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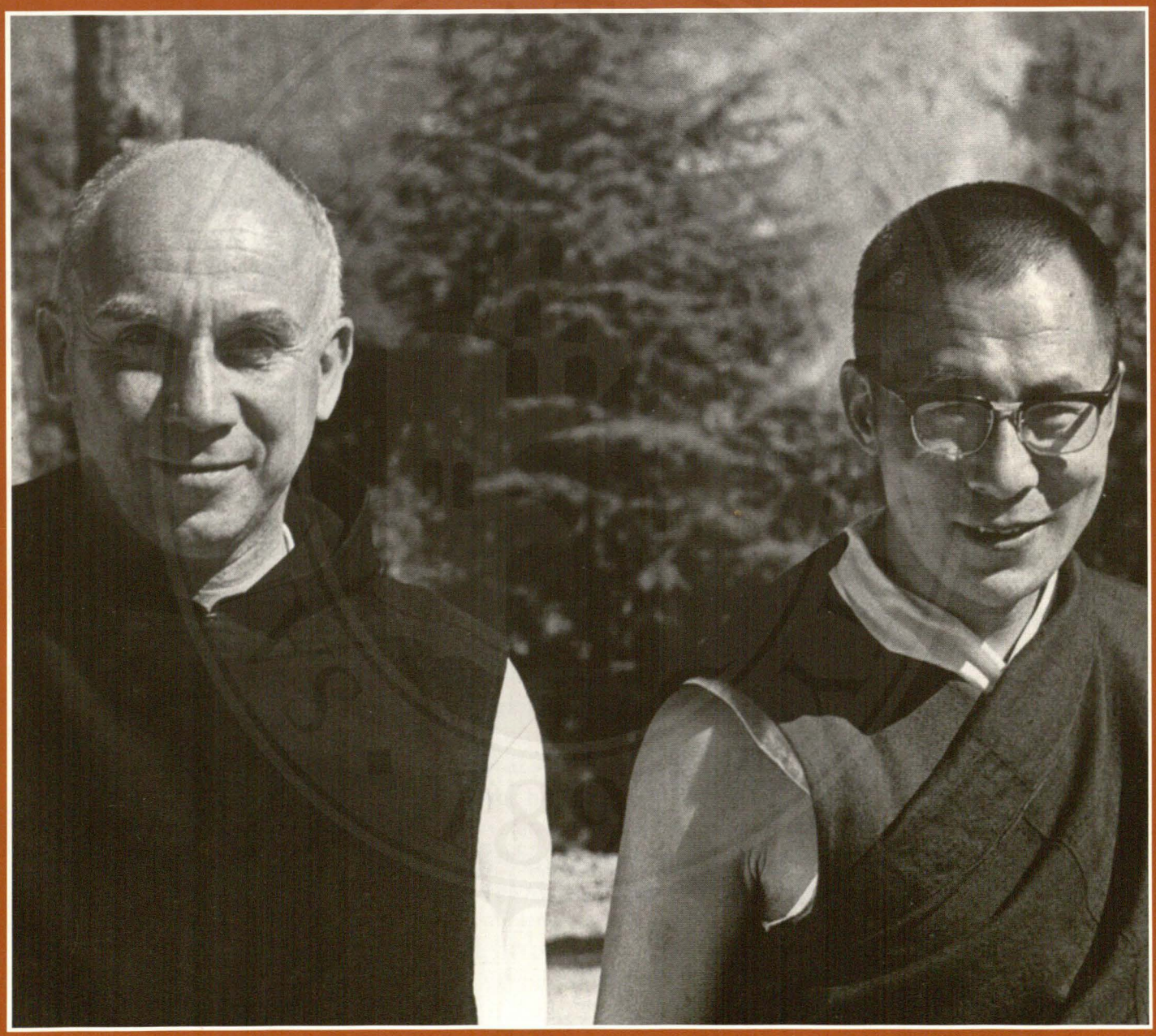
the INNER DIRECTIONS journal

FALL 1995

PATHWAYS TO AWAKENING



FEATURING

Asian Perspectives of Thomas Merton ❖ A Sufi Mystic: Bawa Muhaiyaddeen

Living Kabbalah ❖ The Way of Chuang Tzu ❖ A Conversation With Francis Lucille

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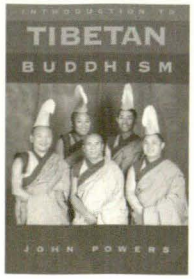

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Contacting Inner Directions
Mail: PO Box 231486, Encinitas, CA 92023
Phone: (619) 471-5116
Fax: (619) 471-0337
E-mail: 72770.2757@compuserve.com
Internet: http://www.genius.net/indolink/Global/innerdir.html

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A Word to the Reader

Welcome to the Fall 1995 Inner Directions Journal

The fall season brings with it the yearly cycle of nature's changes and an invitation to the more introspective winter months. The shedding of leaves denotes the dawning of a period of inwardness and stillness that takes place throughout much of nature. Those of us on the spiritual path also go through periods that are very much like the cycles in nature. We divest ourselves of out-turned energy and activity to taste the inner stillness and peace which is always present.

Represented in this issue are perspectives from Hinduism, Sufism, Christianity, Chinese philosophy, Tibetan Buddhism, and Judaism. There is a great joy in recognizing the same truth expressed through different approaches. The common thread running through them all points to the truth of our existence, the Heart. It is the Heart of oneself that is the repository of true peace and understanding. The title of Francis Lucille's talk in this issue sums it up quite well: Let Your Heart Be Your Guide.

The path of the Heart is direct, since it takes us straight to the core of our being. Once we taste our true nature we "re-cognize" seeing ourselves as we truly are. The "re-cognizing" process happens naturally when through the grace of our own Self, the Heart opens to reveal the Awareness that sustains ourselves and all of creation.

In the current issue we have a special article on M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen. Now, just as in his lifetime, Bawa exemplified the true meaning of Sufi, as one who dwells in the Heart. Bawa wrote, "When we say Sufi we mean the state in which one has attained true Wisdom." We also have an interview with Rabbi David A. Cooper. Rabbi Cooper has devoted his life to integrating the teachings of *Kabbalah* with practices of Eastern meditation. I met with Rabbi Cooper when he was visiting Los Angeles, teaching a monthly class on *Kabbalah*. What struck me about him was his broad vision and a dedication to making these teachings accessible to all. He and his wife have a home in the mountains of Colorado where they provide accommodations to those who wish to spend time in quiet retreat.

If you have access to the World Wide Web and use a graphical browser (such as Netscape or Mosaic), visit our Internet site at: *http://www.genius.net/indolink/Global/innerdir.html* — the Web site will highlight a listing of the current articles in the Journal and provide you with the ability to send us your online comments.

Matthew Greenblatt

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READERS' FORUM

Dear Friends,

Inner Directions is currently finalizing its move to become a nonprofit organization. Through this vehicle we can look to public funding to help sustain this important publication. I ask you to become a financial supporter of *The Inner Directions Journal* and help it through these challenging times of growth and development. We remain committed to the vision of an independent journal which reflects the underlying Truth at the heart of authentic spirituality and mysticism. Please refer to the reply card included in this issue for details.

Bertram W. Salzman
Member, Board of Directors

Thanks for the true privilege of re-subscribing to *The Inner Directions Journal*. Watching from afar, I am in constant wonder and amazement at the Grace that flows to and through this endeavor. May you ever share our heart's song — thank you.
— Scott Mounce, Sarasota, FL

I especially liked the interview with Robert Powell, who has ripened into a true sage, and the Steven Levine and Toni Packer articles. I also want to compliment you on your editorial. You write with clarity and insight. Your observation that, "This process is always happening anew, for it does not belong to the past or future but to the eternal present," is right on. So long as the "me" thinks it has arrived at enlightenment or wherever, it is still in delusion; enlightenment itself is the ultimate ego game!
— Jim Dreaver, Sebastapol, CA

I received my first copy of *The Inner Directions Journal* a few days ago and picked it up yesterday and just "devoured" it. I'm a student of "A Course in Miracles" and I truly appreciate the articles as they all point to Undoing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence. I can't read enough of the necessity of looking at my ego thought system to see it's not giving me what I really want, and consequently, slowly dismantle it.
— Alice Morris, Mandan, ND

Even though for years I read every book that I could get a hold of, I'm not a big reader now. But when your journal was loaned to me by a friend I read through the whole issue in one sitting. I was happy to see an article by Allan Anderson whose video interviews with J. Krishnamurti I have enjoyed for many years.
— Doris Thurston, Austin, TX

I'd like to respond to Carol, who wrote in the Spring 1995 Readers' Forum about the question of effort. I think this question was answered quite well in the recent article by A.R. Natarajan. I feel far too much effort is used by aspirants in questioning the role of effort. As long as one feels one is an "individual," isn't effort (for lack of a better word) necessary to rid oneself of that feeling?
— Tim Broderick, Sacramento, CA

This morning I finished reading the Toni Packer article. I felt the rightness of spiritual direction in this piece, i.e., a sense of calm and freedom. It caused me to harken back to early childhood, when life was lighthearted and adventurous and always lived in the moment, because there was no idea of any other way to live.

Carol Hartley makes the point in the Readers' Forum, "even allowing is an effort because we have to be attentive, aware; we have to be receptive to allow ourselves to be receptive." It seems to me it depends on the point of view, the personal or impersonal. Our natural condition of being (impersonal) is one of allowing — allowing the universe to be, for example. Allowing is effortless — effortless effort, if you like. Our transcendent nature is simultaneously one of love, tranquillity, energy, receptivity and generosity; it is effortlessly attentive and effortlessly conscious.
— Greg Wilson, Petaluma, CA

The Ultimate Happiness

A Conversation With Robert Adams

Robert Adams spent three years with the contemporary sage Ramana Maharshi, from 1947 until the latter's death in April 1950. He has been holding meetings in the Los Angeles area for the past nine years. The following introduction and talk was compiled by Edward Muzika, Ph.D., one of Robert's students.

Huang Po, the Sixth Patriarch, stated, "The only truth is that there is no truth. Beware even of this truth." Robert Adams urges students not to believe what he says, for why should they? He asks instead that we experiment on ourselves to find truth.

Any truth stated in words, conceived in ideas, or perceived by the senses is what you make of it. This truth lies in the relative world and depends on education, family upbringing, and other factors. It changes moment by moment and is only opinion. However, the possibility of Absolute Truth, beyond human knowing, beyond scientific or religious understanding, has been an essential part of most spiritual traditions.

Robert's way to convey the ultimate is to puzzle some people to death. Just when they think they have truth or realization, he changes the focus of his teachings, offers a new practice, or in other ways suggests they do not yet "have it." If they did "have it," it would be wrong because spiritual attainment creates the duality of an attainer and an attainment, and any duality must be relative, not absolute.

As a "confusee," I learned that the teachings are not important. For Robert there are 1,100 ways to peel a potato. Teachings and techniques are the surgical thorns to remove the embedded thorns of suffering. When you find a skilled spiritual surgeon, just stick around and listen. Let the words pass through. Don't be caught by them or by the teacher, unless, of course, that is what happens. The words come, are suspended for a moment within, and then are forgotten. The true teachings come in silence, the gap in which the busy and self-referring mind is absent, where the Absolute can manifest without distortion. But even these words must be taken with a grain of salt. Do not be captured by them or project your understanding into the "Absolute, "Self," or "silence," otherwise they become imprisoning concepts. The Absolute comes to a mind that knows it does not know.

Robert Adams: There is one thing I can tell you for sure. All is well. Everything is unfolding as it should. I can tell you that truly nothing is wrong anywhere. If you think you have a problem, that's the mistake — thinking you have a problem. As soon as you stop thinking, everything will go right.

Questioner: Isn't everything going right while you are thinking?

R: Yes, but you don't know it. Some of us don't think it is, saying, "I've got a problem," or "I'm involved in something I can't handle which is bigger than I am," or "Something hurts me," or "I feel anger." But I can assure you, there is nothing wrong!

All that you have to do is watch yourself. As soon as your mind starts thinking past your nose, grab it — not your nose, but your thoughts. You can grab your nose too if you want (*laughter*). Grasp your thoughts with your mind, and put a stop to them any way you can, either by observing the thoughts or by practicing self-enquiry and asking to whom they occur. Whatever you need to do, do not allow yourself to think. If your mind does not think, you will be exceedingly happy. You will have unalloyed happiness.

Some people ask me, "Robert, why don't you just speak the highest truth all the time?" Some others tell me to speak in such a way that they can understand what I am talking about (*laughter*). So that is the dilemma. I do whatever I have to do. I plan nothing. Everything is extemporaneous. I have no rehearsals.

A man called me yesterday telling me he had been practicing for two weeks, took a seminar and paid seven hundred dollars, and is still not realized. I get calls like this all the time. What you say determines the answer I give you. But there is a standard answer. Think of the question, "When will I become self-realized?" Before I answer this one I usually ask "Please tell me what do you

mean by 'I'?" Then I further ask, "What do you mean by 'Self-realization?'" They usually become silent, so I finally ask, "Who do you think the 'I' is? Who wants to become Self-realized?"

If you can't do anything else, surrender to consciousness. By surrender, I mean surrender your ego, your problems, your emotions, your fears, your frustrations and anger. Give it all up. Say, "Take it, consciousness!"

Do not get carried away by your emotions. Stop in the middle and watch. Watch your emotions ruling you. Watch your fears controlling you. Watch your anger arise. Do not try to stop it, just watch and observe. Look intelligently and realize who it is that is getting angry. It is not you. It is not even your ego because there is no ego. It is not your body because there is no body. It is not your mind because there is no mind. Therefore, what is making you angry? Nothing.

I was talking about all the phone calls I've been receiving. People still ask what I think about this or that teacher, this or that person, or why shouldn't they go to see other teachers as well? I really don't know what to say. You have to do what you have to do. I can tell you that the more people you consult, the more confused you'll become. I don't care if you never come back here again because I am not looking for anything.

If you do find a teacher that you seem to have an affinity for, you should stick around for a while. If you run from teacher to teacher, you will become totally confused. Every teacher has his place. You will be attracted to the person you have to be with for as long as necessary. It depends on where your consciousness is.

Photo: Behroz Padamsee

Q: Robert, throughout the spiritual literature there are distinctions made between a gradual path and instantaneous enlightenment. A lot of this stuff about passing through stages — I can't relate to it. It just doesn't make any sense to me.

R: What can't you relate to?

Q: Just the idea that you pass through one stage to the next stage.

R: This is for the person who is striving. The truth is there is nothing to pass through. It appears that some people, who need to understand these things and research them for themselves, will be helped to see where they are coming from. Perhaps you don't need it.

Q: The state of happiness you talk about I would not call happiness. The state seems far above happiness — happiness as the opposite of sadness.

R: You are right.

Q: Sadness could even come into that state you are in, and it would only be something that was passing through with no identification.

R: You are right. As an example, I can cry at a funeral, but I realize who is crying. I can have sadness if I want to, but *I* am never really sad.

Q: The state of non-attached mind, that's really the closest thing to it, isn't it?

R: That's true. I am looking for words to describe things. More importantly, there is always total happiness. It is not human happiness. For most people to be happy, there has to be a person, place, or thing involved in their happiness. In true happiness, there are no things involved. It's a natural state. You will abide in that state forever.

Q: From the standpoint of practice, I have noticed that no matter what state arises, the problem is whether I am willing to let this go. Is it important for me to stay in my emotional state? The answer is that there is nothing you can do anyway as it comes and goes.

R: Act as if there is something you can do, even though there is nothing you can do. If you were passing a starving man in the room, don't think there is nothing you can do. Give him a piece of bread.

Q: But in that state of mind arising, emotions arising, perceptions arising, there is nothing you can do.

R: Except watch. Just watch. Just observe. Another thing to consider is this: if you were here as a visitor, having only one meeting with me, and you would never see me again, I would expound the highest truth to you and take off. You would say how great that is. But when I see you twice a week or more, I begin to know you quite well, and everything I say is to help you grow because that is what is needed at that time, since I'm going to be with you again. To people who were with Ramana Maharshi as devotees, he didn't expound absolute truth to them all the time. He would talk to them like an ordinary person. He would inquire about their welfare, their health, about their problems, and he would give them practical advice. He wouldn't say, "Nothing matters because nothing exists." They had problems. So he would talk to them in a practical manner.

Q: If we don't see progress within ourselves and see we are continually getting upset, we shouldn't let that bother us?

R: Keep observing, keep watching, keep focusing on the Self, and there will be nobody to ask who is bothered or who is not bothered. You only ask such a question when your attention is more on the bothering than it is on the Self. If you change your attention to the Self, see what happens.

Q: The question is, is that gradual?

R: For some people. It depends on how much time you give to it.

Q: We can't just turn our emotions off. When I go to work sometimes, I find such an intensity there, with people snapping at each other, I get caught up in it. Of course I become aware, usually after the fact, asking myself, "will this disappear gradually by abiding in myself, or will I someday suddenly awaken?"

R: In the morning, when you first open your eyes, that's the time to work on yourself. Ask yourself, "Who am I? How did I get here?" Reconcile yourself with yourself. If you do that upon first waking up, the whole day will be good, without these problems. Just don't go straight to work. Get up an hour early if you have to. See yourself for what you are, and realize the truth. Focus on the self. Ask yourself, "Who Am I?" and wait. Concentrate on the source of "I Am," or say to yourself, "I Am, I Am," and then go to work. Then you will see changes. You will build up a power that you will carry with yourself all day long.

Q: To follow that "I" to its source, to find the "I" by self-enquiry and abide in it seems to mean non-existence, statelessness.

R: Don't worry about being non-existent. Simply observe the "I," and watch it going into the heart.

Q: It is not so much a following then, but that it happens by itself?

R: It happens by itself.

Q: When I contemplate "I Am," does it means that already I am the Self?

R: Yes it does.

Q: Robert, it's because we have the concept we are not the Self that we miss the fact that we are abiding in the Self all the time. As Ramesh Balsekar has said, we only have the doubt we are not the Self, but the truth is we have always been it.

R: Exactly. When we don't see that, we go through all these troubles and play all these games, until we realize we are the Self. Then that is it. But it's fun.

Q: If we don't have the Self and are saying, "I am it," what is to keep that from becoming a parrot-like repetition?

R: It doesn't become a parrot-like repetition if you do it with your breath. When you inhale, say "I." When you exhale, say "Am." A subtle change of energy takes place within the Self, and you will become more peaceful, calm, and soon you will lose all identification with your body and mind. You will remain as "I Am."

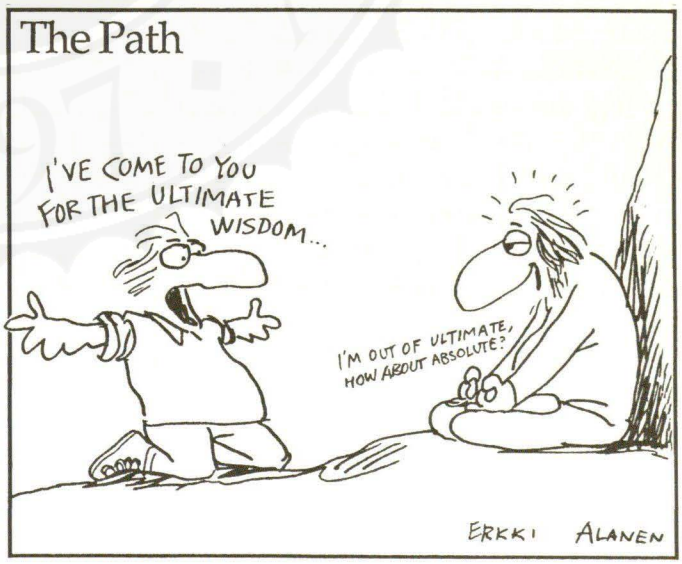
Keep observing, keep watching, keep focusing on the Self, and there will be nobody to ask who is bothered or who is not bothered. You only ask such a question when your attention is more on the bothering than it is on the Self. If you change your attention to the Self, see what happens.

Q: Robert, when we do self-enquiry, actually that is the beginning step to find the "I." When we develop a sense of abiding in the "I," there isn't much need of enquiry because we go straight to the abidance.

R: Self-enquiry has no beginning. If you practice "Who Am I," it sounds simple, but is very powerful. Only say, "Who Am I?," then pause, then say it again, "Who Am I?" Never answer the question. Just keep repeating "Who Am I?" Eventually, something will happen.

Q: I'm asking, if you develop a sense of self-abidance, you can watch states come and go, watch identification with the ego, and then self-enquiry is not necessary if you can go directly to that.

R: If you are abiding in the Self, there is no ego to watch — there is only the Self. You watch the ego with the mind, not with the Self. If you abide in the Self, there is nothing else. You are finished. You're cooked. Everything else is of the mind. When I say abide in the Self, I mean forget everything and be yourself. There is nothing else to know at that point. ■



Bawa Muhaiyaddeen

A Sufi Mystic

By Ahamed Muhaiyaddeen

Do not write on water all the learning you have acquired. Even before you lift your finger out of the water, the writing will have disappeared. Not a single word will remain.

In the same way, do not write what you have learned from the sheikh or from experience on the desire, arrogance, vanity, or selfishness of your mind. It would be like writing on water. There are waves, and the writing would be instantly erased.

But if you wish to learn with Iman[1], with the determination and certitude of absolute faith, then open your heart and write on the heart within the heart.

— Bawa Muhaiyaddeen

La illaha
Nothing other than God exists.
Il Allahu
You alone are God.

M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen was discovered in the jungles of Sri Lanka by religious pilgrims. After being invited to teach them, he left his life of solitude, prayer, and meditation. Those pilgrims and many others came to hear him sing and discourse on the wonders of God and man. After several years, the Guru Bawa Ashram was formed in Jaffna, and during the 1960s the Serendib Sufi Study Circle gathered in Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital. True to a prediction he had made in 1946 that he would come to the West, in October of 1971 he came to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he created a center for Sufi studies and a dynamic community of lovers of truth. He called the small group who met and loved him "God's Funny Family," eclectic in their beliefs, lifestyles, races, and religious propensities, but unified in valuing the qualities of the soul that fill the heart with light. This family grew into the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship, and it soon developed branches in many cities around the world.

On the day I met him, Bawa looked at me, and our eyes met, and he said, "What do you want?"

And I said, "I want what you have."

He smiled and said, "Good, do you have any questions?"

I said, "Yes, can you give it to me?"

He said, "Yes, do you have any more questions?"

I said, "Yes, will you give it to me?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "What do I do?"

He said, "You give up everything other than God."

Bawa was a true Sufi, one who lives in the state of completion, in the state of purity wherein there is no duality. That clear purity is the essence of our consciousness and our life. It doesn't belong to any one religion. It has to be filtered out of religion by wisdom. Bawa explains the essence of Sufi thus:

"*Sufi* is a clear, pure essence that has filtered and settled slowly, deep within. It goes beyond the state of *mounam* (silence), even beyond the station of the *mouna guru* (the silent guru within us). It is that state of stillness when the resplendence of the pure clarity of wisdom has sunk down and settled completely within its ultimate completeness and perfection."

He saw only the One that exists in all beings. And because of the depth of his realization, people from all religions and different backgrounds came to him — to bask in his universal love and hear him reveal the essential truth of each religion, that God is only one, and our true existence is in that oneness.

A *gnani* (realized person) reflects and resonates the divine qualities, elevating those around him and filling them with overflowing love. Even photos can evoke this

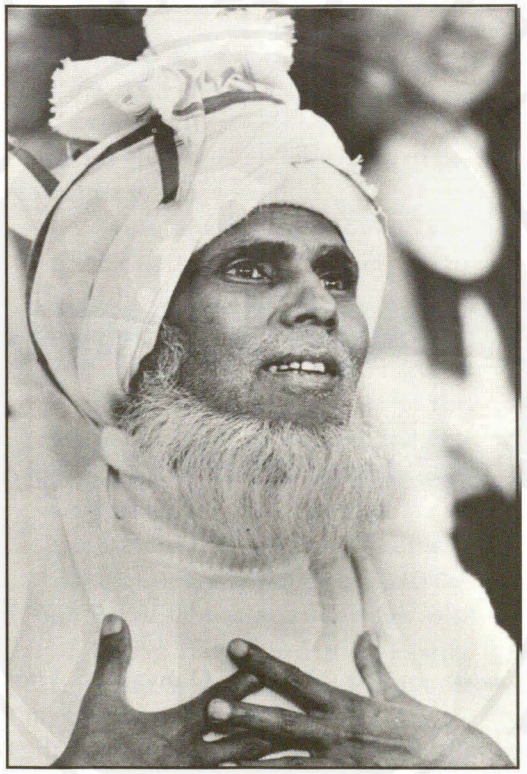
[1] *Absolute certitude that God alone exists; the complete acceptance of the heart that God is One.*

presence. When I asked Bawa, "What will happen when you leave? Whom will we follow? What will we do?" he said, "I won't leave you." Bawa Muhaiyaddeen left his body on December 8, 1986, but he did not leave us. Truth does not come and go. The process of awakening and communicating clearly continues. There is no boundary of form.

An Evening With Bawa

It is January of 1975 and I am with Bawa at his ashram in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. There is a cement floor and a roof which is partially corrugated tin and partially tiled. There is one large room and Bawa's bed is in the middle. One side is open, bordered by a three foot high cement wall. The other side is a courtyard with a deer, turkeys, cats, chickens, a goat, and other animals who seem to gather with us when Bawa sings.

It is a typical evening, and people of all classes, religions, levels of understanding and intentions are coming to his bedside. One tall, thin, very energetic man aggressively steps forward brandishing a curved machete (knife). He is raging that he will slit Bawa's throat. His knife is but a foot from Bawa's neck and his leg is brushing against me as I sit at the side of the bed.



Bawa Muhaiyaddeen

Bawa sits calmly on the bed. He is wearing a *sarong*, no shirt, and some prayer beads. It is very hot, and the man with the knife is screaming and working himself into a frenzy. Apparently he has suffered some personal tragedy and is blaming everything on the sage. He is yelling in *Tamil* and I cannot quite understand the specifics of his complaint, but his intensity is palpable and the reality of the intent unmistakable.

I am strong, athletic, and weigh about 180 lbs. An unexpected upper cut would easily down the assailant. My conscience says, "Sit still, there will be a lesson of truth."

Bawa rarely demonstrated miraculous powers. In fact he rarely even talked about himself. "When I am here, God is not; when God is here, I am not." He said we must separate from ourselves that which separates us from our fellow man and that the only miracle of any value is in changing our qualities — changing from haste to patience, hate to love, selfishness to compassion, and thereby transforming consciousness and illuminating it into wisdom.

Bawa calmly, deeply, and gently opens his arms and tilting his head, as if to expose his neck further, says, "Will taking my life bring you the peace your soul is craving?" He offers no resistance at all, and as he speaks he becomes increasingly vulnerable and open. He seems to grow younger and more innocent before my eyes.

And this is the wonder. There is a pronounced, almost physical presence of divine love emanating from his tranquil smile and his open armed gesture. Bawa's entire being is emanating a purity of essence from the realm of essences. One can feel the area filling with love and comfort. Those who have gone into the heart know of this pure love. It is unbounded and without object, pouring forth on all objects.

The room fills with this love and it showers upon the man with the knife. His body appears to lose all internal power and energy. The knife drops from his hands and he collapses onto his knees next to me, his head resting on Bawa's bed. Bawa comforts him and tells him to attend to certain specific affairs and return later. The man leaves and Bawa continues his duties to the stream of visitors without a ripple, without carrying the event for one second.

Why? How? There was no one to be killed by the knife. The true Sufi is one who had died before death, died to the world, and whose entire being is forever focused on and in *Allah* (God) alone. I bear witness to having lived with a man who lived this reality and stated its secret: "Love all lives as your own."

Words of Wisdom

* One who loses himself into nothingness, where the state of the self does not exist; one who knows the station where only God remains as that Solitary Oneness that is God: this is the explanation of Sufi.

* Do not be impatient under any circumstances; it will destroy your life. Stop and think, analyze. Act with patience and wisdom, and you will see peace in your life. Just as the sun's radiance scatters the clouds which threaten to hide its light, you must use the resplen-

dence of your wisdom to scatter the darkness of your mind.

* A fortuneteller asked a wise man, "Does man carry time with him, or does time move along carrying man?" The wise man answered, "It is man who carries time and makes it pass. Time does not carry man. Man carries time, counts it, and is subject to the difficulties and conditions of each season that time brings. If he unburdens himself of time, all things connected to time will also leave."

Time is the day and night which man himself brings about. It is the dream he sees. If man relinquishes darkness, he will no longer exist in the duality of time. If he gives up the dreaming of his mind, he will lose his thoughts. Engulfed in the light of grace, he will live a life without darkness. Forever he will dwell in the light of God, and there will be no passage of time.

* Men say, "Search, search, search for God in the truth." They tell you to find God.

Hearing this, the parrot of wisdom said, "O man, give up searching for truth here, there, and everywhere. Truth and falsehood are within you; good and evil are within you; heaven and hell are within you; God and man dwell in the same place. Realizing this, if you search within, disregarding everything else until you find truth and God within yourself, that will be the highest victory of your life. That is the divine wisdom called *gnanam* (knowledge).

* The creations of God are only signs of the existence of God. They are not the reality that is God. They were created in order that man could understand the Ultimate Reality that lies hidden within God's signs. You will be able to reach Him only if you go beyond these signs.

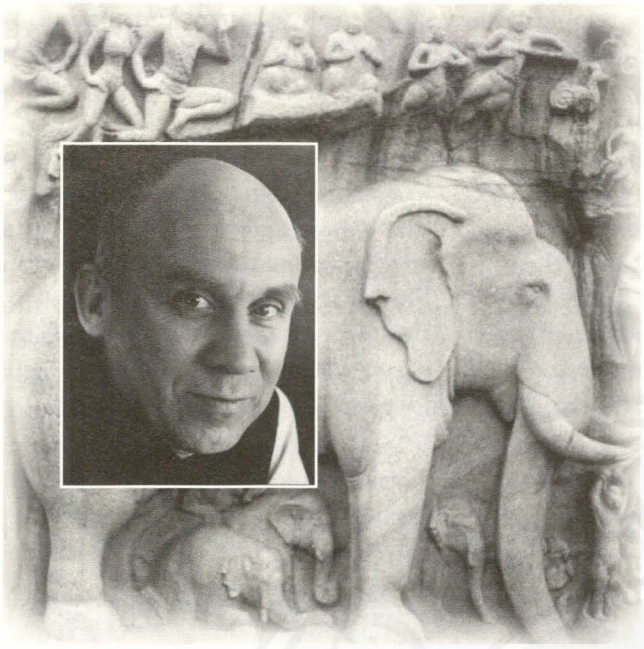
* The mind creates forms and then bows down to them. It carries them to certain places, worships them, and then carries them back. All these things are carried out by the mind because of its lack of understanding of the reality of God.

Song by Bawa Muhaiyaddeen

You understand all of it, O mind.
Know this, today.
This darkness pulling us is *maya*.
Put it aside, leave it.
If you look and analyze, you will see everything.
You will understand God within yourself.
You will know who you are.
And you will understand all the things that have no stability.
You will understand all the destructible things.
You will understand the ignorance, false wisdom, scientific wisdom, and lack of wisdom.
All of these things will be destroyed.
The thought within your thought, your very mind, will be destroyed.

O mind, realize that *ati* is the One within the One.
O my mind, know this is an outspread way.
This is the clear way. Know this.
You must be the Light that shines.
If you do, there is no other secret.
No other, no other.
Know this with wisdom, O mind.
Dispel the illusory dream in your heart.
Separation lies only within that dark dream.
Go into the light of wisdom with love and gain bliss.
Then the great light of *ati* and you can join as one open space.

Ahamed Muhaiyaddeen (Jonathan Granoff) in an attorney practicing in Pennsylvania. He is a board member of the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship, author, award-winning screenwriter, and active in United Nations disarmament affairs.



Asian Perspectives of Thomas Merton

By Robert E. Daggy

Elephant Photo: Darrell Newberg
Thomas Merton photo: © The Trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust

Thomas Merton died in Bangkok, Thailand, on December 10, 1968, a victim of an accidental electrocution. His death ironically occurred twenty-seven years to the day after his entrance into the Abbey of Gethsemani near Bardstown, Kentucky, on December 10, 1941.

This man, whose writings came to mean so much to people in all parts of the world, began his "journey," as he often described his life, on January 31, 1915, in Prades, France, a small village near the Spanish border. He received his education in the United States, Bermuda, France, and England. His father died in 1931 when he was sixteen and, after a disastrous year at Cambridge University (1933-1934) in England, his British guardian sent him to the United States to be supervised, financially and otherwise, by his American grandparents. He attended Columbia University in New York City, receiving a bachelor's degree in 1937 and a master's degree in English in 1938. Merton dabbled with Communism and peace movements and apparently followed a "Bohemian" lifestyle, perhaps because his childhood had left him comfortable only with a lifestyle perceived as marginal (and one must say questionable) by the rest of society.

He converted to Roman Catholicism in 1938 and attempted to join the Franciscan Order, but was rejected. He then secured a job teaching English but continued to desire greater withdrawal from the world. In 1941, he entered the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (or Trappists) at Gethsemani. The state of Kentucky was then sparsely populated and the abbey, or monastery, was in an area of dense hardwood forest, surrounded by ancient, eroded mountains called "knobs." Merton was to live among these trees and knobs for the next twenty-seven years of his life. It was not an easy life, for when he entered the Order they still followed a medieval lifestyle based on prayer, silence, and work. Merton was given the religious name of "Louis" and was ordained a priest in 1949.

He had aspired to be a writer and had written several novels, mostly autobiographical, before entering Gethsemani. His search for himself and for God caused him to abandon these early aspirations for a time, though he continued to write poetry. His own inclinations and the requirements of his order, however, led him back to writing as part of his vocation as a monk. In 1948, his autobiography, the story of his conversion to Roman Catholicism and entrance into the monastery, was published. Called *The Seven Storey Mountain* (a reference to the levels of Dante's purgatory), it was an immediate and phenomenal bestseller and brought him international recognition. Speaking from the margins of society, Merton touched a nerve in the post-World War II world, not just in the United States, but also in war-weary Europe and Latin America. During the next twenty years he produced an amazing number of books and articles and increasingly became a voice to be heard and reckoned with.

Merton entered Gethsemani to withdraw from the world and to live on its fringes in silence and solitude. His early writings, those from the 1940s and into the 1950s, tended to be ascetic, other-worldly, colored by a conviction of the complete separation of God and the world. Yet, despite this desire for withdrawal and the expression of it in his early writings, Merton was never quite able to withdraw totally from the world.

Although he was initial preoccupied with Eastern teachings in his college days, he began to study the Zen Masters seriously in the late fifities. His writings and taped lectures on Eastern traditions helped to introduce them to American readers — Taoism, Confucianism, Zen Buddhism, Sufism, and Austronesian spirituality. Through his wide correspondence (he basically never left the monastery), he engaged in dialogue with scholars and leaders of Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and other religious traditions. His book, *The Way of Chuang Tzu,* he admitted frankly was one of his favorites.

In 1965, as part of his search for an ever greater solitude, he was given permission to withdraw from the routine of community life and to live on the Abbey grounds in a small, concrete block cabin. He described his occupation in 1967 as "hermit." In 1968, he was given permission to travel to Asia on a kind of pilgrimage. There, at a conference on Buddhist-Christian monasticism outside Bangkok, he died. On Merton's trip to Asia he wrote of the heart of spirituality in the closing paragraph of a circular letter: "Our real journey in life is interior; it is a matter of growth, deepening, and of an ever greater surrender to the creative action of love and grace in our hearts."

Universal Love in Mo Tzu and Thomas Merton

Mo Tzu[1] and Thomas Merton. Strange bedfellows. Mo Tzu lived in China in the fifth century before Christ. Thomas Merton was very much a twentieth century person, who died only twenty-five years ago. At first glance, it would seem that these two figures, separated in time by nearly two and a half millennia, have only one thing in common. As noted scholar Arthur Waley pointed out fifty years ago (and it still holds true today): "A good many people outside China have heard of Confucianism and Taoism; very few know even the name of Mo Tzu." It is undoubtedly true that very few people in China know the name of Thomas Merton. Both came to the conclusion that universal love — a benign, benevolent, nondiscerning love — might be the governing principle, indeed the remedy, which would allow the world and all humans (not just an individual culture) to live in peace and harmony, and this love might be the world's salvation.

Thomas Merton was a significant figure in helping to introduce Chinese thought and make it explicable to readers in the West. He wrote in nearly mystical fashion that he had the "reassuring companionship of many silent Tzu's and Fu's" in his hermitage in the woods.

Even though Thomas Merton was a Catholic monk with a vow of poverty (which meant, among other things, that he was not supposed to own books), he gathered what I would judge to be one of the best collections on Chinese thought in the state of Kentucky.

Both Mo Tzu and Merton lived in periods which they perceived as being in political and cultural upheaval. As they viewed the "fevers and frets" of their times, they both came to offer "relief and remedies." Both went beyond being mere cultural critics. Mo Tzu and Merton were clearly prophets, voices crying out each in his own wilderness. Somehow, both concluded finally that the most effective relief and surest remedy is "love," a universal, all-inclusive love that pervades not just their society but the whole world. The idea of "universal love" is undoubtedly the hallmark of Mo Tzu's thinking, at least to Westerners. And it becomes an overarching principle in Merton's thinking. In 1967 he wrote:

"The simple fact that by being attentive, by learning to listen (or recovering the natural capacity to listen which cannot be learned any more than breathing), we can find ourselves engulfed in such happiness that it cannot be explained: in that hidden ground of Love for which there can be no explanations.

"I suppose what makes me most glad is that we all recognize each other in the metaphysical space of silence and happiness, and get some sense, for a moment, that we are full of paradise without knowing it.

"Love is the soul's bond with God as the source of all reality, and therefore such love is itself the triumph of truth in our lives. Hence it drives out all falsity, all error. To remain in love is to remain in the truth! Everything else follows. Life is then a perpetual 'Sabbath' of divine peace."

To that end, both Mo Tzu and Thomas Merton became what we might call "peace activists," discouraging aggressive ways, exploitation, and notions of cultural superiority. And Love, though they had very different ideas of how to achieve "universal love" (Merton didn't much like some of Mo Tzu's methods which he saw as "coercive"), remains for both the underlying principle which they saw leading us toward a better world. In 1967, Merton wrote *A Letter on the Contemplative Life,* formed and informed by his diligent study of other religious and cultural traditions. Without that study, including I think his limited reading of Mo Tzu, he would not have written the following lines in quite the same way:

"If we once began to recognize, humbly but truly, the real value of our own self, we would see that this value was the sign of God in our being, the

signature of God upon our being. Fortunately, the love of our fellow humans is given us as the way of realizing this. For the love of our brother, our sister, our beloved, our wife, our child, is there to see with the clarity of God Himself that we are good. It is the love of my lover, my brother, or my child that sees God in me, makes God credible to myself in me. And it is my love for my lover, my child, my brother, that enables me to show God to him or her in himself or herself. Love is the epiphany of God in our poverty. The contemplative life is then the search for peace not in an abstract exclusion of all outside reality, not in a barren negative closing of the senses upon the world, but in the openness of Love." ■

[1]Mo Tzu, also known as Mo Ti and Master Mo, lived about 468-376 BC and offered an alternative teaching to the popular philosophy of Confucius. His doctrines are contained in a little-known work entitled simply, Mo Tzu, *which was probably compiled by his pupils around 400 BC. Mo Tzu initially studied the teachings of Confucius but was unable to agree with his definition of morality. This led him to develop his own philosophy, the central idea of which was an all-embracing love, not confined to the family or clan (as in the case of Confucius) and subject to the will of Heaven. Mo Tzu rejected warfare in any form as well as the elaborateness of Confucianist rites so prevalent in his day. For about two centuries, Mohism held its own against the teachings of Confucius but later was gradually displaced by it.*

The following article and biographical sketch is taken from a talk, presented by Robert E. Daggy, Ph.D., in China, in 1993. Robert Daggy is the resident secretary of the International Thomas Merton Society and Director of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine College in Louisville, Kentucky.

Thomas Merton and the Dalai Lama

Thomas Merton met the Dalai Lama in November, 1968.

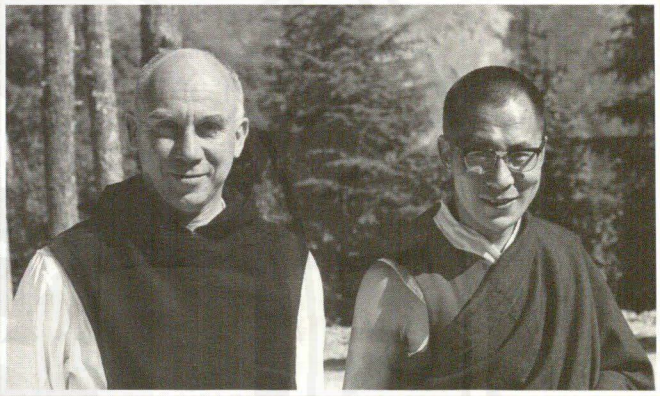


photo: ©The Trustees of the Merton Legacy Trust

I had my audience with the Dalai Lama this morning in his new quarters. It was a bright, sunny day — blue sky, the mountain absolutely clear. Tenzin Geshe sent a jeep down. We went up the long way around through the army post and past the old deserted Anglican Church of St. John in the Wilderness. Everything at McLeod Ganj is admirably situated, high over the valley, with snow-covered mountains behind, all pine trees, with apes in them, and a vast view over the plains to the south.

The Dalai Lama is most impressive as a person. He is strong and alert, bigger than I expected (for some reason I thought he would be small). A very solid, energetic, generous, and warm person, very capably trying to handle enormous problems — none of which he mentioned directly. The whole conversation was about religion and philosophy and especially ways of meditation.

My third interview with the Dalai Lama was in some ways the best. He asked a lot of questions about Western monastic life, particularly the vows, the rule of silence, the ascetic way, etc. But what concerned him most was:

1. Did the "vows" have any connection with a spiritual transmission or initiation?

2. Having made vows, did the monks continue to progress along a spiritual way, toward an eventual illumination, and what were the degrees of that progress? And supposing a monk died without having attained to perfect illumination? What ascetic methods were used to help purify the mind of passions?

He was interested in the "mystical life," rather than in external observance.

And some incidental questions: What were the motives for the monks not eating meat? Did they drink alcoholic beverages? Did they have movies? And so on. Finally, we got into a rather technical discussion of mind, whether [mind was] consciousness, *prajna* (the state of deep sleep) or *dhyana* (meditation) and the relationship of *prajna* to *sunyata* (emptiness). The greatest error is to become attached to *sunyata* as if it were an object, an "absolute truth."

It was a very warm and cordial discussion and at the end I felt we had become very good friends and were somehow quite close to one another. I feel a great respect and fondness for him as a person and believe, too, that there is a real spiritual bond between us. He remarked that I was a "Catholic geshe," which, Harold said, was the highest possible praise from a Gelugpa, like an honorary doctorate!

From The Asian Journals of Thomas Merton *©1975 by New Directions Publishing Company. Reprinted with permission by New Directions.*

The Way of Chuang Tzu

Compiled by Thomas Merton
Illustrated by Alice Faro

Chuang Tzu is not concerned with words and formulas about reality, but with the direct existential grasp of reality in itself. It can be presented in a parable, a fable, or a funny story about a conversation between two philosophers. Chuang Tzu's teaching follows the principle of "Three in the Morning," and it is at home on two levels: that of the divine and invisible Tao, and that of ordinary, simple, everyday existence . — Thomas Merton, from the introduction.

Three in the Morning

When we wear out our minds, stubbornly clinging to one partial view of things, refusing to see a deeper agreement between this and its complementary opposite, we have what is called "three in the morning."

What is this "three in the morning?"

A monkey trainer went to his monkeys and told them: "As regards your chestnuts: you are going to have three measures in the morning and four in the afternoon."

At this they all became angry. So he said: "All right, in that case I will give you four in the morning and three in the afternoon." This time they were satisfied.

The two arrangements were the same in that the number of chestnuts did not change. But in one case the animals were displeased, and in the other they were satisfied. The keeper had been willing to change his personal arrangement in order to meet objective conditions. He lost nothing by it!

The truly wise man, considering both sides of the question without partiality, sees them both in the light of Tao.

This is called following two courses at once.

The Tower of the Spirit

The spirit has an impregnable tower
Which no danger can disturb
As long as the tower is guarded
By the invisible Protector
Who acts unconsciously, and whose actions
Go astray when they become deliberate,
Reflexive, and intentional.

The unconsciousness
And entire sincerity of Tao
Are disturbed by any effort
At self-conscious demonstration.
All such demonstrations
Are lies.

When one displays himself
In this ambiguous way
The world outside storms in
And imprisons him.

He is no longer protected
By sincerity of Tao.

Each new act
Is a new failure.

If his acts are done in public,
In broad daylight,
He will be punished by men.
If they are done in private
And in secret,
They will be punished
By spirits,

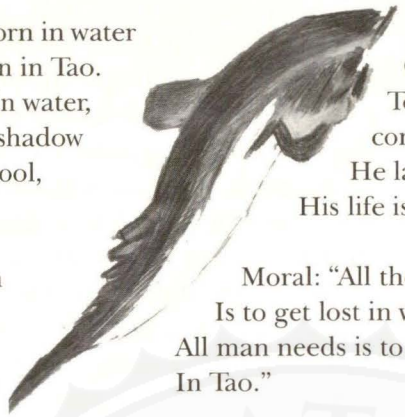
Let each one understand
The meaning of sincerity
And guard against display!

He will be at peace
With men and spirits
And will act rightly, unseen,
In his own solitude,
In the tower of his spirit.

Man Is Born in Tao

Fishes are born in water
Man is born in Tao.
If fishes, born in water,
Seek the deep shadow
Of pond and pool,
All his needs
Are satisfied.
If man, born in
Tao,
Sinks
into the deep
shadow
Of non-action
To forgot aggression and
concern,
He lacks nothing
His life is secure.

Moral: "All the fish needs
Is to get lost in water.
All man needs is to get lost
In Tao."



The Fasting of the Heart

Yen Hui, the favorite disciple of Confucius, came to take leave of his Master.

"Where are you going?" asked Confucius.

"I am going to Wei."

"And what for?"

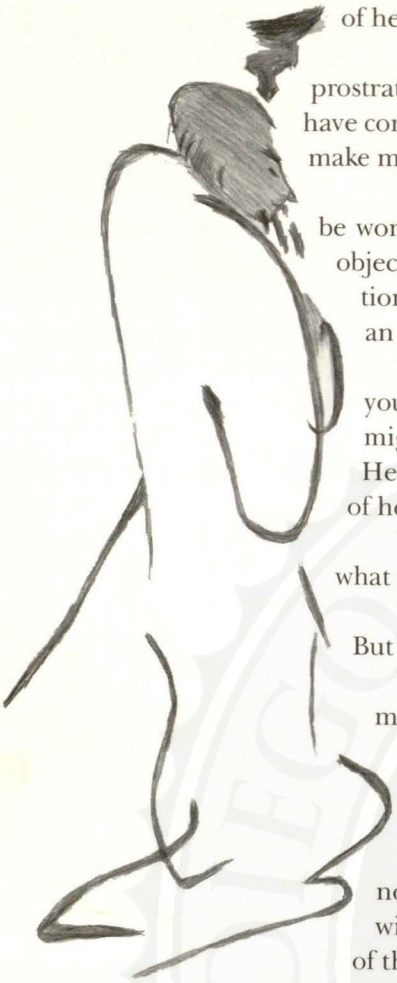
"I have heard that the Prince of Wei is a lusty full-blooded fellow and is entirely self-willed. He takes no care of his people and refuses to see any fault in himself. He pays no attention to the fact that his subjects are dying right and left. Corpses lie all over the country like hay in a field. The people are desperate. But I have heard you, Master, say that one should leave the state that is well governed and go to that which is in disorder. At the door of the physician there are plenty of sick people. I want to take this opportunity to put into practice what I have learned from you and see if I can bring about some improvement in conditions there."

"Alas!" said Confucius, "you do not realize what you are doing. You will bring disaster upon yourself. Tao has no need of your eagerness, and you will only waste your energy in your misguided efforts. Wasting your energy you will become confused and then anxious. Once anxious, you will no longer be able to help yourself. The sages of old first sought Tao in themselves, then looked to see if there was anything in others that corresponded with Tao as they knew it. But if you do not have Tao yourself, what business have you spending your time in vain efforts to bring corrupt politicians into the right path? . . . However, I suppose you must have some basis for your hope of success. How do you propose to go about it?"

Yen Hui replied: "I intend to present myself as a humble, disinterested man, seeking only to do what is right and nothing else: a completely simple and honest approach. Will this win his confidence?"

"Certainly not," Confucius replied. "This man is convinced that he alone is right. He may pretend outwardly to take an interest in an objective standard of justice, but do not be deceived by his expression. He is not accustomed to being opposed by anyone. His way is to reassure himself that he is right by trampling on other people. If he does this with mediocre men, he will all the more certainly do it to one who presents a threat by claiming to be a man of high qualities. He will cling stubbornly to his own way. He may pretend to be interested in your talk about what is objectively right, but interiorly he will not hear you, and there will be no change whatever. You will get nowhere with this."

Yen Hui then said: "Very well. Instead of directly opposing him, I will maintain my own standards interiorly, but outwardly I will appear to yield. I will appeal to the authority of tradition and to the examples of the past. He who is interiorly uncompromising is a son of heaven just as much as any ruler. I will not rely on any teaching of my own, and will consequently have no concern about whether I am approved or not. I will eventually be recognized as perfectly disinterested and sincere. They will all come to appreciate my candor, and thus I will be an instrument



of heaven in their midst.

"In this way, yielding in obedience to the Prince as others do, bowing, kneeling, prostrating myself as a servant should, I shall be accepted without blame. Then others will have confidence in me, and gradually they will make use of me, seeing that I desire only to make myself useful and work for the good of all. Thus I will be an instrument of men.

"Meanwhile, all I have to say will be expressed in terms of ancient tradition. I will be working with the sacred tradition of the ancient sages. Though what I say may be objectively a condemnation of the Prince's conduct, it will not be I who say it, but tradition itself. In this way, I will be perfectly honest, and yet not give offense. Thus I will be an instrument of tradition. Do you think I have the right approach?"

"Certainly not," said Confucius. "You have too many different plans of action, when you have not even got to know the Prince and observed his character! At best, you might get away with it and save your skin, but you will not change anything whatever. He might perhaps superficially conform to your words, but there will be no real change of heart."

Yen Hui then said: "Well, that is the best I have to offer. Will you, Master, tell me what you suggest?"

"You must *fast*!" said Confucius. "Do you know what I mean by fasting? It is not easy. But ways do not come from God."

"Oh," said Yen Hui, "I am used to fasting! At home we were poor. We went for months without wine or meat. That is fasting, is it not?"

"Well, you can call it 'observing a fast' if you like," said Confucius, "but it is not the fasting of the heart."

"Tell me," said Yen Hui, "what is fasting of the heart?"

Confucius replied: "The goal of fasting is inner unity. This means hearing, but not with the ear; hearing, but not with the understanding; hearing with the spirit, with your whole being. The hearing that is only in the ears is one thing. The hearing of the understanding is another. But the hearing of the spirit is not limited to any one faculty, to the ear, or to the mind. Hence it demands the emptiness of all the faculties. And when the faculties are empty, then the whole being listens. There is then a direct grasp of what is right there before you that can never be heard with the ear or understood with the mind. Fasting of the heart empties the faculties, frees you from limitation and from preoccupation. Fasting of the heart begets unity and freedom."

"I see," said Yen Hui. "What was standing in my way was own self-awareness. If I can begin this fasting of the heart, self-awareness will vanish. Then I will be free from limitation and preoccupation! Is that what you mean?"

"Yes," said Confucius, "that's it! If you can do this, you will be able to go among men in their world without upsetting them. You will not enter into conflict with their ideal image of themselves. If they will listen, sing them a song. If not, keep silent. Don't try to break down their door. Don't try out new medicines on them. Just be there among them, because there is nothing else for you to be but one of them. Then you may have success!

"It is easy to stand still and leave no trace, but it is hard to walk without touching the ground. If you follow human methods, you can get away with deception. In the way of Tao, no deception is possible.

"You know that one can fly with wings: you have not yet learned about flying without wings. You are familiar with the wisdom of those who know, but you have not yet learned the wisdom of those who know not.

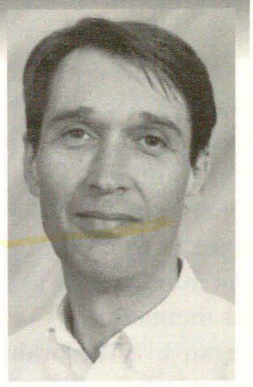
"Look at this window: it is nothing but a hole in the wall, but because of it the whole room is full of light. So when the faculties are empty, the heart is full of light. Being full of light it becomes an influence by which others are secretly transformed."

From The Way of Chuang Tzu *©1965 by the Abbey of Gethsemani. Reprinted with permission by New Directions.*

Let Your Heart Be Your Guide

An Interview With Francis Lucille

By David Jennings



Francis Lucille

Francis Lucille was born in France in 1944. He is a graduate of the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris where he was trained as a mathematician and physicist. In 1973, an encounter with Vedantic and Zen scriptures triggered a deep self-inquiry that found its resolution through meeting his teacher in 1975. Besides working as a scientist and diplomat, he has held dialogues, meditation sessions, and workshops in both France and the U.S. over the past 15 years. After retiring from formal employment, he has been meeting with truth-seekers throughout the U.S. and Canada, sharing his understanding of life. Francis has recorded a collection of interviews on non-duality. This interview is taken from an edited transcript. He is the author of a forthcoming book, Dialogues on Awareness. *David Jennings, the interviewer, is a graduate of Princeton and Oxford University and a physician who has studied non-dualistic teachings for many years.*

What is enlightenment?

Enlightenment is the deep understanding of what we are not. When what we are *not* is eliminated, there is no need to light up the candle, because our true nature beyond time shines in its own glory.

Enlightenment then is a leaving behind of a former thought that we are something, when in fact we are not.

Yes. From the vantage point of the person, from a relative point of view, it is a hypothetical event in time and space, but this is a complete misconception originating from the person. From the vantage point of light, there is only light, and there has always been and will always be only light. It is beyond time.

The stark statement that the world and our body are mere illusions comes as a shock to most Western thinkers. Could we perhaps explore this in order to make it less strange, less startling?

First, let us understand that from the point of view of the witnessing Consciousness, the body is an object like any other. Along with the rest of the world as we actually know it, it is made out of sensory perceptions.

Your listener might respond that it is not quite correct to say that the body, like any other object, is made out of sensations. Rather, he may say that these objects are made out of matter, and that that is revealed to us, in its various facets, via sensations, via the sense organs, the mind and awareness.

Yes, at this instant the illusory aspect of the world comes in. When we say that the world is made out of matter, we replace an undeniable fact, our sensory experience, by the unverifiable hypothesis of a world out there existing independently from us.

So, an "object" is ever a mere appearance and never seen "objectively"?

Not as an object. In the words of the Sufis of the School of Oneness, "There is nothing that is not Him."

Why is the firm belief in an external world so widespread and tenacious? Why do so few people question it?

The "why?" takes us away. To know why there are so many people thinking otherwise doesn't get us one inch closer to the truth. The real question is, "Is there a world apart from awareness?" If anyone claims such a reality out there, existing independently from Consciousness, then that person carries the burden of proof.

What is the ego?

I would define the ego as a concept originating from the "I am" experience, pure being without attributes, the absolute certitude of our existence. When I conceptualize this experience, I name it "I" or "I am." There is nothing wrong with the pure concept "I am." The ego comes in the moment I say "I am this or that," "I am a man or a woman," etc. The "this or that" superimposes a limitation onto something that, up until now, was limitless.

So the concept in this case disappears into awareness...

And also refers to awareness, to reality. It originates from reality and brings us back to reality. We remain, so to speak, at home. But the moment we say "I am this or that," we create a division in reality.

Between the "me" and the not "me"?

Exactly, because if I am "this," I am not "not this," there is something that I am not. I have assigned a limit, a contour to my being. The ego is this contour. It defines two separate domains, creating duality.

It seems to me that defining the ego the way you have defined it simultaneously defines the world.

Absolutely, the body-mind complex and the world are two sides of the

same coin, artificially created by thought, out of unicity.

The mind arises in awareness, but awareness somehow acts through the mind. Could you clarify this interrelationship?
The mind is a concept which, as any other concept, refers to other concepts or to perceptions. In this case, the mind is seen as the container of all mentations. The mind is not an organ like the brain, it is not perceived, it is an abstraction; so there is no mind, there is only the concept of a mind. What is there then? Thoughts and perceptions or, more precisely, mentations. A mentation originates from awareness and sooner or later dissolves again into awareness. Thus, any mentation is awareness, in the same way that a gold ring, which originates from gold and later melts down into gold, is in fact always only gold. So there is only awareness.

What would you say to those who find your perspective either too theoretical or too difficult to apply in everyday life?
Actually, this perspective is the least theoretical one can think of. Theoretical means "based upon concepts." Non-dualism is a total rejection of all concepts, and so is radically non-theoretical. Since the non-dualist is not interested in any theories, his vantage point is eminently practical. Those who have been conditioned to understand in conceptual terms, in objective terms, moving from concept to concept, when confronted with a non-objective perspective, fail in their desperate attempt to find something to cling to, an object, a concept, and attribute their failure to the complexity or the "theoretical character" of non-dualism. The only obstacle in this case is their own beliefs, theories and habits that prevent them from having the direct experience of their own real nature.

One shouldn't worry if one doesn't understand all the various arguments because each represents only one side, one face, of the truth. Any of these paths leads to the ultimate; one needs take only one of them to get there and stay there. In time, as one establishes oneself in the single truth, all questions find their final answer. From the top of the mountain, looking down on the valleys, one can see all paths leading up to the summit — the one you followed as well as many others you might have taken.

Coming back to the original point, it may be of interest to remark that a theoretical approach never leads to a fully satisfactory answer to any question. To the question "Why A,?" the theoretician answers "Because B." Then the question "Why B?" arises, to which he answers, "Because C," and so on. He remains caught in an endless causal regression.

It is clear that assuming this perspective is based on theoretical presuppositions, that theoreticians have made a mistake. But have they made a mistake in thinking that it is very difficult? It certainly, at first glance, does not seem a simple matter to transcend concepts.
It is very difficult, in fact it is impossible, for the ego to have a clear understanding of this perspective, but it is very easy for the heart to have an inkling of it. So I would tell them, "Let your heart be your guide." Whatever brings you a flash of joyful understanding, keep it, cherish it. Do not start from the negative side, from the 'I don't understand' side. Start with what you understand, what makes you happy. There is no need to understand everything; there is only one thing to understand, your permanent inner core. Only you can understand you, only you can be you. You cannot see you, you cannot think you, because you *are* you." Isn't it simple?

What is meditation?
Meditation is our natural state, what we are spontaneously, what we have always been and will for ever be. Devoid of duality, of fragmentation generated by the I-concept, it is pure being, pure awareness, pure happiness.

Meditation then does not take time, does not occur in time, but is rather eternally present?
Our true nature is permanent. It may call us at any moment of our daily life. It is important to remain available to it and to respond with our whole being. There are privileged moments when this invitation is felt more forcefully, for instance when waking up in the morning, before going to sleep in the evening, after a task has been accomplished, when a fear or a desire comes to an end, when we are astonished and find ourselves off the beaten path. We should make good use of these precious moments, especially the transitional states between sleeping and waking. If there is no compelling reason to keep us busy, we can live these moments completely, remaining open to our thoughts and bodily sensations, enjoying our freedom and the close presence, the peace of deep sleep.

This quiet welcoming of our thoughts and sensations should not become a drill or a habit. This would kill the freshness, the spontaneity of these moments. Like a lover, we should be ready to answer the slightest sign from the beloved, knowing that there is nothing we can do to bring about this invitation, since it comes from grace. In this way, we remain in our innocence, without any agenda, having nothing to lose and nothing to gain in the game of life.

This attitude of openness may be misinterpreted by an external observer who, projecting his own concepts, may think that a person is practicing esoteric exercises to achieve some mystical goal when in fact there is nobody, nothing is done, and there is no goal. ■

Profiles in Spirit

N. Balarama Reddy

By Matthew Greenblatt

When my wife and I first met Balarama Reddy on a visit to India in 1979-1981 he was in his late seventies, with the energy and vitality of a person half his age. There was a lilt in his walk and a regal air about him; keeping up with him during early evening walks was always a challenge. Balarama lived in a simple, austere room along the northern part of Sri Ramanasramam, the Ashram of Ramana Maharshi in Tiruvannamalai, South India. He would almost always keep to himself but would "hold court" for the few that had an opportunity to move more closely with him.

Balarama spent most of the year at Ramanasramam, leaving only during the hot summer months. Wherever he lived his routine was always the same: he would rise at 2:30 a.m. each morning and drink a cup of coffee prepared the night before, kept warm in an old thermos. The balance of the morning hours would be spent sitting on his bed, absorbed in meditation until daybreak. After breakfast he would read, attend to correspondence, and take a brisk walk. After lunch and the proverbial post-lunch Indian *siesta*, it would be time for *tiffin* — the traditional late-afternoon snack and coffee. Toward the end of the *siesta* period, a man would often come to our room with a note from Balarama, inviting us to join him for *tiffin*. It was during these afternoon meetings that Balarama would open his heart and talk about spiritual life and his long association with Ramana Maharshi.

Photo: Matthew Greenblatt

(Left to Right) V. Ganesan, Kunju Swami, N. Balarama Reddy, and V. S. Ramanan (President of Sri Ramanasramam). Taken in 1980 during the Birth Centenary of Ramana Maharshi

As a young man he had studied for a law degree at a major university in the city of Benares. However, once he understood that his real calling in life was to realize his true nature, he simply walked out of the university, shortly before taking his final exams. After living with Sadhu Vaswani, a well-known Indian saint, he settled at the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo. It was at Sri Aurobindo's ashram that Balarama came to learn of the great sage Ramana Maharshi. After visiting the Maharshi on several occasions, he felt that this is where he should spend the rest of his life.

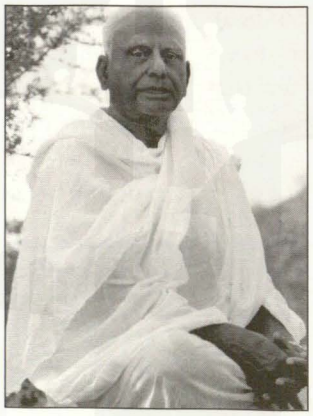
When he spoke of Ramana his face would light up. But more than words, Balarama had the special ability to bring the presence of the great sage to the conversation. Those who listened to his stories were able to feel the tangible peace that permeated the Maharshi's presence. In the late evenings, when we would be at the end of a long walk, he would often find a quiet place to sit and would become quietly absorbed. Meditating with him at these times lifted one beyond the mind and body to that awareness which simply is. Once, on an afternoon walk, we sat on boulders facing the sacred hill Arunachala, and he spoke about the environs of this special hill. "The town of Tiruvannamalai had always been a religious center" he said, "but because of Ramana Maharshi, it is now a spiritual center. His presence is felt everywhere. In other places power is quick to enter the seeker, bringing many experiences through the mind. Here, Ramana's path is through the heart and one's experience come slowly, but the benefits are permanent. For us time is bound in our own preconceptions; for Ramana it was a speck in eternity."

He was very clear that the goal of life was Self-knowledge and that we need only realize what we already are.

His outlook was very eclectic and he recognized the same truth in all authentic teachings, drawing on them and making them his own. One day we were walking down the road and he began to describe the great contribution of Jesus as a spiritual teacher. He became quite animated and was completely absorbed in the moment with Christ and his disciples. As he raised his hands exclaiming the truth of Jesus's words, I had to quickly reach out and grab him from the path of an oncoming bus.

We had the opportunity to travel with him on many occasions and wherever we went in South India, admirers would learn about his presence in town and join in the afternoon *tiffin*. Balarama's mother tongue was Telugu but he spoke excellent English, Tamil, and Sanskrit as well. He was a scholar in the true sense of the term and would read classic Hindu texts in their original languages. An appropriate quote from the vast array of scriptures was never far from his lips when making a point or conveying an idea. While he was an avid reader, he always encouraged people to learn who they truly are and not rely on second-hand knowledge. It was this great mind and simple heart that allowed him to "see" the essence of things.

He once had a long philosophical dialogue, in Sanskrit, with the current senior *Acharya* (Spiritual head) of the Kanchi *Mutt* (monastic center), in South India. Yet with all this great learning, he was intrinsically a very simple man. When people began to articulate and discuss the nuances of meditation or self-enquiry, he would often say, "This is nothing new. Socrates said it long ago, simply 'know thyself'."


Balarama Reddy

While Balarama Reddy was a great practitioner of the path of self-enquiry, he could appreciate and understand those who reached the supreme state through divine love and devotion. When the great English mystic Krishna Prem (Ronald Nixon) came to visit Ramana Maharshi, the Maharshi asked Balarama to personally escort Krishna Prem on his tour of South India. Balarama was impressed with Krishna Prem's deep devotion to God, which manifested outwardly in his life as a traditional *Vaishnaivite* Hindu monk.

Balarama often spoke about the essence of love, especially as embodied in Ramana Maharshi. "The love of Ramana was unmistakable. Even if one were to sit in the hall and be totally unnoticed for weeks together, one would leave feeling this great love." We had an opportunity to experience the expression of this love when I needed to take up professional work for a while and would be leaving the Ashram. Balarama accompanied my wife and me to Bangalore, and like a loving father took us from shop to shop, purchasing saris, pants, and shirts for our use. He became so filled with childlike enthusiasm while shopping that he had the salesperson literally pulling down piles of goods — to make sure we had enough items to choose from. We heard later from a friend that this simple, loving act was quite unusual since he rarely stepped into a shop to buy anything.

He would often say that Ramana Maharshi was a phenomenon, and that the power and grace of his presence had just begun to be released: "Ramana is the phenomena of the age. He cannot be compared, as one cannot compare the ocean or the sky. The Maharshi had the unique ability to instill in one a sense of self-confidence concerning one's ability to become fully awakened. He would say, 'why do you say it is difficult; you can realize at any moment?' His words were not the words of a mere man — they actually transformed lives. When the Maharshi was alive, those around him would say 'Bhagavan is in the hall,' or 'he is taking his walk' or 'he is in the kitchen.' Now, his presence is everywhere, not limited to a specific location."

Balarama's childlike nature included a deep sense of gratitude for even the smallest favor done for him. Once, we brought him a small gas stove to help him heat up milk and coffee when he awoke at 2:30 each morning. It was a very simple act but his reaction was quite astonishing. For days we heard about the amazing qualities of the stove, how it had made his milk warming so effortless and so on. It made a lasting impression on me, since we take for granted most things that happen in our lives.

Balarama never made any claims about himself and avoided company as far as possible. He never spoke about himself being a disciple and, in fact, emphasized that Ramana himself often said he had no disciples. He was amused by those who made claims to have had "special experience" or ideas of "successorship," and he encouraged us to check them out for ourselves. Yet there are several people who spent many years in association with the Maharshi and seemed to imbibe a grace — a fragrance which would emanate from them. Balarama Reddy was one of these people. He passed away this spring as naturally as he had lived; in a quiet, almost invisible manner. There is much to be learned by observing the lives of such people who contribute to the legacy of authentic living, by their firm abidance in God or the Self at all times.

What is most memorable was his steadfastness to Truth. His was an ironclad determination and the complete conviction that he was not the body but the eternal witness to all phenomena. He was fortunate that finan-

A Pilgrimage to Tirupathi

During the hot summer months Balarama would leave Tiruvannamalai, to spend time in cooler, elevated cities. On two occasions, Balarama invited us to spend the weekend with him at Tirupathi, in the state of Andrah Pradesh. Tirupathi is probably one of the most famous places of pilgrimage in India. The ancient *Venkataeswara* (Vishnu) Temple is built high atop a mountain at the edge of town. These sacred hills, known as the *Tirumala* hills, attract pilgrims from all over India.

Arriving at Balarama's hotel room in Tirupathi, he gave us the name of a person to meet for arranging a room at the top of the hill. After he dropped us at the bus station, we were privileged to take an infamous "wild bus ride" courtesy of the Indian bus drivers who seem to relish living life on the edge. Rounding hairpin turns at breakneck speeds, these drivers delight in meeting oncoming buses head-on, only to swerve off the road at the last minute. While we were praying to simply reach the top, the other passengers happily cheered our driver on.

Settling into a small room in the vicinity of the temple, we found ourselves transported into another time and realm. The sounds of prayer bells and chanting filtered through the mist-shrouded air, and from wherever one stood the top of the temple tower hovered in sight. All around the perimeter of the temple was a pedestrian road where *Mutts* (monasteries) representing many of the major religious groups of Hinduism were located.

The next day Balarama joined us and took us on a tour. We had never seen him so excited. Steeped in the *Advaitic* (non-dualistic) tradition and a brilliant scholar in *Vedantic* lore, he became like a child, almost ecstatic, and his heart opened in a special way. As we rounded the corner to the Temple steps we began to see hundreds of pilgrims lining up in long queues around the Temple's outer periphery. Balarama stopped and, almost moved to tears, began telling us about the pilgrims who had waited almost a lifetime for a chance to stand in these queues — often up to twelve hours at a time. The thought of making this pilgrimage had sustained them through their difficult days and they had sacrificed much to spend a few moments walking through the halls of this temple. He asked us specifically to notice the joy on the faces of these simple folk. We stood there transfixed, watching people whom most would refer to as "downtrodden." But these were not downtrodden people at all — for they were rich; rich in faith, rich in love, and filled with a genuine sense of happiness and gratitude for the fulfillment of their dream.

After this experience, life in India was never quite the same.

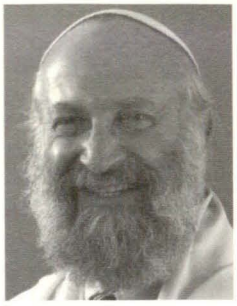
cial circumstances allowed him to live a hermit's life, without undue cares, responsibilities, or pressure, in close proximity to one of the great sages of this century. Yet it doesn't mean we have to live in a forest hermitage to experience this awareness. Balarama was very clear that the Self is not limited or bound by time or space, and we can awaken to it in whatever circumstances we happen to be. One of the last things I remember Balarama telling us was, "Is this (the Maharshi's) presence for a lifetime only? When devotees pleaded with him during his illness that he should not leave them he answered: 'Where can I go?' As I recall these words now, 30 years later, it remains as vivid as the moment they were spoken. Ramana did not ask anyone to do anything, he simply wanted us just TO BE."

> For us time is bound in our own preconceptions; for Ramana it was a speck in eternity.

Balarama Reddy used to often remind us that to be what we are requires no external activity and is always available regardless of outer circumstances. He shunned teachers and gurus who would impose their will on another and he believed in experience rather than blind devotion. Balarama Reddy never wrote publicly about Ramana Maharshi. One day I asked him why he didn't share the reminiscences of his close association with this great sage. He was silent for a long time. Then he lifted his head, looked directly into my eyes, and with a great intensity said, "There is already so much written about it. I don't have much to add. The ego is so sly that I don't want to even give it a chance to raise its head. It may project that I was privileged to experience these events. It is not the events that are important, it is each one's experience of Truth. The essence of Ramana's life and teachings is experiencing Truth — it is that simple." ■

Living Kabbalah

An Interview With Rabbi David A. Cooper



Kabbalah *is a system of ancient Judaic wisdom that reveals the truth of the individual, God, and the world. The* Zohar *is the definitive book of* Kabbalah *and provides the deeper meaning behind the stories in the Torah.*

IDJ: *You've participated in fairly long and intensive meditation retreats, especially at Vipassana centers. In your books you discuss contemplative practices from Sufism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen, etc. How has your association with these other traditions and the practice of silent retreat influenced your own desire to lead a meditative life?*

David Cooper: I used to be a political consultant in Washington, DC. During that time I began attending short retreats. I became involved in Sufism for some time and ultimately went to the Lama Foundation to participate in a retreat there. At the Lama Foundation I realized that silence was a very strong path for me. I continued attending short retreats: long weekends, maybe a week or ten days at a time. When I was forty-one years old, I managed to take a forty-day retreat and it drew me much deeper into my spiritual practice. It taught me that I needed to have a strong discipline on some level. I was drawn to Eastern tradition because that was my background and area of study. But a small voice kept coming up saying I was born a Jew, and following another tradition which accepted reincarnation, I would eventually have to answer the question: "Why was I born Jewish?" I had a strong feeling that my practice of retreat would be more effective in the lineage of my birth.

My wife and I moved to the Old City of Jerusalem. While I was studying Jewish mysticism, I developed a strong need for contemplative practice and discovered *Vipassana*. At my second *Vipassana* retreat, I understood the value of this very powerful and positive practice. In the middle of a Buddhist retreat, my Jewish world literally began to open up. While in this quiet state I put on my *Tefillin* (phylacteries) and they began to speak to me, in an entirely new way. Saying prayers, reading psalms, and several other Jewish practices started to provide genuine mystical awareness. I began to understand that the mystical part of our tradition is just waiting to be unveiled, if approached from a different state of consciousness. As I deepened my *Vipassana* practice, I began to explore Judaism from a completely different state of awareness. The entire Jewish world began opening up for me. While on retreat I started reading some of the old commentaries and discovered that they had a tone similar to the Eastern teachings. And, I realized that the only way to understand their meaning was to approach my studies from this new state of consciousness.

During this time I sharpened my practice of Buddhist meditation and other techniques to help understand the nature of the mind. While many meditation students spent their reading time studying Buddhist texts and *Sutras*, I focused on learning *Torah* (the five books of Moses) and Jewish mystical practice. The great teachings of the old Jewish sages revealed a state of consciousness beyond everyday experience.

Since that time I have talked with quite a few people who have engaged in Zen practice or other Eastern meditation techniques. Many of them have taken a new look at Judaism and have come to realize that it is a deeply mystical and spiritual tradition. I heard a statistic not long ago that was quite frightening. The numbers I heard indicated that whereas one-third of the Jewish world was killed during the Holocaust, almost ninety percent of the practicing hasidic world and the kabbalistic teachers were destroyed. So, while many, many Jews were lost, the heart of the contemplative and the spiritual side of Judaism was almost extinguished.

IDJ: *Would you say that this tradition was passed on orally?*

DC: Yes, for the longest time. In *Kabbalah* there are certain things that can only be imparted by a teacher. If you pick up the *Zohar*, the primary text of Jewish mysticism, you are not going to get anywhere. Because even though it has been translated into English, it is very difficult to understand without a teacher.

Right now I am working to glean the deeper meanings of Jewish mystical teachings. With a solid background in traditional Judaism, I am now concentrating on a contemplative approach to unlock the secrets hidden in classical texts. I am currently going through the *Zohar* page by page — it is mind blowing.

IDJ: *According to Jewish mystical tradition, how is the true nature of the individual explained and expressed?*

DC: There are two fundamental practices in mystical Judaism. One is called *bittul hayesh*, which means the nullification of the "there is." The nullification of the "there is" means that the only way that I can attain true connec-

tion with the Divine is by nullifying the sense of "myself," my ego sense. One could say then that one's true nature is "nothing," that we are but vehicles for the expression for the Divine, and that every self identity is illusory. That is one particular practice. There is another practice called *meserit nefesh*. *Meserit* means "sacrifice" or "surrender," and *nefesh* means soul. So it could be translated as "selflessness."

Whether you look at *bittul hayesh* or *meserit nefesh*, both of them indicate that one's true nature is nothing but light. Kabbalists use light and vessel as a basic metaphor for all that exists. Since this light is infinite and there is nothing to attain, practices work on the vessel. This vessel, named David, is energized by an infinite light. kabbalistic practices work on the vessel, which is imperfect and "leaking." So if one fixes the vessel — closes the seam so to speak — light instantly fills it. Even though we think of this vessel as having form, it is actually made of infinite light, and this limitless light is our true nature.

IDJ: *Can you tell me some of the practices that one might do to become aware of this infinite light?*

DC: When we talk about light, ultimately we are talking about consciousness. The kabbalistic cosmology is one of concentric spheres of consciousness, with the center of these spheres being the Divine. So whenever we talk about light, or vessel, or any other form we are really talking about layers of consciousness. One of these spheres [layers] is *Adamic* (Adam) consciousness. The first human forms, Adam and Eve, are identified as the consciousness that goes from nonrecognition of the Divine to recognition of the Divine. Once we have recognition of the Divine, that is *Adamic* (or human) consciousness. The next step moves us closer to the center. I call this *Abrahamic* consciousness. *Abrahamic* consciousness is on a level that moves from a sense of the Divine in its multiplicity to a sense of the Divine as a unifying force and a unity.

One of the fundamental practices in Judaism is called *Talmud Torah,* which means immersion in *Torah* consciousness. On a basic level it means you and I would sit over a text and work with it, trying to "break it open." On a deeper level, it's really living one's life in the context of *Torah* consciousness, always immersed in it. With every breath you pull in, you are aware of the fact that you are doing spiritual practice.

To really connect with Jewish mysticism, you have to live the life of Jewish practice, which means that from the first moment of awareness in the morning until we go to bed at night, we are conscious of being vehicles for the expression of the Divine.

Hasidism (the movement of Jewish mysticism, originating in Poland in the 18th century) offers many different ways to develop deeper connections with the Divine. One of them, called *Hitbodedut,* means seclusion (either outer or inner). Outer seclusion typically utilizes a physical place where we can get away from people. Inner seclusion means trying to isolate that inner silence within the busy mind. This sounds very much like Eastern meditation practice, yet this approach has been part of Judaism for a long, long time. *Hitbodedut* is one of the principal practices in *Hasidism.*

IDJ: *Why are the mystical teachings in* Kabbalah *somewhat secretive and not easily accessible to people when compared with the mystical teachings of other traditions? Is there a rationale for this or is it solely due to the periods of history in which these teachings and practices took place?*

DC: Well, they are secretive by design. There are a number of hypothesis concerning secretness and accessibility. I think the most prevalent one is that mainstream Judaism has always been extraordinarily fearful of the mystical bent, because mysticism constantly challenges the mainstream religious view. Jewish mysticism really began to get a foothold in Judaism within the *Hasidic* movement because the *Baal Shem Tov* (founder of the Hasidic movement) and the *Hasids* that followed him were willing to challenge the mainstream. This led to a major conflict between what we call the *Mitnagim* (the opposition) and the *Hasidim*, the ones that wanted to live a life filled with joy, song, and prayer. These *Hasidim* wanted to live in the presence of the Divine and the study of *Torah* was not their primary concern. Well, the mainstream said: "If you let go of *Torah*, you've lost Judaism." This battle went on for a long time and it continues today. Some people feel that anything mystical is not Jewish. When I lived in Israel and I would sit in meditation, people would say, "Well, that's simply not Jewish." (*laughter*)

IDJ: *Would you say that the Hasidic movement brought to Judaism a greater awareness of the heart, rather than the head? Was their special contribution the path of love or devotion?*

DC: That was the way *Hasidism* began a few hundred years ago. It really was the path of the heart. There are many stories told about the *Hasidim,* in which they would dance wildly, tumble, and yell — do all kinds of things that were very "un-Jewish." And they were simply having a good time reveling in their ecstatic devotion. But today the *Hasidic* movement has become mainstream, devoid of the spiritual ecstasy that marked its earlier days. The *Hasidim,* in our time, are the Jewish renewal folks who are going back to the devotional, contemplative approach to connect with the Divine.

IDJ: *Why is the kabbalistic expression of God so different from that of mainstream Judaism?*

DC: One of the major problems that people have with Judaism is that there is a sense of a vindictive God out there. They feel hesitant to deal with a tradition that has a God like this. In standard translations of *Genesis*, the first verse begins: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The *Kabbalah* (from the start) said this passage should be translated differently. It should read: "With beginningness (it) created God, heaven, and earth. What is the "it"? The "it" is called *Einsof*. The *Einsof* is defined as the "infinite nothingness" that has no attributes whatsoever. This sounds exactly like a mystical description of the Divine found in many traditions. *Kabbalah* has been talking about *Einsof* for a thousand years, stating that this infinite nothingness created God, heaven, earth, and the beginning; it created the beginning. Now we may ask, "What is the God that we are looking at in the Old Testament?" The God in the Old Testament is not *Einsof*, it's simply a form of the Divine that we can relate to. Since we can't relate to *Einsof*, the stories that come through the *Torah* are teaching tales, not revelations of the character of God. So, with this information, our outlook and relationship to the tradition changes; we no longer need to relate to an angry or vindictive God.

> The Messiah rests within each one of us. We do our own work and raise our own level of consciousness.

Now, we must pose the question: "If this is mainstream Jewish mysticism, how come Judaism never got it?" And this is the really big question. Jewish mystical teachings suggest that the entire *Torah* offers us instruction concerning the attainment of higher states of consciousness and a deepening awareness of the Divine, but this is not the way *Torah* is normally taught. Yet, ultimately I believe this is the direction Judaism must take in the future. Just as the Jewish mystics did in the past.

One of the expressed goals in Judaism is the bringing of the Messiah. The mystics say the Messiah is not a physical being but rather *Messianic* consciousness. *Messianic* consciousness is not the same as the Messiah. The important shift in awareness is a move into the sphere of *Messianic* consciousness. In this state we don't relate to the world in the same way as before.

IDJ: *Are we talking about coming into a new awareness?*

DC: Absolutely. The Messiah rests within each one of us. We do our own work and raise our own level of consciousness.

IDJ: *Would you say, in the practice of Jewish mysticism, there is a sense of implied duality when compared with other Eastern approaches to God?*

DC: Duality in Judaism is a matter of perspective, the same as in the other traditions you refer to. When we see through the eyes of God (so to speak) there is no duality. Jewish mysticism is very clear about this; it says in the *Shema*, "There is only One." There is no duality from the Divine perspective. But the mystics go another step, using the image of layers of consciousness that we spoke about earlier. Human consciousness dwells in a reality that has duality. That's our reality and there's just no way we can get around it. However, that is not the only reality. Judaism plays it both ways and it is a paradox. In every tradition we find these paradoxes.

Judaism is a social tradition, we are constantly fixing the world. So this is the game that the mystics play; they don't simply get stuck in the duality. To the question of who rises first, you or God, the kabbalists answer "they both arise simultaneously."

We are always going to be stuck concerning the teachings of non-duality. As long as the nature of thought is implicitly dualistic, there is going to be a profound paradox.

IDJ: *Could you tell me a little bit about the Heart of Stillness Hermitage?*

DC: We have a little place in the mountains, not far from Boulder, Colorado. My wife and I designed it for people who wish to come for independent retreats. The environment is eclectic, there is no emphasis on a particular ideology, and visitors have complete freedom to spend time in their own meditative practice. We wanted to provide a place that would allow someone to practice independently for extended periods of time, yet still have the benefit of counseling. As you know, when one is on a long retreat it is often good to have someone available as a "sounding board," a service my wife and I provide. There are many retreat places in the country. I wanted to provide an eclectic place, modestly priced, in a quiet and clean environment.

IDJ: *What options do you see for people who turn to Judaism in hope of genuinely finding inner peace and ultimately God or the Divine Consciousness?*

DC: I'm absolutely convinced that in a short period of time, perhaps twenty years, there is going to be a vehicle in the Jewish context to be intensely spiritual and contemplative, to be mystically identified with Judaism, and to feel that the tradition is truly nourishing the soul at the deepest level. ■

Rabbi David A. Cooper is the author of Silence, Simplicity, and Solitude; The Heart of Stillness; *and* Entering the Sacred Mountain. *Rabbi Cooper commutes monthly from the Colorado mountains to serve as Rabbi for a contemplative-oriented congregation in Los Angeles,* Makom Ohr Shalom. *He was ordained by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi in 1992.*

Inner Transformation

Independent of Knowledge & Time

SECOND OF TWO PARTS

By Allan W. Anderson

Knowledge and Time

The English word, "knowledge," is etymologically somewhat obscure. However, what seems fairly certain is that it derives from Middle English where it meant "to admit," "confess." The element of confession gives the word a certain religious aura which confers upon it a high seriousness. An anterior etymology relates "knowledge" to "note" whose main source is Latin "*nota*" a brand, a mark by which one recognizes what is at hand. These two etymological roots lend the word "knowledge" a high respect and an air of permanency.

The word's relation to time is clearly on the side of the past, since what bears a mark has already been branded. The bearer of the brand is easily reduced in the mind to a tool for carrying the mark, as the mark is all important for identification; yet it remains an abstraction. As an abstraction it has the power to last well beyond the existence of its bearers. This seemingly magical property so enhances its dignity that it is easily forgotten that the mark, as such, is of the past, and to fix the mind upon it, imagining it an authentic creature of the present, is to misunderstand the mark and oneself also.

These remarks do not apply to the practical order where the uses of memory are absolutely necessary. One could not drive a car, wash dishes, get to work, or operate sophisticated instruments without the uses of memory, let alone undertake prodigious reckonings in the calculative order.

On the contrary, I refer here to the matter of attitude, *i.e.*, whether the measure of my present living is a mark from the past to which I am attached or whether my attention is one of listening and watching free from attachment. One of the keys to how knowledge can and almost certainly does govern attitude is furnished by our word "recognition." To re-cognize is to know again. We cannot recognize what we have not known before. This is crucial for our emotional relation to symbol, dogma, and ritual, since all three relate so intimately to our belief structures. These structures we impose upon the present by whatever means we feel necessary and appropriate to make the present in every particular continuous with the past. Any break in this dreary chain we interpret as a threat to where and how we are in the world. This species of fear is one of the principal causes of continuing religious and political violence the world over, to say nothing of neighborhood and domestic conflicts.

Our inveterate habit of superimposing upon the present an image from the past is devastating to interpersonal relationships, since it disables us from meeting the other with a fresh and innocent eye. Before we are aware of it, the experience of our first encounter with the other converts to a belief, and from then on each new experience with the other is reduced in our mind to that belief. Such an attitude and conviction are lethal to understanding and leave us perennial prisoners of time, cemented in the past.

There is a distinction between knowledge as static and knowing as dynamic which points a way out of this bondage. Knowing is a movement free from slavery to its source.

There is a remarkable text in St. John's Gospel [17:3] which, when translated strictly from the Greek, discloses this untrammeled way of knowing: "This is eternal life, that they should keep on knowing thee the only true God . . . " I am not concerned in the implicit theology of this text. It is the phrase, "that they should keep on knowing . . . " which arrests attention in the context of this meditation.

The term, eternal life, joins two words that seem mutually exclusive. Classically, eternity has meant timeless existence, i.e., existence without change. This is not the same as infinite time or endless duration. Eternity is the ever abiding now without respect to any then or when, any past or future. However, life, as we ordinarily understand it, is subject to time. For the individual or the collective, life comes to be and passes away. The life of a thing has a beginning, a middle, and an end, a life cycle. Finite existence which is existence subject to change endures a temporal career. Then what can eternal life possibly mean for a mortal existence?

The unprecedented in every instant is the home of the eternal. The unprecedented has no antecedent. It is the absolute new as distinguished from what is novel. The great Danish thinker, Kierkegaard, defined the instant as an "atom of eternity." This implies that it cannot be one moment among others in the temporal chain of cause and effect. The Buddha, noting the circularity of cause and effect, observed that if there is only cause and effect, then there cannot be the liberation of self-awakening. Self-awakening is an instantaneous leap out of causalism into a sphere unmodified by the uses of time.

We are now in a position to contemplate the seemingly contradictory term, eternal-life. Even though the sphere into which self-awakening leaps is not contaminated by time, it nonetheless irradiates and redeems it. This being so, eternal-life is realizable now, upon this present instant of self-awakening. Eternal-life is not limited to a beginning after death

but, as eternal, it is ever present and, as life, it is now. Self-awakening is not a gradual illumination as though one were lifting a shade within a darkened room. Self-awakening suddenly, instantaneously sees the intrinsic light of one's own being, where before there was only darkness caused by the blindness of self-misunderstanding.

When Jesus prays to his Father in heaven saying, "This is eternal life, that they should keep on knowing thee . . ." he points up that nothing of *this* knowing can be reduced to the known. This knowing is ever afresh, unprecedented, free from the duality of the knower and the known, experiencer and experienced, controller and controlled. One keeps on awakening to it that there is no intrinsic separation and division since, in the words of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, "Nothing was divided and there is nothing to unite." Knowledge which is in bondage to time no longer hinders knowing which keeps on leaping into the sphere of the abiding, the ever present now.

Understanding and Timelessness

Every language contains certain words which are particularly strong in their power and compass to disclose what they express. The English word, "understand," is one of these. Its clear distinction from the word "knowledge" is sharply brought forward in the words of an old African wise woman who remarked: "The white man knows a very great deal but doesn't understand anything." She put her finger on the heart of the word. The English word "understand" denotes not only a work of intellect. It includes also a response from the heart. It embraces a dual meaning. On the one hand, to understand is to comprehend, to discern. On the other, it includes empathy, sympathy, the resonating of one heart to another precisely as the other's uniqueness is intuitively embraced. These features of understanding are open to intelligence but closed to calculative reason. Whatever intellect can abstract from these affections cannot stand in for their concrete expressions; so, one can say to another, "Yes, it is the case that you know all about me, but what really matters is that you understand me." At that point, unless I am mistaken in the other, a gentle peace suffuses our mutual presence and, as we say, we understand one another.

The duality in unity in the word, "understand," lies deeper than the distinction within it between a matter of the head and the heart. Quite simply, the word means to stand under.

We are counter-directed between the movement upward by which we stand and the movement downward that roots our posture to its base. The borderline between these counter-tendencies exists vibratively, waveringly and, to an obstinate perspective, even waywardly.

Since the structure of our nature abides without change, it is a matter of bearing it well or ill in the now. To bear oneself well is to stand under the obligation to be true to one's own nature. It is a question of authenticity, whether or not I will hold to my own way of being what and who I am, which existence has required of me from the moment I came into the world. Existence has always the first move and specifies in advance not only my way of being but also the way of every being throughout the term of its natural career. The truth of any being's existence hangs in fidelity to its unique way of being, even at the cost of its individual existence. There is not only cognitive or logical truth but also existential truth, the truth that lies outside of thought. Erich Frank (*Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth*, 114) defines existential truth as "To be that which one is, is true." This authentic way of being cannot be expressed self-consciously. One cannot, in the strict sense, copy oneself. Yet, self-betrayal is a fact and an all too frequent occurrence. It happens when thought obtrudes upon one's intuitive response to what is at hand. Timely action is lost. Almost inevitably at such times we say, "I have let myself down."

It is a question of authenticity, whether or not I will hold to my own way of being what and who I am, which existence has required of me from the moment I came into the world.

From this it follows that living true to myself, bearing myself well, is not a matter of developing from a worse state to a better, as though one could progress from self-betrayal to self-authenticity. Rather, it is a matter of not falling out of one's natural state to begin with. In the natural state there is no identifying with my idea of myself or even with my felt self-presence. Every world-class athlete understands this at the level of physical action. Not all such athletes realize that principle in living out their lives as a whole. The attitude that frees them for superlative physical feats is the same attitude that frees us all from self-betrayal when that attitude governs the actual character and quality of our total living. This attitude of full openness to the unprecedented present instant cannot be one attitude among others but must inform my every action if wholeness is to obtain.

What is the stance that underlies my bearing myself well? It is patience. This answer might surprise given the low esteem to which this concept has fallen in this century. Contemporary standard English translations of the Greek New Testament in numerous instances replace the translation, "patience," with the

word "endurance." These words, when contemplated in depth, disclose how dramatically they differ in spirit. Patience transcends time, endurance is time bound; it looks for release.

The beautiful Greek word for patience, 'hypomone' means literally, "remaining under" or "staying behind." The kinship between patience and understanding reveals itself on noting that they are free from any projection upon the future. Unlike endurance, whose strain longs for relief to come, patience neither tries nor expects, as understanding neither withers nor blows its own trumpet. Knowledge can parade itself theatrically. If understanding became self-conscious it would perish. Patience and understanding, though operating with time, are not the children of time. They are above time while bearing up activities within time. Patience consists in suspending the will to completion, in leaving it empty of design, detached and open to the unprecedented in every present instant. In like spirit, understanding stands abidingly under a thing's way, supporting it, resonating to it regardless of the thing's style or fortunes for good or ill. Understanding as a work of love abides timelessly.

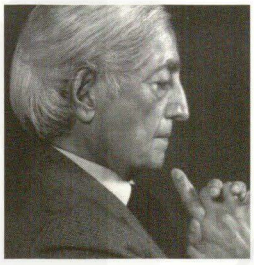
Not to Misunderstand and Timing

Life is lived out between the timeless and time. It does not enjoy the absolute security of the timeless nor is it reducible to the sheer accidents of time. It both hints of timelessness and threatens dissolution. Life then is problematic for us and calls for the keenest attention if we are to live well. It is not the case that life lives itself out mechanically in us; rather, it is in our quality of living that we lay hold on life.

Life lived well is not a matter of timelessness or of time but of timing. By the timely, I do not mean something opportunistically grabbed. What is timely upon every instant is what attends and follows from a meditational attitude. A meditational attitude is receptive to the voice of Socratic intuition or what I call primal intuition. This is the voice that Socrates said never told him what to do but what not to do. This requires an astonishing degree of faith to obey it since reason has no part in it, indeed cannot have a part in it, since primal intuition opens out upon the incalculable, the unprecedented in every present instant.

Before we bolt from this, let us note that intelligence is not embarrassed by it. The root meaning of the word "intelligence" means something gathered in-between. Between what? Between the timeless and time, which is the timely.

Intelligence, which is never restless, waits quietly, unattachedly within the in-between. It waits upon what is specified for us in advance, what we can have no knowledge of ahead of time. Intelligence obeys the negative summons of primal intuition and rejoices in the unheralded that comes to pass.


J. Krishnamurti

Primal intuition calls upon that creative inhibition that halts before what at the time ought not to be known or acted upon and might never be known or acted upon, since it would land us in self-misunderstanding.

Not to misunderstand, then, in this context, means not to misunderstand oneself by disobeying the warning from primal intuition against a particular present action. Obedience to it places oneself precisely within the timely. Timeliness is the practical equivalent of what Krishnamurti calls in his *Notebook* (101) " a thinking born out of the total emptiness of the mind; that emptiness has no center and so is capable of infinite movement. Creation is born out of this emptiness but is not the creation of man putting things together. That creation of emptiness is love and death."

The creation pointed to here is not a process. It is instantaneous. Human transformation, if genuine, is instantaneous since it is a creation. As a creation, not a making or remaking, it necessarily is independent of knowledge and time, since the transcendence of creation is also the total destruction of what preceded it.

Perhaps we are now in a position to attempt a descriptive definition of both spirituality and wholeness. In the first I shall employ some of Krishnamurti's words to describe spirituality: "It is to see the false in the false and to see the truth in the false, and it is the truth that denies the false. You see what is false and the very seeing of what is false is the truth." Spirituality consists in denying what is false without knowing in advance what is truth. Spirituality is the instantaneous obeying of primal intuition's negative summons without knowing why its warning should be heeded.

Wholeness is the intact condition of our original nature. It is realized, awakened to, instantaneously. It is not reached through a process nor is it an integration of aggregated parts.

These definitions will seem radical. They are meant to be since human transformation is not a matter of knowledge or time. It is the instantaneous awakening to the freedom of being a light unto oneself, the destruction of the bondage of causalism, for the former things are truly passed away. ■

From a talk presented to The Second International Conference on the New Paradigms of Science at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, in 1994. Allan W. Anderson, Ph.D., is Prof. Emeritus of Religious Studies, San Diego State Univ.

Conscious Living
Holistic Approaches to Health

Nisargadatta Maharaj and Health and Healing

By Peter Madill, M.D.

Peter Madill, M.D., spent several weeks with the contemporary teacher and sage, Nisargadatta Maharaj, during June of 1980. Nisargadatta lived in Bombay, India, and taught a direct, non-dualistic approach to Self-Realization. Several books are available that chronicle his talks, the best known of which is I Am That. *Peter Madill was one of the few physicians who treated Maharaj for throat cancer, during 1980-1981. Dr. Madill currently lives in Northern California where he has a holistic medical practice.*

It is hard for me to remember just what I learned from Nisargadatta Maharaj, because it is difficult to separate the meetings and conversations with him from the inner flowering that occurred and continues to occur as a result of that contact. Nisargadatta Maharaj represents a luminous and creative inner force in my life and greatly influences my work in the areas of health — especially what causes people to get sick.

Since talking with Maharaj in 1980, I have been working on several approaches to help mobilize the body's innate healing system, also known as the spontaneous healer, the vital force, *prana, chi*, or whatever one chooses to call it. These approaches center around an increased understanding into what obstructs the free functioning of this power in each individual.

I believe that the health or illness of an individual is inextricably intertwined with the larger issues of suffering, grace and spirituality. Ever since meeting with Nisargadatta, I have a strong sense that there is more to illness than a random, capricious, cruel, and ultimately meaningless event in an individual's life. Since those days in Bombay, I have had an almost insatiable drive to discover what else illness could represent, other than a "flat tire on the road of life."

My most prominent memory of Maharaj's teachings on the subject of health is that the Self will "stoop" to whatever level necessary to get one's attention. He indicated we should be mindful of the multitude of early warning signals that are given to us before the Self pulls out the big guns of major illness, accident, or even death itself. Maharaj often commented that wise persons will take note of their actions and those of others that lead to suffering and illness and choose not to repeat those actions. In his view, actions that lead to suffering and illness were generally initiated on the basis of the mistaken belief that they would somehow lead to happiness or grant permanent relief from suffering. Only a full grasping of the illusion of "I" as an individual entity grants us true relief from suffering — the relief we all so desperately seek.

I understood from Maharaj that people in general do not consciously chose to get sick and that many illnesses reflect "mistakes in living." I also intuited from him that there are no accidents of life, that even widespread calamities were a settling of *karmic* (destined) issues. To Maharaj our so-called "mistakes" do not mean that we have failed and are in need of salvation, for we are forever free. These incidences simply represent occasions for learning and gaining insight into how previous actions generate suffering in our life. Many have noted how particularly free Maharaj was and how he actively refrained from judging other people or making rules they should follow. His view was that people should create their own rules based on their own experiences, and even if those rules work for them, they should not force them on to others.

I always felt that Maharaj believed we should focus our efforts, at least initially, on employing therapies that are designed to increase the availability of *prana* (vital energy) or healing energy; therapies that facilitate the right flow of life force in the body. In an effort to alleviate his own cancer, Nisargadatta employed homeopathic remedies both from myself and prominent Bombay homeopaths. It was one of my great pleasures to prescribe remedies for him and express-mail them from California to his residence in Bombay. He also tried a variety of traditional Ayurvedic remedies but reported to me that he received more help from the homeopathic remedies. Although Maharaj refused surgical intervention and was not interested in the orthodox chemotherapy or radiotherapy treatments that Bombay cancer specialists recommended, I never felt any harsh judgment from him of Western scientific medicine. My sense was that he felt all the healing and medical traditions, including

naturopathic, homeopathic, herbal, Ayurvedic, and traditional Chinese medicine, as well as contemporary Western, all had their place in the scheme of things and should be employed on an individual basis. One should take into consideration the nature of the illness, the degree of development, and also the belief system of the ill person.

Even though he was over eighty years old when I met him, he was in full possession of all his mental faculties and evinced great interest in new ideas and discoveries. This reminds me of the "beginners mind" referred to by Suzuki Roshi, or the insistence of many great teachers that our mental attitude needs to be like that of a child: open, accepting, without premature judging, seeing things as they are and not how we think they should be.

Far more important to me than any conceptual instruction I received from Maharaj was the personal example he demonstrated in dealing with his own cancer. When I went to visit Nisargadatta in June of 1980, he had just recently been diagnosed with cancer of the oropharynx, or if I remember correctly, of the uvula and soft palate. What I recall most poignantly was how unconcerned about the whole affair he was, despite the palpable dismay and grief that a number of his devotees clearly manifested. I remember on several occasions devotees imploring Maharaj to take the treatment of his cancer more seriously, if not for his sake then for theirs. He would sweep away their entreaties with his customary hand-waving and *Marathi* expletive: "Subject closed!" I accepted his counsel stating that if the seeker's need and earnestness were great enough, then the Guru, even without the physical form, would appear in some manner to comfort and guide him or her. Maharaj always couched such a comforting promise with the warning that one had better be careful about what was asked for, because the desire may manifest in the form of a lesson that the seeker will be forced to face.

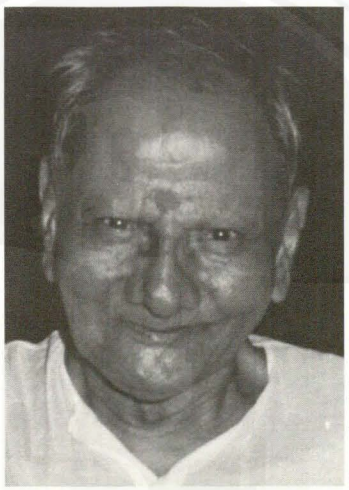


Photo: Josef Nauwelaerts

Nisargadatta Maharaj

Maharaj experienced discomfort from the cancer that had presumably metastasized to his abdominal area and eventually resulted in a symptom called *tenesmus,* which involves a lot of additional painful intestinal cramping. Yet, I never sensed that these symptoms dragged him down or distracted him from the commitment to be available for those who came to be in his presence or from the unwavering adherence to his daily schedule. The latter included morning and evening recitation of *bhajans* (devotional singing) and, more importantly, the twice-daily periods of discussion when he would answer questions from those who sought his spiritual instruction.

Maharaj was clearly mischievous and loved to be "challenged" in discussion. When confronted by a questioner, the subsequent "battle royal" that ensued seemed to make his day. The nonchalance with which Maharaj approached his cancer clearly reflected the depth of his enlightenment and complete freedom of concern about death. Maharaj's sense of being an individual entity had "died" many years before; I believe that as part of a great soul's realization, such a one would have experienced a kind of physical death, almost like a "dress rehearsal" for the real event.

Maharaj, was not inclined to live up to any prevailing definitions of sainthood, at least so far as diet and personal habits were concerned. Consistent with the caste into which he was born, he included meat as part of his diet. However, his habit of smoking dismayed some of those who visited him and even led a few to dismiss him outright. Despite several indignant protests over his incessant smoking of *biddies* (hand-made Indian cigarettes), Maharaj, when asked why an enlightened man continued to smoke, responded: "Even after enlightenment the body is allowed to continue a few of its habits and to me it is not a big deal. Wake up, look through apparent appearances, examine your own righteousness and judgment, and separate the wheat from the chaff. If you can't see beyond surface appearance and get caught up in your superficial judgments, then you have no business being here with me."

Just prior to my visiting Maharaj and after he was diagnosed with cancer, he had apparently given in to the entreaties of his close devotees to stop smoking. But to my surprise, I found him sneaking a daily dose of nicotine through the surreptitious use of snuff; he was truly a noncompliant rascal! When he knew that I had uncovered his trickery, he gave me a wonderful sly grin with a glint in his eye — the kind you usually see in the eyes of children for whom the thirst for play had not been squelched. I still remember this moment as if it were yesterday.

I think that Maharaj's response to his cancer was that this was the predestined process with which his physical life was to end. Being well into his eighties, he simply accepted his condition, never giving it any further thought. Even on his deathbed he implored people to continue with their questions. This example of unrelenting and passionate commitment to a sense of duty or personal *dharma* in life, along with the recorded teachings, is, for me, his most abiding legacy. Nisargadatta Maharaj truly lived an authentic life consistent with the expression of his teaching. ■

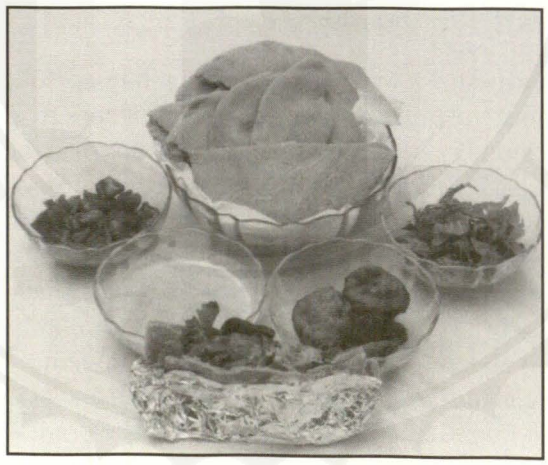
THE NATURAL KITCHEN

Stuffing the Pita

By Joan Greenblatt

During the summer of 1970, I found myself working on a Kibbutz in Southern Israel, about five kilometers from the Gaza Strip. After a grueling day (that began at 5:00 a.m.) of weeding acres of green pepper and hauling bails of hay, I often spent the evenings sitting alone on a mound of sand staring out into the desert dusk. As the sunset colors splashed across the wide horizon, the sound of shepherds and stillness filled the air. The intense work and fresh air brought with it an amazingly large appetite, something I will probably never again experience in quite the same way. Since this particular Kibbutz had a rather large group of vegetarians, it offered two completely separate menus. The food was served with freshly picked vegetables, whole grains, and various yogurt sauces. Just experimenting with a vegetarian diet myself, each meal became a surprise and delight. One day, while venturing out into Tel Aviv, I discovered the roadside falafel stands. The humble falafel, made of fresh pita bread, salad, chick-pea balls, and plenty of sesame sauce seemed like the perfect combination of foods. Falafels never did taste quite the same outside of Israel, although there was a place that came close: a very small restaurant called Heshey's, located in Spring Valley, New York. What made Heshey's and the Tel Aviv falafels stand apart was the abundance of tahini sauce and warm, very fresh pita bread.

To stuff a pita, I've put together two items: a spread and my old friend falafel.



Falafel

Chick-peas, or garbanzo beans, are rumored to be the only food needed for survival on a desert island. Since most of us don't find ourselves stranded on desert islands too often, it is nice to know that chick-peas are very healthy. Falafel is basically chick-pea balls that are traditionally deep fried, but they can also be baked with good results.

2½ C chick-peas, cooked & well drained
2 t parsley, freshly minced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 t salt
1/8 t cayenne pepper
½ t ginger, minced (aids in digestion)
2½ t wheat germ
1 T flour
1 egg, beaten (egg white alone can be substituted, or ½ t cornstarch dissolved in ¼ C water)
oil for deep frying

1. GRIND or mash chick-peas coarsely; do not grind to a paste.
2. COMBINE all the rest of the ingredients.
3. CHILL the chick-pea batter at least 15-30 minutes.
4. SHAPE into 20 balls; flatten slightly and coat lightly with flour.
5. FRY balls in oil until crisp. Oil should be heated to at least 375 degrees. If the oil is not hot enough the balls will absorb too much oil.
6. DRAIN very well on absorbent paper.

BAKING OPTION: Place balls on a generously oiled baking sheet and roll them in oil to coat all sides. Bake at 375 degrees for at least 20 minutes. Turn over at least once during baking.

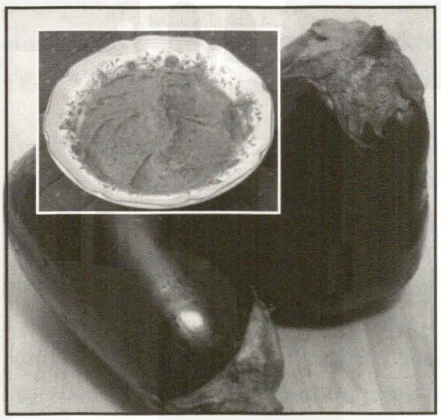
Tahini Sauce

Blend the following ingredients together:

½ C tahini (sesame paste)
1 small garlic clove, minced
½ t salt
¼ C lemon juice
½ - ¾ C water

To assemble the falafel:

1. CHOP 1 C lettuce very small.
2. CHOP 2 tomatoes very small.
3. HEAT pita slightly.
4. PLACE some lettuce and tomato mixture on bottom of the pita and top with two falafel balls.
5. SPOON on 3 T tahini sauce.
6. REPEAT above layer again.
7. FOLD a small square of tin foil on bottom of pita.
8. SERVE immediately with plenty of napkins.



Baba Ghanouj

This is a wonderful eggplant spread often served with warm pita.

1 medium eggplant, or two small
1 clove garlic, minced
½ lemon, juiced
2½ t tahini
1 t salt
2 T olive oil
½ t cumin seed
¼ t crushed red pepper

1. CUT eggplant in half and place in a baking pan with a little water. Cover with tin foil and bake in a 350 degree oven for 40 minutes or until very tender. The preferred method (which may not be an option) is to char the eggplant directly over a flame until the outside is black and the inside is soft. This process adds a very special flavor.
2. SCOOP the cooked eggplant into a bowl.
3. COMBINE eggplant with lemon juice, tahini, garlic, and salt.
4. HEAT 1 T olive oil in a small pan and add the cumin seed and red pepper. Heat until cumin seeds are roasted.
5. COMBINE oil and spices with eggplant.
6. SPRINKLE 1 T olive oil over eggplant spread just before serving.

Pita Bread

For the truly adventurous who wish to create an authentic Middle Eastern meal from scratch, I have included a recipe for baking your own pita. I find baking bread helps one to slow down, breathe, and let go. This basic bread, prepared since Biblical times (over open fires) is very simple to make. You have the choice of letting it rise from 3 to 11 hours. This means you could prepare the dough in the morning, let it rise all day, and bake it for dinner. Alternatively, you can prepare it in the evening and bake it in the morning.

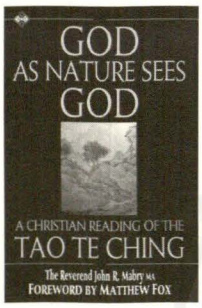
1 C warm water
1 t yeast
1 t honey
1 t olive oil
1 t salt
1¾ C whole wheat pastry flour
½ - 1 C unbleached white flour

1. PROOF the yeast by sprinkling it on top of warm water. Let it sit for 5 minutes. If the water is too hot it will kill the yeast. If the water is too cold the yeast will not activate.
2. ADD yeast water, honey, oil, and salt to a large bowl.
3. MIX in whole wheat flour and ½ C white flour. Add just enough additional white flour to make it into a solid ball.
4. KNEAD the dough on a floured board for about 5 to 10 minutes, until it is quite smooth.
5. PLACE in a lightly oiled bowl. Roll the dough in oil to coat all sides. Cover and let rise for 3 to 11 hours.
6. PUNCH the dough down about 60 minutes before you want to bake it.
7. PREHEAT the oven to 400 degrees.
8. DIVIDE the dough into six balls. Roll each ball into a 6" circle, about 1/8 inch thick.
9. SPRINKLE corn meal on two baking sheets and place the pita circles on top. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise about 40 minutes.
10. BAKE for 10 to 12 minutes. If you plan to eat the pitas immediately, remove them from the baking sheet and cover with a cloth to keep soft. If you will be using them within a couple of days, put them in the freezer.
11. OPEN the center of each pita gently with a sharp pointed knife.

Inner Review

BOOKS ▪ AUDIO ▪ VIDEO

BOOKS



God as Nature Sees God

A Christian Reading of the Tao Te Ching
By Rev. John R. Mabry, MA, Foreword by Matthew Fox
Softcover/190 pages. $14.95
Element Books

As Mabry notes in his introduction, the attitude of European Christianity to other faith traditions has been marked for centuries by ignorance, persecution, and attempts to convert others by all means necessary. As the communication and transportation revolutions of the last century have shrunk the world and brought practitioners of different traditions into increased personal contact, it becomes more difficult to hold onto stereotypes. Yet the extension of tolerance to respect and understanding, which is necessary for sustainable harmony within the global community, is far from the norm.

This remarkable little book has been clearly placed as a gateway in this continuing dialog: an opening onto the ancient Chinese tradition of Taoism for Christians. While both the fine translation of the original text and the commentary chapters would be of value to anyone interested in their own spiritual unfoldment, this is a book that should be particularly appealing to someone who is deeply grounded in the Christian tradition (with little awareness of other traditions) and has a willingness to listen and explore.

Reverend Mabry's spiritual journey took him from the fundamentalism of Southern Baptists to ordination as an independent Catholic priest, and it has enabled him to clearly and deeply grasp the connection between the *Tao Te Ching* and the Good News of Jesus's life and death.

This remarkable little book has been clearly placed as a gateway in this continuing dialog: an opening onto the ancient Chinese tradition of Taoism for Christians.

The Tao, which cannot be adequately described in words, is "The womb giving birth to all of being." All of nature is a part of this impersonal ground. The Taoist follows the example of the animals and the Earth herself, and perceives God as the web of being in which she moves and of which she consists. The Sage, held up as the ideal within the human condition, is one who is in "oneness" with the Tao. A Sage thus mirrors all of the attributes of the Tao:

> "It never refuses life to any being. /It makes no demands for itself.
> It does not claim to be great. /It acts, but takes no credit."

As Mabry then points out, Jesus's ministry is the very picture of the Taoist Sage.

Once we have made this link between the central figure of the Christian faith and the heart of the Taoist tradition, we then have the opportunity of reflecting on the way that Christian tradition has unfolded, of seeing "much that our own tradition has blinded us to." Understanding the complementary of masculine and feminine principles, for example, can help correct the far overblown masculine perspective of patriarchal Christianity. One of the noteworthy aspects of Mabry's translation is his even-handed use of the masculine and feminine in describing the Sage. In relation to Christian origins, he asks the provocative questions: "Consider what would have happened if Ur of the Chaldees had been a matrifocal civilization: Would it have

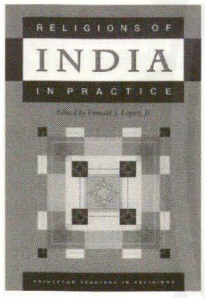
been Sarah rather than Abraham who was called? Would Jesus have been born a woman? Would the Trinity be referred to as Mother, Daughter, and Holy Spirit?"

While the Tao Te Ching offers practical advice concerning everyday life, it is also deeply mystical. "Attaining oneness," as is clear from all Eastern traditions, does not denote attaining something that one was once without, but rather a simple realization of how things truly are. Mabry calls Christians to rediscover their own tradition of oneness, particularly through a study of the "medieval mystics."

Approaching this oneness with the companionship of the *Tao Te Ching* points one to a radically different relationship to the natural world. The successes of several centuries of development in science and technology are closely tied to a theology of dominion, which has increasingly meant domination of a natural order, from which we stand apart. These developments are also moving us toward our possible demise as a species, along with the destruction of countless other species. As spoken so eloquently by the Creation Spirituality movement, in which Rev. Mabry has a respectable place, we must "create or rediscover deep within our tradition a theology of cooperation with nature . . . Only by assuming this religious responsibility for the fate of the Earth can the church regain any authentic stature either in the human or in the Earth process."

Personally, I believe that the directions Mabry points for the Christian tradition are absolutely essential for our survival; the heart of the "Will of God" for our Third Millennium. A book that definitely deserves a wide readership.

— James A. Grant



Religions of India in Practice

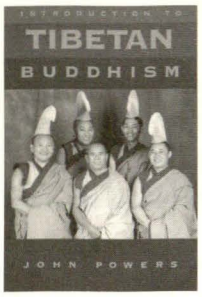
Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed.
Softcover/653 pages. $19.95
Princeton University Press

This book offers something new among anthologies on the religious traditions of India. Here spiritual India is, for once, not seen primarily through the deathless philosophical classics of Hinduism's elite culture; that is the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Crest-Jewel of Discrimination, and their companions. Without putting them down, the editor and writers of the present work have chosen to give us another side of religious India, one indicated in the title: how it has been and is actually practiced. Here is an impressive collection of hymns, mantras, liturgies for temple worship, and items of folk religion. Here are stories of saints and converted sinners. Here is lore from not only Hinduism, but also Sikhism, Jainism, Islam, and Indian Buddhism. Titles of selections range from "The Litany of Names of Manjusri" (Ronald M. Davidson) to "Predicting the Future with Dogs" (David Gordon White) to "A Holy Woman of Calcutta" (June McDaniel).

This is a large book, and only the most dedicated student of India will want to read it straight through. Many aficionados of Indian religion will, however, find it convenient to leave on a coffee table to pick up and lay down as the occasion arises. The individual selections, by more than thirty distinguished scholars, are all of manageable length and complete in themselves as vignettes of some facet of India's almost infinitely various religious world. Seekers will be inspired by the accounts of India's many styles of holy persons and mystical rites. *Religions of India in Practice* will also undoubtedly see classroom use in advanced courses on the subject.

The present volume is the flagship of a new series of anthologies in world religions being prepared by Princeton University Press, "Princeton Readings in Religions." Like this example, they will endeavor to break new ground among such anthologies by emphasizing practice and real people more than philosophy and theology. Both sides are important, but it does always need to be remembered that religion is much more than philosophy: it is also symbol, rite, music, saints and seers, social groups, and institutions. We look forward to forthcoming volumes in this series.

— Robert S. Ellwood



Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism

By John Powers
Softcover/501pages. $18.95
Snow Lion Publications

For anyone interested in Tibetan Buddhism, Tibetan culture, and the Tibetan way of life, this book presents a comprehensive overview. John Powers, Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion at Wright State University, has immersed himself in Buddhist thought and practice. The rich tradition of Tibetan Buddhism is shown through its historical roots in Indian Buddhism, its doctrines, meditation practices, and the teachings of *Mahayana*. All this information is presented in a way that is very straightforward, engaging, and easy-to-read.

Writing about the cycle of suffering, a topic of great significance in Buddhism, Powers notes that one must develop a profound desire to break the cycle of existence by any means necessary. He quotes Lama Thubten Yeshe:

> This attitude indicates a deep, heartfelt decision definitely to emerge from the repeated frustrations and disappointments of ordinary life. Simply stated, renunciation is the feeling of being so completely fed up with our recurring problems that we are finally ready to turn away from our attachments to this and that and begin searching for another way to make our life satisfying and meaningful.

Some of the most engaging and fascinating chapters are those on Tibetan religious history. The scene in which a party of lamas visits a remote Tibetan village in search of the fourteenth Dalai Lama was beautifully choreographed:

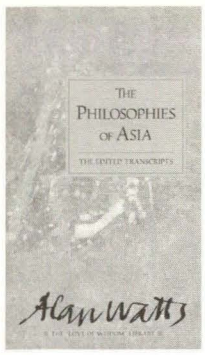
> Kutsang Rinpoche entered the kitchen and began making tea. As he was waiting for water to boil, a two-year-old boy walked up to him, sat in his lap, and began to play with the prayer beads around the disguised lama's neck. These beads had belonged to the thirteenth Dalai Lama. The young boy, named Hlamo Döndrup, then told Kutsang Rinpoche that the beads belonged to him, and Kutsang Rinpoche offered to give them to the child if he could guess the lama's true identity. The boy said, "You are a lama of Sera," which was true. The boy then correctly identified Losang Tsewang [a member of the party of lamas]. This was remarkable, since the boy had never been outside of his small village, and the two were dressed as merchants. The boy then announced that other two attendants were from Sera Monastery, which was also correct.
>
> The members of the delegation still did not tell the parents the true purpose of their visit, and after spending the night in the house they left. As they were preparing to go, the boy came to see them and asked that they take him with them. He was so insistent that they finally had to console him by telling him that they would return later.

. . . renunciation is the feeling of being so completely fed up with our recurring problems that we are finally ready to turn away from our attachments to this and that and begin searching for another way to make our life satisfying and meaningful.

It was quite interesting to learn that before the Chinese invasion, one quarter of the population were monks, and there were over 6,000 monasteries throughout the land. The harsh physical environment and extreme weather made Tibet a virtual fortress, protecting it from outside influences. The chapter on Tibetan architecture and landscape portrays the powerful effect of monasteries and temples perched on the edge of mountain cliffs, against the striking backdrop of snow-capped mountains. This unique landscape provides an ideal setting in which to experience emptiness and reflect on the Eternal. The second half of the book details specific Tibetan Buddhist practices and viewpoints which include *Tantra*, along with the four main schools of philosophy: *Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya,* and *Geluk*.

For those who have not had much exposure to Tibetan Buddhist tradition, this book serves as an excellent introduction.

— G. Madhavan



The Philosophies of Asia

The Edited Transcripts
By Alan Watts
Hardcover/106 pages $16.95
Charles E. Tuttle Co.

Alan Watts was born in England in 1915. He wrote his first book, *The Spirit of Zen,* while just twenty years old. Watts, who was an acclaimed author and philosopher, was also a minister, professor, and research fellow at Harvard University. He eventually retired to Northern California where he died in 1973.

This is the first in an edited collection of Watts's public talks on Eastern spirituality, a series of his works to be published as part of Charles E. Tuttle Co.'s *The Love Of Wisdom Library.* The book provides a good, concise introduction to the philosophical views of Hinduism, Zen, Yoga, Buddhism, and Taoism. The dedication begins with a quote from Alan Watts:
"The nub of all these Oriental Philosophies is not an idea, not a theory, not even a way of behaving, but a way of experiencing a transformation of everyday consciousness so that it becomes quite apparent to us that this is the way things are."

The nub of all these Oriental Philosophies is not an idea, not a theory, not even a way of behaving, but a way of experiencing a transformation of everyday consciousness so that it becomes quite apparent to us that this is the way things are.

There has been a resurgence of interest in Alan Watts's writings because he had the unique ability to find the clear essence of each path and bring from it a perception and interpretation that was uniquely his own. His son, Mark Watts, writes in the introduction:

> *The Philosophies of Asia* is a journey into the spirit of Eastern religious thought. It is at once an introduction and an overview of the primary branches of Oriental philosophy. Most significantly, it is a revelation of the common thread of experience that weaves its way through thousands of years of traditional Asian methods of "teaching the unteachable."

Speaking about Hinduism Alan Watts reflects, "The Hindu and the Western ideas of God are somewhat different. So, when the Hindu realizes that he is God, and that you are too, he sees the dance of God in everybody all around him in every direction."

In a humorous way Watts describes the Zen master:

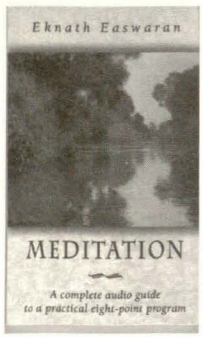
> Anybody who goes with a spiritual problem to a Zen master defines himself as a nut, and the teacher does everything possible to make him as nutty as possible. The teacher says, "Quite honestly, I haven't anything to tell you. I don't teach anything — I have no doctrine. I have nothing whatsoever to tell you." So the student thinks, "My, this is very deep," because this nothing that he is talking about, this nothing that he teaches, is what they call in Buddhism *sunyata*. *Sunyata* is Sanskrit for "nothingness," and it is supposed to be the ultimate reality. But if you know anything about these doctrines, this does not mean just "nothing there at all" or just "blank," but it means "no-thing-ness." It is the transcendental reality behind all separate and individual things, and that is something very deep and profound.

Alan Watts had the gift of being able to communicate with an intuitive intelligence and humor. His words flow poetically, entertain you, then reach out and draw you in again. These teachings are timeless, and his talks are as relevant today as they were when he gave them over twenty years ago. Watts touches the heart of wisdom in ways that continue to flower and inspire. An additional audio series of Watts's talks (Original Live Recordings) includes *Myth and Religion* and *Buddhism, the Religion of No-Religion.* Alan Watts's view of religion includes one of joy and celebration:

> If you do find out, by any chance, who you really are, instead of becoming merely lazy, you start laughing. And laughing leads to dancing, and dancing needs music, and we can play with each other for a change.

— Joan Greenblatt

AUDIO

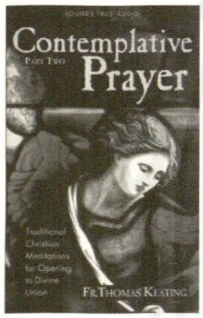


Meditation

A Complete Audio Guide to a Practical Eight-Point Program
By Eknath Easwaran
Two cassettes 3 hours, 40 min. $16.95 Nilgiri Press

Eknath Easwaran needs little introduction to those who have an interest in meditation practice. Since the early 1960s, Easwaran has dedicated his life to bringing the eternal teachings of Hindu spirituality to the West through weekly talks; through activities at The Blue Mountain Center for Meditation in Tomales, CA; and through the publication of his writings. Easwaran has always focused on the practical approach to meditation practice and control of the mind. This two-tape set provides an introduction to Easwaran's teaching about meditation and its practice in daily life.

Excerpt: The more we pursue a desire the more fulfillment is going to elude us. It's almost impossible to grasp this intellectually, but if you look back in our own personal experience we can see how many times we have obtained what we were longing for, and discovered it has slipped through our fingers.



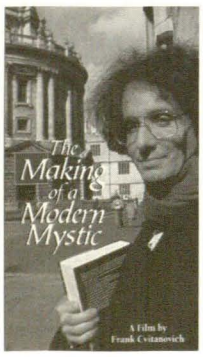
Contemplative Prayer

By Father Thomas Keating
Three cassettes $24.95 Sounds True Audio

Father Thomas Keating is an author, teacher, and monk of the Cistercian Order, which was founded in 1098 by St. Benedict. Now in his seventies, Father Keating directs retreats in the practice of Centering Prayer. *Contemplative Prayer* addresses the mystical side of Christianity to help integrate the teachings of Christ on a deeper, more profound level than basic theology. Contemplative prayer is rooted in what Saint Thomas Aquinas identified as the "human capacity for God." Father Keating teaches this system of Christian meditation as it has been practiced in the cloisters and monasteries of Europe since medieval times.

Excerpt: Damaging emotions are gradually healed by the affirmation of deep prayer, which is like coming home. Like a door opening inside, one is invited into peace, refreshment, and calm.

VIDEO



The Making of a Modern Mystic

Frank Cvitanovich
59 Minutes $29.95 First Run Features

Andrew Harvey is a seeker, author, and poet who invites us to discover the way of the mystic. This video includes interviews by Andrew Harvey with novelist Iris Murdock, biologist Rupert Sheldrake, analyst Anne Baring, Tibetan master Sogyal Rinpoche, the late Father Bede Griffiths, and the Dalai Lama.

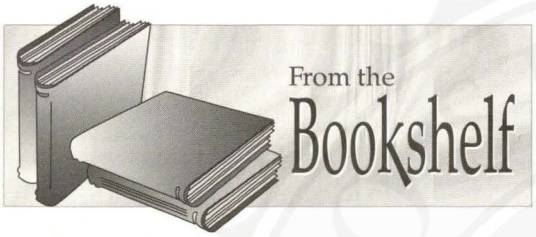
The film begins with Harvey's early life in India, the land where he was born. At six years old, he was sent to England to be educated. This separation from his mother, in particular, created a sense of abandonment in this young, sensitive boy. These events eventually helped shape his life, which turned toward an intense, lifelong inner quest. Harvey relates all this with his unique candor and wit.

The video is beautifully filmed and brings an authentic overview to the process of seeking and remaining on the spiritual journey.

The Way to Wisdom: *"Explanation of Sufism"*

Bawa Muhaiyaddeen
60 Minutes $30.00 Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship

In this issue you will find an article on Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, which provides some background into this remarkable man of wisdom. In this video, Bawa speaks in his native Tamil. Crisi Beutler does a wonderful job of providing the translation without getting in the way so that the words flow gently from Bawa to you. This great Sufi Master had, and still has, the ability to radiate the light of love and wisdom that transforms lives. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen demonstrates the true essence of Sufism — as one living completely free from a sense of "individuality" and the very embodiment of love and humility.



In Search of the Cradle of Civilization

By Subhash Kak, David Frawley, and Georg Feuerstein
Hardcover/341pp 47 Pictures $24.95 Quest Books
This is a scholarly yet very readable book that examines the historic beginnings of human civilization. The authors show that the cradle of civilized humanity began in India. They explore the ancient wisdom of the *Vedas* and the heritage of Indian spirituality.

The Ribhu Gita

Dr. A. Ramamoorthy, trans.
Hardcover/396pp $25.00 Society for Abidance in Truth
This is a comprehensive English translation of the *Sanskrit* classic, the *Ribhu Gita*. Taken from the epic work, *Sivarahasya*, the *Ribhu Gita* is the portion that contains a dialogue between Sage *Ribhu* and Sage *Nidagha*. The teachings contained in the *Ribhu Gita* reflect the highest non-dualistic truth presented in a terse, succinct, yet easy-to-read manner.

Thoughts on the East

By Thomas Merton
Softcover/84pp $6.99 New Directions Publishing
This book is a compilation of Merton's essential definitions of the religions that so much interested him — Taoism, Buddhism, Sufism, and Hinduism. Along with the Merton selections is an introduction by George Woodcock, author of *Thomas Merton: Monk and Poet.*

Living in the Presence of God: Love's Simple Path

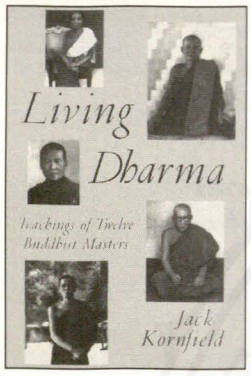
By John Allan
Softcover/187pp $12.00 MorningStar Press
Through letters to seekers, John Allan guides those who wish to experience the power of love and the spirit of God in their lives. Meditations at the end of each letter provide exercises to help one experience the joy and peace that are always present within. These letters brim with sincerity and reflect a life fully lived in the spirit of love.

Buddhism Through American Eyes

Karma Lekshe Tsomo, ed.
Softcover/180pp $12.95 Snow Lion Publications
This is a book written by thirteen American Buddhist women from various perspectives. Both engaging and well-written, these essays go straight to the heart. They explore everyday challenges and the application of Buddhist practice in one's life.

Shambhala

NEW TITLES



Living Dharma
Teachings of Twelve Buddhist Masters
Jack Kornfield • Forewords by Chögyam Trungpa and Ram Dass

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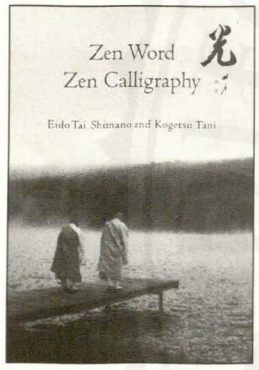

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Eido Tai Shimano
Illustrated by Kogetsu Tani

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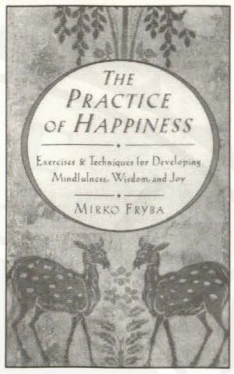

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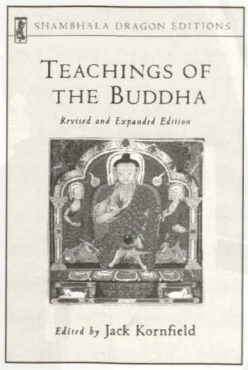

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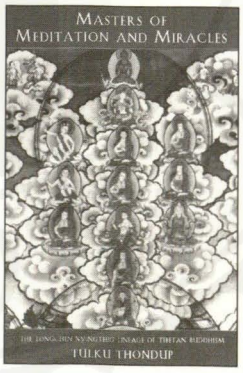

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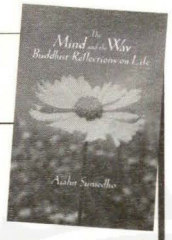

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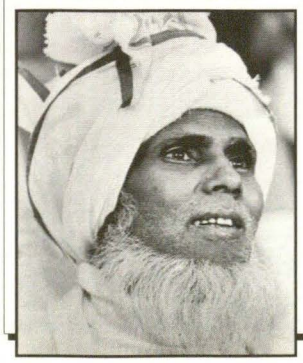

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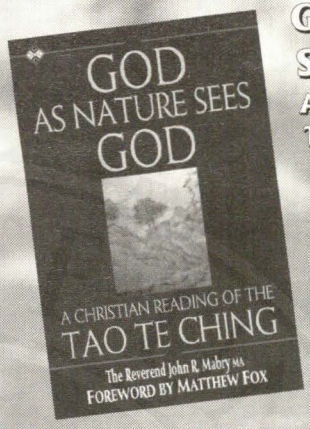

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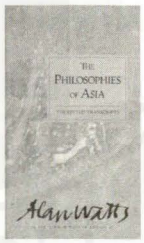

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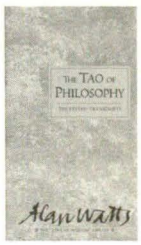

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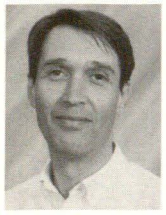

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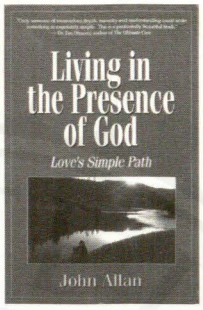

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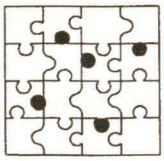

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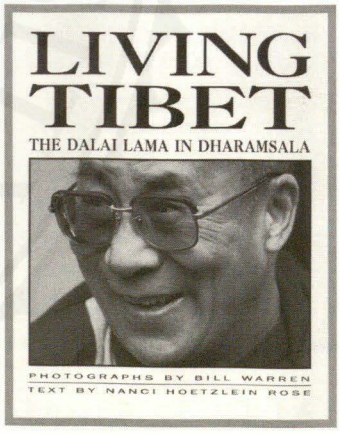

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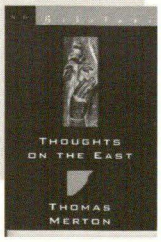

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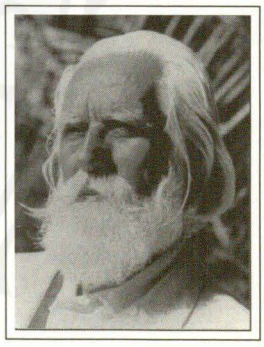

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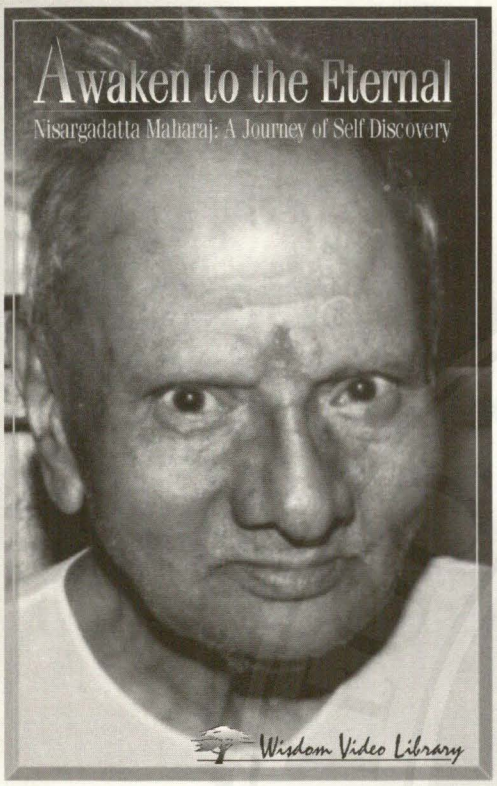

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