

# René Guénon and Sri Ramana Maharshi

## Two Remarkable Sages in Modern Times

### Part Four

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It was Martin Lings who drew a paramount parallel between Shaykh Ahmad Al-'Alawi (1869-1934) and the Maharshi, two principal spiritual lights in the modern world. "Sri Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvannamalai, whose teaching was essentially the same as his own [Shaykh Ahmad Al-'Alawi]." <sup>64</sup> Readers may be interested to know that in 1932 the same year that Schuon entered Islam, he went to visit Shaykh Ahmad Al-'Alawi in Mostaganem, Algeria and received his initiation (*bay'ah*) into the Sufi path, the inner dimension of

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<sup>64</sup> Martin Lings, 'The Spiritual Master', in *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Shaikh Ahmad Al-'Alawi, His Spiritual Heritage and Legacy* (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), p.80.

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Islam. Schuon articulated his praise for Shaykh Ahmad Al-'Alawi in the following words: “[S]omeone who represents in himself... the idea which for hundreds of years has been the life-blood of that [the Islamic] civilization. To meet such a one is like coming face to face, in mid-twentieth century, with a mediaeval Saint or a Semitic Patriarch”.<sup>65</sup> It was at Shaykh Ahmad Al-'Alawi's insistence that Shaykh Adda Bentounés (1898-1952), who later became his successor, provided the *ijaza* (certificate) confirming Schuon as a *muqaddam* (assistant to the master in teaching other students) in 1933. Shortly afterward, Guénon wrote a kind letter to Schuon expressing: “My congratulations on your new dignity of muqaddam.”<sup>66</sup> In 1936, at twenty-eight years of age, Schuon was invested with the function of a spiritual guide. He is the founder of the Maryamiyyah Tariqah and is known by his traditional name as Shaykh Isa Nur ad-Din Ahmad.<sup>67</sup>

The parallel drawn between Sri Ramana Maharshi and Shaykh Ahmad Al-'Alawi is also an example of how two analogous spiritual traditions manifest themselves in the temporal cycle, one within Hinduism, a religion that traces itself back to the beginning of the Manvantara or the temporal cycle known as the Krita-Yuga or Satya-Yuga (Golden Age) and the other Islam, which represents the closing of the current temporal cycle known as the Kali-Yuga (Iron Age). There is an inverse relationship between the two revelations of — Hinduism and Islam — where they overlap and touch one another in their innermost core. The spiritual possibilities that were once present in the commencement of the temporal cycle become possible once again in its closure. Dara Shikoh (1615-1659), the son of the

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<sup>65</sup> Frithjof Schuon, quoted in Martin Lings, ‘The Spiritual Master’, in *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Shaikh Ahmad Al-'Alawi, His Spiritual Heritage and Legacy* (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), p.116.

<sup>66</sup> Jean-Baptiste Aymard, ‘A Biographical Approach’, in *Frithjof Schuon: Life and Teachings* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), p. 22.

<sup>67</sup> See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ‘Frithjof Schuon and the Islamic Tradition’, *Sophia: The Journal of Traditional Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Summer 1999), pp. 27-48; See also Michael Oren Fitzgerald, *Frithjof Schuon: Messenger of the Perennial Philosophy* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2010).

Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1592-1666), spoke to this underlying metaphysic between the Hindu dharma and Islamic spirituality, “The science of Sufism and the science of Vedanta are one.”<sup>68</sup> The Prophet Muhammad is the final messenger, known as the ‘Seal of the Prophets,’ within the Islamic revelation which rejoins with the initial revelation of Hinduism in its conclusion. This integral framework allows one to view the entire temporal cycle in its metaphysical transparency, representing both the immutable quintessence and the final synthesis of all revelations in the Divine Unity.

For this reason both Guénon and Schuon articulated the central importance of Hinduism or the *sanatana dharma* (the primordial, eternal code of conduct) and its analogues expression with the inner dimension of Islam: “At heart we are like Hindus—Hindus in the Sufi form.”<sup>69</sup> The following are some confirmations of this: “*Sanatana Dharma*...derives most directly from the primordial tradition;”<sup>70</sup> “the perspective of Shankara is one of the most adequate expressions possible of the philosophia perennis or sapiential esoterism;”<sup>71</sup> “The most direct doctrinal expression of the sophia perennis is undoubtedly Advaita Vedanta;”<sup>72</sup> “[T]he Vedanta stands out as one of the most direct formulations possible of what constitutes the very essence of our spiritual reality;”<sup>73</sup> “[T]he Advaita Vedanta...is the most direct possible expression of gnosis.”<sup>74</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Shah Jahan, quoted in Cyril Glassé, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, Revised Edition (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), p.112.

<sup>69</sup> Frithjof Schuon, quoted in Swami Ramdas, ‘Hindus at Heart’, in *World is God* (Kanhangad, Kerala: Anandashram, 1955), p. 105.

<sup>70</sup> René Guénon, ‘Sanatana Dharma’, in *Studies in Hinduism* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004), p. 83.

<sup>71</sup> Frithjof Schuon, ‘Understanding Esoterism’, in *Esoterism as Principle and as Way*, trans. William Stoddart (London: Perennial Books, 1990), p. 21.

<sup>72</sup> Frithjof Schuon, ‘The Perennial Philosophy’, in *The Unanimous Tradition: Essays on the Essential Unity of All Religions*, ed. Ranjit Fernando (Colombo: Sri Lanka Institute of Traditional Studies, 1999), p. 22.

<sup>73</sup> Frithjof Schuon, ‘The Vedanta’, in *Language of the Self* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1999), p. 19.

<sup>74</sup> Frithjof Schuon, ‘Gnosis, Language of the Self’, in *Language of the Self* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1999), p. 201.

In a similar fashion, we might reference ‘A Monk of the West’, who used the pseudonym of ‘Elie Lemoine’ (Alphonse Levée, b. 1911), a French Cistercian monk who, at the young age of twenty, found a copy of fellow countryman René Guénon’s *Orient et Occident* (East and West) in a second-hand book stall while he was posted in Asia. This event had a tremendous impact that endured for the rest of his life, and was instrumental in his decision to take up the monastic vocation. It was in the discovery of the René Guénon’s works that ‘Elie Lemoine’ – A Monk of the West – found an integral metaphysical doctrine that was universal in its principles, “As for ourselves, we will say unequivocally that after more than forty years of intellectual reflection on this doctrine [*advaita-vada* or non-dualism], having allowed it to impregnate us more and more profoundly, we have found nothing that has seemed incompatible with our full and complete faith in the Christian Revelation.”<sup>75</sup>

Another testimony of the unanimity between the traditions of the East and West, as Elie Lemoine also references, is found in the life of Benedictine monk, Swami Abhishiktananda (Henri Le Saux, 1910-1973), who was a pioneer in Hindu-Christian dialogue. He arrived in India on 14th August 1948, and remained there until his earthly passing. At the end of January 1949, he had his first darshan with the Sage of Arunachala, whose influence upon his life was pivotal:

“Even before my mind was able to recognize the fact, and still less to express it, the invisible halo of this Sage had been perceived by something in me deeper than any words. Unknown harmonies awoke in my heart.... In the Sage of Arunachala of our time I discerned the unique Sage of the eternal India, the unbroken succession of her sages, her ascetics, her seers; it was as if the very soul of India penetrated to the very depths of my own soul and held mysterious communion with it. It was a call which pierced through everything, rent it in pieces and opened a mighty abyss...”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> A Monk of the West, ‘Conclusion’, in *Christianity and the Doctrine of Non-Dualism*, trans. Alvin Moore, Jr. and Marie M. Hansen (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004), p.136.

<sup>76</sup> Swami Abhishiktananda, *The Secret of Arunachala: A Christian Hermit on Shiva’s Holy Mountain* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1979), p.9.

The reader may therefore ask why Guénon and Schuon elected Islam rather than Hinduism. Due to spatial constraints we cannot explore this matter in great detail,<sup>77</sup> yet one would point out that Hinduism requires the participation in one of the four major social divisions of Hindu society – *Brahmins* (priests), *Kshatriyas* (warriors), *Vaisyas* (merchants) and *Sudras* (peasants, manual labourers) – known as the caste system (*varna dharma*), and is not open to those outside this traditional form. For this reason, in the case of Guénon and Schuon, not being born into the caste system, Hinduism was closed to them. Through integral metaphysics they comprehended that religious pluralism corresponds to human diversity, and that each revelation spoke as it were to a distinct human collectivity as the Koranic declaration upholds, “For each [community] among you We have appointed a Law and a Way.” (5:48) With this said, there are always exceptional cases such as the sannyasins or sadhus who have opted out of the caste system and are so to speak above caste. According to Sri Ramakrishna, “[T]he rules of caste are automatically effaced for the man who has reached perfection and realized the unity of all things.”<sup>78</sup>

The notion of ‘conversion’ also lends itself to much confusion as it is commonly interpreted from the exoteric or religious perspective and does not generally take into consideration the Greek term *metanoia* which designates a change in the immanent Intellect (*Intellectus* or *Nous*), indicating an ‘intellectual metamorphosis’ of a transpersonal nature.<sup>79</sup> In speaking of the Hindu dharma, the notion of conversion does not exist, “Hinduism has more ritual than any other religion, yet its canonical texts do not contain any rite for conversion. No better proof is needed for the fact that we have at no time either

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<sup>77</sup> See Frithjof Schuon, ‘René Guénon: A Note’, in *René Guénon: Some Observations* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>78</sup> Sri Ramakrishna, quoted in Frithjof Schuon, ‘The Meaning of Caste’, in *The Language of the Self* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1999), p. 119.

<sup>79</sup> See Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, ‘On Being in One’s Right Mind’, in *What is Civilization? And Other Essays* (Ipswich, UK: Golgonooza Press, 1989), pp. 33-41.

encouraged conversion or practiced it.”<sup>80</sup> For the pure esoterism of the ‘transcendent unity of religions,’ there is no ‘conversion’ from one religion to another.<sup>81</sup> Readers may find it helpful to recall that Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wahid Pallavicini (b. 1926), of Milan, Italy, who as a young seeker, was moved by Guénon’s oeuvre, and although he perceived the importance of theory he also perceived its indispensable and corresponding practice of an authentic spiritual form. This led Shaykh Pallavicini to embrace Islam which incidentally took place on 7th January 1951, when he was twenty-five years old, and was given the name ‘Abd al-Wahid, ‘servant of the One’. Shortly after, Shaykh Pallavicini learned that Guénon had passed away in Cairo on the same day. This event served as an omen indicating that he needed to carry on this vital work. Shaykh Pallavicini makes the following observation on the notion of ‘conversion’:

“René Guénon’s so-called conversion from Christianity to Islam should not be misunderstood as a rejection of his original religion. Instead, it should be regarded as an acceptance of Islam through which he joined what he called the Primordial Tradition (din al-qayimah) in its final expression, which incorporates all previous Revelations without opposing them.”<sup>82</sup>

Guénon himself speaks on this matter,

“In principle, there is only one really legitimate conversion, the one that consists in the connection to a tradition, whatever it may be, on the part of someone who was previously lacking any traditional attachment.... Contrary to what takes place in ‘conversion,’ nothing here implies the attribution of the superiority of one traditional form over another.... [A]nyone who has an understanding of the unity

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<sup>80</sup> Jagadguru H.H. Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal, Sankaracharya of Kanchi, ‘The Unity of Religions’, in *Introduction to Hindu Doctrine: Illustrated*, ed. Michael Oren Fitzgerald (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2008), p.8.

<sup>81</sup> See René Guénon, quoted in Alain Daniélou, ‘René Guénon et la tradition hindoue’, in *René Guénon: Les Dossiers H*, ed. Pierre-Marie Sigaud (Lausanne: L’Age d’Homme, 1984), p.138.

<sup>82</sup> Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wahid Pallavicini, ‘A Meeting of Genius and Holiness’, in *A Sufi Master’s Message: In Memoriam René Guénon* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2010), p.33.

of traditions, whether through a merely theoretical comprehension or through an effective realization, is necessarily for this very reason ‘unconvertible’ to anything whatsoever.”<sup>83</sup>

We must now turn our attention to another matter, which has raised much discussion with regard to the fact that Sri Ramana Maharshi did not have a human guru, in the traditional sense. The Maharshi’s response to this was: “[A] Guru need not always be in human form.”<sup>84</sup> Given his jnamic nature he was able to awaken without the traditional requirement of initiation (*diksha*), which likens him to what is referred to in Islamic esoterism as a fard, a ‘solitary’ or someone who receives Spiritual Realization spontaneously and outside the normal channels of tradition. The Maharshi elaborates on this matter, “That depends on what you call Guru. He need not necessarily be in human form. Dattatreya had twenty-four Gurus—the elements, etc. That means that any form in the world was his Guru. Guru is absolutely necessary. The Upanishads say that none but a Guru can take a man out of the jungle of mental and sense perceptions, so there must be a Guru.”<sup>85</sup> Pallis spoke to this in a letter to the Trappist monk Thomas Merton (1915-1968), who also held a high regard for Ramana Maharshi: “[Ramana Maharshi...] did not at any time become the disciple of a known guru; he is one who ‘perfected his sadhana [spiritual practice] in a previous life.’”<sup>86</sup> Incidentally, Merton referred to the Sage of Arunachala as “one of the former great Indian saints of our time, Ramana Maharshi”.<sup>87</sup> Merton likewise had a high regard for Shaykh Ahmad Al-‘Alawi:

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<sup>83</sup> René Guénon, ‘Conversions’, in *Initiation and Spiritual Realization*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, ed. Samuel D. Fohr (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), pp. 62-64.

<sup>84</sup> A. Devaraja Mudaliar, ‘30-10-45 Afternoon’, in *Day by Day with Bhagavan* (Tiruvannamalai: Sri Ramanasramam, 2002), p.33.

<sup>85</sup> Sri Ramana Maharshi, quoted in Arthur Osborne, ‘Upadesa’, in *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge* (San Rafael, CA: Sophia Perennis, 2006), p. 112.

<sup>86</sup> Marco Pallis, quoted in Thomas Merton, *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1975), p. 208.

<sup>87</sup> Thomas Merton, quoted in David D. Cooper (ed.), *Thomas Merton and James Laughlin: Selected Letters* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 331.

“Yesterday afternoon I finished a remarkable book [Martin Lings, *A Moslem Saint of the Twentieth Century* (1961)]—the biography of Shaikh Ahmad al-‘Alawi, who died in Algeria in 1934. One of the greatest religious figures of this century, a perfect example of the Sufi [and Islamic] tradition in all its fullness and energy. This is one book that I want to read again. The excerpts from his writings are most impressive and I know I have not begun to appreciate their content.”<sup>88</sup>

It was Pallis who introduced Merton to the writings of the Traditionalist or Perennialist school, and was in correspondence with Merton in 1963. Pallis met Merton along with Richard C. Nicholson on 24th October 1964 at the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky.<sup>89</sup> Merton also had written correspondence with other perennialists such as Martin Lings, Lord Northbourne (1896-1982), including the widow of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Doña Luisa Coomaraswamy (1905-1970), and met Huston Smith in Calcutta, India in 1968. Merton had intended to stay in Persia for a month through the invitation of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, but died en route in Thailand before reaching Tehran.<sup>90</sup> Merton was very much drawn by the perennial philosophy, and wrote the following statement on Schuon in a letter to Pallis, “In reading Schuon I have the impression that I am perhaps going along parallel to him, and once in a while I will get a glimpse of what he means in terms of my own tradition and experience.... I think [that he] has exactly the right view.... I appreciate Schuon more and more.”<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Thomas Merton, ‘October 2, 1963’, in *The Journals of Thomas Merton, Vol. V: Dancing in the Waters of Life*, ed. Robert E. Daggy (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1997), p.115.

<sup>89</sup> See Rob Baker, ‘Merton, Marco Pallis, and the Traditionalists’, in *Merton and Sufism: The Untold Story: A Complete Compendium*, eds. Rob Baker and Gray Henry (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2005), pp.193-265.

<sup>90</sup> See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ‘Preface: What Attracted Merton to Sufism’, in *Merton and Sufism: The Untold Story: A Complete Compendium*, eds. Rob Baker and Gray Henry (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2005), pp.9-13.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Merton, *Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1985), pp.469, 468 & 470.



Guénon, who held a great esteem for the Sage of Arunachala expressed: “[B]y virtue of its ‘spontaneous’ character Sri Ramana’s realisation represents a path that is rather exceptional”.<sup>92</sup> Due to the many ways in which this point could be interpreted, Hartung wanted to clarify this matter and wrote the following regarding Sri Ramana Maharshi and the question of initiation (*diksha*) and what Guénon referred to as his ‘action of presence.’<sup>93</sup>

“Arthur Osborne – like that which happened to me several years later – had heard some Europeans make a distinction between the influence that Bhagavan [Ramana Maharshi] radiated and initiation such as René Guénon had defined. Thus he posed to the Maharshi himself this question: [...] Ramana approved the point of view according to which his presence like his indications are practical means of spiritual realization (*sadhana*).”<sup>94</sup>

Osborne recalls one of the only indications if not the sole indication that overtly affirms the Maharshi’s granting the rite of initiation (*diksha*) when questioned by Louis Hartz: “‘I want Bhagavan’s initiation.’ Bhagavan replies: ‘You have it already.’ This is the only occasion of which I know when he explicitly confirmed having given initiation.”<sup>95</sup> One point of confusion stems from Ramana Maharshi’s insistence that he was not himself a guru, yet this appears to be due to his Vedantic perspective that saw no human individual as separate from himself—therefore there was no disciple or guru—only the Self (*Atman*) and the Transcendent Unity (*Paramatman*) that abides in the innermost heart of all. While initiation (*diksha*) is essential to embark on the path, it is only its beginning and not its end, for the

<sup>92</sup> René Guénon, ‘Reviews of Books: Other Authors’, in *Studies in Hinduism*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, ed. Samuel D. Fohr (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), p.150.

<sup>93</sup> René Guénon, ‘Reviews of Books: Other Authors’, in *Studies in Hinduism*, trans. Henry D. Fohr, ed. Samuel D. Fohr (Ghent, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), pp.150-3.

<sup>94</sup> Henri Hartung, quoted in Xavier Accart, ‘Ramana Maharshi and René Guénon’, *The Mountain Path* (July 2007), p.102.

<sup>95</sup> Arthur Osborne, ‘Tribulation’, in *My Life and Quest* (Tiruvannamalai: Sri Ramanasramam, 2005), p. 86. See also Louis Hartz, “Silent Initiation,” *The Mountain Path*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (January 1988), pp.31-3.

way will certainly require spiritual practice (sadhana) and guidance. The Maharshi confirmed the need for grace and effort on the path: “If the guru could just give [us] Realization there would not be a cow left unrealized.”<sup>96</sup>

Given the unique nature of Sri Ramana Maharshi within this inverted spiritual era of the Kali-Yuga, he should not be taken to be a founder of a spiritual method which bypasses the guidance of a qualified spiritual master, nor an advocate for the circumventing of spiritual practice (sadhana) as many neo-advaitians or proponents of the New Age suggest.<sup>97</sup> A notable facet of the Maharshi’s teaching is that it was available to all who sought him out, which was exemplified by all of diverse individuals who came to him from all parts of the world, who had different faiths other than Hinduism, including some without a religious affiliation. This remarkable feature of the Maharshi’s teaching also presents some challenges regarding the ability of these different types of individuals to assimilate his teaching devoid of ritual and doctrinal support as it has been illustrated:

This aspect of the Maharshi’s life could be considered problematical, for, since he did not explicitly require from his visitors a traditional affiliation (the purpose of which is to guarantee a structure or framework for the spiritual journey), his non-Hindu followers for the most part remained without ritual and doctrinal support, and therefore did not prepare themselves to attain something solid and permanent in the spiritual way.<sup>98</sup>

The Maharshi received Hindu, non-Hindu or even the non-religious the same, for he did not want to withhold his darshan from anyone who desired it. Nevertheless it does not therefore suggest that to have a religion was unnecessary, on the contrary, for having

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<sup>96</sup> Arthur Osborne, ‘Tribulation’, in *My Life and Quest* (Tiruvannamalai: Sri Ramanasramam, 2005), p.87.

<sup>97</sup> Arthur Osborne, ‘Preface’, to *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, ed. Arthur Osborne (Boston, MA: Weiser Books, 1997), p.13.

<sup>98</sup> Mateus Soares de Azevedo, ‘Frithjof Schuon and Sri Ramana Maharshi: A Survey of the Spiritual Masters of the 20th Century’, *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity*, Vol. 10 (Winter 2002), p.193.

a religion and committing oneself to it may very well have provided individuals with the framework needed to assimilate his teachings in a more integral way. As “Truth does not deny forms from the outside, but transcends them from within.”<sup>99</sup> One could very well suggest that by not having a traditional affiliation, it could ensnare the seeker at the surface level of the Maharshi’s ‘action of presence,’ preventing the individual from probing deeper into the darker facets of the empirical ego. A seeker could confuse the various phases of the mountain’s ascent for the summit itself without realizing that the top has never been reached. The trappings of the psychological order cannot be underestimated, as is evident in the ensuing:

The problem with the Maharshi, as someone told me, was that his spiritual radiance was so beautiful and so beneficent that people were unable to make the necessary ‘descent into hell’. They couldn’t get into the frame of mind required for this self-knowledge, because they were as it were plunged into an ecstasy from the fragrance, from the beatitude of his light; strangely enough, his light actually prevented them from going down into the dark depths of their own souls.”<sup>100</sup>

While many things could still be articulated about these two remarkable sages of the twentieth-century, René Guénon for resuscitating the Primordial Tradition and diagnosing the pathology of the modern world and Sri Ramana Maharshi an embodiment of Spiritual Realization as it was known in ancient India manifesting itself in this dark age, both of whom offer the most affirming message of hope, while fulfilling two distinct functions. In this era where confusion, if not abnormality reigns, and uncertainty is felt in every sphere of life, seekers are reassured by these two sages that there are indisputably answers for those who seek them. We can see the tremendous radiance of their intellectual and spiritual influence which continues to touch the hearts and minds of contemporaries,

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<sup>99</sup> Frithjof Schuon, ‘The Vedanta’, in *Language of the Self* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1999), p.40.

<sup>100</sup> Whitall N. Perry, quoted in Gray Henry, ‘Ways of Knowing: An Interview with Whitall N. Perry’, *Sophia: The Journal of Traditional Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Winter 1997), p.111.

not only through Guénon and the Maharshi, but the vast web of individuals who have been moved by them and influence others in turn. The concentric rings of this influence, connecting innumerable individuals, is vast and of the highest order, unparalleled in these modern times. Guénon expresses the objective of his work:

“All that we can undertake now is to contribute, up to a point and as far as the means at our disposal allow, towards making such as are capable of it aware of some of the consequences which seem already fully established [the crisis of the modern and postmodern world]. By so doing we shall be preparing the ground, albeit in a partial and rather indirect manner, for those who must play their part in the future ‘judgment,’ following which a new era will open in the history of mankind.”<sup>101</sup>

Yet it is not numbers that are of interest, but those who sincerely pursue the uncoloured Truth in its fullness, and will be satisfied with nothing else, “Even if our writings had on the average no other result than the restitution, for some, of the saving barque that is prayer, we would owe it to God to consider ourselves profoundly satisfied.”<sup>102</sup> As René Guénon and Sri Ramana Maharshi were both quintessential universalists expressing the one Truth concealed in all of the diverse forms. We recall the decree of the sanatana dharma: “*Ekam sath vipra bahudha vadanti.*” (It is the one truth, which jnanins call by different names.) (*Rigveda* 1:164:46) And by the same principle, they would both affirm regardless of time or place, even under the most arduous conditions of this age, the abiding motto *vincit omnia veritas*, “Truth conquers all”.<sup>103</sup> ▲

(Concluded)

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<sup>101</sup> René Guénon, ‘Forward’, to *The Crisis of the Modern World*, trans. Arthur Osborne (London: Luzac and Company, 1942), pp.4-5.

<sup>102</sup> Frithjof Schuon, ‘Forward’, to *The Play of Masks* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom Books, 1992), p.vii.

<sup>103</sup> See René Guénon, ‘Some Conclusions’, in *The Crisis of the Modern World*, trans. Arthur Osborne (London: Luzac and Company, 1942), p.170.