ignorance ? The Supreme Lord is eternal Grace ; and, being ever-present, the manifestation of Grace is not confined to any particular period or occasion.

Grace is not something outside you. In fact your very desire for Grace is due to Grace that is already working in you.

* * *

Question : Isn't success dependent on the Grace of the Guru ?

Answer : Yes, but isn't your practice itself due to such Grace ? Its fruits spring from it automatically. There is a stanza in *Kaivalya Navaneeta* which runs : " O Guru, you have always been with me, watching over me, one incarnation after another, and have shaped my course until I was Liberated." The Self manifests externally as the Guru when occasion demands, otherwise he always remains within, doing what is required.

In actual practice I find that I cannot succeed in my efforts unless Bhagavan's Grace descends on me.

Answer : The Guru's Grace is always there. You imagine it to be something somewhere high up in the sky that has to descend, but really it is inside you, in your heart, and the moment you effect the subsidence or merging of the mind into its Source, the Grace rushes forth, spouting as from a spring within you.

* * *

Only those who have no knowledge of the Source of destiny and free will dispute which of them prevails. They that know the Self as the one Source of destiny and free will are free from both. Will they again get entangled in them ? — (*Forty Verses*, v. 19)

If you are wounded by a thorn, you yourself have sown it. If you are clad in silk and satin you yourself have woven it.

— JALALU'DDIN RUMI.

THE INTRICACIES OF KARMA

By
Dr. W. RADHAKRISHNAYYA

Dr. Radhakrishnayya is a sadhaka of long standing. He has been paying occasional visits to the Ashram since as far back as 1947. Readers may remember that in our last issue we had occasion to review his rendering of extracts from the *Bhagavata*. Although writing with the expertise of a doctor of philosophy, he is in fact a doctor of medicine.

An early version of part of the present article has been published elsewhere, but in its present form and under its present title it is original to 'The Mountain Path'.

'KARMA' is a much used word, but it is often wrongly used, with the result that its meaning is often dubious, sometimes self-contradictory. It is apt to be loosely used in conversation in a derogatory sense, implying unintelligent surrender to circumstances. Actually it is an ancient word, to be found in the Vedas and the Gita, in Sruti and Smriti.

The place to find the original meaning of the word is Sanskrit grammar. We divide a sentence into subject, predicate and object, that is experiencer, experience and the experienced. These are, in Sanskrit, kartru, kriya and karma. Thus, in the sentence 'Ram ate a mango': Ram, the kartru, engages in the experience, kriya, of eating a mango, karma. The accomplished action, the eating of the mango, is then known as a karyam.

This is with a transitive verb; but with an intransitive verb such as 'Ram stands' an action is also accomplished and this also is known as karyam. Both in a transitive and an intransitive sense, the action accomplished, the karyam, has by general usage come to be known as a karma. Thus, instead of being confined to the object of an experience, karma has come to mean the total action performed. In the scriptures it is often used with the meaning of action or work.

In the earlier parts of the Vedas certain kinds of work or action are prescribed for

men or laid down as obligatory. This action is known as karma and these parts of the Vedas are therefore called karma-kanda. In them a man is urged to undertake some laudable activity — swargakamo yajeta. This applies to the materialist who has no spiritual goal in life, for whom life means no more than to toil and sweat, earn and hoard, eat and procreate, and finally to die. His outlook is raised higher and his life made brighter by telling him of the existence of a heaven or swarga to which he can attain after death by performing meritorious action and where he can enjoy celestial delights. Thus he is made to perform punya karma. His outlook becomes brighter, His life less egoistic and his actions more beneficent.

Two types of activity are prescribed in the karma-kanda, and these are known as ishta and poorta. Ishta consists of yagnas and yagas of various kinds, that is of sacrifices and services by which the gods are propitiated. The community is indirectly benefited by these, since they imply the employment of labour and feeding of the poor and so forth. Indeed, they are often not individual but community celebrations. Poorta are acts of social welfare or community development such as digging wells and ponds and irrigation canals, making parks and public gardens, building temples and feeding the poor. The donor has his reward in this life through the honour with which he is regarded and after this life in a heavenly state.

Smritis like the Gita are only echoes of the Vedas, but they are rather concerned with the later portions of the Vedas wherein the goal prescribed is not merely a formal heaven but ultimate Reality. They do not condemn the prescriptions of the karma-kanda, but they urge that the actions there prescribed should not be performed in the hope of reward, even celestial reward, but in a spirit of service; that is to say they recommend karma-yoga. This is a discipline producing integration through service and leading towards reunion with the Supreme. Beyond this discipline comes karma-sannyasa-yoga in which a man is exhorted to relinquish even the spirit of service, realizing that he is not the doer but is essentially above all actions, a witness to them and one with the Supreme.

It is also necessary to distinguish between various sub-divisions of karma, that is: *karma*, *akarma*, *vikarma*, *niyata-karma*, *nishidda-karma*, *nitya-karma* and *naimittika karma*.

In this context the simple word karma implies activity performed with the sense of being the doer and with an eye to the reward accruing from it.

Akarma is activity performed without the feeling of being the doer and not motivated by desire for the rewards it brings. One simply regards oneself as the instrument for performing prescribed or necessary or right actions. This is the mode of activity of the Enlightened or Self-realized.

Vikarma is activity performed in the wrong way or with a wrong motive.

Niyata-karma is the performance of prescribed actions the omission of which would be blameworthy and would constitute a sin or default.

Nishidda-karma is forbidden activity which, if performed, will be calamitous both to him who performs it and to others.

Nitya-karma is regular daily routine activity such as eating, sleeping, taking a bath, ritualistic worship, etc.

Naimittika-karma is similar prescribed routine activities which are not performed

daily but only on special occasions such as new moon days, eclipses, festivals, etc.

Despite these varieties of karma, the law of karma is a solid rock foundation of life. The Spirit is eternal. Life is an endless chain, past, present and future lives being only links in it. The law of karma is a law of cause and effect, of logical sequence, whether between one life and another or between one day and another in this life. If a doctor goes to sleep at night he can only wake up a doctor next morning, not an engineer or a lawyer. If A goes for a ten mile walk it is only A who gets tired and no one else. If B takes a purgative it is B who gets purgings and not C. (C may also suffer to the extent that he has to attend on B, but that is only C's own *pareccha-prarabdha-karma*, which is explained later.)

The law of karma permits of *purushartha* or one's own effort. In this it differs from the doctrine of predestination. If a man has, in ignorance, taken some poison, he can mitigate or altogether avert its evil effects by taking a remedy or purgative; whereas by the law of predestination the effects would be determined and there would be no escape from them.

Since karma is any kind of work or action, the law of action applies no less in the spiritual field than the physical. In both alike there is cause and effect. In both alike action and reaction are equal and opposite. To appreciate this, let us examine the mechanics of action and reaction. The human body is an unconscious mass composed of the five elements or, in modern parlance, of countless whirling atoms. It functions under the controls of a life principle, and only as long as this is present. It performs actions by means of the various organs of action, which also, in themselves, are unconscious. The life principle animating the body shines forth through the sense organs and cognizes the outer world, also composed of the five elements or of whirling atoms. The sense organs do not contact actual sense objects but only their qualities: sound, touch, form, taste and smell. The sense organs are said to be very subtle instruments, but even more

subtle are the qualities of the sense objects which influence them. The Katha Upanishad says: "Subtler than the sense organs are the sense objects: sound, touch, form, taste and smell, for these can cast a spell on the sense organs and dupe them. The remedy is the mind. An integrated mind can control the sense organs and wisdom can guide the mind. But even subtler than wisdom is the Atman."

Sense objects are said to be powerful because they infect a man with stimuli through his sense organs. The sense organs are easily captivated by them owing to their *poorva-vasanas* (predispositions or latent tendencies) created and accumulated through innumerable previous births.

The body, being unconscious, performs no action without a stimulus. During sleep there are no stimuli and therefore no actions. While awake the mind receives both external and internal stimuli. The external ones are sent in to the mind from sense objects through the sense organs. The mind responds to them and orders a reaction which is carried out by the organs of action. An internal stimulus starts from a thought-wave powered by a *sankalpa*, that is an urge or desire. This reaches the mind and the mind sends out reactions to it. Thus every action of the body is only a reaction, not a primary action. When the mind is free from stimuli it enjoys perfect peace.

Thus we see that the stimuli from sense objects or *vasanas* are the cause or primary action and the movements of the body the effect or reaction. The primary action enters the body through the sense organs and the reaction finds an outlet through the organs of action. The intensity of the reaction is directly proportionate to that of the stimulus. Usually there is a reaction for every stimulus. But when a stimulus is not responded to it is stored up in the mind awaiting a future reaction. These accumulated stimuli increase day by day, year by year, birth by birth and form *vasanas* or tendencies. Also those stimuli that do provoke reactions often leave behind a desire either to repeat or to avoid the experience, and these also join the storage. This total storage of unspent reactions and accu-

mulated tendencies is called *sanchita-karma*. It goes on increasing from birth to birth unless diminished or dissolved by *sudda-samskara* or mind-control.

When the mind is integrated the *buddhi* or wisdom gains control over it and it thereupon rejects stimuli with the result that reactions naturally die down, being deprived of fuel. The accumulated stimuli or *vasanas* also get dissolved. This is *sattvic samskara* or *Jnana-agni*. "All karmas are burnt out through right knowledge."¹ The only right knowledge is Self-knowledge. The law of karma evaporates in the presence of Self-knowledge. The Self is beyond action and reaction, but for the ordinary man who lacks Self-knowledge karma in the sense of accumulated motive-power for activity remains in control. In this sense, karma falls under three headings: *sanchita*, *prarabdha* and *agami*. These can be explained by what is usually known as the 'bank account theory'.

Pyarelal died, leaving behind a three-year-old son, Ramlal. Ramlal was brought up by his uncle, Chunilal. When he came of age his credit in the bank, composed of the heritage left by his father plus the interest that has accrued, amounted to twenty lakhs of rupees. This corresponds to *sanchita karma*. He worked out a plan of action and withdrew five lakhs, with which he constructed a factory and started working. This was his *swecccha-prarabdha*. Through his own work and effort he earned a profit of ten lakhs. This was his *purushartha*. His uncle Chunilal died, leaving him another five lakhs—his *parecccha-prarabdha*. There was an accident in the factory for which he had to pay two lakhs (*aniccha-prarabdha*). He also had to pay three lakhs in taxation (*samashti-prarabdha*). His total assets rose from twenty to twenty-five lakhs. This, his resources for future expansion, corresponds to his *agami-karma*, the total store of karma accumulated at the end of one's life: so that the *agami-karma* at the end of one lifetime is the *sanchita karma* at the beginning of the next, out of which the amount actually to be utilised in the next is its *prarabdha*.

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, IV. 37.

By unintelligent work Ramlal could have made a loss on his factory and ended up with no bank balance at all. And this is where the bank account analogy ceases to apply. For a large bank account is a sign of success, while its diminution would have been a sign of unsuccess and its complete loss a total failure; and with regard to karma it is the exact opposite: the building up of a heavy karma to carry forward to the next life is a sign of failure, while its diminution is a favourable development and its complete dissipation is the final success.

The total store of unspent reactions and vasanas caused by reactions together form the sanchita-karma with which one begins a lifetime. That part of it which has matured and is to be used in the present lifetime or to condition the present lifetime is the prarabdha-karma. This includes not only one's own stock (sweccha-prarabdha) but also that of others which falls upon one (pareccha-prarabdha), such as the duty to serve one's parents and care for one's children, and one's duties to the community in which one lives (samasthi-prarabdha). The balance of sanchita, minus what has been exhausted as the prarabdha for this lifetime but plus what has been newly earned in this lifetime, is the agami-karma. This is carried forward to become the sanchita-karma of the next incarnation.

There is also the factor of purushartha or effort by which the agami can be modified. The highest purushartha is Self-knowledge, for this burns away all karma. The Jnani or Self-realized Sage has therefore no agami and no sanchita to cause him to undergo a new incarnation.

Some hold that even a Jnani suffers prarabdha-karma, because this already exists and has started working in this lifetime and must run its course. They compare it to an arrow which has left the bow or a bullet that has been shot from the rifle. It must continue on its course and hit the animal ahead of it, even though the tiger that was there has leapt ahead and been replaced by a cow—that is to say even though the ignorant man for whom the prarabdha was stored up has

disappeared and been replaced by a Sage. They would be right if the Sage were the body. The body must suffer what is in store for it, but the Sage does not identify himself with it; he is a mere witness, observing its prarabdha but unaffected by it. He has no birth, no death, no bondage, and therefore no karma.

People sometimes speak as though karma were something which comes to one from the outside, some unearned destiny. Actually, it is entirely what one has oneself created and stored up. In that sense, man is the master of his own destiny and the maker of himself. Bhagavan has said that karma, like the body, is 'jadam', inert or unconscious. It is not supreme.

"Karma bears fruit (in further karma), for so the Creator ordains. But is it God? (No, for) it is not sentient.

"The results of action pass away and yet leave seeds that cast the agent into a sea of action. Action (therefore) cannot bring Liberation.

"But acts performed without attachment, in the spirit of service to God, cleanse the mind and point the way to Liberation."²

In conclusion, then, the first meaning of karma is 'the object of an experience'. The second is 'the work or action performed'. The third is 'the subtle product of an action'. The fourth is 'the law of cause and effect shaping one's destiny'; and this last meaning is often misunderstood to mean destiny itself. One poet-saint, looking only on its dark side, has written: "O Lord Venkateswara! Mysterious indeed is karma, which is one's own past misdeeds. It makes man a mean creature, arrogant with might and power. It does not allow him to approach a meeting where holy stories are being told or Truth talked of. It does not allow him to perform acts of charity or to tread the path of righteousness. It does not allow him to remember God's Name constantly. Horrible are the ways governed by karma."

² *Upadesa Saram*, vv. 1-3.

THE THREE KINDS OF KARMA

Extracts from an unpublished commentary
on Sankara's "Manisa-panchakam"

By

Dr. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

WHEN one gains release through knowledge, one's body need not fall. In fact, the continuance of the body is in no way incompatible with the status of release. What happens when release is gained is a change in perspective. Before release, one took the world, of which the body is a part, to be real; after gaining Self-knowledge one realizes that the world is an illusory appearance. If the body were real, release could come only after the destruction of the body. But, since the body is not real, its continued appearance or disappearance is of no consequence.

Karma which is responsible for the repeated embodiment of the soul is threefold: sanchita, the fund of accumulated deeds of the past which will bring about future births; agami, the deeds that one does in the present life and will do in future lives — these will be added on to sanchita; and prarabdha, that portion of the past deeds which had given rise to the present birth, i.e. the Karma that has begun to fructify in the form of the present embodiment. Of these three varieties of Karma, sanchita and agami do not belong to the man of realization because they get burnt up in the fire of knowledge; and they do not any longer affect him by producing merit (punya) and demerit (papa), both of which are evil in so far as they perpetuate transmigration. If it be asked how could the man of realization be absolved from the evil results of sanchita and agami, we reply: even because he does no longer identify himself with the illusory projections of nescience, beginning with egoity (ahankara) and ending with the physical body. His realiza-

tion is of the form of the truth: "I did nothing in the past; I do nothing in the present; I shall do nothing in the future. In all the three times I am free from the sense of being an agent of actions. I am Brahman." What others may continue to observe as his actions are not his actions; they do not attach themselves to him even as water does not stick to the lotus-leaf. Thus, for the man of Self-Knowledge, there are no deeds, whether good or bad, nor the consequences thereof. As we have already shown, even meritorious deeds are of the nature of evil, since they too cause embodiment.

There now remains the question about prarabdha-karma: why should this too not be destroyed for the man of Self-knowledge? The one who asks this question is the one who bears a body and is yet unreleased; such a one sees the jivanmukta also to continue living in a body. The answer has to be framed in language that he can understand: the continuance of the jivanmukta's body for a while longer has to be accounted for. The present body is the result of prarabdha; it is only when the fruit of prarabdha has been exhausted that the body will fall. But the continuance of the body does not in any way affect the mukta's state of wisdom; for he knows that the body is not real, that it is but an illusory appearance. But, then, the continuance of the effect after the cause has ceased to be may be objected to: when nescience, the cause of bondage and embodiment, has been destroyed, how could the body stay on? In answering this objection, several illustrations are given, the potter may remove the

rod from the wheel on which he shapes the pot ; but the wheel continues to rotate till the momentum is spent. Similarly, even though the cause of embodiment, nescience, has been destroyed through knowledge, its effect, the body, may persist till the prarabdha gets exhausted through enjoyment. In a dream a person sees a ferocious tiger ; he is seized with fright and wakes up. Now, the cause of fear has been removed ; yet, the person's body continues to tremble for a time. This is another example. Let us imagine an archer practising archery : he has a number of arrows in his quiver ; one of the arrows he has taken out of the quiver and shot from his bow at the target ; another he has taken in hand and placed it on the string, ready to be shot. Now, let us suppose that at this stage the archer resolves not to continue the practising of archery ;

he may, then, throw away the quiver full of arrows ; he may also cast away the arrow that he has in hand ; but he cannot recall the arrow he has already released from his bow ; that must do its work, and only then will it stop. This illustration may help us in understanding why, while sanchita and agami do not exist for the jivan-mukta, prarabdha must work itself out and is therefore inescapable. To the question : how to destroy prarabdha ? the answer is : by enjoying the merit and demerit occasioned by it. This is what is meant when it is stated that the Jivan-mukta offers up his body to prarabdha. But all this explanation, it should be remembered, is from the standpoint of the unreleased. For the jivanmukta ; there is no body at all, and so there is no need either for explaining the continuance of the body.

Continued Presence

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 From Muruganar's

Ramana Anubhuti (Part II, page 132)

Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan

"Having cured me of my separateness,
 must you,
 As if to test me, Spirit Supreme, withdraw
 Your form from sight ? Where have you
 gone, my God,
 Forsaking me ? Where have you hidden
 yourself ?"
 Deep from within me comes the answer
 clear :
 "Here in the Heart your very Self am I.
 Know well this truth, the oneness of the
 Self."
 Destroying thus in every limb
 The false, deluding I, He shines
 Instead in wondrous splendour now
 As "I", as "I", the only Self.

KARMA, DHARMA AND PURUSHARTHA

By
BHAGHAVAN DAS

THERE is one school of modern psychology which holds that at no moment in a man's life has he any real freedom of decision. At every moment when a choice of action awaits him — and they are countless and continuous throughout life, ranging from major decisions such as the choice of a profession to minor ones such as whether to read a book or go to the cinema — the outcome is really inevitable, not because of any outside force called 'destiny' but because of the balance of impulses in himself, of which the strongest must prevail. The decision he thus makes strengthens one impulse and weakens another and thus helps to predetermine the next decision, and so on throughout life. If the man himself does not know what his decision will be and sometimes suffers agonies in deciding, that is only because he does not know himself well enough. The existence of conflicting tendencies within him necessitates the agony of deciding as well as predetermining the outcome. The psychologist does not claim that he himself is capable of foreseeing the outcome; he only says that, as with two armies on the battlefield, if all the conditions of their relative strength were fully known it would be possible to predict which would win.

Some exponents of the doctrine of karma advance a similar theory. They say that a man's prarabdha-karma, that is the karma governing the course of this lifetime, fully determines all his actions. It shapes his environment, while his vasanas dictate his reaction to the environment. The vasanas or innate tendencies are very like the impulses and urges of the psychologist. Like these, they are liable to conflict and are capable of being strengthened or weakened according to whether they are indulged or overruled.

Only, unlike these, their origin is traced to a previous lifetime.

This view of man is incomplete because it leaves three factors out of consideration. One of them is outside influences or pareccha-prarabdha-karma; another is voluntary effort or purushartha; to the third I will refer shortly. Suppose a man has to traverse a jungle. It may be possible to anticipate from the lay of the land what route he will take. But let a tiger appear before him and the anticipations will go wrong. Either he will be seized and killed and his journey brought to an end or he will flee in some unforeseen direction or jump into a river and swim. Similarly in life, his vasanas lead him along a fairly predictable course, but an intuition of Truth or the appearance of a Guru may make such an impact on him as to completely change this course by calling his purushartha or voluntary effort into activity.

The concept of purushartha is closely connected with that of agami-karma. A person's total karma when he steps on to the stage of life is known as sanchita. But he does not bring it all on stage with him. That part which he does, in other words, that part which is to be worked off in the present life, is known as prarabdha. But during this lifetime he is not only working off accumulated karma; he is simultaneously accumulating a new stock by his actions and by strengthening some tendencies in him and weakening others. This is known as agami. Therefore when the curtain falls for him at the end of this lifetime the burden he takes off with him could be defined as sanchita minus prarabdha plus agami. And the agami which he takes off with him at the end of one lifetime forms a part of the sanchita with which he begins the next.

By engaging in beneficial rather than egoistic activities and developing noble rather than base tendencies a man builds up a favourable agami-karma. This brings him blissful experiences in the subtle state which intervenes between death and rebirth ; it also ensures a finer birth and environment when rebirth comes. Better still : by engaging in aloof activity without the I-am-the-doer illusion, doing what needs to be done simply because it lies in his way, not out of desire for praise or reward, though not necessarily rejecting them if they come, he avoids making any new karma and thereby lightens the total load and approaches nearer to the emancipated state of the Sage.

However the determinist will assert that it is just this apparently voluntary effort which is in fact guided by the mind's already existing tendencies and that the direction it will take is really determined by them, although one may not know what it will be. Again the answer is that they do not appreciate the full nature and potentiality of a man. Sri Krishna says : "Mighty, they say, are the senses, mightier than these the mind, mightier than that the intellect, but mightier still is He. Thus, knowing Him who is beyond the intellect, control yourself by the Self and slay the enemy in the form of desire, hard though it may be."¹ Let us examine this saying.

The senses, stimulated by sense-objects, awaken emotions such as desire and fear and prompt the mind to certain lines of action. Therefore they are powerful. But the mind is the discriminating agent which decides whether to act on these promptings or not ; therefore it is more powerful than them. It can decide against them for reasons of purely practical policy apart from any higher intuition. For instance, one may see a sweet and feel an urging to eat it, but if one is a guest and the sweet belongs to one's host and has not been offered to one, one will reject the urging. In such a case the mind shows itself more powerful than the senses. It also, however, receives promptings from the intellect or higher mind, the buddhi, which can influence it to reject the prompt-

ings of the senses even when this is not a matter of policy. Therefore the intellect is still more powerful. Just as the senses are the spokesmen of sense objects to the mind, so the intellect is the spokesman of the Atman or Self or God. Therefore it is the Atman which is the most powerful. Therefore when Sri Krishna tells Arjuna to control himself and slay the enemy in the form of desire he tells him to do so "by the Self", the Atman.

Those who regard a man's decisions as entirely predetermined by the balance of vasanas or impulses in his mind overlook the existence of the Atman or Self and of the intellect or higher mind through which its impulses can come to the mind. That is to say, they overlook the influence of Grace ; and this is the third of the three factors to which I have already referred as being left out of account by them. It may act either directly upon the mind or through the medium of an outwardly manifested Guru. If one regards the vasanas or impulses as fighting it out within the closed circle of a man's mind, the descent of Grace or prompting of the Atma received through the buddhi or higher mind is an intervention from outside this circle and can therefore nullify calculations based on the balance of forces within it.

I will now break off to consider the concept of dharma, which is so closely connected with that of karma that the two should be considered together. Derived from the root dhr, meaning 'to hold, carry, maintain, support', the word dharma has a wide range of meanings, central among which is the religious, social and moral law which shapes the pattern of life of a community. There is also the conception of a man's swadharma or own personal dharma : that is the pattern of life which will give free development to his natural qualities of mind and character and thereby bring fulfilment, whereas rejection of it will cause frustration. Therefore Sri Krishna declares : "Better one's own dharma, however imperfect, than that of another, though well performed. Better even

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, III., 42-43.

to die following one's own dharma, for that of another is perilous."²

At first sight the last sentence looks self-contradictory, for how, one may ask, can a wrong dharma be more perilous than a swadharma which leads to death? But in a deeper sense it can be. To die following a harmonious pattern of life is not a bad fate or karma; to fall into a state of inner confusion and frustration is creating a worse karma for one's next appearance on the world stage and is thus perilous in a deeper sense.

Arjuna needed this warning. His dharma as a Kshatriya was to uphold dharma (in the sense of moral law and uprightness) in the world and to strike down adharmā or wrong-doing; but he shrank from this and told Krishna that he would rather renounce the world and go off as a mendicant (which was the dharma of a Brahmin) than fight for the vindication of dharma. Krishna had to convince him that it was better to follow his own dharma than to assume that of another.

It may be necessary here to meet the objection that Buddha also was a Kshatriya and he renounced his kingdom and became a mendicant. That, however, can be regarded as an exceptional case where personal overrode caste dharma. In a hereditary society where people of similar natural propensities intermarried generation after generation it would naturally be unusual for children to have different propensities from their parents, but it might occur. Another answer to the objection would be that, by temporary withdrawal from the world, Buddha equipped himself, through Enlightenment, to uphold dharma and destroy adharmā incomparably more powerfully than he could have done as an Indian princeling. Moreover, a large part of his motivation in renouncing his kingdom was the urge to help people by finding a way to Enlightenment that others also could tread (that is the urge to teach dharma), whereas Arjuna's only motive was the desire to escape the distasteful dharma with which he saw himself faced.

One of the principal reasons for the widespread dissatisfaction and unrest of modern

times is that so many people are frustrated through following another's dharma instead of their own. Very often it is for the reason that Sri Krishna suggests — that their own would be 'imperfect'. And the word that is so translated could also be rendered 'lowly'. For instance, if a man's natural aptitude and inclination is towards teaching children, he may become far more prosperous and socially prominent by going into politics, but it will leave him a frustrated man, whereas he might have found inner fulfilment as a humble teacher. There are other causes also of such frustration. It may be due to parental error. For instance, a man who has a natural feel for machinery will make a good mechanic or engineer, but if his parents put him through a long and expensive medical education he will have no alternative to becoming a doctor, although it will not bring him a sense of fulfilment. There are also more obscure, psychological reasons for wrong development. It may be out of emulation, hero-worship or rivalry the desire to be better than so-and-so or to be recognized as such-and-such. The first thing needed is to recognize that one has got a swadharma and that it is in one's own interest to follow it; in other words to understand that being true to one's own nature brings more inner harmonisation and true fulfilment than prosperity or social status or power or successful rivalry. The next is to estimate what that swadharma is. Only too often emotional obstructions such as arrogance and jealousy blind a man to what his own dharma is and make him imagine it to be what it is not.

Let us turn now to the connection between dharma and karma. A man's swadharma is his ideal pattern of life, the pattern of life which would bring his qualities of mind and character to fulfilment. His karma is the pattern of life laid up for him by his self-made destiny working largely through his vāsanās or innate tendencies. The closer the latter approximates to the former, the more happy and successful his life will be intrinsi-

² *Ibid.*, III., 35.

cally, in self-fulfilment, quite apart from considerations of outer success or achievement; the more widely they diverge the more he will bring inner frustration upon himself.

This shows the scope for planned activity in a man's use of purushartha or voluntary effort. It need not be a mere series of reactions to impulses and circumstances. He can study his swadharma and deliberately encourage those vasanas which tend to realize it and reject those that oppose it — for there are beneficial as well as harmful vasanas, and the right use of purushartha depends on knowing which to encourage and which to reject or at least to discipline. For even in this lifetime a vasana can be strengthened, weakened, or even eradicated by deliberate treatment of it. For instance, the craving to dominate one's associates is a vasana. A man may make varied use of it. He may submit to it and lead a turbulent life of constant squabbles and ambition; he may canalise it and become a leader of a national revolt, a religious revival, a gang of bandits or any other group or cause, which his other vasanas make attractive to him; he may reject it by taking up a life of solitude or the disciplined life of a monastery where there will be no associates for him to dominate; or he may so concentrate on the Self that it will not be he who dominates but the Spirit acting through him. As Sri Krishna said: "Control yourself by the Self", he may control others by the Self.

The self-knowledge which is necessary for the harmonisation of karma and swadharma is not Self-knowledge in the profounder sense of realized identity with the Supreme Self or Paramatma but simply knowledge of the empirical individual self. Nevertheless, it can hardly be perfected without the higher Self-knowledge, since emotional barriers due to egoism will intervene to corrupt it. And, on the other hand, once the higher Self-knowledge dawns it will come spontaneously, since there will be no egoism left to obscure it. Indeed, it may be that it is only in those who attain the higher Self-knowledge that the harmonisation of swa-

dharmā with karma through enlightened purushartha is complete. Those who have realized their identity with the One Self have not thereby ceased to manifest this Self in their own individual manner through their personal dharma; on the contrary they do so more clearly and distinctly than others, all obscurations of this individual manner, caused by convention, snobbism, jealousy, ambition or any other impurity, having been swept away. That is why the great Masters, a Buddha, for instance, and a Christ, a Ramakrishna and a Ramana Maharshi, differ from one another so much in life-history and individual nature.

Having got so far, let us return once more to the position of the determinist. Suppose he were to say that a man's whole life including the appearance or non-appearance of a powerful outside influence, his using or not using purushartha, his realizing or betraying his swadharma, his attaining or not attaining to Self-knowledge, was all pre-determined in his karma. He obviously could not prove it, but could one disprove it? One could say that the statement is not valid within the context of this lifetime, since it involves a combination of mutually incompatible perspectives.

If one considers Universal Formless Being rushing out into denser and denser forms in devolution to the lowest depths, swirling through countless lives, metamorphoses or states of being and then returning again through countless lives to conscious reunion with the Self from which it went forth, one may regard the whole process as pre-ordained. One may see the necessity for each life as a link in the chain, joining up those that went before and those that came after. From such a perspective it will be difficult even to speak of cause, for one could as well speak of the later stations necessitating the earlier as of the earlier causing the later. As an illustration, if you go from Madras to Bombay by train, you can just as well say that your passing through Poona necessitates your having already passed through Wadi as that your passing through Wadi causes your later passing

through Poona. You could just as well say that a doctor's successful treatment of a patient necessitates his having passed through medical college as that his passing through medical college causes his becoming a doctor. The entire chain is indivisible. But that cannot be the perspective for judging one lifetime viewed in itself. If you meet a man at Poona station you can no more say that he must have come from Madras than that he must be going to Bombay.

There is a still more profound viewpoint from which the very idea of succession is excluded, and with it, therefore, the idea of causation or determinism. This is the view of simultaneity in the Eternal Now. It was expressed recently in a poem in *The Mountain Path*:

World and dissolution, day and night,
Both are eternally, although to sight
They seem to alternate.³

From this viewpoint there is no destiny because there is no one to be predestined. But to apply either of these viewpoints to an individual in his earth-life span would be confusing different perspectives and could not be valid. Therefore it is no use asking for a definite, unequivocal answer to the question whether a man's life is predestined or not. First there would have to be a definite, unequivocal answer to the question whether a man as an individual being exists or not; and there is none.

³ *The Mountain Path*, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 334.

To Whom?

By
A. Rao

Why fumble about blindfold
In the box of things
The future may hold?
They will take to their wings
In whatever form time brings,
Never as told.

Give them no chance
To lodge in your mind,
Or soon you will find
A true devil's dance
Going on without cease,
No respite, no peace.

Let the mind be still,
Like a clear lake
Where no waves break.
Then, come what will,
The thoughts that fly over
Have no cause to hover,
No place to nest
In a mind at rest.

If still they come,
Never follow them home;
Ask only to whom
The thoughts come.

KARMA AND GRACE

How can the conceptions of Grace and Karma exist together? This is the subject of a letter that the late Swami Brahma Yogiesir wrote to one of his disciples before leaving this life. The disciple has kindly passed it on to me.

YOU must understand that this human body has been vouchsafed to us as an expression of God's unmotivated Grace. It is in this body and this body alone that we can understand the inwardness of His Grace and become an object of supreme love to God. Life is ebbing every moment and it is impossible to obtain such an opportunity again. The time that has already passed will not return to us. This valuable human life should not be idled away or wasted in enjoyment of worldly pleasures, in hugging shadows and clasping illusions and indulging in forbidden pursuits.

General benefit from Divine Grace is shed on all uniformly, but he who becomes a special object of this Grace can derive benefit from it in a special degree. The light and rays of the sun are equally available to all, so that all derive equal benefit in a general way, but the rays falling on a lens are focused by it and can cause fire. Similarly he who possesses a heart as pure and trans-

creatures and is virtuous actions to be ascribed to grace which guide virtue. This Divinity associated with every creature. The divine dispensation of enjoyment and suffering and sinful deeds is also inspired by Divine Law by which of innumerable beings a little japa, meditation, and the holy men shows t

Man should learn His Grace in all circumstances, whether favourable or unfavourable, to avoid confusion or loss of object, such as wife, children, good or ill health, as well as in pain. When there is enjoyment, one should

pervasiveness, and in order that one may practise bhajan and meditation on God. When the body is in the grip of disease the feeling should be cultivated that the affliction has been sent by God out of compassion in order to enable one to work off one's past sins and guard against committing new ones, to help one cultivate an attitude of dispassion and indifference towards the body, to teach one how to make capital out of physical ailments by treating them as austerities and reaping the fruit thereof, and finally to remind one constantly of God. In this way one should learn to see the operation of Divine Grace through every incident at all times and under all circumstances. The glory of Grace is infinite. Man can secure as much advantage from it as he likes. But so long as its truth and secret is not understood it operates only in a general way.

Therefore take refuge in God or Ramana and pray daily as follows :

'O Lord, Sustainer of the universe, gracious protector of the distressed, Ocean of Mercy, Knower of the heart, Saviour of the Fallen, Almighty Lord, Friend of the poor, O Lord Ramana, Narayana, Hari, Arunachala, have pity on me ! O Reader of man's heart and mind, Thou art famous throughout the world as an Ocean of Mercy, therefore it is right for Thee to show compassion on me, O Ramana !'

As requested, I enclose herewith prasadam of Lord Viswanath Annapurni. May God bless you. I am nearing the goal by His vision and grace. Only a few more breaths remain to draw before I cast off this physical sheath. I am quite happy and comfortable by His Grace.

Knowing

By

L. P. Yandell

REALITY is the Actor — the role
is the "me".
Can the role know the Actor ?
The REAL behind all faces —
what "me" can see ?
To a "that", can THIS be known ?
A "life" — can it know LIFE ?
Hear the HEARER, which IS hearing ?
See the SEER, which IS seeing ?
Know the KNOWER, which IS knowing ?
Only for the Actor — the NEVER BORN —
can such knowing be.
REALITY is the Actor — the role
is the "me".
And "my" knowing is greed —
want beyond need.
Sit back ! Let be ! And BE !
Both Actor and role —
both "me" and "Thee".

GOD AND DESTINY

By

A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR

Devaraja Mudaliar is one of the seniormost devotees. He wrote an article for us on 'The Maharshi and the Path of Devotion' in our issue of October 1964. It was largely owing to failing eyesight that he left the Ashram late in 1965. In the issue of January 1966 we put a farewell note in the *Ashram Bulletin*. Now Devaraja has already had an operation for cataract on one eye and is able to write again, and we are very glad to welcome this new article from him.

*"The moving finger writes and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."*

IN my opinion, Umar was not a scoffer when he wrote this but an earnest seeker brought up against the impenetrable wall of predestination. The majority of Hindus also believe that Destiny cannot be overcome. They speak of God having written their fate in life on their foreheads, so that all events, pleasant and painful, will come to them as ordained. Those who have studied the question of karma declare, however, that destiny is not anything imposed on them by an arbitrary God but is a result of the law of cause and effect, each man having to go through such experiences as his past actions have provoked. Each action of a man is followed by its consequences, whether pleasurable or painful, and no man can escape them. If it is not possible to exhaust all the consequences of one's actions in one lifetime, one may have to pass through successive lives to exhaust one's karma.

This doctrine has been welcomed by serious thinkers because it gives some rational explanation to the great differences between man and man that we find in the world. How could one explain otherwise the vast differences in a world created and governed by a just, impartial and loving God? The doctrine of karma is so basic to Hinduism that we cannot conceive of Hinduism without it.

Karma is classified into three categories: prarabdha, agami and sanchita. When a man

is born the amount of his accumulated karma which is to be worked off in this lifetime is called his prarabdha karma and the residue is sanchita. That which he accumulates in this life is called agami. It is generally held that prarabdha at least must be gone through by every one and that there is no escape from it. I will give here Bhagavan's teaching in the matter.

Referring to Sri Krishna's telling Arjuna: "Deluded by Maya you refuse to fight, but your own nature will force you to fight;"¹ a devotee asked Bhagavan whether we have no free will at all. Bhagavan replied: "You always have freedom not to identify yourself with the body and the pleasures and pains that come to it as its prarabdha." In continuation of this I said: "I can understand the major events in a man's life being pre-ordained, but surely it can't be that everything in his life, however trivial, such as, for instance, my putting this fan that I have in my hand down on the floor, has already been ordained. Do you mean to say that it was ordained before my birth that on such and such a date at this particular hour of day I should put my fan down on the floor in front of you?" Bhagavan unhesitatingly answered, "Yes."

From various other talks that I had with him, I am convinced that this was Bhagavan's teaching. I will only refer here to the classic reply he gave to his mother when, as a young Sage, he rejected her tearful request to go back home with her. "He who ordains shapes each person's life according

¹ Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 18, v. 59.

to his prarabdha. What is destined not to happen will not happen, try as you may. What is destined to happen will happen, try as one may to prevent it. This is certain. So the best course is to remain silent."

However, if the law of karma as pure cause and effect is so supreme as to be absolutely inviolable and inexorable, one may ask what use is religion, God or prayer. There seems to have been no time when man did not turn to an all-powerful and all-loving God who could save him from his sins and suffering and give him peace and bliss. Starting from the Vedic times and passing through the period of the great bhaktas, both Saivite and Vaishnavite and down to comparatively recent times, there is a great mass of religious literature which states quite clearly that whatever sins a man may have committed God in His mercy can save him. They have also stated that all karma, including prarabdha, can be destroyed by the Grace of God like cotton by fire. Western saints and mystics have said the same thing and have ridiculed the idea that because God is just, impartial and righteous He cannot save the sinner but must punish him first for his transgressions. For if that were so what would become of the other attributes of God such as Mercy, Love, Fatherhood and Motherhood? The Vaishnavites stress the quality of Vatsalya or loving-kindness in God and illustrate it by the vatsalya of a cow which, as soon as its calf is born, begins to lick it all over, oblivious of the fact that it is unclean. They say: God does not wait for the sinner to become pure before He can save him but saves him just as He finds him, if only the man desires, cries out for and supplicates salvation. If a man who is suffering turns to God for help and relief in full faith that God can save him he is sure to be saved. That is what the scriptures say and what countless saints have declared. Christ said: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Fear not." Lord Krishna said almost the same thing. When Arjuna, after hearing what Krishna had to say about all the different kinds of yoga which could secure Liberation, complained that he was confused by all

these instructions and felt that he could not follow them, Krishna said: "Then give up all dharmas and take refuge only in Me. Grieve not. I will save you from all your sins."² What is demanded here is total surrender to God. But throwing oneself completely on God's Mercy and not desiring anything for oneself but leaving everything to God the all-loving and all-knowing is not so easy as it may sound. However the point I want to make here is that Grace is all-powerful and that even the law of karma by which, they say, a man must reap what he has sown, with no exception whatsoever, can be overcome. I am strongly inclined by temperament to believe this, and I believe that Bhagavan has confirmed it for me. I will quote here what I wrote on the subject on pages 100 and 101 of my little book '*My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana*'.

"Another point on which I more than once argued with Bhagavan is the extent to which Grace can override prarabdha or destiny. My main line of argument throughout was (and my conviction now as ever is) that God is all-powerful and that nothing is impossible for Him, and that if one got and could get only what one had worked for and merited there would be no place at all for Grace. Most often Bhagavan remained silent when I indulged in such arguments either by myself or with others, some of whom took my side and others the opposite side; but from various remarks and observations that he made on different occasions I have come to the conclusion that the following is his attitude in the matter: "Of course, nothing is impossible to God, but everything happens according to the order established by God's will or plan and exceptions are very few. How many Markandeyas, are there in our Puranas?"

On the other hand, many authoritative books have clearly said (and Bhagavan has quoted them with approval) that one look from a Jnani can save us from the effects of all our karmas, past or present, prarabdha included. And Sri Janaki Matha³ has pub-

² Ibid., Ch. 18, v. 66.

³ For an article on whom see our issue of June, 1966, p. 105.

lished in her Tamil journal that when she discussed this question once with Bhagavan, maintaining that His Grace can help one even to overcome prarabdha, he told her : "If you have such faith it will be so."

I find that I cannot usefully add anything to this quotation, but I should perhaps explain the reference to Markandeya. It is said in the Puranas that Markandeya was destined to live for only sixteen years and that he prayed to Siva and received the boon that he would be perpetually sixteen. Bhagavan mentioned it to stress his point that the obvious and spectacular intervention of Divine Grace is very exceptional.

It is said in the Upanishads that one cannot say when or why or to whom Grace will come. It is said that it will fall only on him whom it chooses. A hundred might make the effort and yet only one or two of them might be chosen. No one can predict anything about the Grace except that it is unpredictable.

It will be interesting here to turn to the following quotations from Paul Brunton given in my book *'Day by Day with Bhagavan'*.

"Divine Grace is a manifestation of the cosmic free will in operation. It can alter the course of events in a mysterious manner through its own unknown laws, which are superior to all natural laws and can modify the latter by interaction. It is the most powerful force in the universe."

"It descends and acts only when it is invoked by total self-surrender. It acts from within, because God resides in the heart of all beings. Its whisper can be heard only in a mind purified by self-surrender and prayer."

The above two quotations were contained in a book called *'Divine Grace through total self-surrender'* by one D. C. Desai, and Bhagavan himself, on going through the book, read them out to us.

My saying that God's Grace is unpredictable and has power to remit sins and erase karma should not be taken to mean that this

Grace can be obtained without effort. On the contrary, great effort is necessary. A man, recognizing that he cannot raise himself by himself, must fall at the feet of God and cry : "Lord, I am weak and powerless. You alone can save me. I take refuge in You. Do what You will with me." This is the effort that must be made : an effort towards attainment of effortlessness after realizing the uselessness of our own puny efforts. As Tagore puts it : "Oh fool, to try to carry thyself on thy own shoulders ! Oh beggar, to come to beg at thy own door ! Leave all thy burdens on His hands who can bear all and never look behind in regret." When we do that, Tagore says, God takes up the responsibility. "When I give up the helm I know that the time has come for Thee to take it. What there is to do will be instantly done. Vain is this struggle."

Religion, in my opinion, ought to be something which can bring solace and comfort to the human heart, not dismay and despair. If it cannot do that I have no use for it, however laudable it may be in other respects and whatever philosophical speculation it may indulge in to win the admiration of the intellectuals. I have no use for a God who, if a devotee approaches him for protection, says : "Dear son, I love you but, much as I should like to take you up and give you shelter under my care, the laws of my kingdom are such that I cannot help you till you go back and get rid of your sins or work out your karma." I prefer to think of God as more like the father in Christ's parable of the prodigal son, the father who is perpetually on the look-out for the strayed son and the moment he sees him retracing his steps and turned homewards runs up to him, even when he is still at a distance, embraces him, brings him home, washes him, gives him fresh clothes and kills the fatted calf for a feast. I really believe that God is like that. As Francis Thompson says in *'The Hound of Heaven'*, it is God's Grace that is pursuing us and we who are fleeing. If we but turn aside from the baubles of the world and give up the company of the swine and the diet of husks that we have been

sharing with them and turn in the direction of God, then they say, for every step that we take towards God He takes ten towards us. Christ and other spiritual Masters have said this and I prefer to believe them rather than the Shylocks who demand the pound of flesh under the law of karma. Bhagavan said in 'Who am I?': "However sinful a person may be, if he would stop wailing inconsolably, 'Alas, I am a sinner; how can I attain Liberation?' and, casting away even the thought that he is a sinner, if he would zealously carry on meditation on the Self, he would most assuredly get reformed."

My faith is: Believe in Divine Grace and sue for it in utter self-surrender and you will be saved. Leave all philosophical wrangles to the uselessly learned and be happy with God Who is anxious to receive you if you will but turn to Him and take refuge in Him.

Bhagavan has strongly commended the path of total self-surrender as a sure way to salvation and has called devotion the 'Mother of Jnana'. That well known early devotee of Bhagavan, Sivaprakasam Pillai, for whom 'Who am I?' was written, says in one of his poems: "To every one you give only this instruction: Find out who you are. If, after that, they humbly ask for more guidance, you tell them as your final word: 'There is a power which moves you and me and all others. Lay your ego at the feet of that Mother.'" From various actions and remarks of Bhagavan I have not the slightest doubt that he regards the path of surrender as the best way for me. It is true that he maintained quite definitely that final Liberation is only possible through Knowledge of the Self, which is being the Self, because Knowing is Being; but that comes inevitably to one who has completely surrendered.

Nowhere — Now here

By

G. V. Subbaramayya

Sri Bhagavan used to say that the Sanskrit term 'Mahāsūnya', which is used as a synonym for 'Brahmam' and means literally 'the Great Non-being', can also be resolved into 'Mahā-Asūnya', meaning 'the Great Being'. So, in the right perspective, the Great Negative becomes the 'Great Positive'.

This is precisely paralleled by the English 'nowhere', which corresponds to 'Mahāsūnya'. It also can be split up into 'NOW-HERE', which means 'the Immediate Presence'. So Brahmam is not only the Transcendental Absolute but also the Immediate Presence.

THE MADHYAMIKA DOCTRINE:

A MODERN RESTATEMENT

Rendered into English by

*"Void, dependent origination", said the Buddha,
"And the middle way are one".*

*The World-Honored One I deeply venerate,
For this the incomparable, supreme statement
— Vigrahavyāvartani Sastra,*

ALL things in the world exist in mutually dependent relation with one another. This mutually dependent coming-into-being (and subsequent existence) is called dependent origination. Nothing of dependent origination is not defined and determined by the various conditions under which it originates. Things of dependent origination, the form and function of which are determined by various conditions, cannot but be without "self-nature (svabhāva)". By "self-nature" is meant that which is self-existent, self-generated, self-completed or self-defined. When we say "everything exists in relation to one another and that the origination is a causally dependent one", the statement is diametrically opposite to the concept of "self-nature", i.e. of self-generation, self-completion, self-definition. (prapancha) even voidness itself. E ordinarily understood. Yet since it is cannot but be re symbols are relat meaning of void discriminative and is an internal rea state of realization and is not exp employment of th indicate such a st adequate, but in t sion and having r the ready vocabul an approximation device for leadin thoroughly unfette

designation of void is used to serve as a guide for sentient beings." The realization that dependent origination is without self-nature (non-substantial, *nih-svabhāva*) and is void may be likened to a finger pointing to the moon. It defeats all delusive, discriminative verbal elaborations of the two extreme views of existence and non-existence and ends up in total quietude. Hence, void is the middle way. The middle way is revealed by void, while void is the natural outcome of dependent origination. Furthermore, understanding the void from the fact that dependent origination is non-substantial, the fact that non-substantiality is dependent origination is also made clear. Thoroughly to grasp the import of dependent origination from the voidal aspect and from the absence of self-nature is rightly to 'see' the middle way of dependent origination. Therefore, though dependent origination, void and middle way are three different terms employed by the Buddha as expedients in exposing the real nature of things, there is no difference in their contents. Nāgārjuna, besides clearly identifying the three as one in his *Vigrahavyāvarttani* Sastra, also proclaimed in his *Mādhyamikā kārikā* that: "Phenomena arising out of various causations, methinks they are void, are names only, and are also the middle way" (*Arya-satyapariksa*). To cognise the self-sameness of dependent origination, void and middle way, is an important prerequisite in the correct understanding of Buddhism. The *Mādhyamikā* system is a penetrating study and closely knit exposition of this fundamental teaching of the Buddha. Nāgārjuna had a firm grasp of this theme which he perceived to be the very essence of Buddha's own enlightenment as well as the pith of his discourses. This, and this alone, is the ultimate doctrine of the Buddha. In the *Mādhyamikā Kārikā*, Nāgārjuna advocated eight negations in support of dependent origination as middle way and void. He proclaimed:

"There is neither origination nor cessation ;

Neither permanence nor extinction ;

Neither unity nor diversity ;

Neither ingress nor egress.

Wonderful is this Law of Causality !

Skilful the destruction of *prapāṇcha* !

I prostrate before the Lord Buddha,

For this the best teaching of all."

The doctrine of dependent origination as illustrated by the eight negations will defeat all theorizing and lead to quietude. This is the veritable heart and core of Buddha's Dharma. Therefore, Nāgārjuna said, "I prostrate before the Lord Buddha, for this the best teaching of all" with which he laid bare his deep veneration and adoration for the Buddha.

Nāgārjuna, of course, was an advocate of total void. Yet in his works, even including his representative treatise, the *Mādhyamika Karikā*, he consistently used the term middle way instead of void. This clearly shows that, besides demonstrating the identity of dependent origination, middle way and void, he singled out the middle way that clears the two extremes as the summit of his doctrine.

In the *Mādhyamikā Kārikā*, each chapter is called an "investigation (*pariksha*)", from the first chapter, 'Investigation of Causality' (*Pratyaya Pariksha*), all the way through to the last chapter, 'Investigation of Views' (*Drsti pariksha*). An investigation is a thorough and precise examination of the aspects of dependent origination, void and middle way, in theory as well as by direct realization through personal experience. This system of investigation formulated and developed by Nāgārjuna is now known as the *Mādhyamika* System or *Madhyamika* School of Buddhism, and the students of the school are called *Mādhyamika* masters.

Free will is the salt of devotion ; without it there would be no merit.

— JALAU'DDIN RUMI.

'DESTINY' — AS UNDERSTOOD IN BUDDHISM

By
DOROTHY C. DONATH

THE concept of Destiny, or Fate, as understood in Buddhism, differs widely from the generally accepted one, i.e., that Destiny is a power over which helpless man has no control. In Buddhism Destiny is *self-created*, in the form of Karma. Here it is taught that a man's "fate" today is the result, and only the result, of what he has done or thought in the past (either in this life or in previous ones); and that his destiny tomorrow will be the result, and only the result, of what he thinks and does today. Christianity puts this concept, whether realized in its full import or not, in the familiar words: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," and "As a man soweth, so shall he reap." This, of course, is the Law of Karma — of action and reaction, of cause and effect — assuring that eventually and inevitably good follows good thoughts and deeds, and evil, evil ones. Thus we are the creators of our own destiny — for good or ill, for better or worse. "Every thought (and of course the deed resulting from it) is a Karma," says Upāsaka Ratnasuvanno of Thailand — and no outside power can impose a "judgement" upon us.

In the "Karma of Thought," causes are stored, "consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly," in the subconscious (the *Ālayavijñāna*, or Store-Consciousness), and are "preserved with cumulative power, unless counteracted by other causes of a different nature" in the form of tendency, ability, knowledge, character, and the *will to strive for spiritual growth* and thus to unfold one's own intrinsic Buddhahood.

A corollary states that it is not the ego-soul, the "I" or "me" that is carried on under the Law of Karma into other lives, but the *character*, the *stream of consciousness* (and in the more highly developed, sometimes even the memories associated

with it), shaped by our own actions, thoughts, and experiences, "as it becomes more enlightened by following the Path, or more degraded by departing from it" that continues to incarnate in other bodies and personalities, until Ultimate Enlightenment, *Nirvāna*, is achieved. This is the doctrine of rebirth and *individual* Karma common to both the Southern (Theravāda) and the Northern (Mahāyāna) Schools. In the Mahāyāna, however, Karma is also, and even more importantly, conceived of as *universal*, that is, as not only collective in a general sense, but *specifically*, as group or family, as national (who has not heard of "the rise and fall of empires" and the causes thereof?), as racial, world-wide, and above all, as *Cosmic* — one in which so-called "individual Karma" has an even wider involvement and implication than when taken by itself alone. D. T. Suzuki has said (in Part II of his "The Development of Mahāyāna Buddhism," *The Middle Way*, November, 1966): "(The spiritual universe) is so closely knitted together that when any part of it or any unit composing it is affected in any way... all the other parts or units... share the common fate. This subtle spiritual system... is like a vast ocean... Even a faint wavelet is sure to spread... over its entire surface... Individual Karma, therefore, is not really individual, it is most intimately connected with the whole..." This subject will be discussed further in connection with our comment on the Bodhisattva's Vow.

Buddhism also teaches that Karmic destiny is not immutable — it can be overcome, changed, negated — for if such were not the case, we all would be caught in the endless round of *Samsāra* (the world of illusion), from which there would be no deliverance or escape. Besides self-effort in the crea-

tion of good Karma (never to be neglected), the doctrine of *Parināmanā* (the "transference of merit" acquired by good deeds to another being, or to all beings) — appearing in the Theravāda, but developed more fully in the Mahāyāna — offers mitigation and deliverance by the Grace and Compassion of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who, through their boundless love and selfless concern for the welfare of all sentient beings, can save man from his own spiritual ignorance (*Avidyā* — the root-cause of all evil) and so from the endless round of birth and death and its attendant sorrows. This is not "atonement" as commonly understood — it is more than vicarious sacrifice; nor is it dependent upon one unique historical event; nor is it arbitrary intervention, as of some "god" or "saviour" separate from ourselves to whom we pray in supplication; but it is by means of the guidance and inspiration received as we open our hearts and minds to the Spiritual Presences around and within us (regardless of the names by which we call them) that selfish, ego-instigated desires rooted in ignorance — the origin of all the seeming "destiny" of ill and sorrow, death and despair, to be found in the world — are destroyed. This "transference of merit" by the power of Compassion works inwardly as well as outwardly for those who turn to *spiritual sources* in their search for saving Grace, and, most importantly, even for those who are still unawakened to the immanent presence of these sources.

In the Mahāyāna, the Bodhisattva's vow not to enter Nirvāna himself until all sentient beings have been saved, is not impossible of fulfilment because here, as mentioned above, Karma is seen as cosmic. Everything that exists in the "grand system of the universe" is, in Ultimate Reality, a "fragmentary reflex," or manifestation of the *Dharmakāya* (the "Body of the Law," or of Truth — "Consciousness merged in Universal Consciousness" according to Humphrey's definition), that is, of Infinite Mind, the ocean of Cosmic Being, for which in reality there can be no limiting "name." Therefore it is in Mind, in Spiritual Con-

sciousness, that all sentient beings are saved. It is through the application of this Realization, both outwardly in deed and inwardly in thought, that the Bodhisattvas can bring their saving Grace into visible manifestation.

On one level we turn to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for help in overcoming our ignorance and delusion as to the ultimate reality of material thoughts and things; on a higher level we realize that the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas *themselves* are manifestations of Ultimate Reality and so dwell, not apart from us in distant heavens, but in that Universal Consciousness of which every sentient being is a part — and thus, equally, within our own minds and hearts. Whether we turn for spiritual help to a realm transcendent to ourselves (as in *Pūjā* before our shrines), or look within to our own immanent Buddha-nature (as in concentrative meditation), we are still "working out our own salvation with diligence." And to the degree that *we*, as potential Buddhas, practise the Bodhisattva's vow ourselves, to that extent we too are demonstrating our own Bodhisattvahood, and creating a higher "destiny" for all to whom we have dedicated our merits and upon whom our compassion rests.

So no person or group — national, racial, or world-wide — individually or collectively, need be the slave of Destiny. It is not a mechanical, rigid, or irreversible thing, and the hopeless round of birth and death in Samsāra need not continue forever. Each one has in his hands and heart the means to Enlightenment — the means to shape his *own* destiny — and has the power within himself to work out his own salvation and to help and save others, as the Buddha taught. No medicine will cure a sickness unless it is taken, and no means will function unless it is used. Therefore it is up to each one to practise his highest concept of good to the best of his ability, and through his work, thought, and example — growing in grace with the use he makes of them — help to enlighten his own life and through it and through the merit he creates and dedicates to others, that of his community,

his nation, and the world itself. "Thoughts are things," and every good and constructive thought broadcast to the world and to every sentient being in it, adds that much in the balance against the Karmas of evil and illusion. Wisdom and Compassion are inseparable — in essence *one* — and the exer-

cise of one will bring the other to fruition and lead to that Realization of Truth which lies dormant, like a seed in the heart, waiting patiently as our eternal heritage. Destiny has no power over such as this, nor over those who have found it and are on the Path toward Ultimate Enlightenment.

Boons — yearned for and earned

By

"SEIN"

There is a saying: "God gives every bird its food, but does not necessarily throw it into the nest". This is crudely the truth of material existence. God is Grace and so provides food — but the bird should have wings to come down and pick up the worm that lies right under its nest or, if still wingless, at least should have compassionate parents. Anyway one should make the effort to deserve Grace.

Grace, destiny and effort are interdependent and their relationship can be understood to some extent from the following story:

Once there was a discussion between Shiva and Parvathi. The Goddess wanted proof of the interlinking of effort and destiny and how they functioned under the Grace of God.

Shiva, in reply, took Parvathi to the earth and showed Her a temple where two aspirants were worshipping Him devotedly. Both were going round and round the shrine, inside the temple, non-stop, all day and night, but with this difference that the first was doing the pradakshina in a clockwise way and the second anti-clockwise. People had tried to persuade the second to give up going round anti-clockwise and go only in the right way, threatening him that some great calamity would befall him. He never heeded and continued for years doing it the wrong way. People praised the first for his sincerity and for doing it in the right

way and said he would be rewarded amply by the Lord.

When Shiva and Parvathi came, Shiva through His Grace granted them boons.

Parvathi was shocked, for the second man on his circumambulation, still going anti-clockwise, tripped over some object and fell, and lo, he found a bag full of gold coins; He shouted to the others, saying that for his apparent wrong-doing he was rewarded with gold. The first man, almost at the same time, on completion of the pradakshina met with an accident from the fall of a stone from the roof and lost his toes. People were taken aback to see this apparent injustice!

Parvathi questioned Her Lord as to how He could grant such unjustified boons. Then Shiva explained to Parvathi:

"The first man was a chandala and had committed lots of sins in his previous births and today he should have lost his life by the fall of the entire temple roof — that was his destiny. Not only was his life saved by his right efforts in this life but all his past bad karmas have all also been washed away. The second man, due to poorva punya karma, was due to inherit enormous wealth which is still hidden exactly under where he got that small bag of gold but because of his wrong doing in this life he not only lost his vast wealth but also all the past inherited good karmas. Thus though the Grace is always there unchanged, the results are dependent on destiny moulded by effort."

Arrows from a Christian Bow - XIV

CHRISTIAN FREE WILL

By
SAGITTARIUS

HAS the Christian free will? Free will to do what? The only question worthy of the true Christian is whether he has the freedom or power, whichever one may call it, to strive in the way of Christ until he can say with St. Paul: "I live, yet not I but Christ in me."¹ Christ called on men to turn from the life of the world and follow him so as to become sons of God through a spiritual rebirth. He would not have wasted his time and sacrificed his life doing this if they had not had the freedom to respond. And we are assured that some did. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, but of God."²

It does not matter what philosophers say about it; we have evidence enough that men have freedom not to respond to Christ's call. The whole of history is one long tragic proof of it. But we have also evidence that they are free to respond, evidence in the strength and wisdom of the saints, the beauty and magnanimity of those in whom Christ lives.

A sort of pusillanimity grips aspirants sometimes: "people in the past have attained beatitude, but how can I?" How can you not? It is not some strange state that you are aiming at but your own true state with self-will, free will, egoism, whatever it was that St. Paul got rid of, rubbed out. Christ came to restore men — as many as would go along with him — to their natural state by setting them free from the enveloping dark cloud of original sin. True, we grow up under a heavy burden of ego-sense (which is original sin); but if we did

not no redemption would be necessary. To doubt whether the burden can ever be removed or the cloud dispelled and the light of pure, spontaneous being come through is to doubt not your power to rise but Christ's power to redeem.

Despondency is a great impediment. The whole purpose of the quest is to give up your life for Christ's sake, your ego-sense for the life of the Spirit, so that you do not live but Christ in you. To say "I can't achieve," means "there is an ego-sense in me that can't be liquidated." Naturally such a belief will prevent its liquidation. To believe that you can't attain prevents you attaining.

But it is not easy. An active quest is needed. Christ demanded total dedication of the young man who said he had kept the law from his youth up. Simply renouncing evil is only one half of the process, and one that is not likely to succeed for long if left to itself since (when left to itself) it depends on the human will, a notably weak instrument. That is only the negative movement; the positive movement of seeking the love of God is also necessary, combining the rejection of evil with the pursuit of Good. "Both movements are necessary, we are told; and the reminder is by no means strange when one considers that the negative aspect, the avoiding of evil, too often plays the dominant and even almost exclusive role in Christian life. But it is not enough to renounce all evil. It is necessary also to show an inflexible valour, to resist boldly and unceasingly all laxity, never ceasing to desire with holy love the

¹ Galatians, 11. 20.

² St. John, 1, 12-13.

True, and tending continually and constantly towards it with all one's power, striving always to rise to the highest perfections that come from the divinity.'"³

But have we free will? Have we the ability or choice to do this? Is this talk of obligation not side-stepping the question? Let us answer with a counter-question: is the question practical or academic? If it is academic it makes no difference which decision you come to, because it will have no effect on your life. It is as useless as

solving a crossword puzzle. If it is practical the only practical answer is: try and see. One hears of people turning aside from the quest out of strong passions and violent attachments, dropping it out of pusillanimity, claiming to have attained when they have not out of vanity; but I have yet to hear of any one failing out of predestination.

³ Cosmic Theology, p. 76, by Dom Denys Rutledge, commenting on The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of the Pseudo-Dionysius.

Bhagavan's Samadhi : Choice of a Site

The following is an instructive illustration of free will in practice. When it became apparent that Ramana Maharshi would soon leave the body the Sarvadhikari or Director of the Ashram decided that the body should be buried on the north veranda of the newly constructed meditation hall. It should be added in explanation that it is usual for the body of a Realized Man to be buried since, having already passed through the fire, he does not need to do so a second time.

On the night following the body's death a number of devotees met together and discussed whether this or some other site should be used. Finally after considerable discussion, the decision was changed and a spot just south of the old meditation hall was chosen for the grave and shrine. Those who took part in the discussion put their views freely and freely strove to convert others to them. However, one devotee, K. K. Nambiar, writing years later in *'The Vision'* (of July 1964) on the subject of the death of Swami Ramdas, recalled that in the

case of Ramana Maharshi he had a previous intimation of where the shrine would be before ever the discussion took place. This is what he wrote.

"I had... a dream about Sri Ramana Maharshi attaining Mahasamadhi a few days before the actual event. In the dream Maharshi himself took me with him and pointed out the spot where he was to be interred. I mentioned the dream to... the Sarvadhikari... as well as to a few important devotees... but the place of interment as seen in the dream was not acceptable to the Sarvadhikari at that time and he therefore paid no heed to it... But at midnight on 14th April 1950 the devotees who had gathered at the Ashram after Bhagavan's samadhi disagreed with the idea of the Sarvadhikari and literally forced him to accept the place where Bhagavan's Samadhi is now located. This was exactly the place shown to me in my dream—I had promptly sketched this in my diary book along with the details of the dream."

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GRACE AND FREEWILL

By
DOM BEDE GRIFFITHS

Dom Bede Griffiths is well-known in India as a Benedictine monk living in a Christian Ashram in Kerala and dedicated to dialogue between the religions. In the west also he is known for his various writings, particularly his autobiography, entitled: *'The Golden String'*, (reviewed in our issue of January 1966). We are very glad to include him in our list of contributors.

THAT man is destined to enjoy eternal life by sharing in the knowledge and love of God, and that this eternal life comes to him as a 'grace', that is a free gift of God, communicating His own life to man, is the common belief of all Christians. But how far the reception of this grace depends on the freewill of man, in what precise way he is required to co-operate with this grace has long been a matter of dispute. It was this matter which divided the Churches at the Reformation, when Luther insisted that man is saved by Grace alone — sola gratia — and not by any 'works' of his own; and a thousand years before in the time of St. Augustine, who is generally considered to be the "doctor" of grace, there had been a fierce controversy with the British monk Pelagius, who maintained that man had first to prepare himself to serve God by his own efforts and only then would the grace of God come to assist him. But the problem goes back beyond this to the very beginning of Christianity, and was the matter on which Christianity was led to make a complete break with Judaism, of which the record remains in St. Paul's Letter to the Romans.

At first sight St. Paul's Letter to the Romans may seem a rather forbidding document, concerned with controversies about the Jewish law, which are no longer of interest to modern man. But in fact beneath this controversy there lies one of the fundamental issues in Christianity, and to some extent in all religion. How does man reach God? Is it by his own labour and by the

power of his own nature, or is it the effect of God's Grace, something which enters his life from outside and takes possession of him? This was the question which St. Paul set out to answer in the Letter to the Romans. In St. Paul's time the Jews had come to regard the observance of the Law of Moses as the essence of true religion. The Law, they believed, had been given by God to Moses as an infallible guide to lead man to God; in the observance of the Law all 'righteousness' was to be found, and those unhappy people who were 'without the Law' were doomed to perish, forever separated from God. St. Paul himself had been brought up in this faith and had sought salvation by a strict observance of the Law, but when he was converted to Christ on the road to Damascus, his whole attitude had been changed.

It was in the light of this new faith in Christ that St. Paul set out to face this question of the place of the Law in a Christian life in the Letter to the Romans. By the Law, of course, St. Paul meant primarily the Law of Moses, but his perspective is really broader, as he recognised that the 'Gentiles', that is people other than Jews, who had not the Law of Moses, had the Law written 'in their hearts'. In other words, St. Paul came to face the whole problem of the moral Law in human life. How far can the observance of the commandments, that is the practice of moral virtue, lead us towards God? St. Paul's answer is that the moral law, though good and useful

in itself, is absolutely incapable of uniting us with God. If man is to reach God, no matter how hard he struggles, he cannot do it of his own power. It is only when God comes down to meet him, when the grace of God lifts him up, that he can attain his goal. This is what St. Paul believed had happened in the coming of Christ. In Christ God had come into the world and raised man up to a new state of union with him, and it was this new life of grace, which was offered to man in Christ.

But how was man to receive this new life of grace, of communion with God? St. Paul's answer was clear and emphatic; it was not by any observance of the Law, that this new life could be attained, but only by faith. It was by faith in God's saving action in Christ, not by any 'works' of the Law, that a man could come to God. This was the aspect of St. Paul's doctrine, which was brought out with extraordinary force by Luther—that man is saved by 'faith alone', by 'grace alone'—these were the great themes of Luther's preaching, and though his insistence on this led to his separation from the Catholic Church, it is to-day felt that there is not, in fact, so much difference between the Catholic and the Protestant belief in this matter. But the concept of faith in St. Paul is very rich and complex, and needs to be understood in all its meaning. It is never a bare assent to a doctrine. It is an act of the will as much as of the mind; it is a kind of self-surrender—not unlike the Hindu bhakti. This is what St. Paul means by faith. It is a self-surrender to God, which has the power to transform a man's whole being. But—and here the complexity of St. Paul's doctrine comes out—this faith itself is not the product of man's own will and reason; faith also is a 'grace', a gift of God. In other words, the whole of man's salvation is the work of God. It is God who draws him by his grace; God who enables him to believe in his power to save; God who brings him to surrender himself and allow the new life to take possession of him.

But if this is so, is man a mere automaton? Has he no part in his own salvation?

These are questions which were asked in St. Paul's time and have been debated ever since, and it must be admitted that St. Paul did not give a clear answer to them. He was so intent on bringing out the saving power of God's grace, which he had himself experienced, that he did not give much attention to the problem of man's co-operation. In fact, it is clear that he took it for granted. But as time went on, the need was felt to express the matter more exactly, and it was thus that a complex doctrine of the co-operation of grace and freewill came to be worked out.

Of one thing St. Paul was certain. It was impossible, as some had charged against his doctrine, for a man to 'remain in sin', that is to go on living a sinful life, confident that the grace he had received would save him. For St. Paul grace, that is the new life in Christ, was the opposite of sin. In a strong phrase, which he liked to use, it put sin to death, to receive the new life of grace was to die to sin. St. Paul expressed this by saying that when a man was renewed by grace he died with Christ; he underwent a kind of crucifixion, and was then raised up to a new life like Christ in the resurrection. This was for him the essential meaning of Christian baptism; it was a death—symbolised by going under the water—and a resurrection, by which the Christian became a 'new creature'. He died to his old self, and was raised up as a new self; he put off the old man and put on the new. Here St. Paul touched the very heart of the mystery of grace. In almost every religion there is a recognition of the fact that if man is to reach God, there is something in him which must die, a self which has to be renounced. This is what St. Paul calls the 'natural man', the man who lives 'according to the flesh', which is under the dominion of sin. Opposed to this is the 'spiritual man', the man who has received the new life of the Spirit and has been set free from the power of sin and the flesh.

We can see now something of the dimensions of St. Paul's conception of grace. It is a principle of new life, which comes from God and is in fact nothing less than a parti-

cipation in the very life of God. This new life was brought to man by Jesus Christ, who by his death on the cross, freely accepted on behalf of all mankind, overcame the power of sin and death and was raised up to new life in which his mortal nature was completely transformed by the Spirit of God. This new life was offered to all men who had faith in Jesus Christ, that is who believed in the saving power of his death and resurrection and surrendered themselves to him. By their baptism they then underwent a death and a resurrection 'in Christ'; they died to sin with all that it involved, leading to eventual death, and were raised up to a new life in the Spirit, a life which was eternal because it was a sharing in the life of God whose Spirit was poured into their hearts. It was this Spirit of God in them which was now the principle of their life and action.

This was what for St. Paul made the whole difference in Christian morality. A Christian, he held, would obey the moral law, but it would no longer be by his own effort in obedience to an external command, but by the impulse of the Holy Spirit within him. It would not be the work of his old self—the self of the rational and moral man—but that of the new self, the Spirit in him. The law would have become interior to him and would express his own deepest desire. Yet it is clear that his acts would be his own; he would not be working like an automaton. On the contrary, this new self is the true self, whose place has been usurped by the false self, which we mistake for ourselves. It is here that the complexity of the interaction between grace and freewill becomes most evident. A free action is an action which is a spontaneous expression of the self, which is not constrained by any external power. But, in fact, our self can only act freely when it recognises its dependence on God. For man has no absolute freedom; his very being is entirely dependent on God. To act freely is to allow God, the first cause of all being, to act in us. It is to surrender our will to God and to allow the power of the Spirit to act in us.

This is the paradox, that the will is only really free, that is perfectly spontaneous, when it surrenders its freedom; but this does not mean that an alien force acts upon us. The action of God is intrinsic to our very being. It is this action which causes us to exist, which holds us in being and which enables us to act. To surrender to God is to surrender to That which constitutes our own inmost being. Thus an action which springs from this source of grace in us springs from the very source of our being. It is the only perfectly spontaneous action which we can perform. The action does not come partly from ourselves and partly from God—a view which was held by the Jesuit theologian Molina—but wholly from ourselves and wholly from God. We are like instruments in the hands of God, but intelligent, responsible instruments, which have surrendered themselves freely into His hands. There is, no doubt, a mystery here, but it is a mystery of which we can have personal experience. We know in our own experience that we are most ourselves when we are most completely surrendered to God. When we claim a freedom for ourselves to act apart from God, we become, in fact, subject to all sorts of influences of which we are unconscious we become subject to the power of nature. It is only God who can make us act perfectly freely, become perfectly ourselves.

This brings us up against the final problem of the relation of the self to God, of the spirit in man to the Spirit of God. We have to admit that this is again a mystery, something which cannot properly be expressed in human terms. St. Paul speaks of it in the most striking way when he says: 'it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me', or again: 'I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I but the grace of God which was in me'. Perhaps the most beautiful expression he ever gave to the mystery was when he said: 'you are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God'. We cannot doubt the reality of this death and the loss of self which goes with it. Yet we cannot doubt also the reality of the resurrection. The life which Christ lives

in me is not something alien to my own life ; it is my own life renewed and transformed and 'hidden' in God. This is the same paradox as that which is found in the words of Christ himself : 'he who finds his life will lose it and he who loses his life for my sake will find it'. How is it possible to express this mystery except in terms of paradox like this ?

It is possible to speak of it in terms of membership of a body, and this was one of St. Paul's favourite illustrations. So he says : "just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and all were made to drink of the one Spirit," and he concludes ; "now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." This is a view which commends itself to a modern mind. We can say that each individual member is like a cell in the one body of Christ. The body is composed of millions of these cells ; each has its own individuality and performs its own particular function, yet all share in the same life and make up one organic whole. Or again one can take the illustration which Jesus gave in St. John's Gospel : 'I am the vine, you are the branches ; he who abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing'. The principle here is the same. All alike are parts of a single organism, sharing a common life. But the phrase, 'he who abides in me and I in him' helps towards a deeper understanding. All illustrations drawn from the material world must be inadequate to express this mystery ; it is when we enter the sphere of human relationships that we come nearer to its inner meaning. This is the favourite method of expression in St. John's Gospel. Jesus speaks of his relation to God in these terms : 'Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me ?' and again he prays for his disciples 'that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us'.

What precisely is meant by this expression, 'I in thee' and 'thou in me' and 'they

in us' ? It is clearly not an expression of pure identity but of relationship. There is an I and a Thou and the two are distinct. Yet they are so closely united that they are said to be 'in' one another. What exactly is meant by this ? It can surely only be understood in terms of the relationship of knowledge and love. When we know someone or something, that person or thing may be said to be 'in' us. We share their life and their being ; we can even be said in a certain sense to 'become' what we know. There is therefore a peculiar kind of identity by knowledge ; a becoming one with another, while yet remaining distinct. When I know another person intimately, I share his life and being, yet I do not cease to be myself. There is a kind of mutual compenetration. This is realised even more closely in love. To love another person is to give oneself to him. The more perfect the love is, the more total is this self-giving. Each gives himself to the other, lose himself in the other, and yet in this loss of self there is also a finding. I become more myself when I find myself in another ; or rather both together find themselves in a new dimension of being in which they are one.

Can we now apply this to the knowledge and love of God ? To know God is to be 'in' God, to have God 'in' me. In a sense it is to be identified with God, to 'become' God. This is how many of the Fathers of the Church could say : 'God became man, that man might become God'. Again to love God is to give oneself totally to God, to lose oneself in God. But it is also to find oneself in God, and to find God in oneself. Thus we come back to the original paradox. When we come to the point of man's union with God, we enter the realm of mystery, where all human terms are inadequate. We can speak of identity in a sense, but it is not the ordinary human sense. There is no 'duality' in the ordinary sense ; it is a unity which transcends all human concepts. As long as we understand that the terms we use are always inadequate, that they point to a reality which they cannot express, we can speak both of identity and of communion, of being

one with God, of being in God and of having God in us, even of being God, but the words must be understood as signs of a mystery which cannot be expressed. This is no doubt why many of the wise men of old refused to speak of these things except to the 'initiated', because if understood in a wrong sense they can easily lead people astray.

Thus the problem of grace and freewill brings us up against what is perhaps the fundamental problem in regard to the relation between the different religious traditions to-day. In every tradition there is a recognition of the fact that in the ultimate state there is a passing beyond our present condition of being, a transcendence of the world both of sense and of thought, a death to our present self. The Buddha, while insisting on the need for individual effort, yet refused to speculate about the nature of the ultimate state and what survived in it; he left it in the realm of mystery. In Hinduism there has been much bold speculation on the nature of ultimate being and the way to attain to it, but in general, it may be said, that the common view is that man is by nature divine. He may use his own efforts and be aided by grace but the

ultimate state is the discovery of that which he eternally is, the knowledge of the one real Self. In Christian doctrine man is not by nature divine; he is a creature, and moreover a sinful creature, that is a creature separated from God. The work of his salvation is wholly the work of God; it is God who rescues him from his sin, God who communicates to him his own life and raises him to share in his own infinite being, knowledge and love. Yet this work of God is not done without man's co-operation. There is a real freedom of the will in man, a real choice by which he wills his salvation, a real act of faith by which he accepts salvation from God, a real surrender of himself in love, by which he is united with God. And yet all this action on the part of man comes from God, is the work of God in him, and in the final state of bliss, man is so penetrated with the grace of God, that he lives the very life of God, knows with God's own knowledge and loves with God's own love. This reveals the full dimensions of the mystery of grace and freewill, but in the end we have to acknowledge that it is a mystery. Each religious tradition points towards the mystery but no words can properly express it.

The Cosmic Dance

By

Arthur Osborne

Things flow as they will flow.
 Your Self the screen on which is cast
 The shadow land;
 Your Self the void wherein flows past
 The rhythmic band.
 In Consciousness all is; all things join hand
 In cosmic dance;
 All circumstance,
 Past and to come, weaving an endless strand,
 Is now.
 Things flow as they will flow.

THE WILL TO PERVERSITY

By
ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

ONE of the hardest sayings in the Qur'an is that Allah is He who leads aright and also He who leads astray. Another is that the unbelievers would not deny if Allah had not willed it so. Thus the scripture itself boldly settles the problem that so torments theologians — how people can go astray if an omnipotent God does not wish it, or how a good and compassionate God can wish it.

This shows how far from anthropomorphic the Islamic conception of God is, when rightly understood. For it is only man who is good or bad, morally speaking. Which is a thunderstorm? Which is the birth of a nebula or the collision of galaxies or the mating of a queen bee? Cosmic events, indeed non-human events generally, follow a pattern or harmony that is neither good nor bad, neither right nor wrong in any moral sense. It is only man who has been plunged or, to speak more correctly, has sunk into the realm of good and evil.

The conception of good and evil implies responsibility, obligation, the obligation to choose the good and shun the evil, and it is man alone in the universe who has this. Responsibility in its turn implies free will. Man has free will to work out his salvation and is held responsible in the Qur'an for not doing so. He alone in the universe has free will because he alone has responsibility. This is declared in one of the most cryptic sayings of the Qur'an. "Behold, we offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid. But man assumed it. Only he has proved a tyrant and a fool."¹ He has used his power of decision and his responsibility to develop his self-will, becoming a tyrant over the

earth and its creatures and a fool towards himself, encompassing his own downfall instead of his salvation.

This drives us farther back to the teaching of religion: that the true and primordial state of man is above the dichotomy of good and evil, that is to say above free will in the sense of the will to perversity and denial. This is expressed in the Judaeo-Christian scriptures and in the Qur'an by the creation myth of Adam and Eve in a state of paradise before they ate the forbidden fruit of the tree of good and evil. The Qur'an further amplifies this by declaring that man was created higher than the angels, who bowed down in homage before him. The angels manifest specific aspects of Allah and have knowledge and power each in his own domain, but man is His vicegerent, central and broad-based. This is indicated by saying that Adam was taught the names of things. He had knowledge and dominion, which the angels had not.

Thus the 'fall' of man assumes the appearance of responsibility accepted but misused. Indeed, the Qur'an avoids the terms 'fall' and 'original sin': they are no part of Islamic doctrine. The sin of mankind, symbolised by Adam, is recorded, but in entering the domain of good and evil he assumed responsibility and undertook the obligation to work out his return, that is his salvation; and therefore Adam is also referred to as a prophet.

How does this affirmation of the choice of good and evil resulting in the assumption of responsibility conform with the statement of predestination with which this article opened? To make it still more explicit: the unbelievers are condemned in the Qur'an

¹ Qur'an, ch. XXXIII, v. 72.

for saying that they would not have denied Allah had it not been His will ; and yet in another verse, as remarked above, this is stated about them. How can these two statements be reconciled ? They must be viewed as applying on different planes of reality, as is often the case when there is an apparent contradiction in religious teaching. Christ's saying that "evil must needs come but woe to him through whom it cometh" contains the same apparent contradiction or injustice ; for if it is predestined that evil should come, how can he be held responsible through whom the Divine ordinance is fulfilled ? The two halves of the statement have to be understood on different planes. On the cosmic plane there is an inevitable pattern of creation and dissolution, some parts of which appear 'evil' when viewed from the human plane, on which alone, as I remarked earlier, the conception of 'evil' exists. But he who abides on the human plane has the responsibility which the terms 'good' and 'evil' imply and cannot shelter behind cosmic laws of an impersonal level. So also with these Quranic sayings. When it is said that it is Allah who leads astray or that men could not deny had He not willed it so, the reference is to the cosmic pattern of out-going and return, creation and dissolution which are neither good nor evil in themselves but may seem so from the human level ; when the deniers are blamed for putting forth this plea in their defence it is from the human level, that is to say the level of responsibility : and they are responsible.

Moreover, whether their course of action is predestined or not, they cannot know what is predestined and therefore cannot take shelter behind it. It is human ignorance that reconciles predestination with responsibility and therefore with free will. A crude example will make this very clear. No one would say : "I won't eat because if I am predestined to die of starvation it is no use my trying to eat." It would be madness because of the gratuitous 'if'. He does not know that he is predestined to die of starvation. There is no less folly and no less presumption in the man who says : "I will

not strive in the way of Allah because it is no use if I am predestined to fail." Or who says : "I would not deny the truth or reject the commandments unless Allah willed it." How does he know what is predestined or, which comes to the same, what Allah has willed ? A man's free will is conditioned by his ignorance ; indeed it is bestowed on him by his ignorance. Not only has he not the right but he has not the power to abdicate from it, since his ignorance of coming events forces decisions on him whether he wants them or not. It is the 'trust' which all others declined and man accepted.

That man has the freedom to fall from his high estate he has proved abundantly and men go on proving without cease ; the important question is whether he has the freedom to return to it. And the Qur'an constantly reassures us that he has. Allah, it asserts, does not burden any man beyond his capacity. He is referred to again and again throughout the Qur'an as "the Merciful, the Compassionate". This may appear anthropomorphic but in reality it is not. It does not mean ascribing the human qualities of mercy and compassion to God but, on the contrary, implies that these human qualities are faint reflections of the Divine Attributes. The Mercy and Compassion of Allah manifests in the guidance of mankind and of each individual man back to the paradise of his true primordial state, but with its virtual perfections actualised and the possibility of a fall from it back into perversity and denial thereby removed. It is for this that the prophets and saints have come down upon earth and that the scriptures have been proclaimed and the paths established. Hard though the way of return may be, we have the assurance of the Qur'an that Allah does not burden any man beyond his capacity.

But what of those who reject the truth and deny and will not listen ? They indeed have their free will. No compulsion can be exercised upon them. They choose perversity and denial ; and this does not mean merely accepting wrong philosophical opinions or false religious doctrine, it means

choosing not to recognize the higher possibilities hidden within themselves or to undertake the self-discipline needed to reveal and stabilize them. It means refusing to subject individual self-will to universal principles or mental theories to divine intuition. Thereby they bring themselves into a state of darkness and torment called 'hell'. So that even hell is a manifestation of the Divine Mercy, since it is the only way by which those who choose the freedom to reject and deny can return to their true state of Bliss unspeakable. But it is a terrible road and the Qur'an, as a voice of Compassion, cries out again and again to warn men against it and to remind them what they are laying up for themselves.

But men have also the freedom to return

gladly and voluntarily to conformity with the universal harmony which is the Will of Allah; and doing so brings supreme happiness. It means rising above free will by willing to be will-less. To such a one the question whether he has free will or not does not arise. Only then do they see how evanescent was this whole episode of strife and turmoil. "He will say: 'How many years did you abide on earth?' And they: 'A day or a part of a day. But ask those who keep account.' He will say: 'You abode there but a short time, if only you had known. Did you then think that we had created you to no purpose and that you should not be brought back to Us?'"²

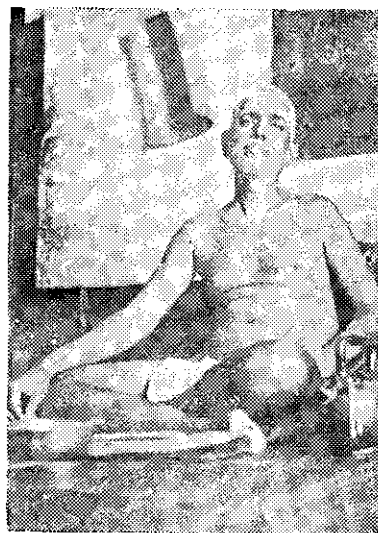
² Qur'an, ch. XXIII, vv. 112-115.

The Maharshi's Health

From a note left by Alan Chadwick

The Maharshi was never robust, or at least not after about thirty years of age. This was no doubt due to the strain he inflicted on his body during his early years at Tiruvannamalai. For years he suffered from asthma and a photograph of him taken at Skandashram shows him as little more than a skeleton. Suddenly, after fifteen years, it left him for no apparent reason, he told me. But he was always liable to catch cold and had frequent digestive trouble.

After that he became a chronic sufferer from rheumatism. His whole body was full of it. As years passed he had more and more difficulty in walking. Various oils were tried and he was massaged morning and evening. In 1947 he was given a medicine which had little effect except to bring on a violent attack of hiccups which lasted for several days in spite of anything the doctors could do. At last it subsided of its own accord.



EFFORT, GRACE AND DESTINY

By

ARTHUR OSBORNE

IT is said in scriptures and by gurus that an aspirant must make effort on the path but that Grace also is necessary and that in the end Realization is bestowed by Grace, not achieved by effort. It is said in the Upanishad that the Atma chooses whom It will.

This is a hard saying. Those in whom the spiritual urge is powerful do not worry their heads over it but strive because they must, because they are drawn to without any thought of reward. Those, however, in whom the mind is too active and the Spirit too weak are apt to be puzzled and ask why they should make any effort if the final achievement is not to be won by effort but bestowed by Grace. They also ask why the Atma should choose one rather than another. For such people I will try to clarify the saying.

Who is the 'you' that has to make effort, and who is the 'God' or 'Atma' that chooses and that bestows Grace on one rather than another?

The essence of a man is pure Spirit or, which comes to the same, pure Being or pure universal Consciousness. This Spirit prowls in the lion, spreads in the tree, endures in the stone; in man alone it not only lives but knows that it lives. The difference between man and other animals is not that man has greater ability (in many ways he has less), but that he knows that he is man; he is self-consciously man. This is through the human mind which, looking outward, knows and dominates the world, looking inward, knows and reflects Being as the Essence and Source of the world. However, the ability to do this implies also the ability to not do it, to regard oneself as a complete autonomous individual and forget the inner Reality.

The various religions express this simple truth through myth, allegory and doctrine

and are apt to be puzzling. In the Quran it is said that Allah offered the trust to the heavens and earth and the mountains but all declined it; only man accepted and was untrue to it. Religions assert that God gave man free will, which implies the freedom to rebel. In Christianity it is said that man is fallen on account of original sin. The Book of Genesis gives the story of how man fell into the domain of opposites, the differentiation of good and evil. All these are allegories of the simple truth stated above.

The mind creates an ego, a seemingly complete, autonomous individual self, which, although illusory, seems to be the reality of one. This is the state known in Hinduism as 'ajnana' or ignorance, in Christianity as 'original sin', in Islam, in its more violent form, as 'kufr' or 'denial', in its milder form, recognizing the Spirit as real but believing the ego also to be real, as 'shirk' or 'association' (of other with God).

This is the obstruction to Self-Realization. Therefore it has to be removed. That is why the Masters say that Self-Realization is not something new to be achieved but an eternally existent state to be discovered or revealed. Therefore they compare it to an overcast sky—the clear sky does not have to be created, only the clouds covering it to be blown away; or to a pond overgrown with water-lilies—the water is there all the time and only has to be revealed by clearing away the plants that have overgrown it.

To do this constitutes the effort of which the teachers and scriptures speak. The mind has created the obstruction; the mind has to remove it. But merely to recognize this, to recognize, that is to say, that the ego is (according to the Advaitin) an illusory self or (according to the dualist) a creation of the Spirit, to which it should be submitted and totally passive, is far from constituting the full effort required. Indeed, it increases

the obligation for total effort and therefore, so to speak, the guilt in not making effort.

The effort involves the will and emotions as well as the understanding and therefore has to be persistent, determined and skilful. The ego has put out tentacles which cling to the world, and either these have to be lopped off or the ego itself killed. It craves the admiration or submission of other egos, and therefore humility is enjoined. It craves enjoyment of creation in its own right instead of being a mere channel through which the Spirit perceives and enjoys, and therefore celibacy and asceticism are sometimes prescribed and self-indulgence is always, in all religions, forbidden. The attempt to lop off the tentacles of the ego has been compared in mythology to a battle with a many-headed giant who grew two new heads for each one lopped off. The only way of disposing of him was to strike at the heart and kill the entire being, not deal with the heads individually. The campaign must be skilful and intelligently planned as well as ruthless. What wonder if different Masters in different religions have prescribed different ways of conducting it. The goal in all cases is the same: the taming or destruction of the ego or the discovery that it never really existed.

Methods such as I have been alluding to consist largely in curtailing the ego's outer manifestations so as to induce the mind to turn inwards to the Self or Spirit behind it. It is also possible to proceed in the opposite direction by turning inward to the Spirit and thence deriving strength to renounce the outer manifestations. This is the path of love and devotion, worshipping God, submitting to Him, calling upon His Name, striving to serve and remember Him with one's whole life. Either path can be followed, or both together. A third path is that of questioning the very existence of the ego by Self-enquiry.

All this is effort. Then what about Grace? Grace is the natural flow of the Spirit into and through the mind and faculties. There is nothing capricious or erratic about it. Bhagavan said: "Grace is always there; it is only you who have to make your-

self receptive to it." It is likened traditionally to the sunlight falling on a flower-garden: if one bud opens and not another it is not due to any partiality on the side of the sun but only to the maturity or immaturity of the buds. Or if the sunlight penetrates one room but not another it is simply because the doors and windows are open in one and in the other shut.

Why then is it said that the Atma chooses whom it will and that the final Realization comes by Grace, not by effort? In order to remove the insidious idea that the ego-self can continue to exist and attain something called 'Realization', whereas all it can do is to immolate itself and be replaced by the realized state of the Spirit, which is ever-present Grace. The mind makes efforts to remove obstructions; it is hard for it to understand that it is itself the final obstruction. The very desire for Realization has to be carefully watched and can become an impediment, for it implies some one to achieve something. At the end all that the mind is called on to do is to keep still and allow the Grace to flow unimpeded — but that is the hardest thing of all for it to do.

Till in the end,

All battles fought, all earthly loves abjured,
Dawn in the east, there is no other way
But to be still. In stillness then to find
The giants all were windmills, all the strife
Self-made, unreal; even he that strove
A fancied being, as when that good knight
Woke from delirium and with a loud cry
Rendered his soul to God.

On the devotional path this danger of supposing that it is the ego who strives and attains, this warning against desires, even the desire to get Realization, is expressed in the attitude that true service of God must be for love alone with no thought of reward. He who asks for reward is a merchant, not a lover.

The impossibility of achieving when there is no one to achieve explains why a Guru will never answer the question 'When shall I attain Realization?' It implies the false presumption: "There is an individual me;

when will it cease to exist?" whereas the Guru realizes the ultimate truth that: "There is no being of the unreal and no not-being of the Real."¹ Not that the unreal ego will cease to be at such and such a point in time, but that it is not now, never has been and never could be. Therefore the attitude of mind which questions when one can attain Realization or whether it is one's destiny to be realized in this lifetime is an obstruction sufficient to prevent Realization, being an assertion of the temporary existence of the unreal. Similarly, if you assert that you cannot attain Realization in this lifetime you are thereby preventing yourself from doing so by postulating the existence of a 'you' who cannot attain.

And yet, paradoxically, it is also an impediment to assert that no effort need be made, on the pretext that, as "there is no being of the unreal and no not-being of the Real", one is That now and has therefore no need to strive to become That. It sounds plausible, but it is an impediment because it is the pseudo-self, the illusory unreal, that is saying it. The Master can say that there is nothing to achieve because one is

That already; the disciple can't. Bhagavan would sometimes say that asking the best way to Realization is like being at Tiruvannamalai and asking how to get there, but that could not be the attitude of the devotee. He expected the devotee to make effort, even while appreciating the paradox that there is no effort to make. In the same way he could say that for the Realized Man there is no Guru-disciple relationship but add that for the disciple the relationship is a reality and is of importance.

For the disciple effort is necessary, but it is also necessary to remember that effort can never attain the final goal, since he who makes the effort must dissolve, leaving only the Spirit. The Spirit, which is the true Self, replaces the illusory ego-self when the latter has removed the obstructions; and that is Grace. The Spirit flows into the vacuum which remains when the ego-self dissolves; doing so is the 'choice' which the Spirit makes. It is for the aspirant to create the vacuum by removing the obstructions.

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 16.

Being and Seeing

By

Johannus J. de Reede

Once when a visitor had recounted to Bhagavan various visions that he had had, Bhagavan, after commenting on them unfavourably in Tamil, turned to Sadhu Ekarasa (Dr. Mees) and said tersely in English: "Being is true; seeing is not true."

DESTINY AND GUIDANCE

By

CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

WERE the awareness of unseen guidance more clear, each day would be a fresh revelation of the miraculous: miraculous, of course, only in the sense of the inter-penetration of higher forces in the happenings of daily life. The nearest intimation of this can come if we ponder the preparation necessitated for a seemingly chance encounter with someone or with a book which can alter one's life or with a meeting which is destined to alter the whole course of one's existence. Guidance is so powerful that we can be led to conversation with a stranger which can, if carefully reviewed later in life, be known to have been the seed for all our future development.

Endless are the personal stories of destined encounters or events. The greatest strength a man can know is when he finally reaches the point where he is consciously aware that he has the help and guidance of the spiritual world in what he is undertaking. When one undertakes work which is not for oneself but for the Spirit then those that belong to the Divine enter into that work. For those who have no awareness of such things the stories of the Bible, or the tale of Jeanne D'Arc or the protection of Saints and the experiences of the mystics and illumined Souls appear illusory or improbable. But thought would reveal that the response, the backing, the encouragement coming to such a one is not to be accounted for by reason alone. There is a law which lends lasting life to any work in accordance with its spiritual content. That which is the product of man's ego perishes. That which is the work of the Spirit endures.

Albert Steffen put it in the following words: "The Gods and the departed, the immortal in Spirit, listen only to the con-

versation of those who love selflessly. They only listen to those who recognise the welfare of mankind. To those who create a higher earth. To those who pray. To the faithful." If only men knew how often the unseen guides stand near to them in spirit and at moments of despair lift them or inspire them to achieve their tasks. If only they could see or sense their presence how much more easily they could meet their destiny, certain of the unseen guidance ever with them.

Distance or physical death is no barrier to their help. Neither the centuries nor continents can contain that which is ever present. Even the thoughts of a single man ascending to truth liberate his fellowmen for they remain attainable to other spiritual searchers.

Destiny has two faces. The face of the unknown which man blindly approaches, or the face which miraculously unfolds its wonders before his eyes. At every moment were man to say to himself "What is being revealed to me? What am I meant to learn?" then might he sense his unseen guides.

* * *

Within each man two beings dwell, one divine, the other mortal, one enduring forever and created in the image of God and the other incarnating briefly and altering his personality from life to life. This mortal man slowly evolves from life to life, learning from experience, gradually purifying himself and increasing his gifts and capacities until one day both selves are merged into one, the lower self and the higher Divine Self.

Yet those who doubt the duality in man ponder the strange anomaly within each human breast. The contradictions of moments

of peace, joy, love, generosity, patience, insight, forgiveness and the sudden reversal into fear, depression, selfishness, impatience, blindness, rancour or revenge; all in the same man. Why can a man at one moment and with one individual be his highest self and at another moment descend to primitive levels?

The answer lies in the two persons within each man and his ignorance of his duality and inner dichotomy. Spiritual training starts with the conscious cultivation and control of the lower self and its obedience to the instructions of the Higher Self. This is often termed obeying one's conscience. Detachment, natural realization of ethics and virtues, eventually ends through constant efforts at checking the lower self in the birth of the Higher Self.

In some way man undertakes daily challenges and testings throughout each hour of the day until at last he acts in accordance with his Divine potential. Lifetimes of training may ensue before it is achieved. Or it may come in a moment of deepest thought and revelation and the man receive as if by Grace a spiritual rebirth becoming in one transfiguring moment a man reborn as was Saul on the road to Damascus and as have been many others before him and since. The death of which Christ spoke when he said to Nicodemus "Truly, truly, I say to you,

if a Man is not born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" refers to this dying of the lower self and birth of the higher.

When we look at another or ourselves we should remember the age-long task of purifying the lower self, recognizing what it is, and attempting to reach the Higher Self. Exceptional acts of bravery, gifts of genius, moments of inspiration, deeds of self-sacrifice are momentary endowments and revealments of the Higher Self. Some men with the greatest weaknesses and ignorance in other respects have yet betrayed moments that are sublime.

So few know themselves. So few recognise their personalities for what they are — brief entrances upon the stage of life in changing roles while the true man remains hidden and unrevealed, unaware of his eternal "I" that enters life and lives on earth incarnation after incarnation employing so many different disguises and playing so many roles. Only the beauty of his soul, the nobility of his character, and the self-sacrificing depth of his love reveal who he really is: a son of God.

All these sons shall one day awake and say unto themselves as did the Prodigal Son, "I am ashamed and shall return to my Father's house". All men are on the path back to the Father. Some sooner, some later — but all are the Sons of God, in whom Divinity is veiled.

Maya

By

G. N. Daley

The SELF shines
and the Light illuminates
the darkness
wherein are concealed
the objects and thoughts
created by the mind
which does not exist.

Only the SELF IS.

PREDESTINATION AND PRAYER

By
H. SEBASTIAN GUBBINS

IT is dangerous to speak to people about predestination because so many misunderstand its implications. They take it to mean that the law of cause and effect is overruled, whereas actually it postulates the working of the law of cause and effect. Some people say: "If what is going to happen is predestined anyway, why should I trouble to pray?" But perhaps it is predestined to happen through prayer. The end is not predestined without the means but through it.

Let us take an example. If a man is undergoing treatment in a hospital and is told that he will recover, that means he will recover through the treatment. Perhaps if, on the strength of this, he left the hospital while still running a temperature, rushed out and got caught in a blizzard, he would catch pneumonia and die; but the prediction takes his character also into consideration, presuming that he will not be such a fool as to do this.

Or another example. Suppose a woman is mixing ingredients and we are told they are going to be a Dundee cake. That does not mean that she can go off and play bridge and it will mix and bake itself; it means that it is going to be a Dundee cake as a result of her work.

These examples show two mistakes between which many people oscillate when speaking about predestination. On the one hand, it does not mean that the end-product (the cure or the cake) will appear without the process leading up to it (the treatment or the baking); but on the other hand it also does not mean that what is predestined is only probable and that one can change it by discontinuing the process leading up to it. What it means is that both process and end-product are predestined either to happen or not to happen. And since one does not know which in any particular case until

it happens or does not happen, it is no use arguing. In fact it is rather a game for philosophers than a policy guide for practical men. All one can say is that in many cases process and end-product go together: if the former is going to happen the latter is too; if not, not. If you are going to press the trigger the bullet is going to speed on its way; if not, not.

If the end-product is a cake no one is so foolish as to argue that it will appear without the process of mixing and baking. If the end-product is health, we all know that it will emerge (if it is at all destined to) from the process of treatment. But when the process required is prayer people are apt to forget this logic and say: "If so and so is going to happen, why should I pray? And if it is not going to happen, why should I pray?" The answer may be that it is going to happen as a result of prayer or not going to happen as a result of not praying. That is no more illogical than to say that it is going to happen because of penicillin.

In that very wise book, the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna does not tell Arjuna that he will win the battle or that he will lose it, but that his own nature will compel him to fight in it. He does not urge him to fight in order to win but to do his duty because it is his duty, regardless of what the outcome will be. Ends and Means. It is a sign of egoism and perversity to focus on ends. It is a sign of purity and nobility to focus on means. Ends achieved by wrong means turn bitter, like Dead Sea fruit. Right means become an end in themselves and can be more important than the end for which they were instituted. That is the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita and Gandhi and the English public school. Prayer is a purifying activity. Its harmonising influence may be more important than its factual efficacy — though that does not mean that the latter also cannot be real.

HERE AND NOW

By

WEI WU WEI

"There is neither destiny nor free-will,
Neither path nor achievement ; *this is the final truth*".

— Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi, p. 93.

MAHARSHI'S statement specifically negates the concepts themselves, and the application of them only by inference.

'Destiny', like 'free-will', is a word that seeks to describe a concept, as also are 'path' and 'achievement'. They are not sensorial perceptions, interpreted as having objective existence, but structures in mind whose existence is inferential only, i.e. directly conceptual.

Therefore they cannot have any nature of their own, such nature as pertains to them depending entirely on an assumed 'entity' to which they as concepts can be applied. Being nothing themselves, their truth or falsehood depends upon the truth or falsehood of the 'entity' to which they are attached and whose comportment they are designed to explain.

It follows that if there is an 'entity', a question arises as to whether such entity suffers 'destiny' or not, exercises 'free-will' or not, has a 'path' to follow or not, can claim an 'achievement' or not.

There seem to be two ways of answering this question : one is by asking the awakened Masters, the other is by asking oneself. As for the former I think I am correct in stating that in all Advaita, whether Vedantic or Buddhist, the totality of great and known

Masters has categorically declared that no such thing as an entity has ever existed, exists or ever could exist. The Buddha mentions the fact nineteen times in the short Diamond Sutra alone.

As for ourselves, each of us can try to locate such an entity either subjectively or objectively. The results of my own efforts, if that should have any interest, have been entirely, and in my view definitively, negative. So that it seems to me to be reasonable to declare that the explanation of Maharshi's magnificently categorical statement is that there is neither an entity to suffer destiny, nor an entity to exercise free-will, neither an entity to follow a path, nor an entity to achieve an aim.

Should it not follow that if we are lived, without attempted 'volition' on the part of a purely suppositional 'entity', we may ask what could there be to have cares and worries, for the disappearance of a supposed 'path' can only leave what inevitably must be our normal and eternal condition here and now, in lieu of "achievement" ?

NOTE : An entity requires inferences such as 'space' and 'duration', an entity is subject to limitation, an entity is an object and needs a subject.

HOW I CAME TO ADORE THE MAHARSHI

By
Col. A. N. S. MURTHI

I HAD known him in my boyhood days. Whenever I stayed with my mother in her home-town, Tiruvannamalai, I used to climb up the sacred hill and go to the "first cave" where he then stayed. Though I then did not understand his greatness, I came to look upon him as some one much superior to the other swamijis who abound in and around the town. My mother used to say that this "Brahmana Sami", as he was then called, was unique in that he had attained Self-realisation when he was a teen-aged boy and that when he sat in the underground cave of the Thousand Pillared Temple, thousands of ants used to climb over his body and bite him, but he was unmindful of all such bodily afflictions. She also used to tell me that her brother, my maternal uncle, was instrumental in removing the boy-saint from there to a safer place — the cave where I first saw him and over which there was a superstructure of brick and mortar. He had, by then, become quite famous in the town. People would say how tears used to roll down his cheeks whenever bhajan parties on festival days went to his cave and sang the immortal Thevaram-songs, particularly the hymns of Manickavasagar.

When I first went to see him I was still a boy of six or seven, more intent on play than on pondering the imponderable. So, I loved to see him swim in the Mulaipal Thirtham—one of my resorts with other boys during the holidays. As though to attract his attention or show my prowess, I used to dive into this 'Milk Pond' from a nearby crag. He said not a word of admonition, though such a dive in that dangerously shallow pond with a bed of rock could have meant sure death. We boys knew no fear and, perhaps, he didn't want, as many elders do,



to instil fear in us which becomes a cause of many ills in later life. Is that not why Sri Krishna, in telling Arjuna the virtues mankind must develop put fearlessness¹ before everything else? Or maybe he was unconcerned, in the bliss of his beatitude or solitude. Or maybe he knew that no harm would occur to me. Or maybe if anything had happened his all pervading benevolence would have protected me and, therefore, he seemed unconcerned.

Yet another occasion I remember was when I saw him speak of some monkeys sitting very near him as though they were human beings — beings like men and my playmates. He would refer to one as the 'leader' and eulogise his qualities of head and heart while the monkey would grin and make faces at us as though he was not pleased with our manner of receiving the

¹ Ch. VI, Verse I.

Swamiji's remarks. It was amazing to see the Swamiji offer food in his hand and this grimacing monkey, male or female, come and take it from his hand as from a parent's. How well behaved they were with him, although the next moment they hopped off and went away bouncing over the rocks for their usual, wild, care-free life!

* * *

It was many years later when I saw him again but still on the hill. I was then studying at college, and suddenly one day I felt drawn to him. I took a train from Vellore and went to him. There was another Sadhu with him — a devotee sworn to stay with and serve him. Swamiji's golden skin seemed to shine more than ever before, and I could feel his benign eyes cool and soothe my body which had become hot in the mid-day summer sun as I climbed up to his abode; he had left two caves lower down to escape the increasing flow of curious visitors. The few banana and coconut trees near where we sat wafted a heavenly breeze. I wondered whether I too should not renounce, like him, while still in my teens and join him but I said not a word to him about it. And yet he replied: "However high the kite may fly, it must come down to earth". I took this as a direct answer to my thoughts. After partaking of the fruit he gave and prostrating for his blessings, I took the train and went back to college musing that there was no escape from my studies, which I had never liked, and to which particularly that year I gave not much time, not caring for the examinations. But when the results came out, to my surprise I found myself successful. Though I attributed my success to the Swamiji's blessings, I somehow soon forgot all about him perhaps in the flush of success and in the attractions of the metropolis, Madras, where I went for further college studies.

* * *

It was many years before I saw him again. In the interval he had become world-famous and I too had seen a lot of the world. Though I had read some of his Tamil

works and newspaper articles about him, I had also read works by Charles Bradlaugh and others on atheism, besides quite a few articles on Sadhus being the curse of our country, etc.

Therefore, when I went to him for his blessings I was not without a critical mind. And so when I saw him from a distance reclining on a soft, velvet sofa I, with my ideas of asceticism, at once revolted. I did not prostrate before him, nor did I go to sit near him. I sat afar challenging him mentally to call me if he cared to remember me or if he could read my mind. He did not, except for looking at me for a second with the almost fearfully blank but piercing eyes of a stranger. The temple he was said to be constructing to perpetuate his mother's memory, the cheques he was falsely said to be signing, the beating he once received from dacoits and many other things I heard from the crowd and from the town-mayor with whom I stayed added to my doubts and I gave him up. I hurriedly left the Ashram like the padre who went to him for metaphysical discussions with a watch in hand to catch the train. (See Arthur Osborne's *Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, page 48.)

I put aside the Maharshi's books and read others by other Swamiji's from Aurobindo to Sivananda, Kamakoti to Ramdas with the same result. I went to Pondicherry and to Rishikesh. I had the honour of receiving Sivananda at my house in Delhi during his all-India tour, but the doubts remained.

* * *

One day last month when I went to draw some books from a library here in Bangalore, a youngster working there, perhaps to express his admiration for my lectures which I give off and on on various subjects, quickly drew from one of the shelves Arthur Osborne's *Teachings of Ramana Maharshi* and requested me to read it. On seeing the title, I almost threw it back, but somehow within a split second I decided not to. I took it home, where it lay among my other books to be read for quite some time. And then one evening, when I had the leisure, I

opened it and, to my own amazement thereafter I carried it about with me and read it with avidity and reverence not as one would read a novel but as one would one's Gita or Bible.

I found page after page a source of revelation and comfort. I found answers to all my queries and doubts, not only about life in general but also about the lives of saints I knew, and particularly about the "Brahmana Sami" of my boyhood days who later became known as Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi but to whom I had become blind till Arthur Osborne opened my eyes.

* * *

From then on, I often see myself in not only the Brahmana Sami of my boyhood days and in the regal thin almost naked,

aged Maharshi with a staff to lean upon, but also, in the world at large.

How I long that this mood will last. It is now a question of my sadhana, not of doubts and queries. I have now no questions to ask either about myself or about Bhagavan's last days.

Even if I am not able to realise Bhagavan's goal of Advaita, I am happy to think that the quest will keep me free from doubts, queries and worries as no other philosophy or teaching could.

For this, I am greatly indebted to Arthur Osborne. Though I am good at Tamil, which is my mother-tongue and in which I have passed even the tough Madura Tamil Sangam Examination quite creditably, the Maharshi's *Collected Works* I had bought as a memento on visiting a place of pilgrimage, could not convert me. Only A. O's exposition could.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

AN APPEAL

This Kendra has been founded to bring together the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and other persons interested in the study and pursuit of spiritual values through *jnana marga* or the way of knowledge.

It proposes, *inter alia*, (a) to provide an educational centre open to men and women of all races and religions; (b) to initiate activities which would enable the public, particularly young people, to understand and practise *dharma* as spiritual *sadhana* in the conditions of modern life; and (c) to maintain close and continuous contact with Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, and to help in its efforts and activities.

The Delhi Administration has sanctioned the allotment to the Kendra of a half-acre site to the south of the Indian Institute of Technology on payment of a lumpsum of Rs. 50,000 and an annual ground rent of Rs. 1,250.

Towards the cost of acquiring the site and putting up suitable buildings, devotees of Bhagavan and friends interested in the aims and activities of the Kendra are earnestly requested to make generous contributions, so that the Kendra may soon have a home of its own in the country's capital.

Cheques may be drawn in favour of "Ramana Kendra, Delhi", and sent to the undersigned.

M-9, Netaji Nagar,
New Delhi-3.

K. SWAMINATHAN,
Secretary.

THE LONG AWAITED
HAPPY ANNOUNCEMENT !

THE SACRED KUMBHABHISHEKAM

ceremony of the Shrine over
BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI'S

Samadhi will be performed
according to traditional Rites on
SUNDAY, the 18th June, 1967

The ceremonies will last for three days and
are estimated to cost at least

Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 45,000

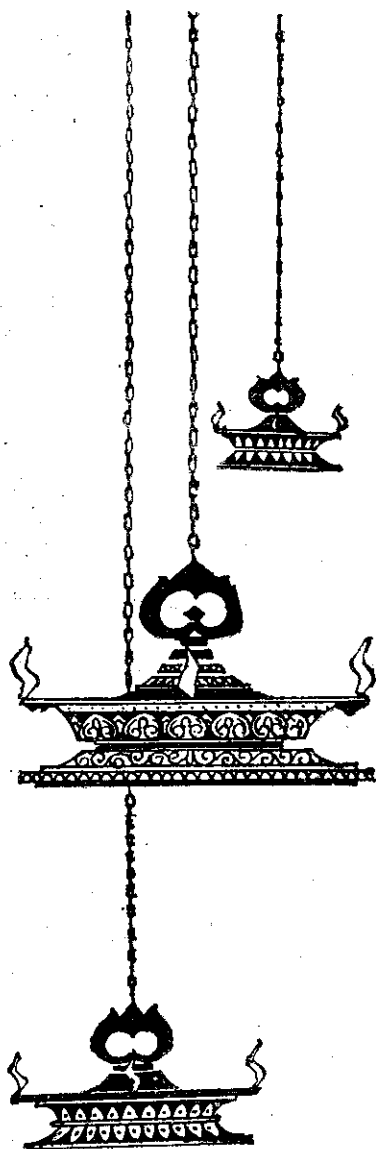
All devotees of Sri Bhagavan are in duty bound
not only to contribute to the best of their
capacity but also to urge their
friends to help.

Cheques may be drawn in favour of

'SRI RAMANA MANTAPA NIDHI'

*specifying "Towards Kumbhabhishekam"
in the covering letter, and sent to :*

The President,
SRI RAMANASRAMAM,
Tiruvannamalai,
South India.



*The youngest and the latest limb
of the Ashram,*

‘THE MOUNTAIN PATH’

has donated its
mite towards the fund for completion
of the RAMANA MANTAPA; it is proud
it has been able to do so!

Rs. 5,000

donated to
RAMANA MANTAPA NIDHI
by *THE MOUNTAIN PATH*

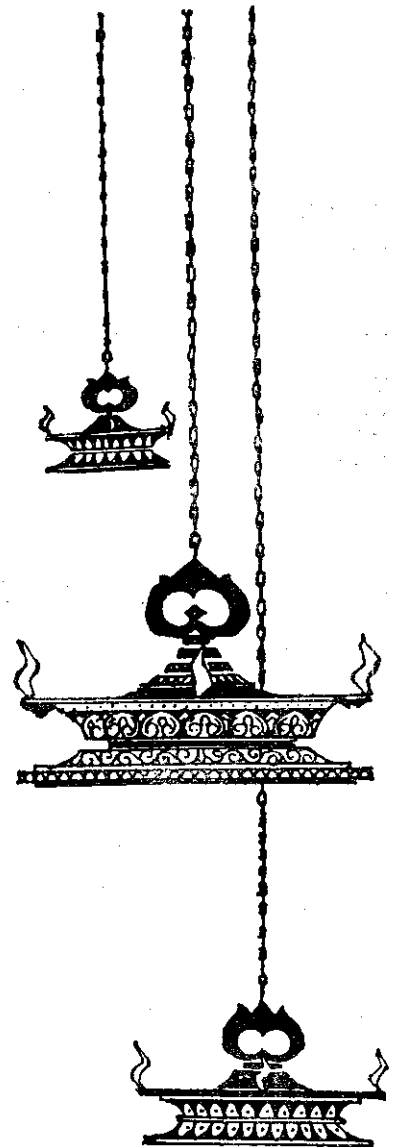


READERS!

We request you also to send your contribution to

SRI RAMANA MANTAPA NIDHI,
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Tiruvannamalai (S. India)

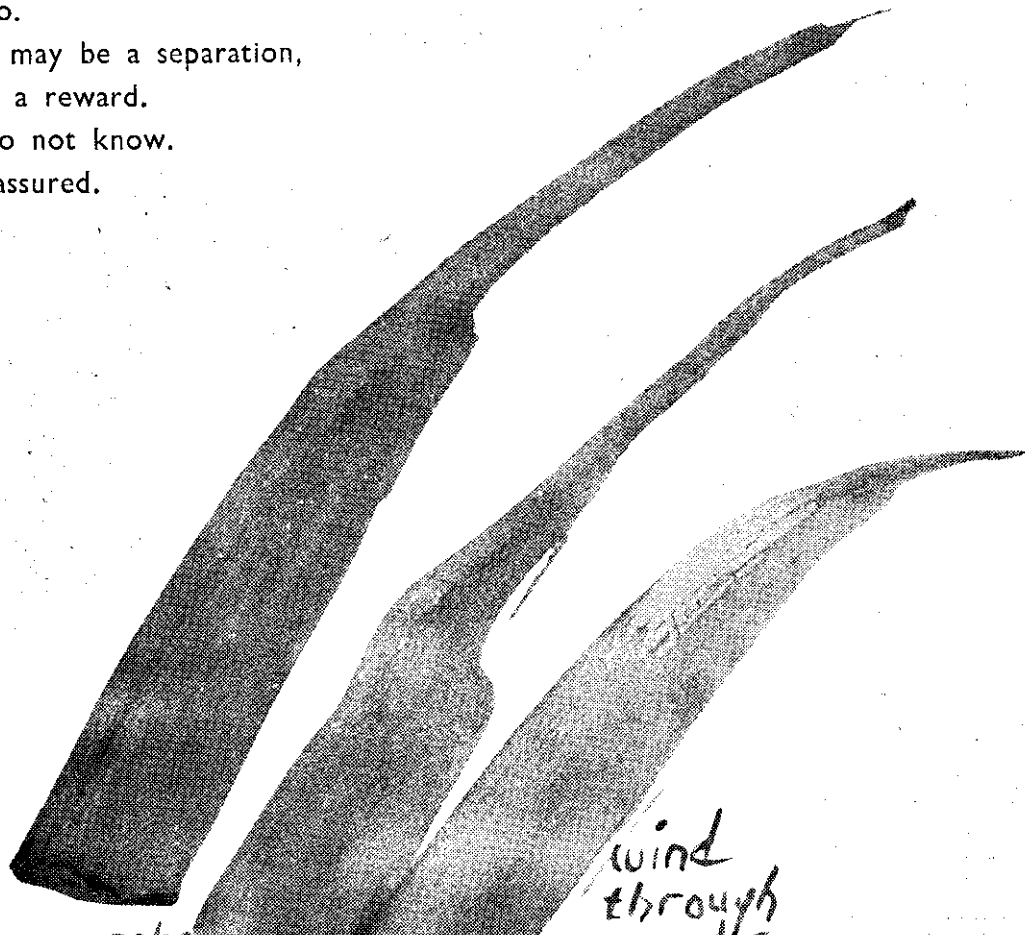
‘the mountain path’



dear . . .

By
PAUL REPS

we are not born.
we do not die.
how could we?
we have nothing to do with it.
we appear to, like leaves.
like leaves, we flutter and let go.
let go.
birth may be a separation,
death a reward.
we do not know.
rest assured.



JOEL AS GURU

By
WALTER STARKE

IT is as impossible to explain colour to a blind man as to give a true picture of Joel Goldsmith to those trained in Western thought and culture who haven't the ability to discern invisibles. The Eastern mind, indoctrinated from birth with knowledge of the far-reaching dimensions of a truly inspired Guru, would be able to more easily catch some vision of Mr. Goldsmith, affectionately called simply Joel by those who studied with him. In the Occident we are aware that it is natural for one studying the arts to come upon some teacher who has the power to kindle the flame of art within the student, some teacher who gives the student the spirit of art and somehow transmits his consciousness to the student, but in the field of Western religious development the Guru system is unknown, despite the fact that Jesus was a classic example of the Guru who completely took on his dozen intimate disciples, and ultimately spoke to masses who came to receive darshan as well as instruction. After the first few hundred years of Christianity organization took the place of the Guru, and the all important help one receives from this most personal relationship was lost or received only vicariously.

When Joel became independent of organization and began his tremendous work, writing his books and travelling the world, he, without conscious thought, began one of the most outstanding examples of the Guru system of teaching that the Western world has known. Though his spoken message was completely Christian orientated, the true power of his work lay within his inner work and his Guru-Chela relationships.

One can only write with accuracy or even authority about that which one has seen or experienced; so for me to give a complete picture of Joel would be impossible, but I



Joel Goldsmith

can relate a few of my personal experiences with him that will give some glimpse into Joel Goldsmith as Guru.

At the end of the Second World War, I arrived in New York to live, about as full of psychological and spiritual holes as a sieve. I knew it would be impossible to plug the holes by the use of psychiatric help, but in the depths of my dilemma I experienced a sudden assurance that there was a truth beyond my awareness, and that I would be led to my teacher. By a series of rapid and unusual occurrences I was guided

all the way across the United States, where I sought out Joel just as he was writing his first book.

After a couple of years of study and a number of trips from New York to California, I arrived once in tears of disgust at my life and progress. I went straight to Joel, and then he said, "For the next week you have no responsibility for your life. Get up each morning and say 'all right, Father, my life belongs to you' and I'll be with you." Within a matter of a couple of days I might as well have been stepping out of a shell... old fears, old desires, old bondages slipped away, and a new freedom pervaded me.

It was then that my appetite for study sprang into being. Joel never told me what to read or where to go, but he always encouraged my search. It was at that time, before the Maharshi's passing, that I found writings of his teachings and discussed them at length with Joel. I was also very fortunate in coming close to Swami Prabhavananda. He knew my relationship with Joel, and allowed me many lengthy and invaluable visits to the Ramakrishna Vedanta Monastery, hours of meditation, guidance and study.

In time another step was ready, and though there had been some rather stern discipline from Joel, he had waked me to the fact that I was in danger of looking more to the man than to the truth that flowed within the man. It was only then that Joel, for the first time, asked me to meditate with him alone. As I sat there, a very physical explosion took place within me, and from that date my whole life has been centred around daily contact in meditation... no greater gift can come from man. After this time there were many intense sessions of daily meditation and study with Joel, as I began to spend more and more time in his presence, and less and less time in the business world. Meditating in his presence was

always like meditating beside a blast furnace, so obvious was the power.

But Joel's, like the Maharshi's, true goal was to set his students free, to guide them to the Guru within. Joel, without deliberate intention but rather through inner guidance, sometimes used confused and stern methods. And being one of the two men who had spent more time at his side than any others in the past twenty years, I perhaps needed more to make me stand on my own two feet; but when the proof appeared, he was overjoyed.

The most accurate explanation of the truth of Joel comes from Joel himself in this quote from a letter he wrote me twelve years ago: "I think people look at me, see my form and face, and think the Infinite Way or God is just an activity, a profession, or a means of earning a livelihood. They do not see that consciousness is filled with God around the clock, that God is really my being, not merely a subject for classes. It is necessary that the outer life be normal, natural, to the world's view, but even though it is not understood by the world, our inner life must be not ours, but His, our being must be not I but Him... He is the air we breathe, the food we eat, the sleep we sleep, the love we love, the life we live..." This is Joel Goldsmith.

On his last day in America, before he left the visible scene, I had an hour of intimate and personal instruction. In this most wonderful hour he gave me a slip of paper with the address of *The Mountain Path* on it, and asked me to subscribe. When I left him, there was little doubt that there was something loving, tender, and final in his words. As I emerged from the building on to the street, I faced the throngs as they passed by, but his spirit was so strong that the only thought that sang out as I looked into each face was, "there I go, there I go, there I go..."

THE CAGE

By
ALONE

[To breathe an air of freedom]

If I intently look at all my actions —
bodily and mental —

I feel :

Every action — every thought — is conditioned in every movement of mine of the body or of the mind. I am following this,

I am just (i.e. only) watching, therefore I am not condemning.

There is no other feeling except, 'that I am shackled' therefore I cannot condemn it, because I do not know *any other* situation — mental situation — mental state, therefore also, I am not just justifying it, neither do I compare it to any other state, because *only* this state do I know — I am experiencing ...!

Kindly it is not because somebody told us (— you —) that "It is a cage" that you should feel it so but it must shine in you!

In an easy chair or standing all alone

We should be in knowledge — in a state of awareness — of it.

I am watching the state of chainedness ; without condemnation or justification or comparison — I arrived at this state automatically which we have seen 'now'.

It gives an appearance of a silent mind but it is not so, it is, what they call, 'dumbfoundedness' sluggishness.

[Only, I feel that it is not that which it ought to be darkly].

I do not feel a way (to get) out of it.

[Yet I feel, there is something — there must be something — 'outside' this.]

Really feeling ¹ "all this is a cage" — is FREEDOM.

[Be in NO THOUGHT or feel-watch in movement of the body or of the mind, that "you are in a cage"]!!

NO THOUGHT AND FREEDOM both are the same thing!

Because, FREEDOM is equal to NO THOUGHT.

To speak differently :

FREEDOM is a 'state' while NO THOUGHT is 'behaviour'.

By the by : As we have repeatedly said :

NO THOUGHT or FREEDOM is to be sought for itself (.... its benefits² are incidental!)

That means, NO THOUGHT or FREEDOM is not even for the sake of 'communion' with God (or the Reality or the Truth call it in any other way)

.... but only to be in it for its own sake. [and, strangely, there is "the sense of the otherness" with its bubbling joy and unconscious Action].

This means : 'NO THOUGHT' or 'FREEDOM' is *not* a 'symbol'. [i.e. it is not for any purpose]

¹ Intensely, with passion.

² 'benefits' is just a word.

THE GOOD NEWS

By
'MERCHANT'

"I am the Self, oh Gudakesa, dwelling in the heart of every being ; I am the beginning, and the middle, and the end of them all."

WHEN asked to select the most important verses of the Bhagavadgita so that they might be learned and kept in mind, Ramana Maharshi selected 42. The verse quoted above was placed fourth in order but was described by him as being the most important. It might be said to sum up the whole essence of the Gita, even representing in shorthand form the message of all religious teachings whether Eastern or Western. It is the 'good news' to which a man may begin to awaken, gently and simply telling him that there is a new state of being possible to him, a new experience of who he is. Yet this experience is not strictly new, it is more ancient and more fundamental than anything else, for it is an experience of that universal ground of being from which the personal life has been born, which is sustaining it at every moment, and in which it will dissolve. Nor can it be confined to some nebulous, impractical, subjective world, for it is also the ground of all objective experience that comes to a man, every event, every person, every thing. Every kind of impression that comes to him comes, whether he recognises it or not, from that same ground which is also his own.

A person may know in his life few or many moments of inward recognition of this strange and magical truth. Any real moment of such recognition is like none other in the life, and each such moment is a fresh discovery having the power to affect the whole life. Perhaps invisibly at first, the touch of truth cannot but remake a person for it overturns at the heart all sense of who he is. Even as the old ways, the old sense of identity, ebb back, something is left quite distinct from all by which he has lived hitherto. Immediately the question arises —



'How can I live from what I have glimpsed? For now nothing else can fully satisfy me.'

Sri Ramana Maharshi was a living representative of the 'good news' and he expressed the very nature of that goodness in that he was able to convey to others how the truth might come to life in them also. It is said that his true teaching was by silence, merely through *being*. Fortunately for those who struggle at the beginning of the rediscovery of themselves he also spoke — quite a lot — and wrote — relatively little. Thus some few years after his death there are sufficient practical traces of his teaching to help ordinary men and women approach that experience of being which his whole life expressed.

There is nothing particularly new about his teaching, nothing that could not be found elsewhere by one who knew where to look,

for it corresponds to the essential teaching of all great spiritual leaders. What is remarkable about Ramana Maharshi's teaching is its strength, its simplicity and its practical nature. Many who have been drawn to practise the elements of his teaching confirm that they have found support in their efforts, as though the spiritual influence of his being is still very much alive, not in some distant time or place, but in the depths of themselves.

This may seem at first glance a strange happening; yet on reflection is it not part of the miraculous quality of any real teaching? Not only is the ancient knowledge

restated in a form appropriate to the conditions of the age, but some actual door in the confusion of human life is opened through which the sincere enquirer may enter into a new room, a new experience of himself.

Corresponding to the existence of the outer teacher and his teaching is the inner moment in the evolution of a pupil when a new possibility is ready to unfold and flower. In the case of a great being, a great teacher, the sending out of the knowledge of his teaching may correspond to the opening of inner possibilities for a number of people. Ramana Maharshi, from the experience of many, is one of the great ones.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

Translated By PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of SRI MURUGANAR

18. The world so clear is but the might of thought.
If even in stillness without thought the world
Dream-like arises stark in front of us,
It is only the persistent power
Of images already formed.
19. Like the spider spreading out its web
From its own mouth and then withdrawing it
Into itself, the mind puts forth the blossom
Of the world and ingathers it again.
20. When the mind turns towards the brain and senses,
Forms and Names are thrust out from within.
And when it rests abiding in the Heart,
They enter and lie buried there again.
21. False like a ring of fire
Formed in the dark
When one whirls fast a glowing joss-stick,
The world of jostling pairs and triads
Shines before the eager ego-mind,
Non-existent in deep Real Insight.
24. This villainous vast world so false
That cheats and ravages the minds of all,
How did it come to be?
By nothing else but our own fault
In falling from instead of clinging to
The Self.

(Continued on Page 161)

THE HUMAN STATUS OF THE MAHARSHI

By

Dr. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

A Hindu's destiny in life is largely determined by his caste and ashram or 'station'. According to the scriptural pattern, there are four successive 'ashrams' in this sense of the word, though they are not often observed nowadays. They are: first, celibate student; second, householder; third, retired person; fourth, homeless renunciate. Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, who has written occasional articles for us ever since our inaugural issue, here explains how this traditional pattern of life did not apply to the Maharshi.

PEOPLE sometimes ask whether the Maharshi was a sannyasin or whether the mode of life he led corresponded to any scriptural pattern. He did not wear ochre robes, as a sannyasin does, or conform to the rules of conduct prescribed for a sannyasin. If he wore only a white loincloth and carried only a bamboo staff and a kaman-dala (vessel for water), that was only because he felt the need for no other possessions, not to indicate any order that he belonged to. He said himself that such symbols pertain to the body and are of little or no intrinsic importance.

A certain person once made a false claim to possession of the Ashram and its properties and the court sent a commissioner to take down a deposition from the Maharshi in the matter. This deposition is of no less importance philosophically than legally. He said: "I have not given sannyas (the status of renunciate) to any one, nor have I taken sannyas from any one. I was living in Skandashram. My mother, who was also living there, passed away in 1922. Her corpse was brought to the foot of the hill and buried here and a samadhi (shrine) was built over it. From that time puja (ritualistic worship) was started here. After a while I left Skandashram and came and stayed here. At no time have I taken any title. At no time have I initiated any disciples with diksha (formal initiation) or in any ritualistic way. I do not impose any restric-



tions or discipline on those who gather round me. I do not invite any one to come to this place, nor do I tell any one to leave this place By birth I am a Brahmin. I was a Brahmachari (celibate student) when I came here (i.e. to Tiruvannamalai). Within an hour of arriving I threw away my sacred thread (sign of being a Brahmin),

clothes, etc.; I shaved my head clean. I had about three rupees and threw it away, and since then I do not touch money. I accept in my hands things which can be eaten. I do not give upadesa (spiritual instruction) or call myself a guru. However, if questions are asked by seekers I answer them. Since 1907 people have called me 'Ramana Rishi'. I am an '*athyāshrami*' (beyond the ashrams and castes) not falling within the category of any of the ashrams. This state is recognized in the sastras. It is explained in the Suta Samhita. The *athyāshrami* can own property if necessary. He needs a guru, but the Self is my Guru. The *athyāshrami* is not bound to observe any rites. I have no desire to acquire properties, but things come and I accept them. I agree that to own property is worldly, but I do not hate the world."¹



Until he was sixteen he was the ordinary schoolboy Venkataraman, rather indifferent to his studies but helped by a phenomenal memory. One day a feeling of the imminence of death overpowered him and his mind spontaneously turned not to trying to escape death but to investigating what it is that dies and what, if anything, survives. He enacted death vividly, held his breath, and even, to give it an air of reality, stretched his body stiff like a corpse. In this con-

dition he exercised the inner mind to find out whether the 'I' dies. He had never heard of Self-enquiry and it was only his purva samskara (innate disposition) that led him to it. The intensity of the enquiry in this corpse-like condition somehow resulted in suddenly opening up a new awareness which is described as a continuous flow of 'I—I'. This awareness flows uninterruptedly and functions alike with and without the body. Many may experience such awareness but the remarkable thing in this case was that it continued henceforth permanently, whether the body was engaged in activity, rest or samadhi. The Maharshi was not limited to the body, but neither was he without the body. All we can say is that he somehow lived and moved among us although in essence he was beyond our comprehension. He has himself told us that the supreme Self, although formless and unknowable, manifests itself out of compassion in a human form to guide the seeker, that is to act as a Guru. And yet he has also said that for the Self there are no others and therefore no seekers for whom to have compassion and that he is not a Guru. It is necessary to understand apparently contradictory aspects of Truth. We can say that he is the Supreme Self manifesting itself in human form to help the seeker to a state beyond form which would remain unknown and inaccessible were it not for these human incarnations. Such incarnations are not bound by any rules and do not fall into any type, caste, ashram or category; the type of life led by them may vary according to the needs of the circumstances: they may be married or celibate, prince or beggar.

It is a natural tendency of the human mind to try to fit everything into a system and to define and classify. This would be possible with the Maharshi if he had still been an individual, an embodied person, but he

¹ Readers are referred to the article 'Above Orthodoxy and Unorthodoxy' in our issue of October 1965 by Krishna Bikshu, particularly to Bhagavan's saying to a Brahmin who wished to eat with the non-Brahmins: "I am the only person here who is neither a Brahmin nor a non-Brahmin." (Editor)

was not. He himself said that for the Jivan Mukta, Liberated while living, there is nothing to be accomplished and no duty to be discharged and therefore he can live in any way, according to the circumstances.² All we can say about the Maharshi is that he used the body just as we all do except that he had the constant awareness of it as the instrument of the Self which he consciously was. He also used the word 'I' for purposes of communication, as for instance in this deposition before the commissioner; but he was constantly aware of his essential supramundane 'I' which was experienced alike with or without a body.

We cannot hope to understand the Maharshi from without by interpreting the events of his life. He himself says that he was robbed of his mind by the power of Arunachala. A mental faculty remained but not a mind in the sense of an individual being who plans and decides and likes and dislikes. True peace can prevail only in the absence of such a mind. Such peace is pure happiness and pervades the Jivan Mukta. As the Maharshi said, his mind has become Brahman. "A Jnani's mind is Brahman. It is soil in which the seeds of vasanas (tendencies) and thoughts will not grow." He also said: "Spiritual men are not to be regarded as bodies. They are pure Spirit, formless and limitless. Spiritual life rightly understood is no different from ordinary everyday life."

If the body of a Jnani is seen to be active that does not mean that there is an I-am-the-body idea behind it, and therefore one should not try to classify him. This explains why the Maharshi sometimes (as in this deposition) denied that he was a guru. He meant that he was not a guru in any limited, individual sense. He himself said: "The Guru is the formless Self within every one of us. He may appear as a body to guide us, but that is only his disguise." It appears

from this that to be consciously the Self is to be consciously the Guru. He also said: "The mindless state of the Jivan Mukta which is not aware of others (as others) makes others happy."

The Maharshi's state is described as 'sahaja' or 'natural' samadhi, which is awareness of oneself as the self-effulgent Self with or without outer activity and body-consciousness. Neither outer activity nor its cessation in any way affect the sahaja state, so it is immaterial for that state whether outer activity occurs or not. Thus possibilities which are contradictory in themselves can co-exist in the sahaja state, showing the supramundane Self to be true and all embracing.

Normal human awareness is mental and when the mind is still the state is one of darkness like deep sleep except insofar as pure supramental awareness awakens. In the state of sahaja samadhi, in which the Maharshi permanently was, this higher awareness is experienced constantly without preventing simultaneous mental awareness. It can continue, he has told us, without the aid of the body, for instance in sleep or after death. It is said to be located in and function from the heart at the right side, and the seeker can indeed experience it there, but it is also independent of any body support. Not only did the Maharshi guide us towards the actual experience of this higher awareness, but by living among us and by the grace and power he emitted he proved to us the possibility of abiding permanently in this state.

² This is a truth which has been corrupted into a dangerous heresy by people in various religions who have twisted it into a sanction for licentious living when in fact they were very far from being liberated from the ego. The fact of there being any desire for licentious living is itself proof of the existence of an ego to have that desire. (Editor)



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER SEVEN

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

1

Sri Bhagavan said :

Hear, O Son of Pritha, how, with mind attached to Me, taking refuge in Me, and practising Yoga, you shall surely know Me in full.

Samagram—in full—is taken traditionally to imply the Divine Attributes as well as the Essence.

2

I will fully expound to you both the essential and the detailed knowledge, having acquired which nothing more remains to be known.

'Jnana' is taken to mean integral or essential knowledge and 'vijñana' detailed or analytical knowledge.

3

Out of thousands, perhaps one strives for perfection ; out of those who strive, perhaps one knows Me as I am.

A hard verse. "Many are called but few are chosen." Many more are not even called.

4

Earth, water fire, air, ether, mind (manas), intellect (buddhi) and ego-sense (ahan-kara), these are the eightfold division of my Prakriti.

'Prakriti' means 'Nature' in the sense of 'substance' or 'manifestation' as distinct from 'Essence'. Further on, in Chapter XIII, it is spoken of as 'kshetra', the field.

5

This is my lower Prakriti, O Mighty-Armed. Know My higher Prakriti to be the life-principle by which the world is upheld.

Further on, in Chapter XIII, this is spoken of as the 'knower of the field'. It will be noted that the 'Lower Prakriti' while far from being 'matter' is akin to the universal energy-field of the nuclear scientist, the substance of the universe.

6

Know that all creatures are born of this (dual Prakriti), I am the origin of the whole universe and also its dissolution.

Krishna, the Purusha, the Essence or Spirit, produces the entire universe by means of the dual Prakriti and dissolves it again.

7

There is nothing higher than Me, O Wealth-Winner. All this is strung on Me, like beads on a string.

8

I am the savour of water, O Son of Kunti, the effulgence of moon and sun, the syllable OM in all the Vedas, sound in space and vigour in men.

That is to say the Essence in all substance.

9

I am the holy fragrance of the earth and the glow of fire ; I am the vitality in all beings and the austerity in ascetics.

10

Know Me, O Son of Pritha, as the eternal seed of all beings, the intelligence of the wise, the lustre of the illustrious.

11

The strength of the strong am I, when this is free from desire and attachment. I am desire unopposed to dharma, O Lord of the Bharatas.

'Kama' is interpreted by Shankara as desire for things not yet obtained and 'raga' as clinging to those obtained. 'Desire unopposed to dharma' is the desire for what is legitimate.

12

And whatever states arise from the gunas, sattvic, rajasic or tamasic, know that they are from Me. However, I am not in them but they in Me.

The gunas are the tendencies, stresses or forces whose interplay sustains the universe :

sattva—pure, white, upward-tending,
rajas—active, red, outward-tending,
tamas—inert, black, downward-tending.

For a detailed account of them see Chapter XVII.

"I am not in them but they in Me." Here Krishna speaks as the Transcendent. God is immanent in all but is not contained in all or any.

13

The whole world, deluded by these three conditions arising from the gunas, is ignorant of Me, Who am Transcendent and Immutable.

14

This My Divine Maya is indeed hard to cross. Those only who surrender to Me cross over this Maya.

15

Wrong-doers, the lowest of men, whose minds are deluded by Maya and who have acquired the nature of demons : these seek Me not.

16

Of four kinds are the righteous who worship Me, Arjuna: those who suffer, those who seek knowledge, those who seek profit, and the wise, O Lord of the Bharatas.

Thus are seekers after God divided into four categories. The highest are the wise, who have no motive. Next come those who seek wisdom. The other two categories are those who seek some worldly gain or advantage and those who turn away from the world on account of grief or suffering.

17

The foremost of these is the Wise man (Jnani) who is ever steadfast and devoted to the One. Very dear am I to the Wise-man, and he to Me.

18

Indeed, all these are noble, but I regard the Sage as My very Self. With integrated mind he is established in Me alone, the Supreme Goal.

19

At the end of many births the man of wisdom comes to Me, realising that Vasudeva is all. Such a great soul is very rare to find.

Vasudeva is a name of Krishna's. This can also be rendered: "realizing that all is Vasudeva."

20

But those whose Knowledge is clouded by various desires resort to other gods, practicing diverse rites, as constrained by their own nature.

It is not a question of worshipping one or another god, but of seeking Liberation in the Supreme or fulfilment of various wishes through partial manifestations of God.

Knowledge is spoken of as the natural state of man, clouded over by desires.

21

Whatever form any devotee wishes to worship with faith, that faith of his do I strengthen.

22

With faith strengthened, he engages in worship and obtains his desires from that form, as ordained by Me alone.

23

But limited is the reward of these men of little understanding. Worshipers of the gods go to the gods; My devotees come to Me.

Their limited understanding causes them to seek a limited goal, and their rewards are proportionate.

24

The unintelligent consider Me, the Formless, to have form, ignorant of My Transcendent State, immutable and supreme.

Similarly Ramana Maharshi would say: "It is only you who say that the Jnani has a body. He does not say so."

25

Veiled by My yogic power (yogamaya), I am not revealed to all; this deluded world does not recognize Me as unborn and deathless.

26

I know the beings of the past, the present and the future, Arjuna, but none knows Me.

27

All creatures are subject from birth, O Bharata, to delusion caused by the polarities arising from desire and aversion, O Vanquisher of Foes.

28

Only men of right conduct whose sins have come to an end are free from the delusion of the polarities and worship Me, steadfast in their vows.

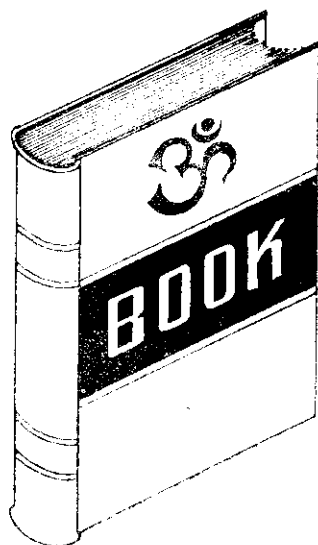
29

Those who, taking refuge in Me, strive for deliverance from old age and death fully know the Brahman, the Self, and all manner of karma.

30

Those who know Me as comprising both the physical and divine aspects and all sacrifice realize Me with integrated mind even at the time of death.

Here ends the Seventh Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, entitled the Yoga of Wisdom and Knowledge.



REVIEWS

THE TENTH MAN: By Wei Wu Wei. (Hong Kong University Press. Pp. 234. Price H.K. \$18.)

The latest Wei Wu Wei has all the old brilliance with an added mellowness as well. For instance, the author declares that praying humbly to God and being impersonally God are not fundamentally different (p. 5). Only he adds that, rightly understood, there is nothing comparative about humility; it implies simply the surrender of the ego. And once the ego is surrendered it makes little difference whether we call what remains 'Self' or 'God', 'You' or 'I'.

Then again, it is refreshing in a Wei Wu Wei book to come upon the question: "So what to do" (p. 93). However baffling the answer may appear ("Be what you are and cease pretending to be what you are not") and however much it may be insisted that there is no one to do anything, the question has been asked and the doorway thereby opened to the effort without which the effortless state is not attained.

On this so subtle question Wei Wu Wei twice quotes the Maharshi but each time gives only one half of the paradox. He quotes:

There is neither creation nor destruction,
Neither destiny nor free-will,
Neither path nor achievement.
This is the final truth.

Quoted alone, this might suggest that the Maharshi (or any other Master) expected people to do no more than agree with his statements, since there is no path to follow and no goal to achieve, whereas in fact he devoted his life to guiding the metaphysically non-existent aspirant on the metaphysically non-existent path to the

metaphysically non-existent goal. If any said that, since there is no path and since volition is an impediment, he would make no effort, the Maharshi would reply, as Sri Krishna did in the Gita, that your own nature compels you to make effort. He also added: "So long as you are compelled by your nature to make mundane efforts why renounce only spiritual effort?"

There are valuable notes at the end of the book on the right use of words. However, one of the points dealt with goes beyond semantics; that is the assertion that Zen is not the same as Ch'an but a new Japanese creation. It would be interesting to know on what data this opinion is based and whether other modern interpreters of Ch'an and Zen would endorse it. In fact, it would be interesting to have an article for *The Mountain Path* on the subject — one from each side if there are two sides to the question.

The title of the book is taken from an old Puranic story which the Maharshi often quoted or referred to of ten fools who forded a river and, on reaching the other side, counted themselves to see whether all had got safely across. Each one counted the nine others but forgot himself, so they became convinced that one of them had perished. The tenth man represents, of course, the Self. In this version they perform the funeral rites of the missing tenth man and a passerby shocks them into wakefulness by telling them that each one is dead. The Puranic version is simpler. A passerby, told of their predicament, lines them up and gives each one in turn a resounding slap on the face, telling them to count the slaps.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

BORN IN TIBET: By Chögyam Trungpa, the eleventh Trungpa Tulku, as told to Esmé Cramer Roberts. With a Foreword by Marco Pallis. Pub.: Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1966. Pp. 249. Price: 35s.

Among the books that have been written about Tibet, this one has the distinction of having a Tibetan as its author — and not only a Tibetan, but an Incarnate Lama of high standing, who presided over a group of monasteries, comprising not less than a thousand monks and many thousands of lay-followers. In spite of the growing oppression by the Chinese who invaded Tibet soon after Trungpa Tulku had taken over the spiritual and secular responsibility for his monasteries, he carried on his duties against heavy odds and without enmity against the Chinese oppressors, confining himself exclusively to his studies and religious duties in the hope to keep the flame of the Dharma burning in the land of his birth. Only when all his efforts to convince the Chinese of the peacefulness of Buddhism and the goodwill that it extends to all fellow-beings had failed and the Chinese began to loot the monasteries and to kill or imprison their inmates, Trungpa Tulku had no choice but to leave his country with a small group of friends and followers.

The flight through the wild, mountainous country, where fighting was going on all around and where nobody knew what the next day would bring or where the enemy would strike next, was an almost superhuman feat of endurance, in which the spiritual qualities of the young Tulku to whom everybody flocked for help, advice and guidance, proved stronger than all adversities of man and nature. Here it became evident that the strength of mind and character, built up through years of apparently 'other-worldly' studies and meditational practices, is not only superior to that of the average man, but proves to be eminently practical and resourceful in situations which require the highest efficiency and responsibility. The graphic description of the flight to India, right through the lines of the enemy, after months of hiding in caves and in lonely valleys and endless trecks through perilous gorges and snow-covered mountain-passes — this alone would have made a thrilling book of adventures.

But what is more important is the first half of the book, which gives us a first-hand, authentic description of the almost unbelievably strict training and education of an incarnate Lama. Instead of resting on the laurels or the achieve-

ments of a previous life, the idea here is that the higher our spiritual attainments, the greater our duties and the necessity to move on to ever higher accomplishments. The theory of a consciously directed re-incarnation of a saint or an advanced mind, trained in meditational and yogic practices — in contrast to the involuntary (i.e. merely karmically conditioned) rebirth of the average human being, who is blindly tossed about on the ocean of life, due to his own uncontrolled desires — this is clearly demonstrated by the remarkable circumstances under which Trungpa Tulku was born and discovered, and likewise in his astonishing ability to re-acquire at a tender age the wisdom and learning of his previous incarnations. At an age when other children play with toys or spend their time in other childish amusements, the little Tulku practised meditation and was engaged in serious studies, which even grown-ups would have found difficult to master. The average reader, who is not acquainted with Tibetan Buddhist literature and the manifold methods and systems of meditation, will probably be bewildered by the variety of subjects and the complicated rituals the young Tulku had to study and to perform, to say nothing of the strenuous life he had to live.

This book is much more than merely an autobiographical account; it is a cultural document of the highest order, because it allows us an insight into the educational system on which the whole edifice of Tibetan spirituality was founded. To the Tibetan, spirituality is not something divorced from life, but something to be realized here and now. There is — or was — probably no other country in the world, in which the pursuit of spiritual values played such an important part in the daily life of its people. This is well illustrated by the following passage on page 112: "on our journey we met many monks carrying their books on the tops of their packs; their first exchange was always 'What philosophy have you studied, what courses of meditation, under what teacher, and at what monastery?' for monasteries in that area were in a very flourishing state with constant exchange of people seeking instruction in various spiritual techniques; there were laymen also engaged on similar pilgrimages."

Two things which stand out in Tibetan education are the importance of meditational practice and the emphasis that is given to solid knowledge. The matter-of-factness of the Tibetan mind is no hindrance to its spirituality. On the contrary: only a mind that is capable of clear

thinking and control over its imaginative and emotional faculties can dare to enter the realm of mystic or transcendental experiences. The terms 'mystic' or 'transcendental' in this context have nothing to do with metaphysical speculations, but denote a state of mind that can be experienced, transcending our usual sense-consciousness. As Marco Pallis rightly explains in his excellent Foreword: "By nature and habit he (the Tibetan) is 'down to earth', hence also his preference for an almost material phraseology when trying to express the most subtle metaphysical and spiritual truths."

This tendency may even be noticed in Tibetan art which, though highly stylized and symbolical, is of an almost surrealistic clarity and definiteness. Tibetan *thankas* are products of, as well as instruments for, meditative visualization. Two such *thankas* are reproduced in the book in form of line-drawings, prepared by the author's friend Sherab Palden Beru (the caption under the second of these drawings contains a misprint: "Vijaya" should have been printed under the left figure, "Tara" under the right one). The author himself has contributed very charming drawings of monasteries and landscapes which testify to his artistic abilities, while the symbols of the "Buddha's Eight Blessings" form fitting tailpieces of some of the chapters. Photos of important personalities, monasteries and places in Tibet add further to the documentary character of the book. The reader will be grateful to the narrator, Mrs. Esmé Cramer Roberts (who put this book into very readable English without overshadowing the personality or the narrative style of the author) as well as to Mr. Gerald Yorke, the sponsor of this book, without whose initiative and encouragement it would probably never have been written, and to Mr. Marco Pallis whose expert knowledge of Tibetan life and teachings greatly helped to interpret in simple, non-technical language many of the religious customs and ideas with which Westerners are not yet familiar. Trungpa Tulku, however, is not content with merely giving us a picture of the past and of the high cultural achievements of his people, — he has set himself the task of keeping alive the spiritual and cultural achievements of his country, "while at the same time seeking fruitful co-operation with whatever spiritual influences the West itself is able to offer." This book is the first step towards the realization of this aim and is itself an example of such fruitful co-operation.

LAMA GOVINDA

INDIA OF YOGIS: By Alfonso Caycedo.
(National Publishing House, New Delhi. Pp. 253.
Price: Rs. 60, £ 4, \$ 11.50.)

Dr. Caycedo, who was for eighteen months honorary cultural attache at the Columbian Embassy in New Delhi, has written a book based on his stay in India. A psychiatrist and doctor of medicine by profession, he has founded a new school for the study of human consciousness which he calls 'sophrology' and for which he draws also on the experience of Eastern thinkers and psychologists. For this purpose he visited a number of ashrams and spiritual teachers in various parts of India.

The book is in five parts. The first describes India as the home of yoga. The second speaks of the ashrams and yogis the author has visited; the third of yoga and medicine; the fourth of yogic specialists; and the fifth of the yogis of Tibet. Any such attempt to build a bridge between East and West is warmly to be welcomed. Particularly in practical psychiatry one cannot sufficiently emphasise the importance of drawing on India's millenia of experience.

The first section contains many interesting observations on India and is the best part of the book. The author writes with a pleasing modesty and does not claim too much for himself. Nevertheless the book remains rather disappointing. The trained psychologist or psychiatrist has very little to learn from it, especially as there are already a number of better books on the subject. For the general reader, on the other hand, the book is much too bulky, too dry and too expensive. It could very well have been reduced to half the size. For instance, 95 pages of it are composed of recorded dialogues and 40 pages of quotations! For the general reader also there are more interesting as well as cheaper books on the subject. Especially the chapters on Sri Ramanashram and Sri Aurobindashram are unsatisfactory and leave much to be desired.

DR. AXENCRONE.

PATANJALI YOGA SUTRAS: By Swami Vasantananda. Pp. 248. Price: Rs. 7.50.
(Sree Ramprasad Press, Madras.)

Swami Vasantananda, a disciple of the late Swami Sivanandaji of Rishikesh, has sought to present in this brief volume of about 250 pages the text, word meaning and a sutrawise commentary on the classic Yoga-sutras of Patanjali. In her comments the author generally tends to follow the great commentary of Vyasa and the annotations of Vachaspati Misra. The book is

to be welcomed as a simple, clear and readable presentation of the Yoga sutras in the light of this ancient commentarial tradition. For example, the author's exposition of the sutra (IV. 13) on the nature of change is commendably simple and pertinent. Unfortunately the standard is not always maintained and at places the translation as well as the exposition appear defective. For example, in the sutra (I. 14) defining the concept of Iswara the word *Klesa* has been mis-translated as pain. It is correctly translated as affliction in II. 3. The exposition of I. 19 as a 'materialistic approach to concentration' lacks authority. Similarly the exposition of I. 41 appears to stray into error since the distinction between *Vilarkanugata* and *Vicharanugata* is not parallel to the distinction between *Grahya* and *Grahana*. 'Subtle sound' is not part of *Grahana* but of *Grahya*. On the other hand, the exposition of spiritual matter is generally full of interest. The exposition of the doctrine of Karman in sutras II. 12-14 is an example.

On the whole the book is useful as an introduction to a more serious and rigorous study of Patanjali's Yoga-sutras and would be of particular interest to those who wish to go beyond a mere translation of the sutras and yet have no time to read the scholastic expositions.

PROF. G. C. PANDE.

GAYATRI RAHASYA: By H. H. Sri Prabhu Ashrit Swamiji. (English Book Store. 7-L Connaught Circus, New Delhi, Pp. 278. Price: Rs. 4.75.)

Addressed to the Lord of Illumination symbolised in the physical universe by the Sun, the Gayatri Mantra is unique in finding place in all the three Vedas viz. Rig, Yajur and Sama. It voices the ancient aspiration of man for a divine enlightenment and impulsion of his faculties. The present work develops the theme into a full-fledged *upasana* and seeks to make the Gayatri into an integrating power as between the individual and the cosmos and a direct link between the seeker and God.

The exposition is compiled from discourses of Swamiji and is meandering in the treatment of the subject. The different names of the Gayatri and their explanation, the correlation between the elements in the universe and the constituents of the human system as related to the letters and *padas* of the Gayatri, the modes of its *japa*, the conditions to be fulfilled for success in this *sadhana*, are some of the topics that are touched

upon by the author in his own way. Not all would accept his derivations of some of the key words in the Mantra. But the discussion has the merit of setting one thinking.

M. P. PANDIT.

INTRODUCTION TO VEDANTA: By A. Nagaraja Rao, Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, Pp. 243. Price Rs. 2.50. Third Edition 1966.

The book under review is devoted to the exposition of the Vedanta philosophy and is a succinct account of it as expounded by Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva and also of the schools of Vedanta by Vallabhacharya, Sri Chaitanya and the Saiva Siddhanta. Only about half of the book is devoted to the exposition of these philosophical systems, while the other half is taken up by an introduction, near and remote. Though the chapters on the Scientific Outlook and Human Value, the Nature and Function of Philosophy (from the Western viewpoint) and the Spirit and Substance of Indian Philosophy and Approach to Vedanta are interesting and useful in themselves, one fails to understand the relevancy of these topics in a book presumably furnishing an elementary and non-detailed account of the main Vedanta systems. Nevertheless they contain very useful material for a student of philosophy.

The author treats the Advaita system of Sankara in a very comprehensive way and discusses not only the metaphysics of the system but also its ethics. The other systems of Vedanta also are discussed in a sympathetic way and there are no cross criticisms. The system of Ramanuja is an "adorable theism" and the system of Madhva is "a scripturally supported attack on monism." The author distinguishes Advaita from the system of Vallabha and the latter's bhakti marga and pushti are explained clearly. The system of Chaitanya with its refutation of mayavada and Nirguna Brahman is next taken up. The last is the Saiva Siddhanta with its emphasis on the three malas and the means to Moksha. In the last chapter, the author argues that, with its mysticism and philosophy, Advaita alone has the chance of being an effective universal religion.

Sri Nagaraja Rao has a very incisive way of writing and the book will promote greater thinking on the part of its readers and so lead them to a more detailed understanding of these systems of Vedanta.

PROF. S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

THE NEW THEOLOGIAN: By Ved Mehta. (Wiedenfeld and Nicolson. Pp. 180. Price 36s.)

A Hindu American writer here makes a study of the Bishop of Woolwich and the group of German theologians whom the Bishop is popularising, all of whom seem to find it possible to be a Christian without believing in God. One sometimes hears people approving of them on the ground that it is only a formal, personal, anthropomorphic God whom they deny.

There is a story that a Muslim, hoping to manoeuvre Bhagavan into condemning the Hindu use of images, once asked him whether God has a form, and Bhagavan replied: "First find out whether you have a form. If you have, then God has. If God has no form then neither have you." The same is said more doctrinally in verse 2 of his *Ulladu Narpadu* ('Forty Verses on Reality'). "All religions postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the ego and God, but it is only the one Reality that manifests itself as these three. One can say 'the three are really three' only so long as the ego lasts."

If there is no separate individual being there is also no separate personal God, because it is the One Reality that manifests as all three: ego, world and God; but none of the theologians whom Mr. Mehta studies and interviews call into question their own individual being, although they deny God's. By clinging to their own they invalidate their denial of God's. Either there must be all three of the fundamentals or none. It is impossible just to erase one of them. The question, therefore, whether denial of a separate God is mystic insight or materialistic blindness depends on whether or not it is accompanied by denial of one's own individual identity. There are no indications in Mr. Mehta's book that this has been understood by the exponents of the 'new theology'. They only destroy without reconstructing; they destroy the faith of the believer without offering in its place the insight of the mystic. This can only accelerate the modern trend to superficiality and meaninglessness.

SAGITTARIUS.

JOURNALS

The R. M. Bucke Memorial Society Newsletter-Review for the study of religious experience, edited by Graham C. Taylor M.D., 1025 Pine Avenue, Montreal 2, P.Q., Canada, noticed in our issue of April 1966 (p. 205), is turning out even more fruitful than expected. In the second issue (Sept. 1966) Prof. Nikam, Ninian Smart and

Swami Nikhilananda are among the distinguished contributors. There is an excellent paper by Fr. Thomas Merton on the question who it is that experiences the transcendent experience. An interesting correspondence is quoted between Dr. Raymond Prince of McGill University and Arthur Osborne of *The Mountain Path*.

Mr. Osborne points out that "... the supreme experience is held in Hindu teaching to be neither spasmodic nor ecstatic but natural and continuous and should not therefore be characterised as a 'peak' but a lofty plateau."

Asked about the difference between a Self-realized man and a successfully analysed man, Mr. Osborne characterises Realization as the ego-free state.

He points out that the criterion for the spiritual aspirant is not social acceptability, as it is for the psychiatrist and his product. He may even deliberately reject this, as Christ did when he told his followers that they would be persecuted for his sake. The criterion is inner and spiritual.

Mr. Osborne concludes rather caustically by asking: "If a socially maladjusted person endangers the very basis of society by his influence, what should we do about it? Crucify him? Give him hemlock?"

* * *

We have received the first two issues of the quarterly *Santi Dipam* published by the 'Rama Sakti Mission' at Mangalore, centred around Sri Rama Devi, who is known as 'The Divine Mother'. In form, lay-out and general style it pays *The Mountain Path* the sincerest compliment, that of imitation. On the whole the standard of articles is high. Some of the articles are learned and some of the contributors professors, but the general trend, set by Mother Rama Devi herself, is towards practical religion and mysticism.

We wish this journal a long and useful future.

* * *

The 82nd birthday souvenir of Swami Jyothi of Tiruttani is also closely based on the form and lay-out of *The Mountain Path*. The number of messages from distinguished persons as well as of advertisements shows that the Swami must have quite an extensive following.

H. S. G.

MISREPRESENTATION

In an article on 'Yogasutras of Patanjali' by Swami Atmananda on p. 8 of the February 15, 1967, issue of *Kaivalya Sudha* it is stated:

"The aim of Pranayama is control of the subtle, vital Psychic forces in the body through the initial regulation of the grosser breathing movements.

"Ramana Maharshi's counsel on the subject is as follows: 'You become an Atmanishta, one established in the self, by restraining the air i.e. the breath.'"

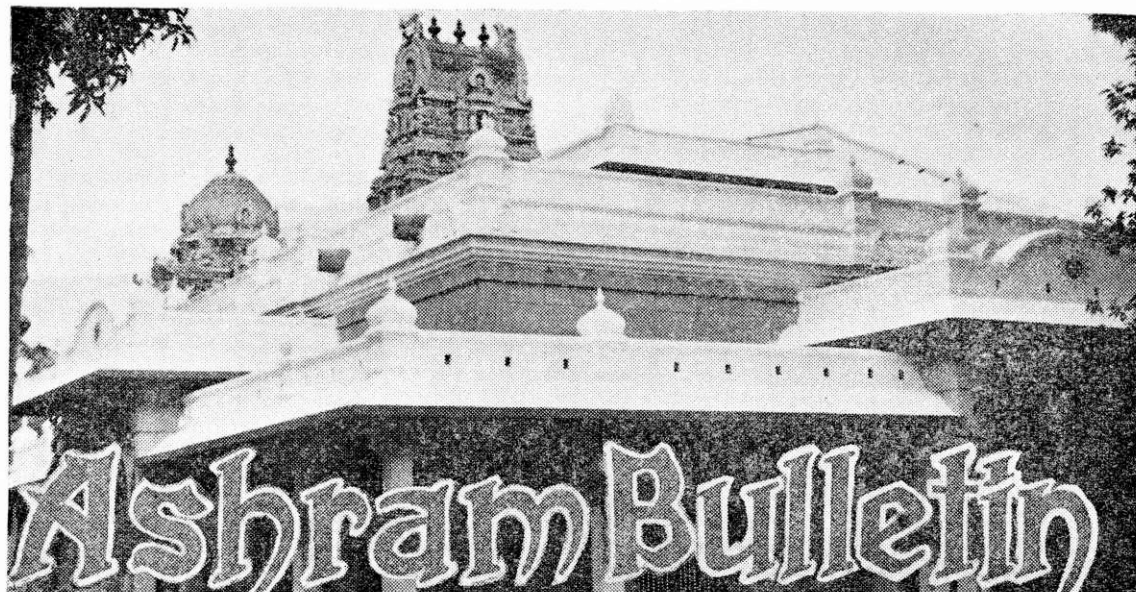
"But there are weighty opinions that Pranayama is not indispensable. For, on meditation becoming deeper and deeper, the regulation of breath comes about automatically; there need not be a conscious effort at regulation."

This gives the impression that Ramana Maharshi taught breath control but that other weighty opinions hold that it is not indispensable. Actually, Ramana Maharshi did not teach breath control. He always taught that it is not indispensable. He did not actually forbid it as a preliminary measure in some cases but he never enjoined it.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

(Continued from Page 149)

25. This earthly life kept going by the fuel
Of our desires and dislikes,
This empty dream in *maya*-slumber dreamt,
Seeming so real while the sleep is deep,
Proves vacant nothing on our waking up.
 27. When several lovely ornaments
Are fashioned out of gold,
All the jewels are just gold
And nothing else.
So are all things moving and unmoving
Only the Self made manifest.
Other than the Self
They are not.
 31. Those who have given up, left far behind
The world of names and forms, and in the bliss
Supreme of pure, self-luminous Awareness
Have had their minds made clear and strong,
They alone know truly and precisely
The meaning of the world's reality.
 32. Turning the mind wholly into knowledge,
And through this knowledge seeking truer knowledge,
You will find the mighty universe
Made up entirely of Awareness,
The only real substance that there is.
And nothing else.
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NEW TRUST BOARD

READERS will remember that the term of office of the first Ashram Trust Board expired at the end of 1966. The Madras Govern-

ment and the hereditary trustee (Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President of the Board) in consultation with one another appointed the following four trustees for the second three-year term:

Sri K. Srinivasachariar, Advocate, Tiruvannamalai, continued from the previous Trust Board.

Sri T. S. Bhadrachalam Pillai, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Tiruvannamalai Temple.

Sri B. S. Ranganadham, retired Executive Engineer, Andhra Pradesh.

Sri K. Padmanabham, retired Deputy Secretary to the Government of Mysore, who has built a small guest house for the Ashram in the name of his late wife.

The new Board was sworn in on January 12th, an auspicious day. It passed a resolution thanking the outgoing trustees: Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami and Sri S. S. V. S. Muthiah Chettiar, for their work on behalf of the Ashram during their tenure of office.

RAMANA MANTAPAM

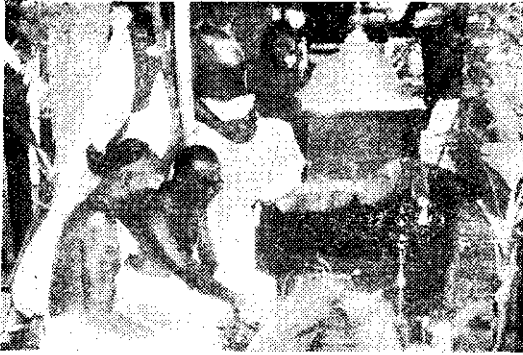
Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan (introduced to our readers in the issue of January, 1965), has for some time been in charge of the construction of the Mantap over the shrine of Sri Bhagavan. She was, however, suffering from failing health since her nearest heart attack, and therefore the previous Trust Board (of which she was a member) at its last meeting relieved her of this onerous task and entrusted it to Sri V. Ganesan, Managing Editor of *The Mountain Path*.



TOP. left: Sri K. Srinivasachariar;
right: Sri T. S. Bhadrachalam Pillai;
BOTTOM. left: Sri K. Padmanabham;
right: Sri B. S. Ranganadham;
MIDDLE. Sri T. N. Venkataraman, PRESIDENT.

[The Ashram President has since received a letter from Mrs. Taleyarkhan, who is not now here, saying that she is now in good health. This is especially good news since she suffered a heart attack for months ago and has twice to go to Madras for treatment].

On January 23rd, an auspicious day, the rite of closing the top (Brahma-Rundhra) of the Gopura or structure over the shrine was performed. The Gopura is regarded in the Agama Sastras as equivalent to the head of the shrine, and therefore its closing is an important function equivalent to the closing of the top of the skull in yoga-marga. There was an elaborate Agamic puja for which our chief sthapaty, Sri S. K. Achary, brought specialists. A number of foreign visitors were also present.



Sthapaty S. K. Achary performing the puja for Brahma Rundhra (closing) ceremony at the Ramana Mantapam.

Sri A. Devaraja Mudaliar, whose departure from the Ashram we noted in our Bulletin of January, 1966, had just returned on that day. It was a brief visit, but he hopes soon to be well enough to settle down here again. While the puja was going on monkeys watched from the roof and one of them made a lightning raid and got away with a banana kept for puja purposes. Some people seized sticks and stones to drive them away but Devaraja reminded us of what Bhagavan had said on such an occasion: "Guarding the bananas is your dharma, stealing them is the monkeys' dharma. You attend to your dharma, but don't get angry with the monkeys for attending to theirs."

The remaining work of construction, flooring, painting etc. is going on with the utmost expedition and we are happy to announce that the sacred rite of KUMBHABHISHEKAM is fixed to take place on **Sunday, 18th June, 1967.**

When building work on the shrine started several years back a special rite was performed deconsecrating the samadhi of Sri Bhagavan and transferring its power of spiritual emanation to its present temporary abode in the New Hall. This was to enable the daily pujas accompanied by chanting of the Vedas at 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. to take place in the New Hall, so that the chanters and the devotees who sit in meditation during the chanting would not be troubled by the noise and dust incidental to building (though actually this is minimal, since the stones are cut elsewhere and only brought to the site to be hoisted into place.) With the Kumbhabhishekam or consecration ceremony the spiritual force will be restored to its original site, and from then on the daily pujas and Vedic chanting will be held at the samadhi, as they used to be. This is a consummation that devotees have been eagerly looking forward to.

We expect a large gathering for the occasion. It is expected that the elaborate ceremonies, including several homams, will consume something like Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 45,000, and the Ashram feels confident that devotees will contribute generously and do what they can to help.

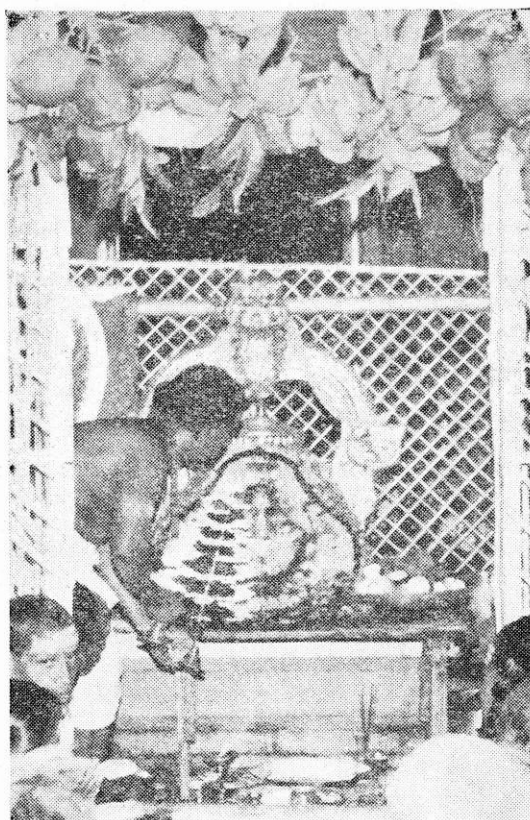
JAYANTHI

The Tamil and Western calendars coincided this year for the celebration of Sri Maharshi's Jayanthi or birth anniversary (the 87th), as it fell on December 29th. The celebrations started early in the morning, as usual, with hymns of praise to Sri Maharshi and to Arunachala. The elaborate morning pujas included Ekadasa Rudra Mahanyasa Abhishekam, chanting of the Taittiriya and Mahanarayana Upanishads, and Ramana Sahasranamam, the thousand names of Ramana.

Throughout the celebrations the Presence of Sri Maharshi was powerfully felt, as it used to be in his lifetime, especially during the arihi or waving of lights before the shrines of Sri Maharshi and Matrubhuteswarar. A large number of guests were invited to stay to lunch and masses of poor people were fed. Sri Satyanarayana Tandon distributed small coins to the poor.

Again this year we had the pleasure of receiving the Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Sri Sayaji Lakshman Silam who came to Tiruvannamalai specially to attend the function. Good wishes for the occasion were received from many high officials and from hundreds of devotees who were unable to attend personally.

A large number of old devotees came for the occasion, outstanding among them being: Sri Satyanarayan Tandon of Kanpur with his

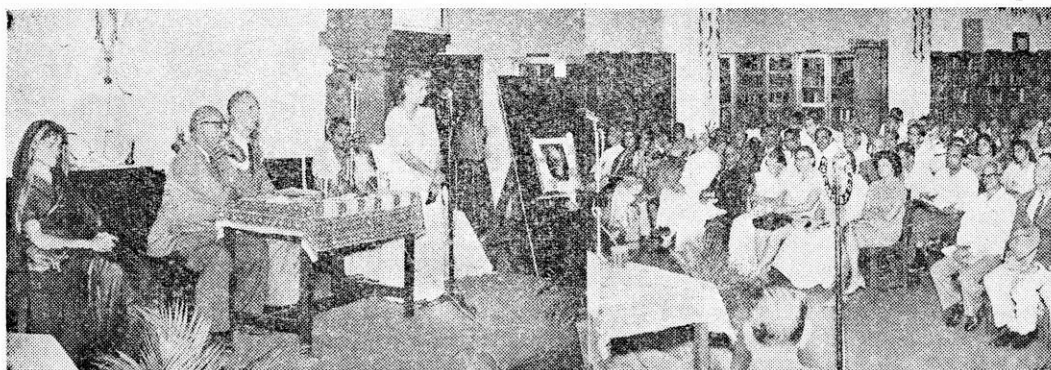


AARTHI, waving of lights at the shrine of Sri Bhagavan, on the 37th Jayanthi day, when devotees had an ecstatic feeling of the Presence of the Maharshi.

family, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Professor of Philosophy, University of Madras, Sri H. R. Chadha of Calcutta, Sri K. Padmanabhan and Sri Ramaswami, both engineers from Bangalore, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, Sri Framji Dorabji and Sri A. R. Narayana Rao and family of Madras, Sri B. S. Ranganadham of Nellore, Sri K. Papa Rao of Vizianagaram, Sri N. Balarama Reddiar of Utukuru, Sri D. H. Chandrasekhariah, ex-Minister, Mysore, Sri I. S. Puri, Retd. Income Tax Commissioner, Simla, with his wife and Sri T. R. G. Krishnan of Bangalore, Mrs. Brigitte Sundin of France, Sri Hugo Maier of Germany, Sri Jean Christian Letschert of Belgium, Sri Terry Nicoll of England.

SPOTLIGHT ON BOMBAY

Our Editor had not intended to go to Bombay again this year for the Jayanthi celebrations, but it is Bhagavan who decides. An All-India Colloquium was held there from Dec. 30 to Jan 2nd at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on 'Ethical and Spiritual Values as the Basis of National Integration' and he was one of those invited to participate. It was an impressive affair. It was to have been inaugurated by Dr. Radhakrishnan, President of India, but ill health prevented him attending and Dr. Cherian, Governor of Maharashtra State, kindly and ably stepped in to fill the breach. The closing session was presided over by Dr. Zakir Husein, Vice-President of India. 'The Mountain Path' was brought to the notice of a number of the distinguished participants, including Dr. and Mrs. Cherian, the Rt. Rev. C. J. G. Robinson, Bishop of Bombay, and Dr. Karan Singh, now Minister of the Central Government, who was at the time Governor of Kashmir.



Mrs. Sahukar addressing the gathering at a Jayanthi Meeting in Bombay. Mrs. Osborne, Mr. Sahukar and Mr. Osborne are also seen on the dias.

Having to go to Bombay in any case, Mr. Osborne naturally informed our indefatigable representative there, Sri P. V. Somasundaram, who organized a meeting at short notice on the actual day of Jayanthi in the Gnaneshwari Hall, kindly lent to us for the occasion, and a larger meeting at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, where the Colloquium had been held, on Jan. 6th.

Arthur Osborne himself presided at this meeting and gave an address, Mrs. Mani Sahukar and Mrs. Osborne spoke in English and Mrs. Valam in Hindi. Miss Homai Vakil sang Hindi devotional songs. Mr. Sahukar, Chairman of the Ramana Jayanthi Celebration Committee gave a welcoming speech and a speech of thanks. There was a pleasant and friendly atmosphere at the meeting. The hall was so full that extra chairs had to be brought in.

Again this year Sri Sunil Damania was extremely helpful with all arrangements and put his car at the disposal of Mr. and Mrs. Osborne.

Sri K. Subramaniam and Smt. Subramaniam, with whom the Osbornes stayed last year, invited them again this year. In appreciation of their great kindness and hospitality, *'The Mountain Path'* presented them with a life-size, hand-coloured copy of the very beautiful photograph of Bhagavan which was used as frontispiece of our January issue.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

On Christmas day, 1966, Sri Ramana Jayanthi was celebrated in the Vinayaka Mandir Hall, Sarojini Nagar, New Delhi. After Pooja, Veda Parayana and recitation of *Upadesa Sara* in Tamil, five minutes' silent meditation was observed.

Sri A. K. Iyer, of the Meteorological Department, gave a short life-sketch of Bhagavan and dwelt on the efficacy of the quest: 'Who am I?', as the direct path to Self-Realization.

Professor S. Srinivasa Iyer of Bombay, one of the oldest devotees, recounted how Bhagavan sat for months in the *Patala Linga* Cave at Arunachala Temple, in a state of samadhi comparable to Valmiki's when the latter was covered by ant-hills. Throughout the years of His bodily existence on or near the Sacred Hill of Arunachala, Bhagavan was always in a state of Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi, living and not living, caring and not caring. Thus Bhagavan was God in flesh and blood. Although he had attained One-ness with the Self, he behaved as a human being would. He never differentiated Himself from other men or from animals and birds.

Prof. Srinivasa Iyer continued: "Bhagavan very rarely allowed Himself to be photographed with others. Once I took to the Ashram a batch of about 100 students, who wanted to be photographed with him. I placed their request before Bhagavan. His reply was: 'Get everything ready'. Within a few minutes all arrangements were made and he was photographed along with the students and myself. Another incident he related referred to the transfer of a colleague, Sri Satyanarayana Rao,* teacher at Vellore. Sri Satyanarayana Rao was a staunch devotee of Bhagavan. 'One Friday', he said 'we received an order that Sri Satyanarayana Rao was transferred to Tirupati and I was asked to relieve him

* He is the elder brother of Sri Sambasiva Rao, for a note on whom see our issue of Jan. '64, p. 56.



Sri Srinivasa Iyer, Sri A. K. Iyer and Sri V. G. Ramachandran all addressed the Jayanthi function audience of Ramana Kendra, Delhi.

forthwith. This was a shock to him, as he would not be able to make his usual trips to Tiruvannamalai. Next day, on Saturday, I visited Ramanasramam and, while taking leave of Bhagavan, told him that I had to relieve my friend, Satyanarayana Rao, who was under orders of transfer to Tirupati. Bhagavan, without looking at me, remarked: "It will not take place (Nadakadu)". I was astounded. I said nothing. After reaching Vellore station, I did not go to my house but straightaway to the school. Going through the pile of letters that had arrived during the weekend, I saw one from the Devasthanam. I opened it with trembling fingers. There was the order cancelling the transfer of Sri Satyanarayana Rao. This showed how Bhagavan took interest in the welfare of His devotees."

Sri V. G. Ramachandran, Member of the Language Commission and Trustee of the Vinayak Mandir, recalled his many visits to Ramanasramam alone and with his mother, who used to sit in the Hall for hours together without either Bhagavan or anyone else present there speaking a single word. He once heard Bhagavan say "Summa Iru" (meaning "Be still!"), the deep meaning of which was then beyond him, but which he came to understand as he grew in years and experience. Sri Ramachandran complimented Ramana Kendra on their well-organized weekly meetings and their putting up a portrait of Bhagavan in the Sat Sangh Hall of the Mandir.

The singing of devotional songs on and by Bhagavan was followed by distribution of prasadam.

Having been allotted a building site (no easy matter in Delhi!) our Delhi Kendra is now faced with a problem of raising funds to pay for it and then to build on it.

We wish them all success.

MADURAI—WHERE IT ALL STARTED

The 87th Sri Ramana Maharshi Jayanthi Celebrations were conducted on 29th December at 'Sri Ramana Mandiram', Madurai, where Sri Bhagavan first attained Self-Realization.

The Celebrations commenced at 5-30 a.m. with Vedaparayanam and recitation of Upanishads and Rudram by Sri Padmanabha Ghanapadigal and Sri Kaleeswara Vadhyar. The Abhishekam of the Holy 'Padukai' of Sri Bhagavan was performed by Archaka Sri R. Venkatasubramanian whereafter the Sri Sahasranama Archana of Sri Ramana was chanted.

The function was attended by Sri N. R. Krishnamurti Iyer, Sri A. R. Raghavan, Sri C. M. V. Krishnamachari and Hon. Sri Tilak Maharaj among numerous others.

Poor feeding which was very dear to the heart of Sri Bhagavan was thereafter conducted by Sri N. Venkataraman and Sri M. A. Seshagiri Iyer. In the evening the portrait of Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was mounted on a well-decorated palanquin and taken in procession round the four Chitrai Streets, accompanied by Nadaswaram music and followed by chanting of Vedas. At 6-30 p.m., a Katha Kalakshepam discourse on Sri Ramana was arranged at 'Koottu Vazhipattu Mandapam'. There Sri Pandit Gouri Meenakshisundaram Iyer gave a fine performance accompanied by musical instruments. The function ended at 10 p.m. after 'Ponnadai' (Silk cloth) was presented to Gowri Meenakshisundaram Iyer by Sri N. R. Krishnamurti Iyer.

Sri N. R. Krishnamurti Iyer and P. Ramakrishnan took keen and active interest in making the celebrations a success.

NELLORE

The celebration of Sri Ramana Jayanthi in Nellore goes right back to 1930, when it was started by Gridalur Sambasiva Rao (for whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of January 1964). Since he passed away it has been continued with the help of Sri P. Pulliah and Sri C. Padmanabharao of the Ramana-Ramayogi Society.

On 27th December competitions were held for boys of over 7 in reciting portions from Sri Bhagavan's works and making speeches on his life and teachings. There was great enthusiasm among the competitors. The next day Krishna Bhikshu (introduced in our issue of January 1966) spoke on sadhana as taught by Sri Bhagavan. On the 29th, the final day, prizes were distributed by Sri Swami Amarananda, while Sri Gurram Subbaramayya told us some reminiscences of Bhagavan. All three days there was meditation in Krishna Bhikshu's Kutir in the morning. Rudrabhishekam and puja were performed in the Sankara Mutt.

A procession carrying a portrait of Bhagavan went through the streets of the town from Sankara Mutt to the house of Sri Sambasivaraao.

On the 31st. there was feeding of the poor.

An interesting feature of this celebration was that no appeal was made for funds.

CALCUTTA

We have a number of very sincere devotees in Calcutta, and when our Managing Editor was there in October '66 he found real enthusiasm. However, in numbers and organization Calcutta lags behind other towns. Jayanthi was celebrated, reports our devotee, Sri V. Seshadri, in the private house of one of the devotees, Sri D. Viswanathan. Puja was conducted there and poor feeding was done for us through the Calcutta Sai Samaj at its own premises. In the evening there was bhajan and meditation at the house of Sri Viswanathan. There was an atmosphere of devotion and the Grace of Bhagavan was felt, although those present were few.

KOLHAPUR

The Dharma Tattvajnana Mandal of Kolhapur celebrated Bhagavan Raman Maharshi's Jayanthi on 29th December. The function started with meditation and ended with prayer. The Marathi translation of the latest edition of Bhagavan's 'Who am I?' was read out by Dr. Gogate. Pandit Khuperkar Shastri made a speech suited to the occasion.

PALAKOL

The 87th Jayanthi of Sri Ramana was celebrated at Sri Murali Krishna Ashram on 29th December. At 3 p.m. Sahasranama puja to Sri Bhagavan was performed by Sri Iyyapu Narasimhulu and at 4 p.m. a talk on Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings was given by Sri B. V. L. Narasimharaja, with Sri Narasimha Rao presiding. At the end prasadam was distributed to all.

NEW YORK

We referred in our last issue to the 'Arunachala Ashrama, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Centre' in New York. We are glad to be able to announce that this has now been incorporated as a non-profit religious organization under the laws of the State of New York. Its Board of Trustees consists of:

Bhagawat Prasad Singh
Maurice Adoto
Isaac Sutel

The following have been elected members of its executive committee:

Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawat—*President*
Dr. Marvin Dworkin—*Vice-President*
Mrs. Jeanne Marie Marly—*Director*
Mr. Bernard Tobacman—*Treasurer*
Mr. Isaac Sutel—*Secretary*.

May Bhagavan's blessings be upon it and guide it. May it grow from strength to strength.

The address, for any who may wish to contact it, is: 78, St. Marks Place, New York, N.Y. 10003, U.S.A.

GERMANY

Die Saher Gesellschaft für YOGA und Integrale Religionsphilosophie (The Saher Institute for Yoga and integral religious philosophy) says:

This Institute is devoted to study and practice in the field of Yoga, Vedanta, Mysticism and Comparative Religion.

It wishes to serve as a kind of 'clearing house' for important teachings and spiritual wisdom.

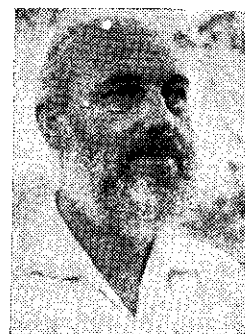
May Bhagavan's Blessings help us to spread the Light.

We wish to maintain friendly relations with His Ashram.

(Sd.) P. J. SAHER (*President*).

VISITORS

Ronald Hodges from Nairobi, Kenya, is a long standing supporter and has brought 'The Mountain Path' to the notice of many people. Readers may remember that it was in response to a letter of his (in January, 1965) that we started our 'Correspondence Network' of people who want their addresses published. He writes: "About seven years ago, a devotee who had had darshan of Sri Bhagavan, told me of His life and teachings. From that time onwards my friend has been most kind and patient in helping me to understand those teachings, and it was only a natural outcome that at the first opportunity I came to His Ashram. My expectations have been more than fulfilled in the spiritual peace of this haven at the foot of Arunachala. To a seeker after Truth, the question is 'Where can I go?'—Not from but to Arunachala. To tread in the Maharshi's footsteps and later—who knows?—discover that 'He' and 'I' and all Be-ing are One. The spiritual 'pole' and the 'path' he shows reflected in his living Ashram of Truth and Peace. What a blessing to all who come to him in humility to see and to find."



Mr. Hodges

Prof. Alexander Eru from the Argentine is professor of philosophy at the Institute of High Culture of Buenos Aires and also President of a Meditation Group. He has long been familiar with the teachings of Sri Bhagavan and the meditation group is mainly devoted to studying and following them. On arrival here professor Eru made a tape-recording of the Vedic chants for use by his meditation group and also tape-recorded an exposition by Arthur Osborne of the theory and practice of Sri Maharshi's teachings.

Terry Nicoll, a note on whom appeared in our issue for January, '67, writes as follows: "I first



heard of Bhagavan and His Ashram in 1962 and within a reasonably short space of time, I was able to come here. The first thing that impressed me was the 'atmosphere' here and especially at Skandashram. Then there was the manifest power of Arunachala Hill. As my time here approaches its end, I feel that all my spiritual problems will be solved. The Ashram staff are exceptionally understanding and diplomatic and they are only too willing to be of service. The food here is tasty, clean and in plentiful supply."

Dr. Pierre Fredou of Paris has been studying Bhagavan's teaching for many years. Quite recently he met Arnaud Desjardins, author of



Dr. & Mrs. Pierre Fredou

Ashrams, les Yogis et les Sages, who has been here several times, and as a result of talking with him decided to pay a visit here. He and his wife

flew here from Paris for their leave. She had read less and followed mainly because of her husband, but on arrival here it was she who felt the living Presence of Bhagavan the more powerfully. So overwhelming did she find it that for some days she shut herself away from people and observed silence. Both have left here convinced devotees.

Mrs. Peggy Hawkins, the secretary of the well-known Homocopath, Dr. Chandra Sharma, paid us a short but very welcome visit. Dr. Sharma himself came here with his family in 1965. A group of followers of the Maharshi of whom Mrs. Hawkins is one meet at his flat at 101, Seymore Place, London-W-1, on the first Tuesday of every month.

RETURN

Abdul Ghaffar, a major in the Indian army and a Kanarese writer of some distinction came to spend his annual leave here for the third year running. Quiet and unobtrusive, he responds vividly to the Presence here. On his return to Bangalore, he celebrated Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi on December 29th, as he usually does, at his residence, in which all the members of his family, neighbours and a large number of friends enthusiastically participated.

Mrs. Trudel Elsaesser of West Germany writes: "It was in an Ashram in Switzerland that I first heard about Bhagavan. It had an immediate impact on me and convinced me that my way led to Arunachala.



Mrs. Elsaesser

I was able to pay a very short visit there four years ago and constantly looked forward to a longer stay. This has now become possible. I find that here one gets a deeper insight into Bhagavan's teaching and feels his Presence the most intensely. The atmosphere here is invigorating and a great help in overcoming one's difficulties.

Also the beauty of the surrounding country and the friendly but unobtrusive ways of the Ashram staff help in establishing inner harmony.

A few days ago a party of us climbed to the summit of the mountain. After a while we stopped for a rest, thinking that we had still more

than an hour to go to reach the top. When we started up again we found to our surprise and joy that we were at the top in a very short time. Similarly we don't know how far we have progressed on the spiritual path and how far the goal still is."

Major I. J. Taneja also spent his annual leave here as usual, though this year without his family. However, he has assured us he will bring his family very soon for a long stay; we welcome him and them!

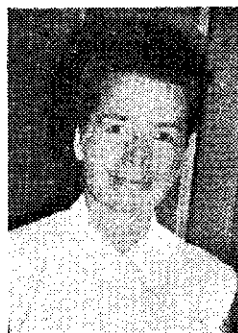
With occasional intervals, *Hugo Maier* has been a permanent resident here since 1958. In our January 1966 issue we wished him well on his visit to his people in Germany. We are now glad to welcome him back again. We are very happy to hear from him that wherever he went, when he met yearning souls he showed slides of Arunachala and the Ashram, and gave them adequate information about them and enlightened them on the path of Sri Maharshi. He has, on our behalf, invited several of his friends to visit Ashram, which invitation we reiterate.



Hugo Maier

Mrs. Brigitte Sundin from France spent some months here in 1964 and on leaving became a life subscriber to 'The Mountain Path'. She has now returned and hopes again to stay for some months. Brigitte writes: "It was far from here that a devotee first spoke to me about Sri Ramanasramam. The melodious name 'Arunachala' fascinated me and I asked him to write it down for me.

"One day the same friend brought me a small stone from Arunachala. When it was placed in my hand I felt an immediate direct contact like the leaping of a



Mrs. Sundin

divine spark. Ever since it has been a living stone for me, helping me through many difficulties.

"Now, sitting in front of Arunachala, seeing it rise up majestic and beautiful before me, I feel that I did not come here but was brought here, the first time, now a second time..... and for all time.

"His Ashram here looks after the physical needs of devotees also with its kindness, its friendly ways and its individual consideration. It takes pains to make our stay here agreeable with regard to accommodation, food and service.

"The most remarkable thing is the atmosphere of full freedom, allowing each devotee to develop in his or her own way, according to his or her own needs."

Johannus J. de Reede from Italy was here on Jayanthi in January, 1964 when the copies of the inaugural issue of 'The Mountain Path' were being distributed. He also wrote an article on 'Universal Symbolism' for our issue of October, 1966. However, his association with the Ashram goes much farther back than that. His first visit was as far back as 1951, when he was impelled here by the work and personal influence of the Swiz



*Johannus
J. de Reede*

Nobel Prize winner, Hermann Hesse, and at the same time drawn here by Dr. G. H. Mees, an early devotee of Bhagavan and a great scholar and authority on symbolism, who was to become his teacher and friend.

Arriving here, still quite a young man, he was hurt, he tells us, to find that Bhagavan had left the body a year previously. However, it was not long before he felt as a personal revelation the identity of Ramana Maharshi and Arunachala and experienced the ability of the Sacred Hill to remove doubts and give initiation.

At present he still earns his living partly at Ascona in Switzerland and partly on the Island of Elba, Italy. In winter he exchanges his European fare for rice and sambar, dividing his time between Sri Ramanasramam and the Kanvashram on his estate at Varkala in Kerala State.

Dr. W. J. Henn Collins spent some time here two years ago. He wrote the article 'Causality

and Rebirth' which we published in our issue of July last year. After leaving here he went on to Japan and has been staying at a Zen monastery there. We are glad to welcome him back on another visit here. He writes:

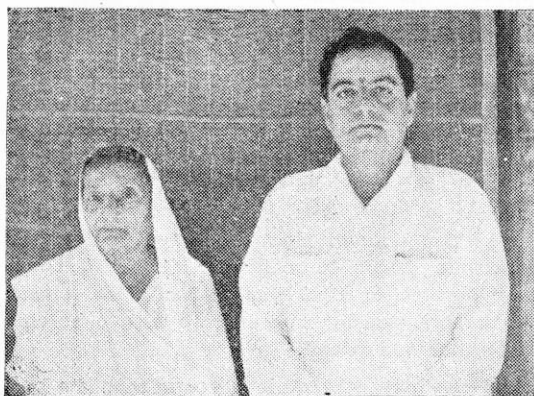


Dr. Collins

"I first heard of Ramana Maharshi through reading 'Self Realisation' some fif-

teen years ago. As the teaching contained in it appealed to me, I read more books about Bhagavan and then visited the Ashram for the first time two years ago. Now I am on my second visit. The peaceful atmosphere makes a strong impression which I am sure has a beneficial effect on my sadhana."

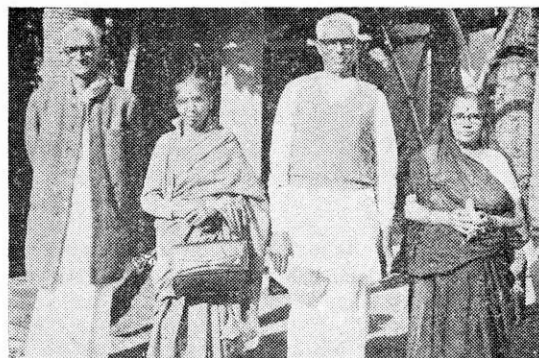
There has been a happy sequel to the note in our October Ashram Bulletin about Sunil Damania



Sunil with his mother.

and his mother. In February they were able to come here, with Sunil's sister, Mrs. Mrudula G. Parekh also and Mrs. Kulina Mehta, wife of Dr. Subodh M. Mehta, the well-known Homoeopath of Bombay. They came by car from Bombay and spent a happy two weeks with us.

Sri Satyanarayana Tandon of Kanpur, a regular yearly visitor, as usual came with his wife and spent a happy two-months here. This year,



Mr. Satyanarayan Tandon (third from left) and his wife; his brother and daughter are to his right.

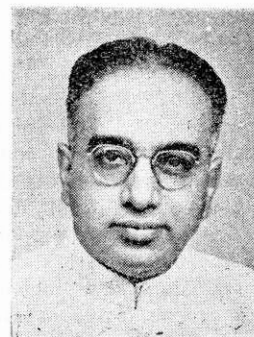
he brought his daughter and brother too. He is a popular visitor, in the sense that he visits everyone who resides in and around the Ashram. He has a strong desire to settle down here very soon. May Sri Bhagavan fulfil his cherished desire!

INTERNATIONAL TOURIST YEAR

This being 'International Tourist Year', our Bombay Committee invites foreign visitors who may arrive to contact their Chairman, Mr. N. D. Sahukar, Godrej and Boyce Mfg., Co. Pvt. Ltd., Lalbaug, Parel, Bombay-12. Tel.: 70163.

CONGRATULATIONS

Among the small number of persons honoured with the decoration of "Padma Bhushan" by the President of India for their eminence in some field of culture was included this year the name of Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan, head of the department of philosophy at Madras University. Readers of *The Mountain Path* will be familiar with Dr. Mahadevan's learned articles. Apart from being a long-standing devotee of Bhagavan, he is the leading exponent of advaitic philosophy to the academic world. We congratulate him warmly on the honour and are pleased to note this act of recognition from one advaitic philosopher to another.



Prof. Mahadevan

In our issue of last October we mentioned the visit of Prof. M. L. Sondhi from New Delhi. Now, having been elected to Parliament, he has just paid a flying visit to do homage to Bhagavan before taking up his new duties. We wish him well.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

Circulation:

We began by printing something over a thousand copies; in our second year this was pushed up to two thousand; in our third year to three thousand; and now we are finding three thousand and five hundred far from enough. Perhaps we have been unduly cautious because the early issues are going out of print—some are already.

Frontiers:

With an order from 'The Academic Bookstore', Helsinki, Finland, we have now Europe's farthest extremity.

Planned Issues:

We have been asked about our system of planned issues. When we started publication in January 1964 a sequence of editorials were written dealing with the quest. By the third issue it had become possible to arrange that most of the articles were also turned to the same theme as the editorial. That was July 1964 and the theme was the need for a path and a guide. This was naturally followed by issues describing different kinds of path—in the 4th Jnana and Bhakti, in the 5th Karma Marga and in the 6th Tantra. Then we had an issue in July 1965 on 'Guidance and Realization', the question whether and why and how far the guide need be a realized man, followed by one in October on 'Guidance and Orthodoxy'—whether and why and how far the path need be orthodox. This series naturally culminated in January 1966 in an issue devoted to the Supreme Guide, Ramana Sat-Guru.

Since then the issues have not fallen in any necessary sequence. Readers will remember the remaining three issues of 1966 on 'Prayers and Powers', 'Reincarnation' and 'Symbolism'. We started the present year with one on 'Suffering'.

July will be on 'Yoga' and October on 'The Ethical Basis of the Spiritual Quest'.

We plan to continue the system of a central theme for each issue in 1968 also. January and April are to be devoted to sacred poetry—Hindu poetry in January and that of other religions in April, July will be on the history and present

state of religion and religions. October, the last of the planned issues, will be on the unanimity of the religions. After that we shall probably revert to the system of general issues, because to continue any longer with central themes might drive us into recondite or unimportant themes and make the journal less central. The issue of October this year is already full up; for the others contributions are invited.

POSTAL DELAY

For reasons outside our control, the foreign, west-bound surface mail copies of our January issue did not leave India until the middle of February, so they will have reached our readers about six weeks late. We are sorry for this and hope it will not happen again.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

NEW ADDITIONS

- The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*
- The True Christian Religion* by Swedenborg
- Heaven and Hell* by Swedenborg
- The Greatest Thing in the World* by Henry Drummond
- The Mind-World* by Hazrat Inayat Khan
- Memories of Hazrat Inayat Khan* by a Disciple
- The Way of the Guru* by P. Natarajan
- A Prophet of Peace or Sree Narayana Gurudev of Malabar* by Swami Dharma Theerthan
- The Light of the Soul, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, by Alice A. Bailey
- Lectures on the Bhagavad Gita* by D. S. Sharma
- Sri Lalitha Sahasranamam, Yoga Annotation*, by T. V. Ramanaiah
- The Mysterious Kundalini* by Vasant G. Rele
- Introduction to the Sambandha-Vartika of Sureswaracarya* by T. M. P. Mahadevan
- Gita Sandesh (Message of the Gita)* by Swami Ramdas
- Introduction to Sai Baba of Shirdi, Part 1*, by B. V. Narasimhaswami
- Vedantasara of Sadananda* by Swami Nikhilananda
- Avvayar's Yoga Aphorisms* by P. Narayana Iyer
- Bhakti Yoga* by Swami S. D. Ramayandas
- The Secret of Recognition (Pratyabhijnahridayam)* by Kurt F. Leidecker
- The Word of the Buddha* by Nyanatiloka
- The Bodhisatta Ideal* by Bhikkhu Narada
- The Life and Teachings of Buddha* by Anagarika Dharmapala
- Mystery of Dreams, Parts I and II*, by M. N. Ganesa Aiyar
- Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, 1965 edition

The Lost Pharaohs by Leonard Cottrell
*Sweetness and Light, Life and Teachings of Goda-
 vari Mataji*, by Mani Sahukar
Shining Harvest by M. P. Pandit
The Tenth Man by Wei Wu Wei
Of Human Freedom by Jean-Paul Sartre
Treasury of Thought by D. D. Runes
The Great Integrators, the Saint-Singers of India,
 by V. Raghavan
The New Theologian by Ved Mehta

OBITUARY

MISS ETHEL MERSTON. O.B.E.

With Ethel Merston another of the senior devotees who were here in Bhagavan's lifetime has left us. Beginning in the late 1930s, she used to spend the cool months of every year here, travelling for the rest of the year. She was always a great traveller. It was only in 1959 that she built herself a house and settled down here permanently. Even that was a remarkable feat, characteristic of her terrific drive and energy—to build a house, supervising every detail, at the age of 77 and without speaking the language.



Miss Merston

She had a long and active life. It was for her services in relief work in Belgium after the first world war that she was awarded the O.B.E. Before coming here she was with Gurdjieff at Fontainebleu for some years. She was a follower of Gandhi and, under his influence, adopted a village in North India, where she ran a free dispensary and unofficially settled disputes and did all she could for the villagers. She spoke Hindi but not Tamil; nevertheless, out of devotion to

Bhagavan, it was here that she finally chose to settle.

Shortly after building her house Ethel Merston fell ill. She was mentally as alert and active as ever, but was unable to go out, even to walk the few hundred yards to the Ashram — and she was too independent in spirit to consent to a wheel chair. She still carried on a wide correspondence and many people came to see her. Three years ago she was taken to Madras for a medical check-up and the doctors told her that she had only six months more to live. Perhaps few people would have gone on longer in her state but her tremendous vitality carried her on.

She recognized and freely admitted that her long illness was a sign of Grace, forcing her to a more indrawn life when she had always been too extrovert. When the end came it was one more relapse, of which there had been several. Her strength failed her and she died peacefully, with no struggle, on the afternoon of March 19 at the age of 85.

Hugo Maier, Ganesh and Narthagi were by her bed when she breathed her last.

MRS. MODI

We introduced Mrs. Taleyarkhan to our readers in the *Ashram Bulletin* of January 1965. As far back as 1956 her old mother, Mrs. Modi, came to live with her here. She could not go to the Ashram, being bedridden; nevertheless the spirit of Arunachala stole over her and captivated her. Towards the end of her life she used to beg people to sing to her the haunting refrain 'Arunachala-Siva!' from the "*Marital Garland of Letters to Arunachala*", and she herself hummed it. Quite recently relatives came from Bombay and suggested taking her back there, but she announced her firm determination to die at Arunachala. She had her wish and died here in the early morning of Thursday, February 16th., at the great age of 98.

The President of the Ashram, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, cordially invites the readers of 'THE MOUNTAIN PATH,' and others too, to participate in the KUMBHABHISHEKAM of Sri Bhagavan's shrine on the 18th June, 1967 and partake of the munificent Grace of Sri Bhagavan.

INTRODUCING.....

S. S. COHEN

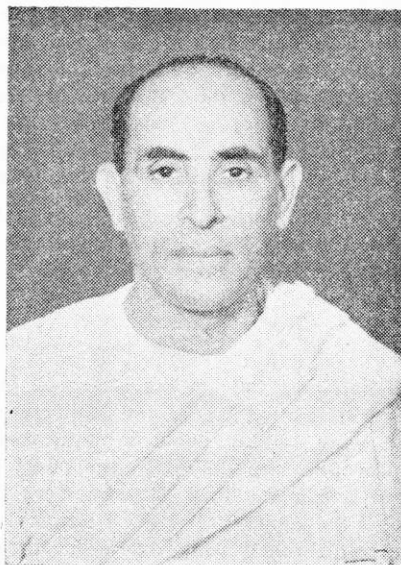
S. S. COHEN, Jewish by race, Iraqi by origin, accountant by profession, came to India in his early youth, about forty-five years ago, took Indian citizenship and settled down here for life. Even at that young age he felt that it was in India that he would find the key to life's mystery. He worked professionally in Bombay for a few years, then joined the Theosophical Society and went to live at its headquarters in Adyar, Madras, to study, meditate and serve.

He stayed here for five years, delving into Buddhist, Vedantic and Theosophical literature. However, Mr. Cohen is a man of exceptionally shrewd mind and keen wit and not a person to take anything on trust. Gradually he came to the conclusion that, although he had learned much philosophy, he had not set foot on a path leading either to higher powers (which he still valued at that time) or to a higher state of being. Back again he went to Bombay for professional work.

His next attempt was on hearing of the Maharshi. Again he threw up his work and set forth on the quest, and this time he found the guidance he sought. He went to Sri Ramanashram with the intention of staying fourteen days and stayed fourteen years, from 1936 until the Maharshi shed the body in 1950. Thus, with Major Chadwick, Paul Brunton, Dr. Sujata Sen, and David McIver, he was a member of the original European colony here.

Like a number of others, he did not think of writing about the Maharshi during his lifetime. It was only some years after 1950 that he wrote 'Guru Ramana', a book showing keen observation and great devotion, of which the third edition is now being printed.

Another book of his published by the Ashram is 'Reflections on Talks with Sri Maharshi'. This is a commentary giving his views on several important points from the large volume of 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi' compiled by Swami Ramananda Saraswati, for whom see our issue



S. S. Cohen

of January 1964. He has also published a condensed translation of *Srimad Bhagavata*, reviewed in our issue of April 1966.

Mr. Cohen still remained at Tiruvannamalai for some years after the Mahanirvana of the Maharshi, and he remained a firm supporter of the Ashram authorities at a time when many wavered. After a few years, however, he retired to a quiet life in Vellore, a town situated three hours bus or train journey to the north. He has remained there ever since, keeping in touch with the Ashram by correspondence and occasional visits. For our *Ramana Jayanthi* issue in January 1966 he contributed an article entitled 'Ramana Sat-Guru'.

Mr. Cohen is a lively and very witty conversationalist. He is very simple in his way of living. He has wide knowledge of Bhagavan's teaching and enormous devotion to him. Not a few devotees have benefited from talks with him.

FROM THE EARLY DAYS

In our book review section of October 1965 we published an appreciative account of the scattered writings of Swami Omkar. His Ashram (Santi Ashram, Totapauli Hills, A.P.) has now sent us a cutting from his monthly magazine PEACE dated September 1931 describing the first visit here of Paul Brunton, whose book ('Search in Secret India') did more than anything else in the early days to make Sri Bhagavan widely known. When Paul Brunton first came here he was using the name of Hurst. 'Paul-Brunton' was a pen-name. He later adopted it as his permanent name because the book he wrote under it brought him fame and made him widely known, owing to its account of Sri Bhagavan.

It is interesting to note what an event a visit from a foreign journalist to the Ashram was in those far off days — something to be written about in the newspapers!

* * * * *

It was half past four in the afternoon and the disciples were sitting before the Maharshi in the hall and were talking about a notification that had appeared in the dailies to the effect that a Mr. Hurst and a Buddhist Bhikshu were intending to visit the Ashram. The clock struck five and there entered the hall a man in European costume bearing a plate of sweets and followed by a Buddhist monk. The visitors offered the sweets to the Maharshi and then, after making obeisance in the Eastern way, they both squatted on the floor before him. These were the visitors of whom the disciples had been talking. The man in English clothes was R. Raphael Hurst, a London journalist who was then on a visit to India. He was keenly interested in the spiritual teaching of the East and thought that by an intelligent study and appreciation of it the cause of co-operation between East and West might be greatly promoted. He came to Sri Ramanashram after visiting many other ashrams. The bhikshu who came with him is also an Englishman by birth. He was formerly a military officer but is now known as Swami Prajnananda. He is the founder of the English Ashram, Rangoon. Both visitors sat spell-bound before Maharshi and there was pin-drop silence.

The silence was broken by the person who had brought the visitors asking them if they would like to ask any questions. They were, however, not in a mood to do so, and thus an hour and a half passed. Mr. Hurst then stated the purpose of his visit. In a voice of intense earnestness he said that he had come to India for spiritual enlightenment. "Not only myself," he added, "but many others also in the West are longing

for the Light from the East." The Maharshi sat completely indrawn and paid no attention. One of those who were sitting there asked them if they had come to the East for a study of comparative religions. "No," the Bhikshu replied; "we could get that better in Europe. We want to find Truth; we want the Light. Can we know Truth? Is it possible to get Enlightenment?" The Maharshi still remained silent and indrawn, and as the visitors wanted to take a walk the conversation ended and all dispersed.

Early next morning the visitors entered the hall and put some questions to the Maharshi with great earnestness. The conversation reproduced below is from rough notes taken while it was going on.

* * *

Bhikshu: We have travelled far and wide in search of Enlightenment. How can we get it?

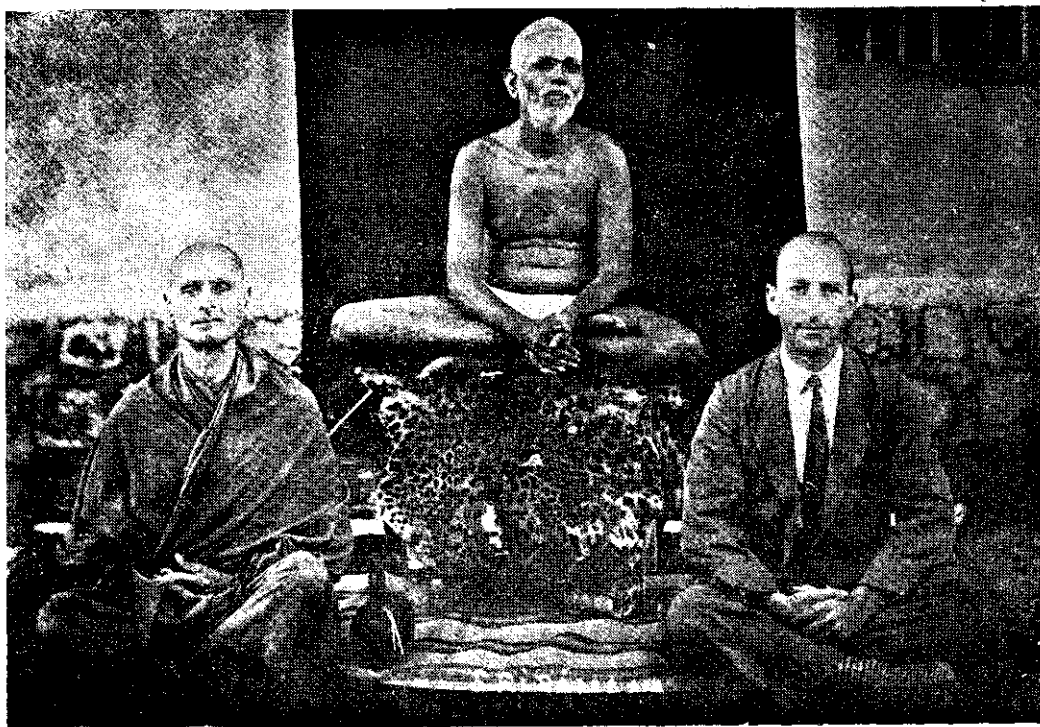
Maharshi: Through deep enquiry and constant meditation.

Hurst: Many people do meditate in the West but show no signs of progress.

Maharshi: How do you know that they don't make progress? Spiritual progress is not easily discernible.

Hurst: A few years ago I got some glimpses of the Bliss but in the years that followed I lost it again. Then last year I again got it. Why is that?

Maharshi: You lost it because your meditation had not become natural (sahaja). When you become habitually intuned the enjoyment of spiritual beatitude becomes a normal experience.



Swami Prajnananda, Bhagavan and Paul Brunton (then known as Raphael Hurst), about the year 1931.

Hurst: Might it be due to the lack of a Guru?

Maharshi: Yes, but the Guru is within. That Guru who is within is identical with your Self.

Hurst: What is the way to God-realization?

Maharshi: Vichara, asking yourself 'Who am I?' enquiry into the nature of your Self.

Bhikshu: The world is in a state of degeneration. It is getting constantly worse, spiritually, morally, intellectually and in every way. Will a spiritual teacher come to save it from chaos?

Maharshi: Inevitably. When goodness declines and wrong prevails He comes to re-instate goodness. The world is neither too good nor too bad; it is a mixture of the two. Unmixed happiness and unmixed sorrow are not found in the world. The world always needs God and God always comes.

Bhikshu: Will He be born in the East or the West?

The Maharshi laughed at the question but did not answer it.

Hurst: Does the Maharshi know whether an Avatar already exists in the physical body?

Maharshi: He might.

Hurst: What is the best way to attain Godhood?

Maharshi: Self-enquiry leads to Self-Realization.

Hurst: Is a Guru necessary for spiritual progress?

Maharshi: Yes.

Hurst: Is it possible for the Guru to help the disciple forward on the path?

Maharshi: Yes.

Hurst: What are the conditions for discipleship?

Maharshi: Intense desire for Self-realization, earnestness and purity of mind.

Hurst: Is it necessary to surrender one's life to the Guru?

Maharshi: Yes. One should surrender everything to the Dispeller of Darkness. One should surrender the ego that binds one to this world. Giving up body-consciousness is the true surrender.

Hurst: Does a guru want to take control of the disciple's worldly affairs also?

Maharshi: Yes, everything.

Hurst: Can he give the disciple the spiritual spark that he needs?

Maharshi: He can give him all that he needs. This can be seen from experience.

Hurst: Is it necessary to be in physical contact with the guru, and if so for how long?

Maharshi: It depends on the maturity of the disciple. Gunpowder catches fire in an instant, while it takes time to ignite coal.

Hurst: Is it possible to develop along the path of the Spirit while leading a life of work?

Maharshi: There is no conflict between work and wisdom. On the contrary, selfless work paves the way to Self-knowledge.

Hurst: If a person is engaged in work it will leave him little time for meditation.

Maharshi: It is only spiritual novices who need to set aside a special time for meditation. A more advanced person always enjoys the Beatitude whether he is engaged in work or not. While his hands are in society he can keep his head cool in solitude.

Bhikshu: Have you heard of Meher Baba?

Maharshi: Yes.

Bhikshu: He says that he will become an Avatar in a few years.

Maharshi: Every one is an Avatar of God. "The kingdom of heaven is within you," Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Krishna, all are in you. One who knows the Truth sees every one else as a manifestation of God.

Bhikshu: Will the Maharshi make a statement about Meher Baba?

Maharshi: What statement? That (the existence of an outer Avatara) is a question which seekers of Truth need not consider.

Bhikshu: Will the world be rejuvenated?

Maharshi: There is One who governs the world and it is His business to look after it. He who has created the world knows how to guide it also.

Bhikshu: Does the world progress now?

Maharshi: If we progress the world progresses. As you are so is the world. Without understanding the Self what is the use of understanding the world? Without Self-knowledge, knowledge of the world is of no use. Dive inwards and find the treasure hidden there. Open your heart and see the world through the eyes of the true Self. Tear aside the veils and see the Divine Majesty of your own Self.

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to the EDITOR

DREAMS

(1)

Ever since I came to know of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi I have been one of his numerous disciples. On 27th November, 1966, before going to bed, I prayed to Lord Ramana thus: "Lord, I have been absorbed in what you have told your devotees about Self-enquiry. Tonight is the night of Kartikai Deepam when the summit of Arunachala will be solemnly lit up. Will you not, out of your infinite Grace, appear to me in my dream tonight and initiate me in the mystery of the Self."

With this prayer in my heart I soon fell asleep. Lord Ramana, out of his Grace, appeared to me in my dream during the third quarter of the night. The smile on his lips is still fresh in my memory. The scene of the dream was the Ashram. He was there and I too; I followed him wherever he went. Finally he looked at me graciously for a few seconds and gave me a handful of boiled white rice from some place where it was being distributed. I received it with due reverence but did not start eating this prasadam until I woke. I had a very pleasant feeling from the dream.

Do you consider this dream of mine his initiation or a mere fabrication of my mind?

D. SIVAPRAGASAM, Manipal, Ceylon.

This was certainly initiation. The rice given was a symbol of spiritual nourishment. Only you should have begun eating it.

EDITOR.

(2)

What are dreams and what is their significance? Why do we dream? We experience some incidents in dreams which we could never think of in real life.

SARRAZ NARASIMHARAO,
Palakol.

These are questions rather for an article than a letter. There are different kinds of dreams — the ordinary action of the mind and a significant symbolical dream. Perhaps the first question should be: what is the reality and significance of our supposedly waking experience. ERROR.

AN ASHRAM MAGAZINE?

I find that I am not alone in feeling that *The Mountain Path* does not contain enough about the mountain path taught by Sri Bhagavan. Though articles on different religions are very illuminating, devotees always look forward to more articles and reminiscences about Bhagavan, whether by Western or Indian writers. And is not Hinduism expected to predominate in the journal?

SATYANARAYANA TANDON,

Kanpur.

The teaching of Bhagavan was universal and THE MOUNTAIN PATH follows in his footsteps. It stresses the central and supreme teaching of Advaita through whatever religion this may be approached. Thus it carries the teaching of Bhagavan to all countries and brings people from all countries to his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai. In that sense it is the mouthpiece of Sri Ramanashram, but not in any narrow, parochial sense. Through its 'Ashram Bulletin' it makes Sri Ramanashram known throughout the world.

As for articles and reminiscences about Bhagavan, few are received by the editor in spite of repeated appeals for them. None worth publishing are rejected.

Incidentally, most of the articles about Hinduism are obtained by the editor with a good deal of trouble by means of personal appeals to the authors. A little more co-operation from competent writers would be appreciated.

EDITOR.

REMINISCENCES

I am sorry that I did not know about your *Mountain Path* earlier.

If the devotees of Maharshi Sri Ramana keep alert they will find what a tremendous force of His Grace is guiding and protecting them at every step in their life. Let their experiences adorn the pages of *The Mountain Path*. Please collect from every one of them information as to how they came within the fold of the Maharshi and about their experiences in sadhana and their difficulties and publish these with your advice. This will be most interesting and encouraging to readers.

S. CHAKRAVARTY,

Kanpur.

One article on how a devotee came to the Maharshi is published in each issue of THE MOUNTAIN PATH and other reminiscences as received. I have several times appealed for such, as they should not be allowed to fall into oblivion. Let us hope that Mr. Chakravarty will follow up his appeal by sending us his own reminiscences.

EDITOR.

MEDITATION

I am a novice in the practice of meditation and yoga who wishes to pursue more serious practice and hopes to find instruction and a conducive environment for it. I am addressing this general enquiry to a number of authorities, hoping to get an extensive, varied and deep idea of the possibilities for guidance and direction in these things.

I turned from the study of psychology (at Reed College) to philosophy and religion, and for the last four years, since then, have pursued on my own the study of Eastern and Western religions and the practice of yoga.

I would very much appreciate some information on instruction courses and practices in which you are involved and any other bits of information, ideas or direction you feel appropriate, and am open to every point of view, faith or belief.

ROBERT STEWART, EVANSTON,
Illinois, U.S.A.

It is quite sensible to examine various paths, as you are doing, before deciding on one; but having decided it is best to stick to one (though there is no harm in reading about others). The path instituted by the Maharshi and still followed under his guidance is the simplest and most

direct, with no need for ritual or meetings or outer aids. The Self-enquiry that he taught is not meditation in the usual sense of the word. As he put it: "In meditation you have subject and object, whereas in Self-enquiry there is only the subject." It is not rational or psychological enquiry. Rather it means to concentrate on the pure sense of being or of 'I am' (which is the same as pure undifferentiated consciousness) without thoughts. Whenever thoughts come dismiss them, ask to whom they came, and thus return to the 'I' to whom thoughts come. This should be practised regularly, daily, even if only for a short time, for instance first thing in the morning and last thing at night.

EDITOR.

SELF-ENQUIRY

How am I to meditate? First I pray to Bhagavan and then I ask myself: "Who am I? Who is sitting here?" etc. Should I keep on asking these questions or just once and then after a certain time repeat them? Or should I repeat them a few times and then sit quietly thinking about them? Should I say the prayer and these questions aloud or only silently in my mind? Sometimes when I am meditating, or trying to meditate, I speak to myself and receive advice what to do regarding certain problems; but when I can check it up afterwards I generally find that it was wrong, so I must be deluding myself. How can I differentiate between my personal 'I am' and the Divine 'I AM'? How can I know whether it is God (the Inner Guru) who is talking to me or my own mind? Ought I to hear an answer to 'Who am I?' and such questions? Or to see something? If so, how can I be sure whether it is my Inner Guru or my ego? When I am honest I think that I am bluffing myself. When I close my eyes and try to meditate I cannot hear or see anything which I can be quite certain is my Inner Guru. I cannot see anything at all but from time to time I hear what is probably my ego, although I think at the time that it isn't. I find out afterwards that it must have been because what I heard was not true or not right. Please answer these questions because I am in great difficulty and want to follow this path.

A. PALIWODA,
Zurich, Switzerland.

You are quite wrong in your idea of Self-enquiry. You cannot expect to see anything or hear anything, because there is only one self in

you, not two; so who is to see whom or to hear whom? It is not a mental enquiry but a spiritual exercise, and therefore Bhagavan said that no answer that the mind can give is right. You do not have to frame a question either aloud or silently but simply concentrate on the pure sense of being, of 'I am', in you with a still mind and without thinking. Just focus on that, on being conscious and feeling your I-ness without thinking.

One useful hint which Bhagavan gave is that it is best while doing this to concentrate not on the head but on the spiritual heart, that is to say the heart at the right side. Not to think about the heart but to feel conscious in and with the heart. The answer, when it begins to come, will come not as a form of words or an idea but as a vibration of consciousness which can actually be felt physically, although it is, of course, far more than physical.

EDITOR.

SELF-ENQUIRY AND JAPA

Although agreeing that Self-enquiry as expounded by Bhagavan is the culmination of all paths, I feel drawn to the practice of japa as a preliminary measure and would be very grateful if you would kindly advise me on this. I understand Bhagavan occasionally recommended mental repetition of 'I—I' and I wonder whether the instruction applied to the Tamil form of 'I' or whether the short English form would be equally effective. Are the repetitions to be made slowly, and should they coincide with exhalation and inhalation? Should one doing so-called brain-work attempt to perform japa while at work? I realize that these questions may seem superficial, but they have arisen as a result of efforts, albeit poor ones.

P. T. MURRAY.
Scarborough.

Your questions are not at all superficial. The purpose of spiritual practice is to keep the mind calm and prevent ego-assertion, so whatever helps to do that is good. The English word 'I' can be used for japa. The repetition helps to keep the mind steady, especially if co-ordinated with the breathing, and at the same time the meaning of it helps to focus attention on the true 'I', the Self. It is good to keep it up so far as possible as an undercurrent while doing any kind of work or while walking or riding in a train or bus.

This does not conflict with the practice of Self-enquiry. Both can be used.

EDITOR.

SYMBOLISM

I was most interested in the October 1965 copy of *The Mountain Path*. I was especially interested in your mentioning the myth of Psyche and Cupid in the editorial, because over a period of about two weeks last August I had an experience that was very reminiscent of it. I was awakened regularly, night after night, at about one or half past in the morning. A warm spot would appear in my heart and grow to such incandescence that the very heat would awaken me, or else I would appear to be pulled into waking consciousness by a thread in the top of my head (the sahasrara chakra) being pulled; sometimes it seemed that a tiny fire kindled itself and just went on boring into my skull until I awakened. But I woke in such a state of joy and intense love that I laughed and wondered who could ever want to sleep instead. I saw no figure at any time these nights. It was as though I existed in an ocean of Supreme Love (far beyond what we ordinarily call love), combined with transcendent Wisdom and impregnated with Will. Sometimes I turned on my bedside lamp and just lay smiling into the emptiness. Sometimes I actually spoke to that Emptiness. I realized I had never known love before except in the palest reflection. My mind was as clear as crystal and I understood what had hitherto been vague or fuzzy with exquisite clarity. Sometimes I seemed to burn with that fire which is not fire but ecstasy and bliss. Then, as the first light of dawn came, I would return to my normal state. If I had been an image-creating sort of person I would surely have found it to be Cupid and I his Psyche. Come to think of it, she also never saw him.

When the experience finally came to an end it left me with a sense of loss. But is it not strange that I should have had such an experience while practising Zen meditation and working on koans? No two disciplines could be more unlike.

MRS. C. E. ALDYNE.
Kyoto.

SUFFERING

(1)

I have just been reading your book 'Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism'. It

is excellent and has the direct simplicity which always seems to appear when the writer knows who 'he' is. I realize through reading this and various articles in *The Mountain Path* etc., that I have always been an advaitin at heart and hence faced East, where such a path is not considered heretical.

Once one lets go and ceases to resist, daily gazing inward, peace seems to come like a cool river which quenches all anguish and makes one what I have heard called in Zen 'an unconcerned man'.

I am a male nurse in assistant charge of an acute ward in a West Canadian psychiatric clinic. So much of the suffering one sees in this field (and elsewhere) comes of vain attempts to assert a mythical and pitifully haughty and threadbare separatedness.

With gratitude for your clear expositions in your writings and with every good wish to all at the Ashram.

R. J. HEARN.

New Westminster, B. C., Canada.

(2)

As I understand it, Sri Bhagavan said that suffering was sent into the world so that, as a consequence, man would turn his mind inwards and discover his real Self.

Sri Bhagavan also says: "God is perfection and His work is also perfection."

Now, what I cannot follow is why a God who is perfect created a man who could be guilty of "... wrong identification with the body or the ego." Why did God the All-Perfect not create a perfect and flawless man incapable of getting lost on a morass of confusion?

BHIM KRISHNAMA.

Secunderabad.

Philosophically this is a very complicated question and cannot be answered in a few words. An article called 'Good and Evil' by 'Sagittarius' which indicates the answer is being published in our issue of the coming October. There is one direct road to an answer without philosophy: that is to ask yourself 'Who am I?' and discover who was born, who suffers, who is imperfect, who creates what.

EDITOR.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

I became very ill and one evening was in such pain that I could not find the least respite and could not get to sleep. I dragged myself from

my futon to the phone and telephoned to my doctor, but he had not yet returned to Tokyo from his trip to Europe, and I had none of the necessary medicines. I returned to bed and finally in acute pain burst into tears of exhaustion and despair. Then I recalled your issue of *The Mountain Path* on the power of prayer (April 1966—Editor). I seldom pray because there is little that I want apart from what I am striving for all the time. But I decided to pray to Bhagavan. I pulled myself together and threw myself with all my heart upon his mercy and asked for help. Immediately, without any time-lapse, an extraordinary thing happened. All my energies, my thoughts, my emotions were suddenly sucked into my heart. It was like a sort of spiritual vacuum cleaner! They seemed to be sucked into what I thought of as a vanishing point in the heart. Although it all happened in a flash, I have grown accustomed through introspection to observe things of an inner nature, and I was aware that what I have called a 'vanishing point' was something like the entrance to the Great Void, to a realm of objectless infinity or tremendous power, speed and purpose, and of infinite good will. In words all this sounds so miserably incomplete. Anyway, when I seemed to be poised on the brink of this Void, suddenly into my conscious mind popped, like a menu card, a clear list of things which I myself could do in the house that minute to alleviate my extremity. I crawled out of bed again and after about an hour of following this advice was able to fall asleep. The next morning my doctor had returned to Tokyo and was able to send me all needed.

MRS. EDNA YLSE,

Tokyo.

AUSTRALIAN AGENT

I shall be posted into the Australian Bush again this year, therefore it will be impracticable for me to continue your agency. I do apologize for all the inconvenience this may cause you. I suppose that you will have little difficulty in finding a new agent. It is to be hoped that your success will continue in the future.

KURT FORRER,

Tecoma, Victoria, Australia.

Australian readers who do not want the trouble of writing here direct can order copies through Mrs. Mason, 'Ananda', 40, Blackwood Street, Tecoma, Victoria, Australia.

EDITOR.