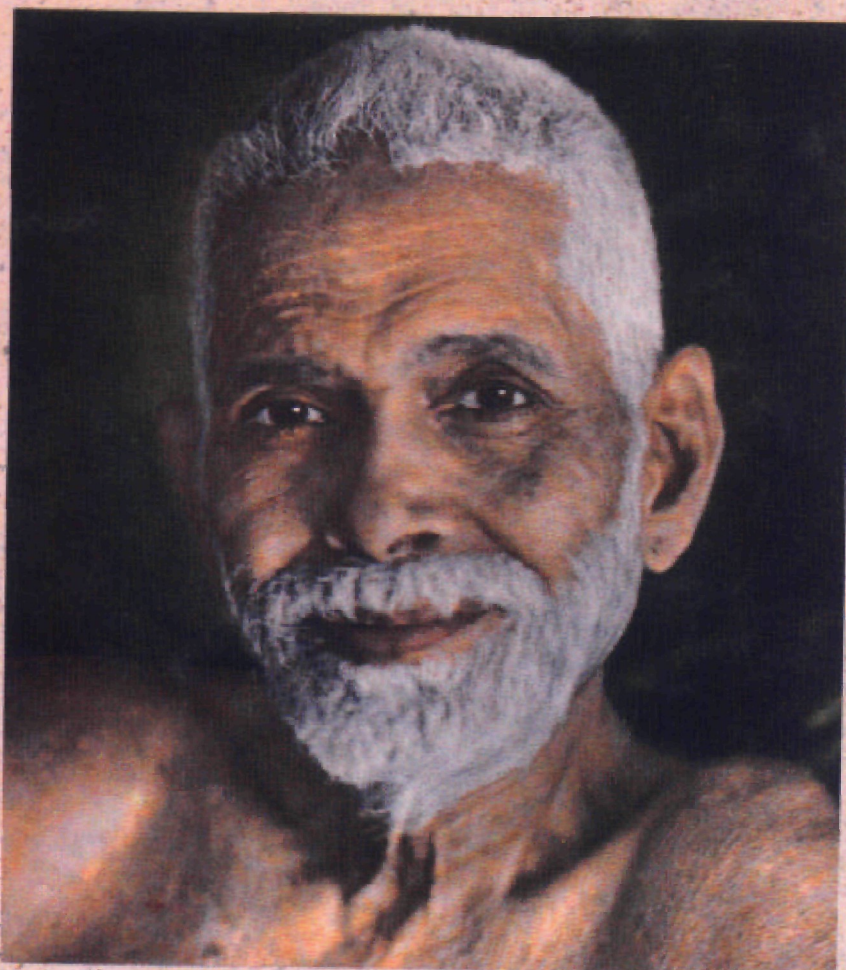


A
Practical Guide To
KNOW YOURSELF

CONVERSATIONS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI



A
Practical Guide To
KNOW YOURSELF
CONVERSATIONS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Compiled and Edited
by
A. R. Natarajan

Published by
RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTRE FOR LEARNING

© Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning
40/41, 2nd Cross, Lower Palace Orchards,
Bangalore - 560 003. Phone: 3369633.

Seventh Edition : 1999.

ISBN : 81-85378-09-6

Cover Design by:
M. Muralidhara Hegde

Typeset by:
Viswas Services
Bangalore

Printed by :
Modern Process Printers
Bangalore.

KNOW YOURSELF

The sacred words of Ramana Maharshi are original and independent utterances like the Upanishads, based on his direct experience, and their message is for all. There is no doubt concerning the spiritual path which is left unanswered. While Ramana enriched and clarified all that is worthwhile in philosophic thought and practice, he has also given a distinct path, a straight path for Self-knowledge to dawn. The Ramana path is the path of self-enquiry or vichara. He illumined and made available the science of the Heart. While philosophic thought generally concerns itself with God, Self, the unknown, Ramana focuses attention entirely on the individual.

Though we think we are familiar with 'I', properly directed enquiry would reveal that the assumptions on which we proceed and things we take for granted are not valid. For, one would be examining, frontally, such questions as the nature of the mind, its relationship to the spiritual Heart, the true import of 'I', and whether it is confined to the body which we have taken it to be.

This selection of conversations between Ramana Maharshi and various seekers, their arrangement, and the editorial notes have been made with regard to the reader's need. The purpose is that it may serve as a practical guide to Self-knowledge. Such knowledge opens up for us our own natural, but hidden, happiness.

...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, has kindly permitted the use of the material in the various publications of Sri Ramanasramam. Dr. Sarada has offered many constructive suggestions and gone through the proof with special care. Sri C.R. Gopalakrishna has also carefully checked the proof. Sri K. Subramaniam has patiently compiled the Glossary, Bibliography and Index. Sri Muralidhara Hegde has done the inside page art work and designed the cover with dedication. Sri B.R. Seshadri has typed the manuscript neatly. Viswas Services are responsible for the fine DTP output. Modern Process Printers have printed the book maintaining their usual high quality.

To all of them the Centre wishes to express its special thanks.

A.R. Natarajan
President
Ramana Maharshi Centre For Learning
Bangalore
Christmas Day
25-12-1991

INTRODUCTION

What we know is activity, relationships, attachment to ideas. We feel dull, unwanted and out of place when left alone, when there is nothing to do. Aren't we scared stiff when there are no thoughts? For us thinking is natural. We carry a heavy load of purposeless thoughts, purposeless because they have no essential connection functionally to our daily life. There is also the load of the past with its hurts and failures, its experience brought into the present by thinking about those 'ashes of memory'. Escapist thoughts, wafting one away from the reality of the present, occupy the mental horizon. The mind is so crowded that it is like a village bazaar on the shandy day or a small railway platform on a day when trains are running late. There is no elbow room at all. Don't we want to be free from the stifling atmosphere of this mental babble? The answer is 'Yes' and 'No'. 'Yes' for the unwanted thoughts. 'No' for the thoughts we label as pleasant, happy memories, the rosy future. Whether we admit it or not we do not wish to be altogether free of thoughts. If we cannot be rid of unpleasant thoughts we would rather live with them than lose also the thoughts which we like to hug, which we hold dear. The fear of what would happen if we were to be thought-free is strong and the stark reality of this fear cannot be overstated.

It is precisely here that Sadguru Ramana steps in with his direct experience of a state in which the mind is wholly silent; the state in which one is bubbling with joy. Ramana's life itself is the best example of what he is communicating,

of what he is teaching. It gives one enough confidence, enough faith to make one give it a chance, to give it a try. The hope that we too may be able to share this beatitude is the starting point of this adventure. It is an adventure for, unless we have the courageous spirit, the determination and strong urge to find out, we can never get out of our old grooves. Nor can we look for a new way of life, a new approach to things which would make each moment beautiful. No radical transformation is possible unless one learns to live in the present, for all experience is in the present. This presupposes an ability to be free of thoughts, a capacity to cut off the mental movements to the past and to the future.

We learn the art of living in the present from Ramana. He never tires of affirming that it is possible to do so because our natural state is one of silence. Thoughts are only on the surface when needed but deep down there is the overwhelming silence, the vast space uncluttered by any thought. By definition the natural state is also one's own state. It is not given and therefore one cannot be deprived of it. If so, the question would arise as to what obstructs our awareness of it. It is our ignorance of our true Self. The solution therefore is in Self-knowledge, in finding out the truth about oneself. Knowing oneself is the thing which alone matters. One's knowledge, however vast, is about objects, about the universe. In contrast one is ignorant about the subject, the seer, about the one on whom the whole world of the seen is dependent. Ramana would therefore emphasise the primacy of Self-knowledge as it

holds the key to one's happiness. Why? Because it enables the discovery of one's own natural state. One might say that one is presently in the habitual state in which primacy is given to thinking. Happiness is located in objects, and one is afraid to be without activity and thoughts. Consequently restlessness is one's lot. In contrast in the natural state, the mind is totally silent, free of thoughts, but yet supersharp. Thinking and thoughts would be purely functional. There would be no thought hangovers or carry forwards. Happiness would be perceived to be inherent, to be within. As a consequence one would be immersed in peace, a peace which is undisturbed by activity.

For Self-knowledge one has to begin by enquiring about or paying attention to the subject ' I'. Necessarily it means withdrawing attention from the objects, which are its present focus, and turning it on itself.

Before going into the question of what the shifting of attention from objects to the subject means one needs to examine what we take the subject to be. Then the further question of the fallacy, if any, in our assumptions has also to be enquired into. We take ourselves to be a particular name and form or we identify ourselves with the mind. One might ask what is wrong about these notions. Let us examine the three states of daily existence, waking, dream and sleep. So far as the waking state is concerned our assumption might appear to be correct. But what about sleep and dream states? As for the dream state though sometimes the identity remains the same as that of the waking state, it could well be and is often different. A rich

and powerful king Somadatta may be Ponniah, a beggar in tattered clothes not knowing where his next meal would come from, and so on. The dreamer is not the one who is awake because the identity is different. As for sleep, the 'I' of the waking state is absent. There is no Shankar or Sri Devi to answer since the particular identity is absent. Can we really be that which we are not in two of our daily states of existence, dream and sleep?

The absence of the sense of individuality in sleep would also confirm one's doubt that there is more to us than our assumed individuality. For we cannot be that which comes and goes. There can be no break in consciousness.

The matter could also be looked at from another point of view. The assumption behind the idea that one is the body and or the mind is that both the body and mind are self-conscious. Taking the body first let us look at its state at the time of death. The body might be perfectly healthy, it might be young yet it is called a corpse the moment the life-force leaves it. Ramana would say that were it not so the body would get up while being taken for cremation or burial and protest. Ramana's reflection on this matter began at the age of twelve, when his father died. His father's body was there apparently as if in sleep but there was a difference, making him infer that his father's 'I' had left the body. Reference has already been made to the daily experience of sleep when there is no body consciousness. Ramana would say that the body would then be taken to be dead, but for the divine plan which continues the respiration at a low ebb.

Where does the mistake lie in our identifying ourselves with the mind? Operationally our sense of existence is related to thoughts. Only thoughts give one the feeling of being alive, of being vital. The mistake here is that if one goes into the question, 'What is the mind?' it would be seen that there is no such independent entity as the mind. Ramana would drive home this point by his remarks like, 'Show me the mind and I will strike it down', 'Ask her if there is such a thing as mind. If so, what is its form? Does it have a moustache and a beard?. Why are these statements made? It is because that which we call the mind is intangible. It is only the aggregate of thoughts with a central thought 'I am so and so'. At any given time the mind is this core thought and the associated thoughts on which its attention is focussed. Thus it would be ever changing. One cannot be that which is intangible and always fleeting.

If one is not the body or the mind what is one's true identity? How is one to find it out? In the Ramana Way the key to everything is to be found in the spiritual heart which is different from the physical organ bearing that name. It is at once the seat of consciousness and the source of the mind. It is the primary energy source which utilises the mind and the body. This energy is transmitted through channels called 'nadis' from the heart to the mind first and from there to the different parts of the body. It alone is self-luminous. The mind and the body only reflect its light of conciseness. Just as the dynamo supplies the motive power to the whole system of lights, fans, etc., so also this primal force supplies the energy for the beating of the heart

for respiration, etc.” More about its importance as a spiritual centre will be mentioned later.

The mind rises from the heart on waking and subsides into it when sleep overtakes. Since its origin is from the heart, the mind is naturally pure. It is like a wave in the sea of consciousness. However, when latent tendencies are there the mind cannot rest in its source but must perforce become externalised. This is what happens on waking. Then the pure mind first limits itself by identifying itself with a particular body and name and becomes defiled by its contact with objects. For convenience of understanding one might say that the mind comprises of two parts, the pure, 'I am', which represents its consciousness content and so and so', which is inert and limiting. It is important to emphasise the mind's consciousness content, for it is this which makes it a bridge back to the heart. Now our attention is almost exclusively on the portion which does not matter, the sense of separate individuality and the other thoughts arising from it. What is needed is to switch this attention on to the 'I am' by an appropriate method.

Another significant aspect of the mind which needs to be taken note of is that though the mind consists of thoughts only the first thought, 'I am so and so', really matters. Without the individual's attention the other thoughts cannot appear on the mental horizon and when such attention is withdrawn they disappear. Also, there is no inter-relationship between the other thoughts, but the thinker, the individual is "equally and essentially connected to all other thoughts". Therefore, when one is tackling the

mind, when one is seeking to control the mind, attention has to be paid to this core thought; all other thoughts despite their bewildering variety are merely chaff.

Ramana says that the most efficacious area for the control of the mind is the constant questing of the validity of our assumption about our identity by asking the question ‘Who am I?’ Though the form is that of a question no answer, by way of denial ‘I am not the body’ or affirmation ‘I am the Self’, should be made. For they are mere concepts within the mind’s framework. Provided one lets this doubt take over at all possible times then the true answer would be found from within, from the depth of one’s being.

The other tool suggested by Ramana is to ask, ‘Whence am I?’ Individuality comes on waking and goes while sleeping. Hence one should enquire about the mind’s origin. Such enquiring would make for source-awareness so essential for merging in the heart.

When one pays attention to the subject ‘I’ using these twin weapons one acquires the capacity to be alert against thought intrusion. One notices quickly, if not immediately, the straying of attention away from the thinker. The warding off of thoughts is a preliminary necessity. When it is followed by sustained attention on the ‘I’, the mind becomes intuned and quiet.

It is important to remember that once the mind is intuned by attention to the subject then one should switch over from the intensive positive attitude, which sustains such attention, to complete passivity. “Being still” is what is needed. Along the way the repeated merging of the mind

into the heart itself acts as a spur for further effort. For “what one has experienced and knows to be the truth can neither be denied nor forgotten”. The mind partakes more and more of consciousness till it gradually acquires the capacity to stay steadily at the source. Then the mind becomes silent. Mind as we know it would be dead. The externalising of the mind and its swinging between action and laziness would end. Instead it would be internalised, pure and uncontaminated by thought. It would then reflect consciousness without distortion. Thoughts will rise when needed and subside. Action would be complete and perfect. It is a state of wakeful sleep for one is free of thoughts as in sleep and alertly active as when awake. When one becomes Self-aware, joy inundates as a ceaseless throb in the heart.

Many, due to lack of experience of that state, are worried about being free of thoughts. It may be made clear again, that the function of mind, memory, reasoning, inference etc. would be very much there and that too with heightened power, due to absence of distractions. The examples of the liberated ones of the past, who were abiding in that state of silence, should also help in getting rid of this fear. Ramana himself is an example of this for he did whatever he did with an infectious enthusiasm, from the cutting of vegetables to clarifying the innumerable doubts of the seekers of truth. When one says that the mind would be a void and free it only means that the rubbish heap of purposeless and psychological thoughts would not be there.

One has also to consider what would be the supplementary practices to help to quicken the process. Ramana recommends 'watching the breath with the mind'. Such attention if constant has the immediate effect of quietening the mind for both the mind and breath originate from the heart. As the mind gathers enough strength to stay with the 'I' breath regulation by watching the breath would serve the purpose of a brake for a car or reins for a horse. However, Ramana does not recommend it as an exclusive method, for breath regulation may have the effect of lulling the mind. The danger of the mind being lulled into sleep is quite on the cards for the mind is either active and full of thoughts or asleep when it is without thoughts. However, what is needed is conscious effort to turn the mind within and make it stay inward till it is merged in its source.

Where does grace of the Sadguru come in? Is it all a matter of the individual's effort only? Quite certainly 'No'. By Ramana's grace alone one is attracted to the direct path of self-enquiry incessantly stressed by him. In this path there is nothing to occupy the mind, no rituals, no scope for philosophical dialectics, no unsaid or hidden nuances. It is all an open book. The mind revels in complications. To opt for a way which does not provide for avenues of relish to the mind cannot happen except by his grace. Also, in the inner journey, grace is very much in operation. Effort can be made only up to a point when inwardness is established. Thereafter, it is Ramana's grace which 'swallows one alive' and opens up a new dimension of living. It is Ramana's guidance from within that sustains in many dead-end

situations and enables one to overcome listlessness and loss of interest. “Grace is thus the beginning and the end. Introversion is due to grace, perseverance is grace and realisation is grace.”

Ramana also would advise that one should proceed with spiritual practice in the confidence of its assured success. “Others have succeeded. Why not you? Why stultify yourself by anticipating failure?” He would say that spiritual unfoldment is only a matter of discovering what is already there, the spiritual heart and the natural state of silence. Since this state is one’s own and not given one is sure to become aware of it when diligent practice and the Sadguru’s grace interact.

Many think that the abandoning of wife and children, giving up of jobs, renouncing of the world and the like are precondition for attaining the goal. Where is the time for spiritual practice in the busy work-a-day world? It is a full time task and duties leave no time for it. Ramana would never encourage such false logic for the world is in the mind. What needs to be tackled is the mind which one cannot leave behind. One can always make self-enquiry an undercurrent, sow the seed of doubt about the truth of our assumed identity. It is all a matter of proper use of the meditation time, and of idle-time. Ramana would say that one who wishes to bathe in the sea cannot say he would prefer to wait till the waves subside. Can such a person have a sea bath at all? He has to resolve to bathe in it as it is. He has to learn by himself or by proper instruction to duck under each wave till he acquires the skill to duck at a stretch

wave after wave. Then the restless ocean holds no fear for him for he knows how to handle it.

This problem of duties and worries of the world can also be handled by learning to leave things to the care of the Sadguru. As one progresses in self-enquiry faith in the omniscience and omnipotence of Ramana grows. One begins by giving Ramana a particular power of attorney, when things go out of hand, and then a general power of attorney as the trust becomes complete. But one has to be clear about the implications of 'surrender'. One has to unquestioningly accept the unfolding of events in the knowledge and certainty that Ramana knows best. Such confidence is never misplaced for he takes over completely the responsibility of guiding one along. The burden is Ramana's and he can well shoulder it.

One finds a lot of interest in the question of reincarnation. May be the underlying fact is the fear of reconciling oneself to the idea of the ending of one's existence. Since one identifies oneself with the body, the death of the body is so awesome. What happens at the time of death? The mind gathers the life-force and attaches itself to another body either subtle or gross before leaving the present one. The karmic purpose of birth is for the fructification of the desires and attachments remaining in seed form. So long as the mind is not merged steadily in the heart, birth and rebirth are inevitable. If one wishes to be free from this cycle one has to work for and attain steady Self-awareness. To do so is to find the true purpose of life, which is to enquire into the question 'For whom is the

birth?’ and find its answer in the freedom from its continuum.

A related question of fate and free-will would also figure quite often in the conversations of seekers with Ramana. Here too Ramana would go into the root of the question, by asking one to find out the one to whom fate and free will relate. Thus one is taken back to the search for true identity. He would also recommend a way out of destiny’s barbs and arrows, by suggesting that it can be overcome by surrender to the guru. Once one is able to accept the happenings of life as just, even the labelling of events into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ stops. Who can know better what is ‘good’ and what is ‘bad’ than the Sadguru himself? We do not know the total karmic picture while he does. Therefore, our judgement is fallible and short-sighted but his is clear sighted and in our best interest.

Many would be interested in miracles. Should a jnani exercise these powers? Why do some jnanis perform miracles while others don’t? Ramana classifies miracles into two categories - those which are natural to jnanis and those which are the product of the mind, which are performed to dazzle, to obtain name and fame. The second category are the unfortunate ones. Even a magician knows, while performing his tricks, that they are illusions. But a miracle worker, on the other hand, would himself be deluded into believing the reality of the illusion he creates. For, these siddhis are not means to Self-knowledge and one would remain ignorant despite possessing these powers. What needs to be remembered is that Self-awareness is the

true miracle. As for the natural miracles of jnanis, they may or may not display these powers, depending on the divine plan. But it makes no difference. For it is equimindedness which marks out the jnani.

What was Ramana's way of communicating his teachings? For many years when he was staying in the caves of Arunachala he would hardly speak. There was no need. In the immensity of the silence in his presence the seekers' doubts would be clarified. Even in later years the silence was so compelling that there would be the necessary response in the seeker's mind. However, there were always occasions when Ramana would clarify by cryptic and direct answers. But before doing so he would generally give a piercing look of grace which enabled the questioner to grasp the full implication of the message. One could say that even now when he is not in the body, the power of the look has not diminished. One can feel it and benefit from his speaking eyes in his photographs. The light which radiates from those eyes stills the mind and helps in resolving the problems during practice. Ramana would also emphasise the need for remembering the inner presence of the guru. From the age of innocence he had himself received the guidance of Arunachala, the sacred hill, regarded as the embodiment of Lord Siva. Likewise, as the inner guru Ramana's guidance is open to all who can turn within and be sensitive to his presence.

As one reaps the benefits, the joy of the path, one often ponders how the enormous debt due to Ramana can

be repaid. He is the fullness of consciousness. What can one give him? Ramana himself has been queried on this. In reply he referred to a Tamil Vedantic work, 'Kaivalya Navaneetam' which says that the best gift of the disciple to the guru would be to become Self-aware himself.

The conversations selected in this book are mostly from the period up to the mid-thirties. For those were the years when greater intimacy and freedom was possible for the seekers. They had Ramana all to themselves. The sole concern of many of them was to find out the truth. What a galaxy of questioners - Ganapati Muni, Kapali Sastri, Daivarata, Humphreys, Narasimha Swami, Paul Bruton, Ramanananda Swarnagiri and Cohen. There is so much to learn from their conversations. Unfortunately, to a large extent, they are like hidden treasures, like scattered pearls. For they are lost sight of in small pamphlets, in little known publications, in stray reminiscences, in books in which they form a small part. These have been strung together in order to harness them for the benefit of earnest seekers.

For the sake of completeness and when needed for the subject a few select conversations of later years recorded by Munagala Venkataramiah, Devaraja Mudaliar, Subbaramayya or in other publications of the Ramanasramam have been added.

At the beginning of each chapter brief notes have been given on the essential points which need to be kept in mind. The arrangement of the contents of each chapter and their order has in view the seeker's need. For the book's purpose is to serve as a practical guide on the path.

One might well ask “Of what use is self-enquiry? What do I lose if I don’t practice it? What do I gain by diligent pursuit of it?” The answer lies in having a good look at our present life. Are we happy? Are we happy all the time or are we tasting continuously the bitter-sweet of life? Is our mind under our control? Can we relax and switch off thoughts? Are we free from their pestering demands? Where is the much yearned for peace of mind? Are we puppets of fate or its masters? Don’t we want to be free from all this endless activity which gives no time even to stop and stare? Each one knows in his heart of hearts the true answer. Hence the search for the way out which the Ramana path offers. For it is practice and experience oriented. As one travels along the way one learns to appreciate its beauty. The goal and methodology are clear. The goal is the discovery of one’s own true identity, to abide in the natural state. The means to reach it too are so explicit. Steadily, the fetters of the mind, the bondage to time is broken. Then we are that dynamic silence, that abundant joy.

Ramana Maharshi
Shrine Opening Day
5th December 1991

A.R.NATARAJAN

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Acknowledgements | i |
| 2. Introduction | ii |
| 3. Sadguru Ramana | 1 |
| 4. The Power of Silence | 6 |
| 5. God, Guru and Self | 8 |
| 6. Ramana's Death Experience | 15 |
| 7. The Natural State | 20 |
| 8. Happiness | 24 |
| 9. The Heart | 29 |
| 10. Flow of Consciousness | 38 |
| 11. The Mind | 41 |
| 12. Pure Mind | 46 |
| 13. 'I'-'I' Awareness | 51 |
| 14. Non-objective Meditation | 57 |
| 15. Am I the Body? | 61 |
| 16. Am I the Mind? | 65 |
| 17. Self Enquiry - What it is and what it is not | 75 |
| 18. Other Spiritual Practices - Pranayama | 85 |
| 19. Spiritual Practices - Doubts and Answers | 88 |
| 20. More Doubts and Answers | 108 |

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|
| 21. | Pitfalls and Deflections | 117 |
| 22. | Practice | 129 |
| 23. | Grace | 136 |
| 24. | Samadhi | 140 |
| 25. | Hand Over Your Burden to the Sadguru | 146 |
| 26. | Ego | 158 |
| 27. | The World | 162 |
| 28. | God | 166 |
| 29. | Dream, Waking and Illusion | 175 |
| 30. | Destiny, Free-Will and Beyond | 185 |
| 31. | Birth - Rebirth | 192 |
| 32. | Renunciation | 197 |
| 33. | Siddhis | 205 |
| 34. | Jnani | 209 |
| 35. | Glossary | 219 |
| 36. | References | 227 |
| 37. | Bibliography | 242 |
| 38. | Index | 245 |

SADGURU RAMANA

To be drawn to the teachings of Ramana is itself a sure sign of grace. It is the dawn of knowledge. For the way of the mind is such that it prefers complications, rituals, dogmas, a system of do's and don'ts which would keep it engaged in some activity or the other. Why should one then come to the Ramana Way with its direct, no distraction approach and clear single focus on Self-knowledge unless it be that his power is already at work? Ramana would say that grace is there at the beginning.

Ramana tried to keep his supreme state of steady wisdom a secret. Even so he would indicate it, or hint at it when a specific question was asked or to sustain faith. He is the timeless one pervading the entire universe as its very core, the heart of all life. He is the fullness of consciousness. He does not hesitate to say so in his reply to Amritananda Yogi.

The question would remain as to why this chapter should be the first one. Would it not be wiser to put it in later when seekers questing of truth have been confirmed in their faith as they become aware of the direct relevance of Ramana's teaching for transforming life? It has been made the first chapter for experience shows that without the constant support of his guidance, one's efforts would add up to nothing. It is his helping hand which is constantly there in our periods of spiritual helplessness. Also, why fight shy of stating straightaway the bare truth that Ramana is

the best exemplar of the fruits of his path - joyous living immersed in the bliss, the fullness of consciousness.

Anyone from whom you learn, be it your parents, teachers at school or friends in the life around, is termed a guru. However, one can be guided in the pursuit of truth only by a Sadguru or one who is himself the embodiment of Sat or Truth. He should have direct experience of it and be poised in it always. One can compare the guru to the lamp and the Sadguru to the sun. Ramana is termed Sadguru for he is the sun of knowledge.

Ramana was the name given to him by Ganapati Muni in 1907 when he found him to be constantly revelling in the Self. Ever since he is known by this name all the world over. It also means 'the sweet one'.

One cannot repay the debt due to the Sadguru for he has no needs, nothing which can make his cup of happiness full for it is already brimming over. But if you must give some recompense do tread the path shown with vigilance and persistence so that you too may partake of that beatitude.



A devotee, Amritananda Yogi, wrote on a piece of paper in Malayalam and gave it to Bhagavan, whose written reply is set out below:

A. Yogi: Are you Hari (Vishnu) or Sivaguru (Subrahmanya) or Yativara (Siva) or Vararuchi?

Bhagavan: In the hearts of all beginning with Hari there shines as the pure intellect, the Supreme who is the same as Arunachala Ramana. When the mind, melting with love for him, reaches the heart, wherein he resides as the beloved, the subtle eye of the pure intellect opens and he reveals himself as pure consciousness.¹

* * *

Anantamurti addressed him and said in English:

Bhagavan, I have enjoyed great peace in your presence. Permit me to return to Bangalore. May I know if I can receive your help when I reach Bangalore? I pray for your benediction.

The benevolent sage was till then reclining on the sofa. He dramatised the parting scene. He sat up vertically on the sofa and with a kind but loud tone he said in English as follows:

What? Is there Time, Place or Distance for me?

After putting this question to me he reclined on the pillows of the sofa. His words and gestures were charming, instructive and benevolent. They indicated perpetual compassion and love of all who pray for his aid. His gracious words are ringing in my ears, even after thirty-four years.²

* * *

When some other devotee made a similar parting request to Sri Ramana, he was pleased to tell him as follows:

No one can be out of sight of the Supreme Presence. Since you identify one body with Bhagavan and another with yourself, you find two separate entities and speak of going away from here. Wherever you may be, you cannot leave me.

These words used by the sage are a commentary of the words said as an answer to me when I parted from him on or about the 10th April 1937.³

* * *

D: Bhagavan is helping us in every way. We derive much benefit as you are shaping our lives. I am unable to know what recompense we can offer.

B: What is there you can do for me? What is it that I want? I am ever content. It is enough if you know the aim of life and strive for the realisation of the Self.⁴

* * *

On the last morning before my departure, Sri Bhagavan quoted two verses from Sri Muruganar and explained them as follows:

1. “That which is said to be beyond the beyond, and is at the same time inside of the inside and shines within the Heart itself - the Real Self, is verily Sri Venkata Ramana. Do adore Him.”
2. “Like the cock that throws aside the diamond taking it for a pebble, you may also belittle this Arunachala Ramana mistaking Him for a

common fellow-man while He is really the Supreme Self. So beware!!”⁵

* * *

In the presence of Sri Bhagavan, Sri Mudaliar gently admonished me for failing to attend the Jayanti, and added: “I believe that Sri Bhagavan expects us, his children, to gather at his feet especially on such occasions.”

Sri Bhagavan smiled and said: “The feet of Bhagavan are everywhere. So where can we gather except at his feet? Time and space are no barriers to the gathering of hearts.”⁶

* * *

Visitor: I want to leave. I want to have Bhagavan's grace.

Bhagavan: It does not matter if it is a hundred miles or a thousand miles. It acts.⁷

* * *

Devotee: In books it is stated that Bhagavan is an ocean of mercy. Is it a fact?

Bhagavan: Ocean? The ocean has a limit or boundary. But the grace of Bhagavan has no such thing. It is limitless. It knows no bounds.⁸

* * *

THE POWER OF SILENCE

One of the results of the steadfast pursuit of the Ramana Way is the silent mind. What do we mean by it? When the mind is silent it is free of distracting thoughts and is therefore capable of giving its full attention to the present. When there is no need for thinking the mind remains serene and peaceful like a vast waveless ocean during the day time. Ramana's mind was immersed in silence, a silence so potent that all those present could also partake of it. Perhaps it is for this reason that it is said that Ramana taught mostly through silence.

How are we to profit from it? It is by becoming more and more receptive to it, by steadfast practice of self-enquiry.

Just one incident which happened in 1937 is covered in this chapter as it is a most telling one about the potency of Ramana's silence. One has to constantly remember that Ramana is timeless and that his silence is available still whenever we are able to feel his presence. Its significance lies in the fact that for the recipient of this transmission of power, faith in Ramana grows. This enables one to move forward on the path.



He was a well-built old man. He loudly addressed Sri Ramana in Telugu and spoke with a stentorian voice. He said, "Swamiji, many men and women are now sitting before you in order to get some instruction. You do not speak even

one word. They too do not put any questions to you. They are all silently sitting to learn something. What are you teaching them? What are they learning from you? Please explain this secret to me.”

Sri Ramana did not stir. He did not make any gesture to indicate that he had heard the loud words uttered by the old pandit. All of us were eager to listen to any answer that the great sage might give. The questioner stood for five minutes hoping that the sage would give a reply. The old pandit started to speak again and said as follows: “My two questions have not been answered by you, Swamiji. I too cannot discover the answers. Please explain the matter by word of mouth.” After having thus spoken, he continued to stand. Sri Ramana looked at the old pandit with his bright eyes and replied in Telugu as follows: "What are you asking me? Is there any one here to teach others?" Unable to give an answer to the question put by the sage himself, the Telugu Pandit said again as follows: “If it is so, why are so many men and women sitting patiently in front of you? What profit do they derive by sitting in this hall?”

Sri Ramana, with a slight smile on his serene face, gave the following instructive reply. He said “The question must be put ‘there’. Why are you putting that question ‘here’?” When he used the adverb ‘there’, the sage stretched his hand towards the assembled devotees. When he used the other adverb ‘here’ he turned his hand towards himself. Such were his suggestive gestures and answers.¹

* * *

GOD, GURU AND SELF

The Self is the fullness of consciousness. Therefore, there is nothing apart from it. Ramana would humorously say that if God were to be separate he would be a Self-less God. As for the Sadguru, his individuality is dead. It is merged in the Self like waves in the sea. So he is the Self. The Guru and God too are not different for their essential nature as unlimited consciousness is the same. Again the omnipotence and consciousness which we associate with God are also found in the guru who is at once the abode of peace and the storehouse of power. One can justifiably have this confidence in the guru. From this flows the faith to pursue the path along which the guru guides

A question is raised by some as to why a guru is necessary on the spiritual path. It is said that a teacher is necessary in matters pertaining to the mind and that it is futile to seek guidance in regard to matters beyond it. The fallacy in this argument is that one has to cross many a hurdle before reaching the cut-off point, before the mind is totally silent. What the guru does is to guide the disciple till the alert quest for truth yields place to passive surrender to the magnetism of the divinity within. He alone has the competence to do so because of his direct experience of the state of natural joy which the disciples or the devotees are seeking. What the guru does is to remove the obstructions to knowledge about one's true identity. Though he has in him the power to bestow the experience he would refrain

from doing so in order that the seeker may find out the truth for himself.

Ramana would say that the guru's role is like that of a doctor to prescribe the appropriate medicine but the seeker who is the patient must himself take the prescribed medicine to be cured of the illness. It is only rarely, when he must that the guru pushes the medicine down the patient's throat. As a rule, while the guru guides on the path it is up to the aspirant to follow it.

The guru's work is mainly within. By the magnetism of his touch, thought or look or the power of his silence the guru turns the seeker within and takes over. For, when the mind is externalised it cannot listen. The din of distracting thoughts would prevent it. The remembrance of the fact that guru's guidance is essentially from within is important for only then one can recognise that his guidance is available wherever one might be and also regardless of whether the guru is in the body or has attained Nirvana.



Sri Dilip Kumar Roy of Sri Aurobindo Ashram this morning sang in the presence of Maharshi in the Hall and in the evening asked the following questions:

- D: Some people reported you to have said that there was no need for a guru. Others gave the opposite report. What does Maharshi say?
- B: I have never said that there is no need for a guru.

D: Sri Aurobindo and others refer to you as having had no guru.

B: All depends on what you call guru. He need not be in a human form. Dattatreya had twenty-four gurus: the five elements, earth, water, etc. Which means that every object in this 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 intellect and sense-perceptions. So there must be a guru.

D: I mean a human guru - the Maharshi did not have one.

B: I might have had one at one time or other. But did I not sing hymns to Arunachala? What is a guru? Guru is God or the Self. First a man prays to God to fulfill his desires. A time comes when he will no more pray for the fulfillment of material desires but for God Himself. God then appears to him in some form or other, human or non-human, to guide him to Himself in answer to his prayers and according to his needs.¹

* * *

Chadwick: Bhagavan says he has no disciples.

Bhagavan: (Looking at me suspiciously) - Yes.

C: But Bhagavan also says that for the majority of the aspirants the Guru is necessary.

- B: Yes.
- C: Then what am I to do? I have come all this distance and sat at Bhagavan's feet all these years. Has it all been a waste of time?
- B: For a seeker God in his grace takes a form in order to lead him to his formless state.
- Has he any doubt about it? Ask him, does he want me to give him a written document? Go and call Narayana Iyer, Sub-Registrar and tell him to make one out for him.²

* * *

- D: I have been following a certain school of thought, which completely dispenses with gurus. But after many years of deep thinking I have now come to the conclusion that a guide is absolutely essential on the difficult path which leads to spiritual liberation. I take Bhagavan to have reached the highest, and so I beg of him to enlighten me.
- B: All scriptures recommend spiritual teachers. The guru is none other than the goal man seeks, the Self. As the seeker's mind is bent outwards, the Self takes a human shape as a guru to help driving it inward. Tayumanavar says that God, Self or Guru appears as a man to dispel the ignorance of man, just as a deer is used as a decoy to capture a wild deer. He has

to appear in a body in order to dispel the 'I-am-the-body' notion of the seeker.³

* * *

D: Is not the guru's guidance needed in addition to idol worship?

B: How did you start without advice?

D: From puranas etc.

B: Yes. Does it matter who the guru is? We really are one with the guru and God. We discover that in the end. There is no difference between them.

D: If we have some merit the search will not leave us.

B: Yes. You will keep your effort that way.

D: Will not a cleverer man be a great help in pointing out the way?

B: Yes, but if you go on working with available light you will meet your guru, as he will be seeking you himself.⁴

* * *

D: Can everybody see God?

B: Yes.

D: Can I see God?

B: Yes.

D: Who is my guide to see God? Do I need a guide?

B: Who was your guide to Ramanasramam? With whose guidance do you see the world daily? Just as you are able to see the world yourself so also you will be able to see your Self if you earnestly strive to do so, your Self alone being your guide in that quest.⁵

* * *

Mrs. Jinarajadasa an old theosophist and later a follower of Sri J.Krishnamurti.

Mrs. J: In Mrs. Besant's time we used to spend such a lot of time meditating on the Masters. Are Masters really useful?

B: Masters do exist externally as long as the pupil feels himself to be the body. As such they are useful to teach him the truth about himself. Once the pupil experiences the truth and breaks the body illusion, he realises the Masters to be the same as himself, namely, the Supreme Consciousness, or Self. If there are Masters outside the Self, then they are not real. The fact is Self, Master and God are one and the same.⁶

* * *

D: Does the good from contact with jnanis hold good even after the dissolution of the physical body of the jnani?

B: The guru is not his body. Therefore his contact will continue even after his life in the body

ends. If one jnani exists his influence would be felt by all people and would benefit them and not simply his immediate disciples.

* * *

D: What are the marks of a Sadguru?

B: The marks of a Sadguru are steady abidance in his Self, looking at all with an equal eye, unshakable courage at all times and in all circumstances.⁸

D: Will the guru help us to know the Self through initiation etc.?

B: Because you think you are the body, you think guru also has a body and that he would do something tangible to you. His work lies within the spiritual realm.⁹

* * *

RAMANA'S DEATH EXPERIENCE

The Sadguru teaches the truth experienced by him directly. In contrast, ordinary gurus only repeat, parrot-like the experience of others recorded in the scriptures. For one wishing to tread the Ramana Way, Ramana's death experience is of vital importance for it is that which he shared with seekers over the five decades of his spiritual ministration.

The edited version of it is recorded in the first biography on Ramana, 'Self Realisation'. This has been adopted by subsequent writers and is reproduced hereunder. "The shock of fear of death made me at once introspective, or 'introverted'. I said to myself mentally, i.e., without uttering the words - 'Now, death has come. What does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies.' I at once dramatized the scene of death. I extended my limbs and held them rigid as though rigor-mortis had set in. I imitated a corpse to lend an air of reality to my further investigation, I held my breath and kept my mouth closed, pressing the lips tightly together so that no sound might escape. Let not the word 'I' or any other word be uttered! 'Well then,' said I to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body, am 'I' dead? Is the body 'I'? This body is silent and inert. But I feel the full force of my personality and even the sound 'I' within myself, apart from the body. So 'I' am a spirit, a thing transcending the body. The material body dies, but the

spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death. I am therefore the deathless spirit.” This version has missed out on some essential points. Therefore, the unedited version of the death-experience which gives a more accurate insight, has been included in this book.

What happened when Ramana was gripped by a total fear of death? Here one would do well to remember that when one is under the complete grip of any emotion there is only that emotion. There is a temporary freezing of all thoughts. Ramana’s experience too was non-mental, intuitive. The edited version however gives the impression of a mental process by reason of which his true personality or ‘I’ was revealed to him. Also, Ramana did not merely imitate the death process. ‘His body had actually become rigid’. On reading the unedited version we find him clearly stating that what happened was the ‘death’ of the body and his simultaneously becoming aware that he was the deathless ‘current of energy working on despite the rigidity or activity of the body’.

The central point of the experience is ‘striking and quite clear; it is the revelation of true identity’. The focus of his attention was exclusively on the subject, the quest for his true identity. This is the direct enquiry into the subject ‘I’ and it leads one on to Self-awareness.

In all mystic experiences the revelation is achieved not through individual volition. It happens at a point beyond which no effort is possible. Ramana has made this clear to Devaraja Mudaliar when he told him that "some force, call

it atomic power or anything else, rose within me and took possession of me.”

□ □ □

D: Can you describe your death experience?

B: It was a sudden fear of death. The actual enquiry and ascertainment or discovery of ‘Who am I’ was over on that very day. Instinctively I held my breath and began to think or dive inward with my inquiry into my own nature. ‘This body is going to die’, I said to myself referring to the gross physical body. I had no idea that there was any *sookshma sarira* (composed of mind etc.) in human beings. I did not even think of the mind. I thought of the gross physical body when I used the term body and I came to the conclusion that when it was dead and rigid (then it seemed to me that my body had actually become rigid - as I stretched myself like a corpse with rigor mortis, thinking this out), I was not dead. I was, on the other hand, conscious of being alive, in existence. So, the question arose in me ‘What is this I? Is it this body who calls himself the ‘I’?’ So I held my mouth shut, determined not to allow it to pronounce ‘I’ or any other syllable. Still I felt within myself the ‘I’ was there - the sound was there and the object calling or feeling itself ‘I’

was there. What was that? I felt that that was a force or current, a centre of energy playing on the body, working on despite the rigidity or activity of the body, though existing in connection with it. It was that current, force, or centre that constituted my personality, that kept me acting, moving, etc., as I came to know then and only then. I had no idea whatever of my self before that. Once I reached that conclusion, the fear of death dropped off. It had no place in my thoughts. 'I' being a subtle current had no death to fear. So, further development or activity was issuing from the new life and not from any fear. I had at that time no idea of the identity of that current, or about its relationship to Personal God, or 'Iswara' as I used to term Him. As for Brahman, the Impersonal Absolute, I had no idea then. I had not even heard the name Brahman. Bhagavad Gita or other religious works I had not read. Except Periapuranam and Bible class texts (4 Gospels, Psalms) I had not read any religious books. Of Vivekananda, I had just seen with my uncle a copy of his Chicago lecture and had not read it. Even that Swami's name I could not correctly pronounce. I pronounced it Vyvekanand, giving the 'i' the 'y' sound. I had no notions of religious

philosophy - except the current notions of God, that he is an infinitely powerful Person, present everywhere though worshipped in special places in the images representing him and other ideas which are contained for instance in the Bible texts I read and Periapuranam. Later, when I was in the Arunachala temple, I learnt of the identity of my personality with Brahman, and later with Absolute Brahman, which I had heard of in 'Ribhu Gita' as underlying all. I was only feeling that everything was being done by the current and not by me. Since I wrote the parting chit, I had ceased to regard the current as my narrow 'I'. That current or 'Avesam' was now felt as myself, not a superimposition. The awakening gave me a continuous idea or feeling of my personality being a current, force, or Avesam, on which I was perpetually absorbed whatever I did, read, or when I walked, spoke or rested.¹

* * *

THE NATURAL STATE

One must be clear what one is working towards. What is sadhana for? What is the purpose of spiritual practices? Various answers might be given. But the common element in these replies would be that one is seeking peace of mind and happiness. Ramana asks whether we would seek it unless it is natural for us to be restful and happy. If by nature we are restless and unhappy, would we not reconcile ourselves to it as our inescapable lot instead of seeking a way out? So happiness and a quiet mind are inherent and natural.

If our experience is different it is only because there are factors which obstruct our awareness of this truth. All effort in the spiritual field is to remove these obstacles which prevent awareness of spontaneous joy and inherence in that state.

Ramana says that one's paramount duty in life is to become aware of one's natural bliss. Self-enquiry incessantly taught by him is the straight path for the discovery of this state.



Bhagavan: (suo moto) The state in which awareness is firm, even when objects are sensed, is called the natural state.¹

* * *

Ganapati Muni: How does a person of 'steady knowledge' know that he is one such? Is it because of the awareness of fullness of his knowledge? Or is it because of cessation of objective awareness?

B: In the firm natural state, through the silence of the mind free of all tendencies, the knower knows himself as such, without any doubt.²

* * *

G M: For seekers of truth is the critical study of the scriptures alone enough for knowledge?

B: There is no doubt that mere critical study of scriptures cannot liberate the one seeking truth. Without 'upasana' spiritual practice, there cannot be attainment. This is certain. Experience of the natural state during spiritual practice is called 'upasana'. When that itself is unwaveringly attained it is called knowledge.³

* * *

Bose: What is death?

B: It is oblivion of one's real nature.⁴

* * *

D: I am unable to have peace of mind. I am planning to go to the Himalayas in search of it.

B: You have travelled 250 miles from Madurai and come here. How much mental quietness have you got? Multiply it by the distance from

here to Himalayas to measure the happiness you would get by going there. Don't forget peace is your real nature.⁵

* * *

Once Ramaswami Pillai searched for a key. After sometime he found it.

B: The key was in its usual place. It was not lost. Only his memory of it was not there. The Self is everywhere. Not being aware of this due to forgetfulness of our real nature, we keep searching for it.⁶

* * *

D: Can one abiding in the natural state be active?

B: For the ignorant onlooker it would appear as if one in the natural state is also involved in activities. However, he does not perform any actions. It is only from the onlooker's point of view that he is so engaged. If the onlooker is also in the natural state such unnecessary questions would not arise. Such doubts will persist till one experiences that state, which is not a matter of hearsay. To be that one has to remain still.⁷

* * *

B: Forgetfulness of your real nature is the real death, remembrance of it is the true birth. It

puts an end to successive births. Yours is then eternal life.⁸

* * *

B: The mind resting in the Self is its natural condition, but instead of that the mind rests in outward objects.⁹

* * *

D: I have riches, power, every material comfort, but am unable to find peace.

B: Why do you want peace? Why cannot you be as you are?

D: Because I am not happy otherwise.

B: It is like this. A man suffering from headache will not rest quietly until he has taken the right medicine and got rid of his ailment. For, health is our nature and not illness. Likewise peace is our nature. Indeed we are peace. Forgetting that, we seek peace from external sources. It is an impossible quest and causes all this trouble. The moment you withdraw your mind from external objects and turn inwards you taste real peace and feel happy.¹⁰

* * *

HAPPINESS

The basic question is whether happiness is within or whether it is derived from our contact with objects, or relationships, or ideas and so on. Presently our happiness is from the externalised mind, through sensory contacts. The snag about such happiness is that it is never steady or continuous. Happiness is followed by sorrow because happiness has been linked to circumstances, linked to the events which we keep evaluating as good and bad. There is a different dimension of happiness, which is termed joy or bliss, for there is no let in it. Ramana terms it natural for it is inherent. If it were not so one would not be seeking it.

The question would arise that if happiness is inherent, why is it that one does not feel it all the time? The reason for this lies in one's inability to be intuned mentally, and to stay steadfast in the mind's source, the heart. Bliss emanates from the heart and one has to tap it there. The means given by Ramana is attention on the subject 'I' for pushing it within till it is drawn into the magnetic zone of the heart.

□ □ □

B: Is it not the nature of man to be happy? That is, when nothing extraneous interferes with him, is he not happy?

D: Yes,

B: Should we not say, then, that man's nature is happiness?

- D: Probably that is so. But still I feel some hesitation or doubt to say so.
- B: Why should you entertain such a doubt when your experience can remove it?
- D: What experience do I have, Swami?
- B: Do you not experience your self?
- D: In some vague way. But when I think of myself, it is always in connection with so many other extraneous things and rambling thoughts. I can hardly get a clear idea of myself.
- B: Do you not at any time free yourself from these extraneous things and rambling thoughts?
- D: I have tried to.
- B: Why should you try? Do you not every day find yourself free from them?
- D: I have never found myself free from them.
- B: You are talking of your waking condition, are you not?
- D: Yes.
- B: But what about your condition in sleep?
- D: I have sleep. But what can I remember of it except a few dreams which happen to produce a strong impression on me?
- B: I do not refer to your dreaming sleep, which is but a weak echo or replica of your waking state.

I refer to dreamless sleep. Have you not had dreamless sleep?

D: I have it every night.

B: Then in that condition, are you not free from these extraneous things and the rambling thoughts about them?

D: I do not know. I remember nothing about that state when I wake up.

B: Do you wake with a sense of having passed the time of dreamless sleep in misery or with rambling thoughts?

D: No, of course not.

B: Do you not wake up with a sense of blissful undisturbed repose?

D: Yes.

B: Who enjoyed that blissful, undisturbed repose during the time of dreamless sleep?

D: I myself enjoyed it.

B: Were extraneous things and rambling thoughts with you at that time?

D: No.

B: Here then is your daily experience in which you are free from extraneous things and rambling thoughts, and you find it blissful and pleasant, do you not?

D: Yes.

B: Is this not a further reason for inferring that the essential nature of your Self is happiness?

D: Yes, it seems to be.¹

* * *

D: Though we feel happy at times at other periods we are unhappy as things do not happen according to our expectations. As a result happiness is so fleeting.

B: Why should you feel unhappy? Do you expect happiness only from your body and mind? You say the happiness does not last long. For eternal happiness the only way is to know the Self. The truth will then shine forth from your heart like sunshine. Mind becomes untroubled and real happiness will flood it. The Self and happiness are identical.

D: I am unable to pacify the mind when circumstances are unfavourable.

B: The relative happiness and unhappiness to the mind arise from sheer ignorance of the spiritual truth. Man's true nature is happiness which is inborn. One's search for happiness is an unconscious search for the Self. At last he finds what is already there. This happiness, bliss does not come to an end. It is eternal.²

* * *

D: In the scriptures a table is given showing the ratio or proportion which each kind of

happiness or pleasure bears to other kinds, and this realisation is the twelfth in that series. Does not this show that this realisation is relative? It is only a billion times a student's happiness. Can this be termed absolute ?

B: Commentators say that this too is an approximation. What is meant is that the state of realisation is infinitely happy when compared to the unit which is a student's happiness. There is no comparison between one and infinity. The infinite is the Absolute, alike in point of happiness, knowledge, power and so on³ .

* * *

THE HEART

The central point of Ramana's death-experience was his discovery of the true identity as the 'current of energy' independent of the body 'though arising in connection with it'. Intuitively he located this feeling of existence to the right of the middle of the chest, and termed it as the 'spiritual heart'. He correlated his own direct experience to the existing usage in the scriptures. Since he discovered the primary energy source, he explains in great detail how this energy is distributed through channels of consciousness called 'nadis'. First, energy of the heart is reflected by the mind. From there it covers the different parts of the body. Therefore the mind and the body are secondary and tertiary sources of energy dependent on the heart. If one is unaware of the heart he would wrongly assume that the mind is self-luminous and relate his identity to it. In the alternative, he might identify himself with the body which too appears to have a life of its own. Ramana gives the analogy of the red hot iron rod which is heated in the fire. Though it acquires the qualities of the fire in which it was heated, if removed it would become cold. It is only because of the linking of the body to the mind and the mind to the heart that consciousness or energy is there in the mind and the body. There is only the reflected consciousness of the heart. The heart alone is self-luminous like the sun.

Another important point made by Ramana is that all thoughts emanate only from the heart where they are

imbedded in seed form ready to sprout when circumstances are propitious. Thus the heart is at once the fullness of consciousness or energy and the place from which thoughts originate. This has far reaching consequences for spiritual practice as would be seen from the chapter on self-enquiry and the related chapters. The goal of all practices is clearly to get back to the source. Constant attention to the source of the breath or of sound or to the core I-thought would inturn the mind and merge it in its source, the heart. It would be increasingly purified and reflect consciousness with less and less distortion. When the goal is achieved the mind would be pure and it would reflect the consciousness free of any contamination. There would be perfection in action and awareness of the bliss of existence. For the manner in which this would be experienced please see the chapter “The ‘I’ - ‘I’ - Experience”.

One more point needs clarification. It is the doubt which might be felt in giving a physical location to the fullness of consciousness or the all pervading energy. Ramana has clarified that since one has identified oneself with body, the source of consciousness has to be located within it. It is only when knowledge dawns that all distinctions between inside and outside cease.



Ramana Muni spoke exhaustively about the Heart on the 9th of August 1917.

That from which all thoughts of embodied beings spring is the Heart. Descriptions of the Heart are only mental concepts.

In brief, the 'I'-thought is the root of all thoughts. The source of the 'I' - thought is the Heart.

The Heart is not the blood-pumping organ. 'Hridayam' means 'This is the centre'. Thus it stands for the Self.

The location of the Heart is on the right side of the chest and not on the left. The light of consciousness flows from the Heart through 'Sushumna' channel to 'Sahasrara'.

From 'Sahasrara' consciousness spreads all over the body, and then the experience of the world arises. Viewing themselves as different from that consciousness human beings get caught in the cycle of births and deaths.

The 'Sahasrara' of one who abides in the Self is pure light only. Any thought which approaches it cannot survive.

Even when objects are perceived, because of their nearness, it does not destroy yoga as the mind sees no differences.

The state in which awareness is firm, even when objects are sensed, is called the natural state. In 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi' there is no objective perception.

The entire universe is in the body and the whole body is in the Heart. Hence the universe is contained within the Heart.

The universe is only in the mind and the mind is nothing but the Heart. Thus the entire story of the universe culminates in the Heart.

The Heart is to the body what the sun is to the world. The mind in 'Sahasrara' is like the orbit of the moon in the world.

Just as the sun gives light to the moon, the Heart lights the mind.

A mortal absent from the Heart sees only the mind, just as the light of the moon alone is seen at night when the sun has set.

Unaware that the true source of consciousness is one's own Self, and mentally perceiving objects apart from oneself, the ignorant are deluded.

The mind of the knower, abiding in the Heart, is merged in the consciousness of the Heart like the moonlight in daylight.

Though the verbal meaning of the term 'Prajnana', intelligence, is the mind, the wise know its essential meaning to be the Heart. The supreme is only the Heart.

The difference between the seer and seen is only in the mind. For those abiding in the Heart the perception is unitary, one.

When there is a forcible arrest of thoughts, by swooning, sleep, excessive joy or sorrow, fear, and so on, the mind goes back to its source, the Heart.

Such merger is unconscious and the person is unaware of it. However, when one consciously enters the Heart it is termed 'Samadhi'. Hence the difference in names.¹

* * *

D: Six adharas are mentioned. Does the 'jiva' reside in the Heart?

B: Yes. The 'Jiva' is said to remain in the Heart in deep sleep and in the brain in waking hours. The Heart need not be taken to be the fleshy or muscular cavity with four chambers which propels the blood. The Heart is used in the scriptures to denote the place whence the notion 'I' springs. It springs from within us, somewhere to the right of the middle of our chest. The 'I' really has no location. It is everything. There is nothing but that. So the Heart must be said to be our entire body and the entire universe conceived as 'I'. But for the practice of the spiritual aspirant we have to indicate a definite part of the universe, or body and so this heart is pointed out as the seat of the Self.²

* * *

D: Then what is the difference between the bound man and the one liberated?

- B: From the Heart, there is a subtle passage leading to the 'sahasrara', the seat of power. The ordinary man lives in the brain unaware of himself in the Heart. The 'jnana siddha' lives in the Heart. When he moves about and deals with men and things, he knows that what he sees is not separate from the one reality.
- D: What about the ordinary man?
- B: I have just said that he sees things outside himself. He is separate from the world, from his own deeper truth, from the truth that supports him and what he sees. The man who has realised the truth of his own existence realises that it is the one reality that is there behind him, behind the world. In fact, he is aware of the one, as the real, the Self in all selves, in all things, as that which is eternal and immutable in all that is impermanent and mutable.
- D: I have done. But one doubt more.
- B: What is it?
- D: You said 'Heart' is the centre of the ego-self, as also the real Self.
- B: Yes, the Heart is the centre of the real. But the ego is impermanent. Like everything else it is supported by the Heart centre. But the ego is the link between spirit and matter; it is a knot,

the knot of radical ignorance in which one is steeped. When this knot is cut asunder by proper means you find this centre.

D: You said there is a passage from this centre to 'sahasrara'.

B: Yes. It is closed in the man in bondage; in the man in whom the ego-knot is cut asunder, a force-current called 'amritanadi' rises and goes up to the 'sahasrara' the crown of the head.

D: Is this the 'sushumna'?

B: No. This is the passage of liberation. This is called 'Atmanadi' 'Brahmanadi' or 'Amritanadi'. This is the nadi that is referred to in the Upanishads. When this passage is open, you cease to be ignorant. You know the truth even when you talk, think or do anything and when dealing with men and things.³

* * *

D: If a fixed place in the body is assigned to the Self, would it not predicate finitude to that which is infinite and all pervading? If the Self is located in the Heart within the physical body, would not the categories of time and space, which are necessarily applicable to the physical body, apply also to the Self?

B: Look, a similar question was put by Sri Rama to Vasishtha. Vasishtha says that there are two

kinds of hearts, the one which is all pervading and which should be 'accepted' and the other which is limited by time and which should be 'rejected'. The all-pervading Heart is within as well as without, and when the 'I am the body' idea disappears, it is neither within nor without.⁴

D: Is it all right to meditate in the space between the eyebrows?

B: When the heart centre is there why not go directly to it instead of going through other centres. To go to Tiruvannamalai from Madras why should one go to Benaras first and come down all the way? Why not come straight?⁵

* * *

In 1915, Jagadeeswara Sastri, an ardent and scholarly devotee of Ramana, wrote the words 'Hridaya kuhara madhye', 'in the centre of the heart-cave', and left it to Ramana to complete it. The completed verse reads "In the centre of the Heart-cave, Brahman shines alone. It is the form of the Self experienced directly as 'I' - 'I'. Enter the 'Heart' merging through self-enquiry or by breath-control and become rooted as That."⁶

* * *

D: What is the location of the heart?

B: The heart is the centre of spiritual experience according to the testimony of sages. When one

asks about the Heart's location he does so because he accepts his bodily existence. It is true from this point of view that reference to the physical body comes to be made. What is indicated is the position of the heart in relation to your identity.

You seek true consciousness. Where can you find it? Can you attain it outside yourself? You have to find it within. Therefore you are directed inward. The heart is the seat of awareness or the consciousness itself.⁷

* * *

FLOW OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The source of consciousness is in the spiritual heart on the right side of the chest. The body and the mind by themselves are inert. However, one gets the feeling that they are self-luminous because consciousness flows from the heart to the mind in the first instance and from there it spreads throughout the body. Ramana has explained the mechanics of it to Ganapati Muni and other seekers in his dialogues with them recorded in 'Ramana Gita'. There are channels called 'nadis' through which consciousness flows.

Ramana had made it clear that the core 'I'- thought which is 'I am so-and-so' is made up of two parts. The 'I am' which is consciousness and 'so and so' which is insentient. The 'I' serves as a bridge between the consciousness from which it originates and matter with which it is associated. So it is termed the 'granthi' knot of matter and spirit. When Self-knowledge dawns this knot is cut because the mind stays immersed in its conscious source.



B: (suo moto) The location of the Heart is on the right side of the chest and not the left. The light of consciousness flows from the Heart, through 'Sushumna' channel to 'Sahasrara'. From 'Sahasrara' consciousness spreads all over the body, and then experience of the world arises.¹

* * *

Ganapati What is cutting the knot regarding which even
Muni: the learned have doubt?

The effulgent Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, listened to the question, remained indrawn for a while and spoke in a divine manner:

B: The knot is the link between the Self and the body. Awareness of the body arises because of this link. The body is matter and Self is consciousness. The link between the two is inferred through the intellect. Just as the unseen electric current passes through the visible wires, the flame of consciousness flows through the various channels in the body. It is because of the spreading of consciousness that one becomes aware of the body. The sages say that the centre of radiation is the Heart. The channel through which consciousness flows is termed 'Sushumna'. It is also called 'atma nadi', 'prana nadi' and 'amrita nadi'. Because consciousness pervades the entire body, one gets attached to the body, regards the body as the Self, and views the world as apart from oneself.

The body of one who abides in the Self through self-enquiry is resplendent just as the heated iron-ball appears as a ball of fire. The latent tendencies pertaining to the body-mind

complex are destroyed. There is no sense of doership because there is no body-consciousness. The one whose knot is cut will never be bound again. The state is one of supreme power and peace. The one to whom the Self alone shines, within, without and everywhere, as name and form would for the ignorant, has cut the knot.²

* * *

THE MIND

Everyone says that he is in search of peace of mind, that he wants to be free from the pressure of ceaseless thoughts. The common complaint also is that the mind is restless, that intruding and unwanted thoughts distract and so on. But the problem of mind control will remain a problem unless one understands what the mind is. Ramana has gone into such great depth and detail about the mind that one gets a clear insight into it.

The first mistake and the fundamental error is to assume that mind is a separate entity. In fact it is intangible being only a collection of thoughts centred round the thought 'I am so and so'. This notion of individuality is not only the first one but it is also the only thought which matters. Why? Ramana points out that while other thoughts have no essential interrelation, all thoughts are 'equally and essentially' related to the 'I'-thought. It is only the individual attention which surfaces a thought at a particular time. When such attention is withdrawn, that thought also drops off. What follows from this? If one pays attention to the 'I am so and so' thought it is enough. One need not and should not allow oneself to be distracted by paying attention to other thoughts.

Once this point is clear one has only to focus on the core thought. It would be seen to have two parts, 'I am' which is consciousness, and 'so and so' which is added on. Here again, one has to look at the consciousness aspect of

the mind for it is this which is a link back to the source of the mind, the heart. Ramana gives the analogy of a dog tracing its master by undistractedly sticking to the scent of the master. So too one can trace consciousness through the mind which has the scent of consciousness in it. Attention to the mind's core would turn it back, within, to rest in the heart.

□ □ □

B: What is the mind? If one searches to find out, then there would be no separate entity as the mind.¹

* * *

B: The mind is a bundle of thoughts. They are dependent on the 'I'-thought. Know the 'I'-thought to be the mind.²

* * *

B: The body is insentient. The Self does not rise. Within the body's limit an 'I' rises between the body and the Self. It is named 'ego', 'knot of matter and spirit', 'bondage', 'subtle body' and 'mind'.³

* * *

B: The mind is born of forms; rooted in forms. It feeds on forms but is itself formless.⁴

* * *

D: Bhagavan please destroy my mind.

B: Is there such a thing as the mind? If so what is its form? Does it have a beard or moustache?⁵

* * *

B: In brief, the 'I' thought is the root of all thoughts. The source of 'I'-thought is the heart.⁶

* * *

D: The question still remains why the quest for the source of the 'I'- thought, 'aham vritti', as distinguished from other thoughts, 'vrittis', should be considered the direct means to Self-Realisation.

B: The 'I'-thought is not really a thought like other thoughts. Because unlike the other vrittis which have no essential interrelation, the 'I'-thought is equally and essentially related to each and every vritti of the mind. Without it there can be no other thoughts. It can subsist by itself without depending on the other thoughts. The 'I'-thought is therefore fundamentally different from other thoughts. The search for its source is the search for the very source of 'I-am'ness.⁷

* * *

D: Although we have heard it so often and so constantly, yet we are unable to put the

teaching to practice successfully. It must be due to weakness of mind. Is it possible that one's age is a bar?

B: The mind is commonly said to be strong if it can think furiously. But here the mind is strong if it is free from thoughts. The yogis say that realisation can be had only before the age of thirty, but not jnanis. For jnana does not cease to exist with age.⁸

* * *

D: When I sit down to think of God, thoughts wander away to other objects. I want to control those thoughts.

B: The wavering mind is a weakness arising from the dissipation of energy in the shape of thoughts. When one makes the mind stick to one thought the energy is conserved and the mind becomes stronger.⁹

* * *

D: I have no peace of mind.

B: Then bring your mind to me.

D: It disappears on enquiry.

B: Proceed further. Don't let go of the enquiry about the source of the mind. Be sure of your peace.¹⁰

* * *

D: Are our prayers granted?

B: No thought will go in vain. Every thought will produce its effect sometime or the other. Thought force will never go in vain.¹¹

* * *

PURE MIND

It is important to be clear about the distinction between the pure and impure mind because of the likely confusion arising from ideas relating to the destruction of the mind. The pure mind is not different from the Self. It is a wave of consciousness which makes for intuitive functioning when the mind is immersed in the heart. It is the power of the Self which enables thinking and activity. When the pure mind identifies itself with the body, due to ignorance, it becomes defiled and limited. It would be futile to enquire how this ignorance arose for it would not lead anywhere. Instead if one enquires 'To whom is this ignorance?', the mind, which is habitually extroverted, would turn within and subside into its source, the heart. Gradually it would be restored to its natural purity.

While on this subject one has to go into the question of the destruction of the mind. Ramana has clarified that mind's destruction only means that the basic ignorance 'I am the body' ceases. The mind is restored to its original state.

What happens as a consequence? The pure mind experiences the bliss of the Self, the throb of consciousness in the heart as 'I'-'I'. However, the pure mind is wholly different from what we now know as the mind.

□ □ □

D: Is Self-experience possible for the mind,
whose nature is constant change?

B: Since sattva-guna (purity, intelligence) is the nature of the mind, and since the mind is pure and undefiled like ether, what is called the mind, is in truth, of the nature of knowledge. When it stays in that natural, pure state, it has not even the name mind. What was originally pure sattva mind, forgets its nature on account of nescience, imagines “I am the body” “the world is real” etc. But the mind which has got rid of its defilement, through action without attachment performed in many lives, by listening to the scriptures from a true guru, by reflecting on its meaning and meditations in order to gain the natural state, gets the form ‘I am Brahman’.

In the pure mind that has been rendered subtle and unmoving by meditation described above, the Self bliss will become manifest. As without the mind there cannot be experience, it is possible for the purified mind endowed with the extremely subtle mode (vritti) to experience Self-bliss by remaining in that form, i.e., in the form of Brahman. Then, that one’s self is the nature of Brahman can be clearly experienced.

D: Is the aforesaid experience possible, even in the state of empirical experience, for the mind

which has to perform functions in accordance with its prarabdha?

- B: A brahmin may play various parts in a drama; yet the thought that he is a brahmin does not leave his mind. Similarly, when one is engaged in various empirical acts there should be the firm conviction 'I am the Self' without allowing the false idea 'I am the body' etc. to rise. If the mind should stray away from its state, then one should enquire, "Oh! Oh! we are not the body, who are we?" and thus one should reinstate the mind in that (pure) state. The enquiry 'Who am I' is the principal means to the removal of all misery and attainment of the supreme bliss. When in this manner the mind becomes quiescent Self experience arises of its own accord, without any hindrance. Thereafter, sensory pleasures and pains will not affect the mind. All phenomenon will appear then, without attachment, like a dream. Never forget, one's primary Self-experience is real bhakti (devotion), yoga (mind control), jnana (knowledge) and all other austerities.
- D: The activity is of the three instruments (the mind, speech and body). Could we remain, unattached, thinking thus?
- B: When such thoughts arise due to residual impressions one should restrain the mind from

flowing that way, endeavour to retain it in the Self-state. One should not give room in the mind for such thoughts ‘Is this good? Or is that good? Or can this be done?’ One should be vigilant even before such thoughts arise and make the mind stay in its native state. If any little room is given, such disturbed mind will do harm to us. While posing as a friend, like a foe appearing to be a friend it will topple us down. Is it not because one forgets one’s Self that such thoughts arise and cause more and more evil? In all manner possible one should endeavour, gradually, not to forget one’s true Self. If that is accomplished, all is accomplished.¹

* * *

- D: What is the authority for saying that Brahman can be apprehended by the mind and at the same time it cannot be apprehended by the mind?
- B: It cannot be apprehended by the impure mind but can be apprehended by the pure mind.
- D: What is pure and what is impure mind?
- B: When the indefinable power of Brahman separates itself from Brahman and in union with reflection of consciousness assumes various forms, it is called impure mind. When

it becomes free from the reflection of consciousness through discrimination, it is called the pure mind. Its state of union with Brahman is its apprehension of Brahman.²

* * *

‘I-I’ - AWARENESS

For convenience of understanding, what we take ourselves to be, the separate individual with a particular name and form, is termed the ‘false - I’. What is false about it is the notion of limitation. In contrast the awareness of fullness of consciousness is termed as ‘I-I’, which is the real ‘I’. Because we are in truth consciousness unbound by thought, unbound by any limitation. Again it is to be emphasised that one is not having two selves, the ‘false’ and ‘real’, but these expressions are for communicating the ideas about the need for search and about what happens on discovery of one’s real nature. Ramana says that when one’s attention is solely on the core of the mind, then the mind turns inward. Thereafter it is pulled within by the current of consciousness in the heart. One might say that the false ‘I’ makes way for the real ‘I’.

There is no break in the feeling of the real ‘I’ unlike the false ‘I’. The latter is a phenomenon of the waking state only since it is absent in sleep. To indicate continuity and uninterrupted feeling, the expression used by Ramana is ‘I-I’.

The spiritual heart is ever existent. So it is called ‘Swaroopa’, the natural state. It is one’s knowledge of it which is felt as ‘I-I’ continuously. It is experienced by the pure mind in the heart. This feeling also exists always but can be felt only in a thought-free pure mind which reflects it.

During practice one has intermittent experience of it. When this experience becomes firm and steady it is termed 'jnana'. This heart-throb is called 'sphurana' in yogic parlance.

□ □ □

D: You speak in very high terms of knowledge; I begin with the body. Is there any difference between the jnani and the ajnani in bodily experience?

B: There is. How can it be otherwise? I have often declared it.

D: Then the Vedanta Jnana as spoken of and discussed is perhaps different from what is practiced and realised. You often say that there is the real meaning of 'I' in the Heart

B: Yes, when you go deeper you lose yourself, as it were, in the abysmal depths, then the Reality which is the Atman that was behind you all the while takes hold of you. It is an incessant flash of I-consciousness, you can be aware of it, feel it, hear it, sense it, so to say; this is what I call 'Aham sphoorti'

D: You said that the Atman is immutable, self-effulgent, etc. But if you speak at the same time of the incessant flash of I-consciousness, of this 'Aham-sphoorti', does that not imply

movement, which cannot be complete realisation in which there is no movement?

B: What do you mean by complete realisation? Does it mean becoming a stone, an inert mass? The 'Aham-vritti' is different from 'Aham-sphoorti'. The former is the activity of the ego, and is bound to lose itself and make way for the latter which is an eternal expression of the Self. In Vedantic parlance this 'Aham-sphoorti' is called 'Vritti Jnana'. Realisation of Jnana is always a Vritti. There is a distinction between Vritti Jnana or Realisation and Swarootpa the Real. Swarootpa is Jnana itself, it is Consciousness. 'Swarootpa' is 'Sat- Chit' which is omnipotent. It is always there self-attained. When you realise it, the realisation is called 'Vritti Jnana'. It is only with reference to your existence that you talk of realisation, of Jnana. Therefore, when we talk of Jnana, we always mean 'Vritti Jnana' and not 'Swarootpa Jnana'; the 'Swarootpa' itself is Jnana (Consciousness) always.

D: So far I understand. But what about the body? How could I feel this Vritti Jnana in the body?

B: You can feel yourself one with the One that exists; the whole body becomes a mere power, a force-current; your life becomes a needle drawn to a huge mass of magnet and as you go

deeper and deeper, you become a mere centre and then not even that, for you become mere consciousness, there are no thoughts or cares any longer - they were shattered at the threshold; it is an inundation; you, a mere straw, you are swallowed alive, but it is very delightful, for you become the very thing that swallows you; this is the union of 'Jeeva' with 'Brahman', the loss of ego in the real Self, the destruction of falsehood, the attainment of Truth.¹

* * *

Mr. C.: Vivekachudamani speaks of the 'I'- 'I' Consciousness as eternally shining in the Heart, but no one is aware of it.

B: Yes, all men without exception have it, in whatever state they may be - the waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep - and whether they are conscious of it or not.

C: In the Talks section of 'Sat - Darshana - Bhasya' the 'I'- 'I' is referred to as the Absolute Consciousness, yet Bhagavan once told me that any realisation before Sahaja Nirvikalpa is intellectual.

B: Yes, the 'I'- 'I' Consciousness is the Absolute. Though it comes before Sahaja, there is in it as

in Sahaja itself the subtle intellect; the difference being that in the latter the sense of forms disappears, which is not the case in the former.²

* * *

- C: Does the enquiry 'Who am I?' lead to any spot in the body'?
- B: Evidently, self-consciousness is in relation to the individual himself and therefore has to be experienced in his being, with a centre in the body as the centre of experience. It resembles the dynamo of a machine, which gives rise to all sorts of electrical works. Not only does it maintain the life of the body and the activities of all its parts and organs, conscious and unconscious, but also the relation between the physical and the subtler planes on which the individual functions. Also, like the dynamo, it vibrates and can be felt by the calm mind that pays attention to it. It is known to the yogis and sadhakas by the name of 'sphurana' which in 'samadhi' scintillates with consciousness.
- C: How to reach that Centre, where what you call the Ultimate Consciousness - the 'I'-'I' - arises? Is it by simply thinking 'Who am I'?
- B: Yes, it will take you there. You must do it with a calm mind - mental calmness is essential.

- C: How does that consciousness manifest itself when the centre - the Heart - is reached? Will I recognise it?
- B: Certainly, as pure consciousness, free from all thought. It is pure, unbroken awareness of your Self, rather of Being - there is no mistaking it when pure.
- C: Is the vibratory movement of the Centre felt simultaneously with the experience of Pure Consciousness, or before, or after it?
- B: They are both one and the same. But sphurana can be felt in a subtle way even when meditation has sufficiently stabilised and deepened, and the Ultimate Consciousness is very near, or during a sudden great fright or shock, when the mind comes to a standstill. It draws attention to itself, so that the meditator's mind, rendered sensitive by calmness, may become aware of it, gravitate towards it, and finally plunge into it, the Self.³

* * *

NON-OBJECTIVE MEDITATION

What is non-objective enquiry? It is an enquiry in which the attention is focussed on the subject, the 'I'. One has to remember that what has to be tackled is the wrong notion that one is a particular name and form. The question being 'What is one's true identity?' From this angle how effective can the normal meditation be? What do we do in normal meditation? In it there is the meditator and the object meditated upon, be it a sacred syllable, name or form. In this duality is present. The crucial question of one's identity is not tackled let alone effectively. To deal with the core problem therefore one has to look for an alternative. This is provided by non-objective meditation. In such meditation attention is on the core of the mind. The 'I' thought, or the wrong notion about oneself is questioned. Attention is not on the seen, the objects, but on the seer. Such attention turns the mind inwards and one becomes aware of the heart's throb, its 'sphurana'. This attention itself is sufficient. Only it should be sustained. Nothing further needs to be done since such attention would result in the subject 'I' subsiding into its source. Then, the real subject, the Self alone remains. It would be seen that the subject and object are one as the subject is all pervasive. Self attention and unitary vision follow.

The advantage of this method is that since the seen is dependent on the seer's attention, attention on the seer stops thoughts on their track. Also, from the beginning one is able to adopt a unitary approach and the fact of oneness

of the Self becomes established in the psyche. Later this becomes one's experience.

□ □ □

Daivarata: What is the paramount duty of a human being caught up in the cycle of births and deaths? Please decide on one and expound it to me.

Bhagavan: For those desiring the highest, discerning one's own true nature is most important. It is the basis of all actions and their fruits.

D: Briefly by what spiritual practice does one become aware of one's own true nature? What effort brings about the exalted inner vision?

B: Withdrawing all thoughts from sense objects through effort one should remain fixed in steady non-objective enquiry.¹

* * *

D: What are the hindrances to Self Realisation?

B: Memory chiefly, habits of thought, accumulated tendencies.

D: How to get rid of these hindrances?

B: Seek the Self by meditation in this manner. Trace every thought to its origin which is only the mind. Never allow thought to run on. If you do, it would be unending. Take it back to its starting place again and again and the mind would die of inaction. Go back constantly to

the question “Who am I?” Tear everything away until only the source of all is left. And then live always in the present, only in it. There is no past or future except in the mind.

D: What meditation would help me?

B: No meditation on any kind of object is helpful. You must learn to realise that the subject and object are one. In meditating on an object whether concrete or abstract you are destroying the sense of oneness and creating duality. Meditate on what you are in reality...you will find..

D: What?

B: You will discover. It is not for me to say what an individual experience would be. It would reveal itself. Hold on to it.²

* * *

GLN: Isn't all that is seen one in the final analysis?

Maharshi: You say that on final analysis all that I see or think or do is one; but that really comprises two notions; the all that is seen and the I that does the seeing, thinking and doing, and says 'I'. Which of these two is the more real, true and important? Obviously the seer, since the seen is dependent on it. So turn your attention to the seer who is the source of your 'I' and realise that. This is the real task. Up to now you have

been studying the object, not the subject; now find out for what reality this word 'I' stands. Find the entity which is the source of the expression 'I'. That is the Self, the Self of all selves.³

* * *

AM I THE BODY?

The scriptures assert that one is not the body. Yet we find it difficult to get over body-consciousness. While dealing with the spiritual heart the reason for this error has been mentioned. Consciousness flowing through nadis, consciousness-channels, reaches the mind and from there it spreads all over the body. This creates the illusion that the body is self-luminous. The false idea has to be corroded and overcome. The intellectual process is to remember the fact that the attributes keep changing whereas the individual does not. I am a student, becomes I am a lawyer, doctor, senior advocate, specialist and so on. The same person has multiple attributes, father, brother, husband, disciple, devotee and the like. Also the 'I' of the dreams may well be and is often different. It bears no relation to the 'I' of the waking state. There is no individuality in sleep. Does one respond to his name in sleep? Therefore the idea that one is a certain name and form is illusory. Experientially this illusion can be broken by enquiring into the self, by questing for one's true identity.

□ □ □

D: May I know about my past and future births?

B: You wish to know what you were and what you will be. Have you considered what you are? It is important to know yourself, to know what you are. Then you will know what ought to be known.¹

* * *

- B: Who are you?
- D: I am Narayanaswami.
- B: Is it the body, the mouth or the hands that represent the 'I' you are talking about?
- D: The mouth, the tongue, the body, all together constitute the 'I'.
- B: What does your body consist of but hands, legs nose and so on. Are you your hands? Can you not exist without your hands?
- D: I can exist without my hands. So I am not my hands.
- B: For the same reason you are not the legs, nose, eyes, and so on.
- D: Just so.
- B: If you are not the parts you are not also the whole body.
- D: How does it follow?
- B: What belongs to you is your property and not yourself.
- D: I now realise I am different from my body, but I cannot however clearly see the line of demarcation between my body and my 'Self'. I cannot see who I am.
- B: Go and put the question to your 'self' and you will know who you are.²

* * *

D: I have finished with everything and abandoned the world. From now on I am a 'sannyasi'.

B: It is no use taking sannyasa if it means enjoying the thought and the happiness of informing other people that henceforward you are a sannyasi. When you were young, you said 'I am a student', then you said, 'I am a revolutionary', next, 'I am a married man', 'the father of a family', 'an industrialist'. Now you say, 'I am a sannyasi'. In all this what difference does it make in relation to that which really is? It is useless to change the attributes, so long as the subject remains intact. It is the subject, the 'I' that disappears when the Self is revealed.³

* * *

D: How can one remove ignorance?

B: You dream in sleep while you are in Tiruvannamalai and you find yourself in another town. The scene is real to you. Your body is here, and you are only on your bed in a room. Can a town enter your room, or could you have left this place and gone elsewhere leaving the body here? Both are impossible. Therefore your being here and seeing another town are both unreal. They appear real to the mind. The 'I' of your dreams has vanished. Another 'I' speaks of your dreams. This 'I' was not in the dream. Both the I's are unreal. That

which conceals or obstructs the right vision is the body-consciousness. This is viparita jnana, and takes place by the union of the Self with the non-Self. Your business is to enquire and be as the Self. By enquiry you find that you are not the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect. You are that which remains after eliminating all that is not Self. By elimination where does the not- Self go? There is no place for it but the Self. It is simply absorbed by the Self.⁴

* * *

AM I THE MIND?

In the terminology of the Ramana Way, mind and ego are interchangeable expressions. We take ourselves to be the mind because our feeling of existence is related to the operation of the thoughts. When awake if thoughts are not there we are lifeless and at a loss. However, since the mind's attention is on objects and not on itself, one remains ignorant of the nature of the mind. Hence the need for self-enquiry. Ramana points out that the mind has a core 'I' or central thought. This is the 'general thought behind every particular thought'. To understand the mind one must hold on to this central 'I', thought. One should stick to it, or cling to it. If sufficient interest exists, then one's mind turns inward. In practice it takes the mode of intense questioning to find out who one is. For, we are seeking to find out if our identity is what we take it to be. Are we the mind? This intense doubt, spirit of adventure, this yearning to find out gives the necessary thrust and enables one to hold on to the mind's centre, the 'I'. This is termed self-enquiry for one is searching to find out the true identity, the truth about oneself, the subject. The mind's attention shifts from objects, which were its exclusive concern, to the subject 'I'. Effort, taking the form of sticking to the mind's core, achieves inwardness. The sustaining grace of the guru makes one switch off effort after a point when the thoughts have ceased and blankness or sleep has not come in their place. For the mind would have merged in its source. Our true identity, our true Self, would be revealed as the fullness of consciousness. The limited consciousness of the mind

would be seen as its reflection. To experience this state is to be Self-aware.



Devotee: What constitutes self-enquiry? What is its utility? Can better results be achieved through other methods?

Bhagavan: This self-enquiry is not the critical study of the scriptures. When the source is searched the ego gets merged in it. The result of self-enquiry is the cure for all sorrows. It is the highest of all results. There is nothing greater than it. Marvellous occult powers are possible through practices other than self-enquiry. But even if one secures such powers ultimately self-enquiry alone gives liberation. Failure to perform prescribed action is not sinful for the wise. For, self-enquiry itself is most meritorious and most purifying.¹

* * *

D: You say one can realise the Self by a search for it. What is the character of this search?

B: You are the mind or think that you are the mind. The mind is nothing but thoughts. Now behind every particular thought there is a general thought which is the 'I', that is yourself. Let us call this 'I' the first thought. Stick to this

I-thought and question it to find out what it is. When this question takes strong hold of you, you cannot think of other thoughts.

D: When I do like this and cling to my self, i.e., the I- thought, other thoughts do come and go, but I say to myself 'Who am I?' and there is no answer forthcoming. To be in this condition is the effort. Is it so?

B: This is a mistake that people often make. What happens when you make a serious quest for the Self is that the I-thought as a thought disappears, something else from the depths takes hold of you and that is not the 'I' which commenced the quest.

D: What is this something else?

B: That is the real Self, the import of I. It is not the ego. It is the Supreme.²

* * *

D: You have often said that one must reject other thoughts when he begins the quest, but the thoughts are endless; if one thought is rejected, another comes and there seems to be no end at all.

B: I do not say that you must go on rejecting thoughts. If you cling to yourself, the I-thought, and when your interest keeps you to that single idea, other thoughts get rejected, automatically they vanish.

- D: And so rejection of thoughts is not necessary?
- B: No. It may be necessary for a time or for some. You fancy that there is no end if one goes on rejecting every thought when it rises. No, there is an end. If you are vigilant, and make a stern effort to reject every thought when it rises, you will soon find that you are going deeper and deeper into your own inner self, where there is no need for your effort to reject the thoughts.
- D: Then it is possible to be without effort, without strain!
- B: Not only that, it is impossible for you to make an effort beyond a certain extent.
- D: I want to be further enlightened. Should I try to make no effort at all?
- B: Here it is impossible for you to be without effort. When you go deeper, it is impossible for you to make any effort.³

* * *

- D: If I go on rejecting thoughts can I call it vichara?
- B: It may be a stepping stone. But really vichara begins when you cling to your Self and are already off the mental movement, the thought-waves.
- D: Then vichara is not intellectual?
- B: No, it is anthara vichara, inner quest.
- D: That is dhyana?

B: To stick to a position unassailed by thoughts is abhyasa or sadhana, you are watchful. But the condition grows intense and deeper when your effort and all responsibilities are taken away from you; that is aroodha, firm state.⁴

* * *

D: Can I dispense with outside help and by my own effort get into the deeper truth?

B: True. But the very fact that you are possessed of the quest of the Self is a manifestation of the divine grace. It is effulgent in the heart, the inner being, the real Self. It draws you from within. You have to attempt to get in from without. Your attempt is vichara (earnest quest), the deep inner movement is grace. That is why I say there is no real vichara without grace, nor is there grace active for him who is without vichara. Both are necessary.⁵

* * *

D: How am I to ascertain who I am?

B: By frequent, if not constant questioning and searching within.

D: How am I to do it?

B: Question yourself and learn that you are neither the body, the senses, the prana (life), nor the mind, nor avidya (ignorance). For all

these are insentient while you are the Sat (the real).

D: But the mind is a demon which presents perpetual obstacles to Self-realisation. Which is the best way to overcome it?

B: The mind is nothing but the thoughts. The root thought is the 'I' which is known as ego. When the question 'Who am I?' preponderates, it kills all other thoughts at first and is itself gone ultimately.

D: What is it that displaces-or is found at the back of the disappearing ego?

B: Even as the rope is seen with the vanishing of the illusion of the false serpent in it, an all-knowing and blissful 'I', the Supreme 'I' devoid of all the qualities and fear, is felt to the exclusion of all duality and plurality.

* * *

D: O Lord, how full of bliss shall I be for all time when I actually achieve that consummation devoutly to be wished!

B: What is there for you to achieve while you are that (sat-chit-ananda) already? You are beyond all time, space and causation. You are the unlimited, absolute, supreme being of bliss. Like the silk worm which weaves its own web and crushes itself by being caught within its

tightening folds, the ignorant man who yields to the mind and its ways seems to be immersed in the world of misery, though in reality he never ceases to be the One without a second.

D: O Lord! How happy am I to have learnt from you the path to perpetual joy!...What is there on earth that an ignorant man like me can offer unto your feet in return for the priceless truth that you have so graciously taught to me now!⁶

* * *

A nest of squirrels was above Bhagavan's couch. A cat had eaten the mother of the young squirrels and the responsibility for their care was taken over by Bhagavan. He remarked:

B: These little ones do not know that wisdom lies in staying in their nest. They keep attempting to come out. All trouble lies outside and they cannot remain within. Similarly if the mind is not externalised, but remains sunk in the heart, then there would be only happiness. But the mind keeps moving out.

D: What is the path for keeping the mind inward?

B: It is exactly the same as what I am doing now. Each time a young squirrel comes out I keep putting it back in its nest. When I go on doing it, it learns the happiness of staying in the nest.⁷

* * *

D: 'All karmas get destroyed on attaining it.' How are we to have that experience? How does this illusion arise and to whom? How is it removed?

B: Instead of pursuing these inquiries as to how illusion arises and how it is removed, it is sufficient if we solve first the question 'To whom?' it arises. Then all questions are solved.

D: The doubts arise in my mind and to me. The books say that I must know myself and learn my own nature But how is it to be done?

B: Seek your source. Find out whence the thought 'I' springs.

D: How is that to be done? I don't find that easy.

B: Do we not see things and know them clearly? But what can we be surer of and be more certain about than our Self? This is direct experience and cannot be further described.

D: If we cannot be Self-aware, what is to be done?

B: Strenuously endeavour to know the Self. Develop the introspective attitude. Constantly put before your mind the query 'Who am I?' and in time you will be able to be Self-aware.⁸

* * *

D: But I am ignorant of the method for the removal of 'viparita bhavane'.

B: Who is ignorant of what? Ask the question and pursue the enquiry as to who it is that is said to

be ignorant. Once you put the question, trying to probe into the 'I', the 'I' disappears. Then what survives is Self-knowledge or Self-realisation.

D: But how to get at that? Isn't a Guru's help needed? Isn't God's help needed?

B: Why? In practice all this is adopted. But on ultimate enquiry, i.e., after reaching the goal, the method and means adopted are found to be themselves the goal. The Guru turns out ultimately to be God and God turns out to be your own real 'Self'.

D: But isn't the Guru's grace or God's grace necessary for one's progress in the vichara (enquiry)?

B: Yes. But the vichara that you are making is itself the Guru's or God's grace.

D: I request you to bless me with your Grace.

The Maharshi remains silent for a while, showing that his very silent presence, in perpetual (i.e., sahaja) samadhi, is an ever present help, which it is for the thirsty questioner to quaff and quench his spiritual thirst with. Then he said:

B: Go on with your enquiry.

D: How? I don't know how to proceed.

B: Who doesn't know? You say 'I' and yet you say you don't know 'I'. Can anyone be ignorant of

himself? Isn't that ludicrous? If there were something else to be attained or known, then you might feel difficulty in attaining or knowing it. But in the case of the ever present, inescapable 'I', how can you be ignorant? You have certainly constantly to fight out and get rid of your false notion of 'I'. Do that.

D: In doing so isn't Guru's help necessary and useful?

B: Yes, to start you on the inquiry. But you must yourself pursue your enquiry.

D: To what extent can I rely on the Guru's grace, in this? Upto what point is the enquiry itself to be carried on?

B: You must carry on this demolition of wrong idea by enquiry, till your last wrong notion is demolished-till the Self is realised.⁹

* * *

SELF ENQUIRY-WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Attention of the mind is on persons, possessions, ideas. It is only on objects and not on the subject, the one to whom they relate. The question of the truth about one's identity is never posed. Thus the most vital question, the one which can make all the difference to our lives is lost sight of in the maze of subject-object relationships. Why is this search for identity important? Because understanding it opens to us the joy of the natural state. It is therefore important, while on this search, to know the do's and don'ts so that one might not be side-tracked, so that one may remain on the job of finding out the truth.

We are often reminded by Ramana that what we have embarked on is a search for the mind's source. The question 'Who am I?' has the double purpose of warding off intruding thoughts and creating a doubt about our notion of ourselves. When as a consequence the attention is on the 'I' then it is more a matter of being aware of the mind's merging in its source. For this the 'Whence am I?' question would be an effective aid.

All postures for meditation are fine for in this enquiry the attention is inward. As Ramana says, when one is not looking out of the window does it matter whether the window is open or shut? The enquiry is not mental. So the temptation of converting the questions meant as tools of the search into 'mantra', into a sacred symbol for repetition, is to be avoided. Also there is no need for auto-suggestions

about one's true identity, that it is the fullness of consciousness, the Self. The advantage of this method is that when one's attention is inwardly fixed, the individual's job is done since the divine force takes over thereafter.

□ □ □

D: In the query 'Who am I?' does this 'I' refer to the ego or the Atman?

B: In the enquiry, 'I' refers to the ego.

D: During the enquiry should I repeat mentally the questions 'Who am I (Koham)?' etc., just like the japa or a mantra again and again, with feeling and understanding of the same or ask them once or twice only in the beginning and then concentrate the mind on the source of ego-the heart and on the efforts to prevent occurrence of worldly thoughts and doubts?

B: Japa of 'koham' is not correct. Put the question once only and then concentrate on finding the source of the ego, and preventing occurrence of thoughts.

D: Should I endeavour to breathe in and out deeply and rhythmically during the enquiry, and synchronise the formula 'koham' with the same? Or should I pay attention to the incoming and outgoing breaths while repeating the question 'koham, kutoham', etc.

B: You should not attend to the breathing, if you are capable of concentrating on the enquiry without it. Some may have to attend to the breathing if unable to concentrate on the enquiry alone. Some may practice 'Kevala Kumbhaka' during the enquiry. Some may require the help of regular pranayama also to steady the mind, and control the thoughts.

All these practices are to be given up when the mind becomes strong enough to pursue the enquiry without their aid. Pranayama is to be practiced with the usual caution. It will gradually increase the power and duration of the 'kumbhaka' (retention of breath). It will make the mind one-pointed. Take its help if unable to concentrate without it. Pranayama is like reins to control the mind-horse, or like brakes to control the wheel of thoughts... 'Who am I?' and 'Whence am I?' are one and the same. They refer to the ego only. No such questions can be asked in the case of the real Self.

D: Should I alternate my questions 'koham' etc., with the replies given by Sri Sankara, such as 'Mano buddhyahankaracittani naham' etc.? Or should I repeat the formula 'Sivoham' after each question 'koham'?

- B: Suggestive replies such as ‘Sivoham’ etc. to the enquiry, are not to be given to the mind during the meditation. The true answer will come by itself. Any answer the ego may give cannot be correct. These affirmations or auto-suggestions may be of help to those who follow other methods, but not in this method of enquiry. If you go on asking, the replies will come. The method of enquiry is dhyana. The effortless state is jnana.
- D: Should I look for the source within the body?
- B: The ego arises within the body. Hence in the first instance you may look within the body for its source. When you reach the source there will be no inside or outside, because the source or the Self is all-pervading. After realisation everything will be inside the Self.
- D: Is it helpful in the enquiry to sit in ‘siddhasana’, keeping spine erect, sitting on deerskin, ‘kushasana’, etc. during the meditation, or are they not quite necessary? Will they expedite the progress?
- B: The real asana is ‘being established’ in the Self-Reality or the Source. Sit in your Self. Where can the Self go and sit? Everything sits in the Self. Find out the source of ‘I’ and sit there. Do not have the idea that the Self cannot

be realised without the help of asanas etc. They are not at all necessary. The chief thing is to enquire and reach the source of the ego. These details such as posture etc. may distract the mind towards them or to the body.

D: Which books are most helpful in ‘swadhyaya’ during spare time (for quick training of the mind for the enquiry)?

B: You may read whichever book you like. Self is the real book. You can look into it whenever you like. Nobody can take it away. It is always at hand to be read. Hold on to your Self in your spare time also and then you can read any book.

D: If doubts, fears and worries harass me during meditation, how can they be most efficiently removed?

B: Ask yourself, ‘To whom do these doubts, fears and worries occur?’-and they will vanish. Cease to pay attention to them. Pay attention to the Self within. Fears etc. can only arise when there are two, or when anybody else exists apart from, or separate from, or outside of you. If you turn the mind inward towards the Self, fears etc. will disappear.

If you try to remove a doubt or fear, another doubt or fear will arise. There will be no end to

it. The best method of annihilating them is to ask, 'To whom do they occur?' and they will disappear. Destroying a tree by plucking its leaves one by one is impossible - other leaves will grow by the time you pluck a few. Remove the root of the tree-the ego-and the whole tree with its leaves and branches will be destroyed. Prevention is better than cure.

D: Will it be helpful if I gaze from time to time on your eyes or face during the effort at meditation, or should I keep the eyes closed? When practising the enquiry at one's own place, should the eyes be closed or-fixed on some object of devotion?

B: Look at your Self or Atma, rather than anywhere else. The eyes may be kept open or closed-it is immaterial. There is only one I, whether you spell it 'I' or 'EYE'. There is no point in opening or closing the eyes. Attention must be focussed on the inner 'I'. You are not 'I' that can be opened or closed. You may close or open the eyes according to your liking for you will cease to think of the world when you think of the Self. If you are in a room and do not look out, it is immaterial whether you close the windows or keep them open.¹

* * *

D: Bhagavan, I have heard about your 'vichara marga' but I have no clear conception of it. Is it to sit in a quiet place and ask oneself the question 'Who am I?' repeatedly or meditate on that question as on a mantra?

B: No, it is not repeating of or meditating on 'Who am I?' It is to dive deep into yourself and seek the place from which the 'I' thought arises in you and to hold on to it firmly to the exclusion of any other thought. Continuous and persistent effort would lead you on to the Self.

* * *

D: As far as I can see it, it is impossible to realise the Self until one has completely succeeded in preventing the rushing thoughts. Am I right?

B: Not exactly. You do not need to prevent other thoughts. In deep sleep you are entirely free from thoughts because the 'I' thought is absent. The moment the 'I'- thought rises on waking, all other thoughts rush out spontaneously. The wisest thing for one to do is therefore to catch hold of this leading thought, the 'I'-thought and dissect it-who and what it is- giving thereby no chance to other thoughts to distract one. There lies the true

value of the vichara and its efficacy in mind control.

* * *

D: Then you mean the Atman is God?

B: You see the difficulty. The vichara 'to know the Self' is different in method from the meditation 'Sivoham' or 'soham', 'Lord Siva I am' or 'He I am'. I rather lay stress upon Self-knowledge, for, you are first concerned with yourself before you proceed to know the world and its Lord. The 'Soham' meditation or 'I am Brahman' meditation is more or less a mental thought. But the quest for the self I speak of is a direct method, indeed superior to the other meditation; for, the moment you get into a movement of quest for the self and go deeper and deeper, the real Self is waiting there to take you in. Then whatever is done is done by something else and you have no hand in it. In this process, all doubts and discussions are automatically given up just as one who sleeps forgets, for the time being, all his cares.

D: What certainty is there that something else waits there to welcome me?

B: When one is sufficiently developed, he becomes naturally convinced.

D: How is this development possible?

- B: Various answers are given. But whatever the previous development, vichara (earnest quest) quickens the development.
- D: That is arguing in a circle. I am developed and so am strong for the quest. The quest itself gives my development.
- B: The mind has always this sort of difficulty. It wants a certain theory to satisfy itself. Really, no theory is necessary for the man who seriously desires to approach God or to realise his own true being.⁴

* * *

A visitor is experiencing great difficulty in meditation when he fights with what he imagines to be his ego. He went to the Master for verification.

- D: In my meditations I try to eliminate the wrong 'I', but so far without success.
- B: How can 'I' eliminate itself? All you have to do is to find its source and abide in it. Your efforts can extend thus far.
- D: Mental activity during meditation does not seem to converge at a point as it should, on the object of meditation and it does not stay there but gets diverted into numerous thought channels. Why is it so? How can the mind be made to overcome this tendency towards

diffused thinking and attain its primal state of freedom from thought?

B: It is the mind's attachment to objects constituting the not-Self that makes the mind wander about during meditation. Therefore the mind should be withdrawn from the not-Self, and an effort should be made to fix it in self-enquiry. All extraneous thought is effectively eliminated when you attune the entire mind to the one question, 'Who is it that is making the enquiry?'

D: In spite of having come to the definite conclusion as a result of one's investigation that the 'I' has no essential relation with the not-Self, i.e. with the body, senses and the objects perceived by the senses, the mind persists in going after these very same things which constitute the not-Self. What is it due to and how can it be remedied?

B: It is due to lack of abhyasa or vairagya. When self-enquiry has become steady through practice, and the spirit of renunciation firm through conviction, your mind will be free from the tendency of thinking about the not-Self.

D: How can I gain steadiness in practice?

B: Only through more practice.⁶

* * *

OTHER SPIRITUAL PRACTICES-PRANAYAMA

Pranayama or breath-control has a vital place in all yogic practices. What is the role assigned to it in the Ramana Way? Both breath and the mind have a common conscious source. They rise from and subside into the heart. Hence the control of the one would lead to the control of the other. Control of mind through regulation of breath is useful at the beginning of meditation or for some time till the mind acquires the strength to stay within. Regulation of breath is done through hathayogic practices which prescribe a mode of inhalation, exhalation and retention of breath.

Ramana recommends the watching of breath with the mind. Such watching, if constant, has the effect of stilling the mind.

The stilling of mind brought about by breath regulation is temporary in its effect. It is like applying brakes to a car or reins to a horse, or tethering of a cow with a rope or the catching of birds in a net. Once the control is removed then the mind is once again filled with thoughts. Hence breath control is more an aid than an independently effective means of mind control. Once the mind is quietened by breath regulation, the quietened mind should be pushed within through self-enquiry. For, mind control is not an end in itself but a step in an inward movement of the

mind which brings it within the zone of the heart's magnetic pull.



The best of knowers of truth, the sage Ramana, having explained the science of the Heart, spoke of the means for controlling the mind.

* * *

Men attached to objects and having endless thoughts due to the strength of latent tendencies find it difficult to control the mind.

* * *

One should control the fickle mind by restraint of breath. Then it would, like a tethered animal, cease to stray.

* * *

Thoughts are controlled by regulation of breath. Then one abides at their source.

* * *

Watching the flow of breath with the mind is restraint of it. Such watching, if constant, steadies the breath.

* * *

If the mind lacks the necessary strength for constant watching of breath then restriction of breath by hatha-yogic practices is suggested.

* * *

Exhaling one unit of time, inhaling one unit of time, and retaining breath for four units purifies the channels through which breath flows.

* * *

Breath-control comes about gradually when the channels are purified. When such regulation becomes permanent it becomes natural.

* * *

The wise regard the giving up of the notion 'I am the body' as exhaling, self-enquiry as inhaling and abidance in the Heart as natural subsidence.

* * *

The mind also gets controlled by repetition of sacred syllables. Then the syllables, the mind, and breath become one.

* * *

The merging of the mind and breath is termed 'dhyana' and it leads to the natural state when it becomes deep and firm.

* * *

By keeping, daily, the company of the great ones always rooted in consciousness, one's mind gets merged in its source.¹

* * *

OTHER SPIRITUAL PRACTICES-DOUBTS AND ANSWERS

Each one would be able to pursue best the spiritual practice to which he is naturally inclined. That would be the best for him. If such a person is exposed to the direct path of self-enquiry, the doubt would arise whether one would have to begin afresh. Also, one would wish to know how best the Ramana Way could be integrated into what one has been practicing till then. The answer is that one can always add self-enquiry with distinct advantage to his sadhana. Whatever be one's method one should hold one to two basics. First is the fundamental one of the goal or purpose of the effort itself. Quite obviously apart from material benefits expected one wishes to progress spiritually. Such a goal will be meaningful only if it is Self-Knowledge. The second aspect is that the method adopted should be such that it helps one to link oneself to the goal. For this self enquiry is the best method. Therefore, without losing hold of the question as to 'Who one is', one has to keep at the spiritual practice of his choice, be it worship, repetition of sacred syllables or name, or yoga. Then the goal and means would be integrated.

One has to find out the truth within the framework of his duties and activities in life and not away from it. This is achieved by trying to maintain throughout the day the current of peace obtained during meditation. Then everything would be seen in its proper perspective. Unwanted thoughts should not be dealt with by pushing

them under the carpet but by enquiry about the one to whom they relate. One cannot be choosy about thoughts, for if the favoured thought is let in the unfavoured thoughts too would find entry. One has to remember that thoughts distract one from Self-attention. The best way for subsidence of thoughts is the enquiry about their source. Discrimination between the 'real', permanent, and 'unreal' is no doubt an aid but it is only constant attention to the subject which turns one's mind within. Then one experiences the natural joy.

□ □ □

D: Whichever way one turns, one finds that the mind has to be subdued. We are told it has to be controlled. Can this really be done when on the one hand the mind is an entity not easily grasped and on the other one continues to have worldly worries?

B: Hmm. A person who has never seen an ocean must make a trip to it to know about it. Standing there before the huge expanse of water, this person may wish to bathe in the sea. Of what use is it if, seeing the roaring and rolling of the waves, he were to just stand there thinking 'I shall wait for all this to subside. When it does, I shall enter it for a quiet bath, just as in the pond back home'? He has to realise either by himself or by being told, that

the ocean is restless and that it has been so from the moment of Creation and will continue likewise till the end of the world. He will then resolve to learn to bathe in it, as it is. He may wade into it by and by, and perhaps, through prior instruction, learn to duck under a wave and let it pass over him. He would naturally hold his breath while doing so. Soon he would be skilled enough to duck, at a stretch, wave after wave, and thus achieve the purpose of bathing without coming to grief. The ocean may go on and though in it, he is free from its grip.

The Maharshi then added, after a pause:

So too here.¹

* * *

B: Your mind seems to be hankering for meditation.

D: What use is it? Here it is only kitchen work.

B: Let the hands and legs do the job. You are not the hands or legs. You are the unmoving one. Problems would be endless as long as one is not aware of this. If you identify yourself with the body you are bound to dualities. Work would appear difficult. Even if you free yourself from work, will the mind cease to wander? It does

not let us even sleep in peace. It keeps wandering as in dreams.²

* * *

D: In meditation I get only temporary peace. What should I do to make it permanent?

B: You can see God within you if mind is turned inward and settled in the Self. God surely reveals himself as consciousness. If one confines his search for peace and happiness to the objective world and its various environments he is bound to fail. In stillness seek to understand the treasures of peace within. That alone affords completeness. With a controlled mind enter within and experience the spiritual fullness. Keep at your sadhana. Keep at it. Then you will find that there is peace even while you are at work. Try to maintain the current of peace.³

* * *

D: In meditation I am disturbed by base thoughts of woman, etc.

What should I do?

B: You must deal with the unwanted thoughts then and there. Turn inwards and be immersed in the source. As the mind extroverts turn it inwards. Maintain constant vigilance and

practise more and more. Maybe your samskaras are strong and you are disturbed. You must struggle and encounter them. This is the challenge in spiritual sadhana.⁴

* * *

- D: What steps should I take as sadhana?
- B: That depends on your qualifications and stage.
- D: I am going on with worship of a form of God.
- B: Go on. That leads to one-pointedness. Get one-pointed. All will come right. People fancy liberation is somewhere and has to be searched for after kicking out the world. Freedom is knowing yourself within yourself. Keep on to a single thought. You will progress. Your mind itself is the world.
- D: My mind is being too much tossed. What to do?
- B: Fix yourself to some one thing and try to hold on to it. All will come right.
- D: I find concentration difficult.
- B: Go on practising. Your concentration must come as easy as your breathing. That would be the crown of achievement.
- D: Celibacy, satvic food, etc. are all helpful, are they not?
- B: Yes, all that is good.

Then Maharshi is silent, gazing at vacancy and setting an example to the questioner for him to imitate and follow immediately.

D: Do I not require yoga?

B: What is that but concentration?

D: To help in that, is it not better to have aids?

B: Breath regulation, etc., are of much help.

D: Is it not possible to get a sight of God?

B: Yes. You see this and that. Why not see God? Only you must know what God is. All are seeing God always. Only they do not realise it. Find out what God is. People see and yet they don't see, because they don't know God.

D: Should I not go on with bhajans, nama japa, etc. when I worship?

B: Yes. Mental repetition is very good. That helps with dhyana. The mind gets identified with that japa and then you know what real puja is-the losing of one's individuality in that which is worshipped or revered.

D: Is paramatma always different from us?

B: The difference is the view a man has now. But by thinking of him as not different, you achieve identity.

D: That is advaita, is it not? Becoming oneself.

B: Where is becoming? The thinker is all the while the same as the Real. He ultimately realises that fact.⁵

* * *

D: I have been practising meditation on the form with japa of guru mantra in accordance with the teachings and writings of my gurudev. Can I now practise meditation according to the method of enquiry 'Who am I?' Am I fitted to take up this method, if I feel inclined to do so?

B: 'I' is also guru-mantra. The first name of God is 'I'. OM comes later. The real Self is always saying I-I. There is no mantra without the person who does the japa, i.e., 'I'. The japa of 'I' is always going on within. Japa leads to dhyana and dhyana leads to jnana. You may practise saguna meditation or the method of enquiry according to your inclination. Only that method will appeal to a person which is most suitable for him.

D: I have been practising other forms of sadhana also apart from the saguna meditation mentioned above such as japa, mantra, bhajanas, spiritual propaganda, lectures, religious free publications etc. Should I continue these in addition to the enquiry of 'Who am I?' if I get spare time, or should I

curtail some or all of these and spend more time in the enquiry only? Will the above practices be helpful in quickening my progress in the enquiry?

B: Without losing hold of the knowledge of 'Who you are', you may continue all activities as prompted to perform by the inner controller. They will go on even without your efforts. What you are destined to do, you cannot avoid. They will come your way of their own accord. You should also understand what japa, bhajans, etc. are meant for. Stay as what you are. The real japa is always going on. Name and God are one and the same.

D: Are my present qualities of faith, humility and surrender sufficiently intense, or are they still very imperfect and requiring further development? If so, how can I quickly develop them to perfection so as to deserve grace and early success in the realisation of Atman, or in the annihilation of the ego?

B: Do not entertain such thoughts of imperfection, lack of qualities etc. You are already perfect. Get rid of the ideas of imperfection and need for development. There is nothing to realise or annihilate. You are the Self. The ego does not exist. Pursue the enquiry and see if there is anything to be

realised or annihilated. See if there is any mind to be controlled. Even the effort is being made by the mind which does not exist.

D: What can I do to increase the receptivity of the mind to your spiritual vibrations while sitting in the hall, and to increase the frequency and duration of the efforts at 'enquiry' in the hall, or to ease such efforts?

B: Keep the mind quiet. That it is enough. Sitting in this hall will help you. The purpose of effort is to get rid of all efforts. The force will be clearly felt when the stillness is achieved. Spiritual vibrations exist everywhere. They will manifest when the mind is stilled.⁶

* * *

D: Why do we need to concentrate?

B: Concentration, meditation and all spiritual practices are not performed with the object of realising the Self, because the Self is ever-present, but of realising the non-existence, of ignorance. Every man admits his own existence and does not need a mirror to prove it to him. Existence is awareness, which is the negation of ignorance. Then why does a man suffer? Because he imagines himself other than what he in reality is, e.g., the body, this, that, and the other- 'I am Gopal, son

of Parashuram, father of Natesan', etc. In reality he is the intelligent 'I-am' alone, stripped of qualities and superimpositions, of names and forms. Does he see his body and all these qualities, shapes and colours in dreamless sleep? Yet he does not deny that he is then himself existing even without a body. He must hold on to that existence, that alone even when he is in the waking state. The man of wisdom simply is, 'I-Am-That-I-Am' sums up the whole Truth. The method is summed up by 'Be still and know that I am God'. What does stillness mean? Cessation of thinking, which is the universe of forms, colours, qualities, time, space, all concepts and precepts whatever.⁷

* * *

Mr. C. relates how the reading of Patanjali Sutras (aphorisms) in 1926 had greatly impressed him. The first few of them had convinced him of the truth of the teaching, but unfortunately there was no one to give him proper guidance till he met Sri Bhagavan early in 1936.

B: Patanjali's first sutras are indeed the climax of all systems of yoga. All yogas aim at the cessation of modification of the mind. This can be brought about in the variety of ways mentioned in the scriptures through mind

control, which frees consciousness from all thoughts and keeps it pure. Effort is necessary. In fact effort is itself yoga.

D: I suppose efforts have to be made in the waking state, which implies that liberation can be gained only in the waking state.

B: Quite so, awareness is necessary for mind control; otherwise who is to make the effort? You cannot make it in sleep or under the influence of drugs. Also liberation has to be gained in full awareness, because the Reality itself is pure awareness.

D: There seems to be nothing but awareness, for to know anything there must be knowledge.

B; Certainly. Subjective knowledge-knowledge, knowing itself is jnana.

D: This is not clear to me.

B: Why so? Knowledge is the light which links the seer to the seen. Suppose you have to search for a book in a library in pitch darkness. Can you find it without light, although you, the subject, and the book, the object, are both present? Light has to be present to unite you. This link between the subject and the object in every experience is consciousness. It is both the substratum and the witness of the experience.⁸

* * *

Mr. B. is a keen devotee of Sri Bhagavan. A few days ago he lost his only son, which shook his faith in the Maharshi and in God's grace. For some days he went on strike by staying away from the Ashram, but today he came in 'to have it out' with Sri Bhagavan with a long list of questions which he had prepared. After receiving some answers he was satisfied.

D: What is faith?

B: Faith, love, grace, are all your nature, the Self.

D: If so, faith and grace are obtainable only on the realisation of the Self. All that we call faith etc. before then is variable and untrue.

B: Quite so.

D: Is sorrow a thought?

B: All thoughts are sorrowful.

D: Even pleasurable thoughts must be sorrowful.

B: Yes, because thoughts take one's attention away from the Self, which is undiluted happiness.

* * *

D: What made Bhagavan come to Arunachala?

B: What made you all come?

D: By that I want to know whether there has been any difference in Bhagavan's spiritual outlook between the day he left Madura and now.

B: None at all: the same experience has prevailed throughout without change.

D: Then where was the need for Bhagavan to write hymns in praise of Arunachala? Was that for him or for us?

B: I do not know why I wrote them. It might have been for others.

D: What is life?

B: Materially speaking life is the body; spiritually speaking it is the Ultimate Consciousness. It depends on how you look at it.⁹

* * *

D: Master, will I be helpful to the world?

B: Help yourself, you will help the world.

D: May I perform miracles as Sri Krishna and Jesus did?

B: Were they, at the time when they performed the miracles, aware that they were performing miracles?

D: No, Master, they were only the media through which God's power did its work.¹⁰

* * *

B: The phenomena we see are curious and surprising-but the most marvellous thing of it all we do not realise, that the one, and only one, illimitable force is responsible for all the

phenomena we see and the act of our seeing them. Do not fix your attention on all these changing things of life, death and phenomena. Do not think of even the actual act of seeing them or perceiving them but only of that which sees all these things. That which is responsible for it all. This will seem nearly impossible at first but by degrees the result will be felt. It takes years of steady, daily practice but that is how a Master is made. Give yourself a quarter of an hour a day, keep your eyes open, and try to keep the mind unshakenly fixed on That which Sees. It is inside yourself. Do not expect to find that 'That' is something definite on which the mind can be fixed easily; it will not be so. Though it takes years to find that 'That' the results of this concentration will soon show themselves-in four or five months' time-in all sorts of unconscious clairvoyance, in peace of mind, in power to deal with troubles, in power all round-always unconscious power. I have given you this teaching in the same words as the Masters give it to their intimate disciples. From now onwards let your whole thought in meditation be not on the act of seeing nor on what you see, but immovably on That Which Sees.¹¹

* * *

The evening was calm but cloudy. Occasionally it would drizzle and in consequence it was somewhat cool. The windows of the Ashram hall were closed and Maharshi was seated as usual on the sofa. A number of devotees sat on the floor facing him. Mr. A.S.K., the Sub-Judge of Cuddalore, had come to see the Maharshi accompanied by two elderly ladies, his aunt and his cousin. He was also accompanied by Raghupati Sastri, a pleader of Cuddalore. Of the inmates and regular visitors there were about seven or eight including Sri Niranjanananda Swami (Chinnaswami), Echammal, Ganapathi Bhat, Viswanatha lyer, Muruganar, and Mahadevan. It was about 6 p.m. and the conversation was mainly carried on by the Maharshi and the Cuddalore visitors. Mr. A.S.K. stared the discussion as to the impermanence of all mundane things.

ASK: Has Sat-Asat-Vicharana (enquiring into the Real and the Unreal) the efficacy, per se, to lead us to the Realisation of the one Imperishable?

B: As propounded by all and realised by all true seekers after the Truth, Brahma-Nishta (abidance in Brahman) alone, if one may say so, can make us know and realise it, as being of us and in us. Any amount of vivechana (discrimination) can lead us only one step forward by making us tyaginah (renouncers), by goading us to discard the abhasa (the

fleeting), and to hold fast only to the eternal truth and Presence.¹²

* * *

- D: Is it not necessary to seek the company of the wise, the saints and the sages?
- B: Yes; but the best sat-sangam is inhering in your 'Self'. It is also the real guhavasam (living in the cave). Dwelling in the cave is retiring into your 'Self'. Association with the wise will certainly help a great deal.
- D: I appear to get the same stillness of thought by tracing the root of the mantra which I repeat, as I would if I put the 'Who am I?' enquiry. Is there any harm in my continuing the mantra in this manner or is it essential that I should only use 'Who am I'?
- B: No you can trace the root of any thought or mantra.
- D: What is the effect of japas or mantras?
- B: Diversion; the mind is a channel, a swift current of thoughts and a mantra is a bund or dam put up in the way of this current to divert the water to where it is needed.
- D: Sometime, after the stillness of thought intervened, I used to hear first some sound resembling that which one would hear if he

were in the midst of or near a rolling mill, and then a little later, a sound like that of a steam-engine whistle. This was only during meditation when I was at home, but here the sound is heard at all times, irrespective of whether I am before you or am walking round the Asrama. The present experience is that the sound is like that of a humming bee.

B: Ask who hears the sound. Repeat the question now and then.¹³

D: As for Iswara's (God's) help in my effort, isn't that to be secured by prayer worship, etc.? Won't that be helpful?

B: Iswara's (God's) grace and worship for it etc. are all intermediate steps adopted and necessary to be adopted so long as the goal is not reached. When it is reached, God is the Self.

D: What particular steps will be helpful?

B: That depends on the circumstances in each case.

D: Which path is best suited to me? Won't all help be provided by God?

B: Bhakti, karma, jnana and yoga, all these paths are one. You cannot love God without knowing him nor know him without loving him. Love

manifests itself in everything you do and that is karma. Development of mental perception is the necessary preliminary before you know or love God in the proper way.

D: Can I go on thinking 'I am God'? Is that right practice?

B: Why think that? In fact you are God. But who goes on thinking or saying 'I am a man', 'I am a man'? If any contrary thought, for instance, that one was a beast had to be put down, then of course you might say 'I am a man'. To the extent of crushing down the wrong notion that one is this or that, according to one's erroneous fancies, to that extent the idea that he is not these but God or Self may be indulged in as a matter of practice. But when practice is over, the result is not any thought at all (such as 'I am God') but mere Self-realisation. That is beyond conceptual thought.

D: Doesn't that all-loving, all-knowing, all-powerful God provide all that is needed for a man's realisation?

The enquirer's inner thought was - "Should we always depend upon the whims and fancies of a Guru, however great he may be? If so, where is the freedom of the Self and Self-reliance?"

Quick and straight as an arrow came the answer from Bhagavan as if he understood the enquirer's inner trouble better than himself.

B: Do not think that this body is the Guru (pointing to his body).

D: I fear that Self-realisation is no easy thing to reach.

B: Why stultify yourself by anticipating failure in your course. Push on. There you are. Self-realisation will come to an earnest seeker in a trice.¹⁴

* * *

D: Worries or worldly life trouble me much and I do not find happiness anywhere.

B: Do those worries trouble you in sleep?

D: No.

B: Are you the same person as you were in sleep, or not?

D: Yes.

B: So, it proves that worries do not belong to you. Those who believe the mind to be real will not be able to subdue it in the state wherein the mind appears to be real, the thief cheats by putting on the dress of the policeman. Hence, we must know how to destroy the mind by knowing its real nature. People ask me as to

how to control the mind. It is but a bundle of thoughts. How will the mind which is a collection of thoughts come under control by a thought of controlling it? Reach its source, therefore. Seek the Atman. All misery will come to an end if you introvert your mind. If you feel that the world is created by the imagination of the individual, then that imagination must be given up. If you think that God has created the world then surrender to him all your responsibilities and leave the burden of the whole world to him.¹⁵

* * *

MORE DOUBTS AND ANSWERS

Ramana repeatedly points out the prime need for Self-knowledge. Until one is Self-aware all attempts at helping the world or reforming it would be like a lame man saying that if only he is helped to his feet he would put the enemy to flight. So whenever questions about social service, or service to the country were raised Ramana would say that the first thing which needs to be attended to is finding out the truth about oneself. “First of all put your house in order before speaking of helping others. Find out who you are”.

Ramana would also draw one’s attention to the need for proceeding further instead of being merely content with intellectual conviction which comes from study of the Sadguru’s works. What matters is experience which cannot come about save by working away tirelessly at self-enquiry. One has to take the medicine prescribed by Sadguru Ramana.

Even when dealing with the question of interrelation between self-enquiry and other methods Ramana would bring one back to source consciousness. ‘What is the source of the mantra’s sound?’ ‘Who is it that does yoga?’ and so on. For everything is contained in self-enquiry, be it yoga, karma, or devotion.

No one need consider that the efforts prior to our being drawn to self-enquiry are a waste. On the contrary, it

is because of the grounding given by these efforts, by their purifying the mind, that one is attracted to self-enquiry.



The following is the conversation which took place when some visitors from Northern India well versed in the Hindu sastras visited Sri Ramanasramam. While the talk opens with an academic question, it was immediately given a practical turn by the Maharshi.

- D: If the ultimate Reality is one and absolute, why does the world appear as an object seen and as different from the subject who sees it? Who is it that sees the object as distinct from himself, the subject?
- B: Who is it that is putting these questions?
- D: One who seeks the truth.
- B: Who is he?
- D: He who desires to know the truth.
- B: If instead of mere desires to know the truth, he has the anubhava, such questions as these would not arise.
- D: True, after Realisation they cannot arise. But until he has the experience, he has not only the desire for it but also some doubts regarding the nature of ultimate Reality. Hence arises the question why the world should appear as an object different from the subject who sees it. I

do admit that the question has any significance only until the desire for Realisation is fulfilled. But till then the question remains and it has to be answered.

B: That there is no answer to your question is the only answer, because the question does not really arise. In order to know the truth you who seek to know it should exist as such, i.e., as yourself, the primal being. It is therefore yourself that you should know in the first instance. It is of you that knowledge or ignorance is predicated. You said you do not know the truth and desire to know it. Instead of engaging your mind with such thoughts as 'I know', 'I am ignorant', etc. you should direct it towards the enquiry as to what the 'I' itself is. Through such enquiry you will find, as a matter of experience and not as something to think and argue about, that what remains alone and absolute is the Self, so that your question, viz., why the world should appear as an object seen by a subject, cannot at all arise. A question that does not arise cannot have an answer.

D: How then should I know the 'I'?

B: By investigation into this question itself, and thereby you get the experience or Atmanubhuti. The ardent desire to know the

truth has a beneficial purpose to serve until one has such experience.¹

* * *

D: Bhagavan during practice the 'I'- thought is turned within sometimes and externalised at other times. Is this inturning of the 'I'-thought knowledge?

B: If the mind having gone in comes out again it is only practice. For knowledge is abiding experience.²

* * *

D: How can one become the knower of the unknown?

B: The seeker himself becomes the knower. The thing to be known is already there. There is nothing to be known afresh. More-over there are no two things. There is only the seer, the knower.

D: I sought Bhagvan's clarification as the Sadguru of all.

B: You can only be the Self. To know the Self is to be it. Remain in the natural state.³

D: Is it not necessary to study the Vedas or at least the Prasthanatraya (the Bhagavad Gita, Dasopanisad and Brahma Sutras, all with commentaries) to ensure firm realisation?

B: No. Do you need all that to see yourself? All that is intellectual wealth, useful in explaining doubts and difficulties if others raise them or if you yourself encounter them in the course of thinking. But to attain realisation, all that is not necessary. You want fresh water to drink, but you do not require all the water of the river Ganges to quench your thirst.

D: Swami, now that you have disclosed this to me, is Jnana attained by me?

B: No, you are just being enabled to prepare the intellectual foundation and to give the necessary turn to your will. What has to be done is to realise. You have been supplied with a bottle of elixir or nectar, but you can get happiness only by actual taste of it. It is only by realisation that it becomes firm, that is, the old tendencies which draw you away into identifying yourself with what is unreal, what is not the Self, are extinguished, leaving you really free and unencumbered by the non-Self. This enduring freedom or perpetual realisation is called liberation or release.⁵

* * *

D: When we see the sufferings of the people in the world, we are very much moved. I wish to do something for them according to my mite.

B: What sort of help do you have in mind? How are you going to help others without knowing yourself? First of all put your own house in order before speaking about others. The world can carry on without you. How can a man who does not know anything about himself help others? First of all try to know who you are in reality. Are you just the human body only, sitting before me now? Know this before trying to help others. Find out who you are. If you know yourself everything will settle down.⁵

* * *

D: Now, after my coming to Sri Ramanasramam, I have no mind to repeat mantras or do any kind of formal worship. I am afraid I would be incurring sin.

B: Just because you have done japa (repetition of mantras) its merit has brought you here. Why should you now fear while enjoying the fruits of your japa?⁶

* * *

D: The Vedantic texts like 'Vichara Sangraham' have extolled the benefits of fasting. Is it not good to fast regularly?

B: They do not mean that you should abstain from eating food or drinking water. All that is meant is that without causing hardship to the body

one should eat limited quantities of food conducive to meditation.⁷

* * *

D: We want some practical guidance for Self-Realisation.

B: (Quoting the Bible said) Be still and know that I am God (and added a rider), the Lord said 'know' and not 'think' that 'I am God'.⁸

* * *

GLN: Isn't Self- Realisation easy?

B: Yes, yes. It seems so at first, but there is difficulty too. You have to overcome your present false values and wrong identification. Therefore the quest requires concentrated effort and steadfast abidance in the source when this is reached.

But don't let that deter you. The rise of the urge to seek for the 'I' is itself an act of divine grace. Once this urge gets hold of you, you are in its clutches. The grip of divine grace never relaxes and finally devours you, just as the prey in a tiger's jaws is never allowed to escape.⁹

* * *

The questions put by Sri Ramanashrayee to Bhagavan and his replies are set out below:

- R: What is the relationship between ‘vichara’, self-enquiry and repetition of sacred syllables (mantra japa)?
- B: ‘Vichara’ itself is the mantra, japa, tapas, sacrifice and yoga.
- R: Does it mean that for those practicing vichara it is unnecessary to repeat mantras?
- B: ‘Vichara’ is the source, the essence of all mantras. All that is meant is that one should not be attached to doing the mantra as such. It does not preclude it.
- R: Sometimes involuntarily vichara and japa overlap into each other. What is one to do then?
- B: As the result of the previous practice even without effort this happens. But can either vichara or japa take place without the ‘I’? In both one has to fix one’s attention to the source be it of the ‘I’ or of the mantra.
- R: While doing vichara sometimes one reaches a blank.
- B: Whether blank is seen or the fullness is seen there is the one to see it. Find out who it is that sees the blankness. The reply has to be to me. Find out who that ‘I’ is. If one enquires then the blankness which appears due to habit

would disappear. The appearance or disappearance of anything, the seeing or not seeing of anything is not natural. Hence when there is any kind of perception one must enquire. Then what remains is the 'I'.¹⁰

* * *

PITFALLS AND DEFLECTIONS

In the Ramana Way the mind is the focal point of attention. Ramana explains that the subsidence of thought can be brought about by breath regulation and by constantly watching breath with the mind. Other practices like breathing in, holding the breath, and breathing it out also serve the purpose of quietening the mind. It is like applying the brake to a railway locomotive. Forcible concentration of the mind also stills the mind. But the effect of all these methods is only temporary. As soon as control is withdrawn or the concentration ceases, the mind is flooded with thoughts. Consequently no progress can be made towards Self Knowledge even if one were to practice it for a thousand years. Ramana called this ‘manolaya’, lulling of the mind, and he emphasises the need for overcoming it by ‘reviving consciousness’, by letting in thoughts. Otherwise one would have jumped from the frying pan of innumerable thoughts into the fire of sleep. It is important always to keep the mind alert and single-pointed in pursuit of its core, the ‘I’, the subject. It is only through such conscious self-enquiry that one can end the sovereignty of thoughts without lapsing into sleep. Then the mind would die, or there would be ‘mano-nasa’ or destruction of the mind. What exactly does it mean? It means that the mind has become pure and is consequently able to reflect consciousness without distortions. The mind is aware of the inherent bliss termed as the ‘I- I’ throb.

The seeker has also to be on guard against getting distracted by matters which are not germane for attaining Self-knowledge. The goal should never be lost sight of. The desire for more scriptural knowledge, concern about the world, about what happens to a jnani's body at the time of nirvana, about the impurities of others, about helping others, and the like, pushes one away from single-minded pursuit of self-enquiry and makes one stray away from the quest. Time and again one should remind oneself about life's purpose, which is to be restored to the natural state.

□ □ □

D: When I am engaged in enquiry as to the source from which the 'I' springs, I arrive at a stage of stillness of mind beyond which I find myself unable to proceed further. I have no thought of any kind and there is an emptiness, a blankness. A mild light pervades and I feel that it is myself bodiless. I have neither cognition nor vision of body and form. The experience lasts nearly half an hour and is pleasing. Would I be correct in concluding that all that was necessary to secure eternal happiness was to continue the practice till this experience could be maintained for hours, days and months together?

B: This does not mean salvation; such a condition is termed manolaya or temporary stillness of

thought. Manolaya means concentration, temporarily arresting the movement of thoughts; as soon as this concentration ceases, thoughts, old and new rush in as usual and even though this temporary lulling of mind should last a thousand years it will never lead to total destruction of thought, which is what is called salvation or liberation from birth and death. The practiser must therefore be ever on the alert and enquire within as to who has this experience, who realizes its pleasantness. Failing this enquiry he will go into a long trance or deep sleep. Due to the absence of a proper guide at this stage of spiritual practice many have been deluded and fallen a prey to a false sense of salvation and only a few have, either by the merit of good acts in their previous births, or by extreme grace, been enabled to reach the goal safely.

Sri Bhagavan then told the following story:

A yogi was doing penance for a number of years on the banks of the Ganges. When he had attained a high degree of concentration, he believed that continuance in that stage for prolonged periods constituted salvation and practised it. One day before going into deep concentration, he felt thirsty and called to his

disciple to bring a little drinking water from the Ganges, but before the disciple arrived with the water, he had gone into samadhi and remained in that state for countless years, during which time much water flowed under the bridge. When he woke from this experience the first thing he asked for was 'Water! Water!'; but there was neither his disciple nor the Ganges in sight.

The first thing which he asked for was water because before going into deep concentration the topmost layer of thought in his mind was water. And by concentration, however deep and prolonged it might have been, he had only been able to temporarily lull his thoughts and when, therefore, he revoked consciousness this topmost thought flew up with all the speed and force of a flood breaking through the dykes. If this is the case with regard to a thought which took shape immediately before he sat for meditation, there is no doubt that thoughts which had taken deeper root earlier would still remain unannihilated; if annihilation of thoughts is salvation, can he be said to have attained salvation?

Seekers rarely understand the difference between this temporary stilling of the mind (manolaya) and permanent destruction of thoughts (manonasa). In the former there is temporary subsidence of thought-waves, and, though this temporary period may even last for a thousand years, thoughts, which are thus temporarily stilled, rise up as soon as the manolaya ceases. One must, therefore, watch one's spiritual progress carefully. One must not allow oneself to be overtaken by such spells of stillness of thought; the moment one experiences this, one must revive consciousness, and enquire within as to who it is who experiences this stillness. While not allowing any thoughts to intrude, he must not, at the same time, be overtaken by this deep sleep or self-hypnotism. Though this is a sign of progress towards the goal, yet it is also the point where the divergence between the road to salvation and yoga nidra takes place. The easy way, the direct way, the shortest cut to salvation is the enquiry method. By such enquiry, you will drive the thought force deeper till it reaches its source and merges therein. It is then that you will have the response from within and find that you rest

there, destroying all thoughts, once and for all.

The temporary stilling of thought comes automatically in the usual course of one's practice and it is a clear sign of one's progress but the danger of it lies in mistaking it for the final goal of spiritual practice and being thus deceived. It is exactly here that a spiritual guide is necessary and he saves a lot of the spiritual aspirant's time and energy which would otherwise be fruitlessly wasted.¹

* * *

D: To say that the pure mind reflects the Truth seems to contradict the statements that the Self is beyond the mind, that the mind cannot know Brahman that is beyond thought and speech.

B: That is why they say that mind is two-fold; there is the higher pure mind as well as the lower impure mind. The impure mind cannot know it but the pure knows. It does not mean that the pure mind measures the immeasurable Self, the Brahman. It means that the Self makes itself felt in the pure mind so that even when you are in the midst of thoughts you feel the presence, you realise the truth that you are one

with the deeper Self and that the thought-waves are there only on the surface.

D: That means the mano-nasa, the destruction of mind or the ego you speak of is then not an absolute destruction.

B: Yes. The mind gets clear of impurities and becomes pure enough to reflect the truth, the real Self. This is impossible when the ego is active and assertive.²

* * *

D: Oh, how great these people are. How fortunate they are to be so learned and to have such deep understanding so as to be able to discuss with our Bhagavan. Compared with them, what am I, a zero in scriptural learning?

B: (Reading the devotee's thoughts) - What? This is only the husk! All this book learning and capacity to repeat the scriptures by memory is absolutely no use. To know the truth you need not undergo all this torture of learning. Not by reading do you get the truth. BE QUIET, that is truth. BE STILL, that is God. Do you shave yourself?

D: Yes.

B: Ah, for shaving you use a mirror, don't you? You look into the mirror and then shave your face; you don't shave the image in the mirror.

Similarly all the scriptures are meant only to show you the way to realisation. They are meant for practice and attainment. Mere book learning and discussions are comparable to a man shaving the image in the mirror.³

* * *

D: There are imperfections, defects and undesirable tendencies even among the inmates of the Ashram. Why should it be so?

B: Where are those defects not found? They are everywhere. If we look to our object, our own aim in life, these things will not distract us⁴.

* * *

D: I want to go to Brahmaloaka. Please guide.

B: So you want to go to Brahmaloaka?

D: That is what I am trying to obtain. That is what the sastras prescribe.

B: But where are you now?

D: I am in your presence.

B: Poor thing! You are there and now in Brahmaloaka and you want to obtain it elsewhere! Know it to be Brahmaloaka where the Brahma-nishta is. The Brahmanishta is the complete one and encompasses and transcends all that is manifest. He is the screen on which the entire manifestation runs as

scrolls of picture. You are like a thirsty man wanting to drink water yet all the time standing neck deep in the Ganges. Let the 'I' that wants to obtain the Brahmaloaka be dead and the Brahman in you will be realised⁵.

* * *

- D: Can this physical body be made to disappear into nothingness?
- B: Why this query? Why not find out if you are this body?
- D: Can't we appear and disappear like Viswamitra and other rishis?
- B: These are debates about physical matters. Is that our essential object of interest? Are you not the Atman? Why think about other matters. Seek the essence. Reject other disputes as useless. Those who believe that moksha consists in disappearance err. No such thing is needed. You are not the body. What does it matter how the body disappears-in one way or another? There is no merit in disappearance of the body in one way over the other. Everything is one. Where is superiority or inferiority in the one? The loss of the 'I' is the central fact-and not of the body, It is the idea that I am the body, that is your bondage. It is the discarding of it and perceiving the real

that matters. Should you pound to pieces something golden before seeing it is gold? What matters if it is round or powdered when you perceive the truth of its being gold? The dying man does not see his body. It is the other man who thinks about the manner in which the body dies. The realised one has no death. Whether the body is active or drops off, he is equally conscious and sees no difference. To him nothing is superior to the other. To an outsider also, the manner of disappearance of a mukta's body is unimportant. Mind your own realisation and after that it will be time enough to see which form of death is preferable.⁶

* * *

D: Don't we attain swarga (heavenly region) as a fruit of our actions?

B: Why? That is as true as our present existence in this world. But, if we enquire what we are and discover the Self, what need is there to think of swarga, etc.?⁷

* * *

D: Why don't you harness your great energy along with Mahatma Gandhi to strike off the fetters of slavery of Mother India?

B: You want to know about God, about Heaven and how sages work for solving such big problems. I tell you that till you know what you yourself really are, you cannot in the least understand any of these. Understand yourself first and everything else would be clear to you then.

D: If sadhus mingle with people and reform them, it will be very good.

B: In the eye of the jnani there are no others so there is nothing like mingling with others for him.⁸

D: Should we not have patriotism and should we not serve our country?

B: First be what you are. Therein lies all truth and happiness. While trying to become someone else, the ego gets in. You think that the world will be conquered by your power, but when you turn inwards towards the Self, you will know that a higher power is working everywhere.⁹

* * *

D: During and after meditation, I get many thoughts about the unhappy people of the world.

B: First find out if this 'I' is real. It is the 'I' which gets these thoughts, and as a result you feel weakness. Therefore find out how

identification with the body takes place. Body-consciousness is the root cause of all misery. When you conduct the enquiry of 'Who am I?' you will find out its source and the 'I' will be destroyed. After that there will be no more questions.¹⁰

D: How can I help others?

B: Who is there for you to help? Who is the 'I' that is to help others? First clear up that point and then everything will settle itself.¹¹

* * *

PRACTICE

Till we become Self-aware, the sense of doership, the feeling that it is one's action, and that the results are dependent on it, is there to a greater or lesser extent. There is no recognition of the truth that the strength for action and responsibility for its success depends on God, on the grace of the Sadguru. It is for this reason that one finds Ramana emphasising the need for effort in the field of spiritual practice as well. Ramana does not encourage any lax attitude on the part of the seeker. He has to put in the necessary effort. Then the guru's guidance would certainly be there.

Another point which Ramana would like is that since the guru's guidance is essentially from within, practice alone would make for the alertness and sensitivity to be aware of the guru's help and support. Also "the more one meditates the more easy it becomes to meditate" for it becomes an undercurrent which goes on when one is not meditating but is engaged in some activity.

One has to be watchful against the dampeners of effort. The transformation resulting from steadfast practice may not be tangibly evident. For there are no set milestones on the way. This leads to impatience, listlessness and loss of interest. Hence we find Ramana assuring that God knows his business, which is to ensure the results at the appropriate time. One can proceed with the confidence that his effort is never a waste. If there is 'the steady impulse

of determination' everything would come all right in the end.

□ □ □

D: My mind keeps wandering. What should I do?

B: Try to make it stick to a single thought.

D: If that be possible what remains to be done?

B: As soon as they come some want to be jnanis. They ignore the effort involved.¹

* * *

Two ladies from Kumbakonam came. One of them said:

D: We want you to initiate us into something which will liberate us quickly.

Bhagavan was silent. After sometime, she said:

D: Kindly instruct. We have to catch the train.

She repeated this often. Bhagavan, the compassionate one, took no offence and said: (addressing Muruganar)

B: Please ask them to find out for whom there is ignorance. (He added later) They are in such a hurry to catch the train, which is a must for them. If possible in the time they are here, they want a short cut to 'moksha'. Is it something to be purchased in a shop?²

* * *

D: Swami, I do not want anything. Just give me liberation.

B: (Laughing heartily) Is liberation a commodity for sale? Have I secreted it somewhere? Renouncing everything is liberation. Is there anything separate for me to give?³

* * *

D: What is the best method of meditation? Some say that concentration on the centre of the eyebrows yields results quickly.

B: What is important is steadfast resolve. It does not make much difference if you concentrate on the tip of the nose, the centre of the eyebrows and so on. The really important thing is to pay attention to the source of the mantra. The sound emanates from the Heart. Keep your attention fixed on that. Perseverance alone counts. The more you meditate the more easy it becomes to meditate. At last it becomes natural.⁴

* * *

D: When an endeavour is made to lead the right life and to concentrate thought on our Self, there is often a downfall and break. What is to be done then?

B: It will come all right in the end. There is the steady impulse of your determination that sets you on your feet again after every fall or breakdown. Gradually the obstacles disappear and your current gets stronger. Everything comes right in the end. Steady determination is the thing required.⁵

* * *

D: Meditation is possible only with control of mind, which can be achieved only through meditation. Is this not a vicious circle?

B: They are interdependent; in fact meditation includes mind control, the subtle watchfulness against intruding thoughts. In the beginning efforts for control are greater than for actual meditation, but in due course, meditation wins and becomes effortless.

D: Your Grace is needed for it.

B: Practice is necessary, there is Grace.

D: In meditation are there words to be repeated mentally?

B: What is meditation but mental repetitions of a concept? It is a mental japam, which begins with words and ends in the silence of the Self.⁶

* * *

Bhagavan told a story of a sannyasi and his disciples to two of the long-standing residents of the asram and a few of the visitors who were then before him, to illustrate what is called sraddha, i.e., earnestness of purpose.

B: There was once a Guru who had eight disciples. One day he required all of them to make a copy of his teachings from a note-book he had kept. One of them, who had lived an easy-going life before renouncing the world, could not make a copy for himself. He, therefore, paid a couple of rupees to a fellow disciple and requested him to make a copy for him also. The Guru examined the copy books one day and, noting two books in the same handwriting asked the disciples for an explanation. Both the writer and the one on whose behalf it was written told the truth about it. The master commented that though speaking the truth was an essential quality of a spiritual aspirant, yet that alone would not carry one to one's goal, 'sraddha' (earnestness of purpose) was also necessary and since this had not been exhibited by the disciple who had entrusted his own labour to another he was disqualified from discipleship. Referring to his making payment for the work, the Guru sarcastically remarked that 'salvation' costs

more than that and he was at liberty to purchase it rather than undergo training under him. So saying he dismissed that disciple.⁷

* * *

D: Bhagavan, I have been coming here for the past several years but still there has been no progress. I am just as bad a sinner as before.

B: There are no milestones on this path. How can you be sure how far you have travelled? Why don't you be like the first class passenger? He informs the guard about his destination, closes the door and sleeps soundly. That is all he need do. The guard will wake him up at the correct station.⁸

* * *

D: My efforts at abiding at the source of the mind have proved futile. Please bless me so that I may succeed.

B: What is the obstruction?

D: It is my deep rooted tendencies. Your grace is needed.

B: Your repeated effort is bound to erase them. Leave God's job to God. You have to do what is in your hands. When the time is ripe God's grace which is always operating would be felt by you also. Grace would work automatically.

Keep three things in mind: (1) individual effort, (2) appropriate time and (3) God's grace. There is no need to remind God about his business which is to keep an eye always on our welfare. The mistake one is prone to make is to abandon effort under the mistaken impression that God's grace is absent. But one should not slacken for God's grace is bound to operate at the ripe time.⁹

* * *

GRACE

The guru's grace is God's grace. They are not different. What place does grace have in the steadfast pursuit of Self knowledge? There are two views about this. One is that the devotee or disciple is like a kitten which stays out till it is picked up and placed elsewhere by its mother. The other is that the devotee is like a baby monkey which has to cling to its mother as she jumps from tree to tree. Ramana is clear that 'clinging' is needed, that the necessary effort should be made by the seeker. Why so? It is because one's sense of doership is dominant and is the motive force behind action. So long as one has the idea that everything depends on his effort, in the spiritual field also he has to put forth his best.

As for the guru's grace it is always there, 'ever full'. One becomes aware of it as one's practice of self-enquiry purifies the mind and makes it more and more equipoised. Self-enquiry helps awareness of grace, and grace makes for the inward bent of mind. Thus they act and react on each other.

Often the mind is weak and scattered, and one is unable to achieve inwardness, or to hold on to attention on the 'I'. Then the guru's support is there, if sought in a mood of surrender. So important is grace at these times that Ramana uses the word 'grace' more than fifty times in his 'Marital Garland of Letters'.

Patience is needed and one should not presume that grace has been denied or not been given in adequate

measure. Ramana points out the need for confidence in the guru's judgement and timing. The required help would be certainly given at the appropriate time.

Also it is the guru's grace which attracts one to the particular path. It is that which sustains interest and makes for the success of the effort to become Self-aware. Grace is therefore the 'beginning, middle and the end'.



The conversation turned upon the question as to whether Iswara prasada (the grace of God) is necessary for the attainment of samrajyam (self-rule) or whether an individual's honest and strenuous effort to attain it cannot, of itself, lead us to that from where there is no return. The Maharshi, with an ineffable smile which affected everyone present, replied:

- B: Iswara prasadam is essential to Realisation. It leads to God-realisation. But it is vouchsafed only to him who is a true bhakta or a yogi, who has striven hard and ceaselessly on the path towards freedom...
- D: There is Iswara anugraham (grace). That is said to be distinct from Iswara prasadam.
- B: The thought of Iswara is Iswara prasadam. His nature is arul or prasadam, i.e., Grace. It is only by Iswara's grace that you think of Iswara.

D: Is not guru anugraham the result of Iswara anugraham?

B: Why distinguish between the two? The guru is viewed as Iswara and not as distinct from Iswara.¹

* * *

D: Would we be wrong if we say that Subbaramayya is the high priest of this order?

B: To me there is no distinction. Grace is flowing like the ocean, ever full. Everyone draws from it according to his capacity. How can one who brings only a tumbler complain that he is not able to take as much as another who has brought a jar?²

* * *

The talk centered round a composition of Bhagavan ‘Song of the Self’, ‘Anma Viddai’. Bhagavan was explaining some points in it to Muruganar who was delighted about it. He in turn referred to certain other points.

B: What purpose would be served if one knows everything except the truth about himself? Once the Self is known what else is there to be known? These words almost echo the gist of the composition.

D: In the song it is stressed that grace is necessary.

B: Yes. It is quite so-the grace of a 'jnani' is essential (and added in his oft quoted way) Grace is always there. If not how will one make an effort at all?³

* * *

One day, a man following the devotional path said in a voice choked with emotion:

D: I have gone on pilgrimage all over the land. I have been regular in my spiritual practices. Many a sleepless night I have passed in prayer. Still I am forlorn. There is no mercy from the Lord.

B: Strange. Why cry? What is there to sob about? Instead of being poised in the Self why go on wailing?⁴

* * *

SAMADHI

Samadhi is the state in which the mind is merged in the heart through conscious effort. Such mergers take place during sleep, trance, swoon, and times of stress and anxiety. However, such unconscious subsidence of the mind is of no use for one remains as ignorant as he was prior to such unconscious merging. The samadhi which is a result of effort is of two kinds. One is nirvikalpa samadhi, and the other sahaja samadhi. While the former is generally regarded as the ultimate in spiritual experience, it is only in Ramana literature we have emphasis on 'sahaja' samadhi, or natural samadhi. In both these types of samadhi the mind is anchored in its source. However, in nirvikalpa samadhi there is no objective awareness. Once objective awareness revives, the state of samadhi is broken and has to be regained again through effort. In this type of samadhi the mind is still alive, and the tendencies which push the mind out remain.

Sahaja samadhi referred to by Ramana is different. In this state contact with objects and activity does not disturb one's state of calm and composure. "You realise that you are moved by the Self which is unaffected by what you say or think". The mind as we know it would be 'dead'. All tendencies would have been erased. They cannot cause mental movements for they would be like roasted seeds which cannot sprout.

Though one appears to awaken to the sahaja state suddenly it is only repeated practice of source merging,

brought about by self-enquiry, that leads one to it. During practice one's mind would be introverted sometimes and extroverted at other times. Gradually as it becomes purer it acquires the capacity to stay within. Finally there would be no outward mental movement save to the extent required. After the purpose of thinking is served, the mind would be like the waveless ocean during midday. The still mind will experience 'existence consciousness' as a constant throb in the heart.



B: (Suo moto) When there is forcible arrest of thoughts, by swooning, sleep, excessive joy or sorrow, fear, and so on, the mind goes back to its source, the Heart. Such a merger is unconscious and the person is unaware of it. However, when one consciously enters the heart it is termed 'Samadhi'.¹

* * *

D: What is samadhi?

B: When the mind is in communion with the Self in darkness, it is called nidra (sleep) i.e., the involution of the mind in ignorance. Involution in a conscious or wakeful state is samadhi. Samadhi is continuous inherence in the Self in a waking state. Nidra or sleep is also inherence in the Self but in an unconscious state. In sahaja samadhi the communion is continuous.

D: What are kevala nirvikalpa samadhi and sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi?

B: The involution of the mind in the Self, but without its destruction, is kevala nirvikalpa samadhi. There are four obstacles in this, namely; (i) vacillation of mind, (ii) life breath or prana, (iii) body, and (iv) drishti.

In kevala nirvikalpa samadhi one is not free from vasanas and does not, therefore, attain mukti. Only after the samskaras have been destroyed can one attain salvation.

D: When can one practise sahaja samadhi?

B: Even from the beginning. Even though one practises kevala nirvikalpa samadhi for years together, if one has not rooted out the vasanas, he will not attain salvation.²

* * *

D: Then what is the samadhi you speak of?

B: In yoga the term samadhi refers to some kind of trance and there are various kinds of it. But the samadhi I speak of is different. It is Sahaja samadhi. For, here you have samadhana, you remain calm and composed even while you are active; you realise that you are moved by the deeper Real Self within. You have no worries, no anxieties, no cares. For, here you come to

realise that there is nothing belonging to you, the ego. And everything is done by something with which you get into conscious union.

D: If this is Sahaja samadhi and the most desirable condition there is no need for Nirvikalpa samadhi?

B: The Nirvikalpa samadhi of Raja Yoga may have its use. But in Jnana this Sahaja sthiti or Sahaja Nishta itself is the Nirvikalpa state. For, in this state the mind is free from doubts. It is sure of the Truth. It feels the presence of the Real. Even when it is active, it knows it is active in the Reality, the Self, the Supreme Being.³

* * *

D: Swami, some say that change or activity of the body, senses and mind are obstacles to samadhi, while others say that it need not be so. Which of them is right?

B: Both are right. In kevala nirvikalpa samadhi the mind is temporarily lulled into inaction, but it is not yet dead. He is in laya and not in nasa. Therefore, when objects are in contact with the body and senses or when the mind is otherwise exercised, his thin thread of samadhi snaps off. But in the case of the perfect samadhi known as sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi, the samadhi state has become permanent and part of one's

nature. Objects may be in contact with his body and senses, and his mind may also be working, yet his samadhi remains undisturbed. How is this possible? An analogy will illustrate it. A boy goes to sleep without taking food. Being a heavy sleeper, after much trouble he is roused just sufficiently to swallow some food. He is hardly conscious of eating then, and has no recollection of it after he wakes up in the morning. Again, take the case of our usual bullock cart drivers. They sleep while seated or lying in the cart, but the bulls take the cart right on to the destination. In both these cases, sleep rendered the boy or man oblivious of the motion of the body. In the case of sahaja samadhi, what renders the possessor of the body oblivious of its motion or change is the intoxication of Consciousness-Bliss.⁴

* * *

- D: Is this salvation or enlightenment instantaneous or gradual?
- B: Time is taken to prepare the intellectual basis on the strength of which intuition is formed. Such time may be of varying lengths in various cases. But the intuition which is realisation, is something to which time does not apply. Realisation of the Self and consciousness of

time are like wax and water. There is no sense of time in samadhi. What is regarded as either quick or delayed realisation is really the quickness or delay in the preparation leading to realisation-not in the realisation itself.⁵

* * *

HAND OVER YOUR BURDEN TO THE **SADGURU**

Ramana would say that self-enquiry, search for source of the mind, and self-surrender are the only two effective means for Self-knowledge. Surrender is generally regarded as easier because of the failure to recognise its true implication. It implies complete and unqualified faith in the sadguru's guidance and protection. When 'bad' events take place we question the why of it. One forgets that 'good' and 'bad' are relative terms, part of the pairs of opposites and that one cannot be had without the other. More than that one ignores the fact that it is the sadguru who knows best what is good karmically and what makes for inwardness. Any questioning or doubt would indicate that the surrender is incomplete.

Also a person who has surrendered would neither seek activity nor renounce it. Whatever action is required would be done with the knowledge that strength for the action and the results of it are dependent on the sadguru. Consequently one will not be anxious about actions or their results.

The spirit of surrender grows gradually as faith in the sadguru takes firmer root. As one practices self-enquiry, the notion that one is the doer gets corroded. Since it is this doership idea which comes in the way of surrender, when this idea wanes one is able to see more clearly that all things are shaped by the divine. One comes to recognise that what we call surrender is 'like a worshipper pinching a little

jaggery from a jaggery image of Lord Ganesa and offering it in worship to Ganesa himself". What can one surrender when nothing belongs to one, and everything belongs to the sadguru? A recognition of this fact removes the entire burden of care. It is seen to be the responsibility of the one who bears the burden of the universe.

□ □ □

D: What is self-surrender?

B: It is the same as mind-control. The ego submits when it recognises the higher authority of the Self. This is the beginning of surrender. Although the ego cannot exist without the Self, yet, due to its ignorance of this fact, it remains rebellious, and acts on its own initiative and by its own will

D: How can the rebellious ego be subjugated?

B: Either by seeking its source, when it automatically disappears, or by voluntarily surrendering all its actions, motives and decisions to the Sadguru thereby striking at its root. Habits create the false notion that thinking is a permanent institution with which it is impossible to dispense, but enquiry and discrimination will blast this fallacy.

D: People prostrate before God or the Guru to prove, I suppose, or at least to show their surrender.

B: True surrender is the melting of the ego in its source, the heart. God is not deceived by outward acts. What he sees in the worshipper is how much of the ego remains in full control and how much is on the verge of destruction.¹

* * *

D: What is meant by surrender?

B: When one surrenders, there will be no sense of doership in him. There will be a feeling of indifference and he will not be anxious about actions or their results. One will not commence any work for his own sake. Such a person would be the one who has renounced all action.²

* * *

A Parsi gentleman who has come for the first time asked:

D: I am a novice in spiritual matters. A friend of mine advised that surrender to God is the best way. I have surrendered to God but he has not enlightened me on the spiritual path. Please extend your grace.

B: Oh! You have surrendered, is it? How then do you say that God has not done anything? It only means that you have not understood the true import of surrender. You should place yourself

completely at God's disposal and expect no return.

D: Now I realise that my understanding of surrender was defective. Please guide me correctly.

B: You say that grace is required. Your coming here expecting guidance is itself God's grace. The same grace will continue if your surrender is total and unreserved. You need not ask anything. Try to get rid of the thought of 'I' and 'Mine'. Don't feel anything is yours. It is all God's.³

* * *

D: Why do interruptions to my peacefulness come?

B: You people are glad and grateful to God when the things you regard as good come to you. That is right. But you should be equally grateful when things you regard as bad come. That is where you fail.⁴

* * *

D: If you leave poor me to go my way how can I be saved?

B: Whether I do or don't do anything you have to surrender and simply keep quiet.⁵

* * *

A decent lady who appeared to be a resourceful person came to the hall and prostrated.

D: (She said in a low voice, but still audible)- I am blessed with a comfortable life by God. I am having all that a human being desires to possess.

B: Then you are happy. What more is required?

D: No, No. I distinctly feel that something is missing. I do not enjoy complete mental peace.

B: Oh, say so. Your life's aim is not complete and so there is no peace.

D: With all my material comforts I am not happy. My mind is worried always and it is agitated. Perhaps this is due to my destiny.

B: Yes, Yes. You have frankly told everything. What is destiny. If you surrender to the Higher Power how can destiny affect you? Surrender is the answer. It will set everything right.

D: That is the trouble. I am unable to surrender. My ego comes in the way.

B: May be, but persist in your attempt. Have one-pointed concentration. Submit yourself to God. Say I am at your disposal. I am helpless. I surrender to you. I seek your help. It will bring peace.

D: I do understand, but I am unable to practise. Perhaps it is due to my destiny.

B: What can destiny do? It will not become operative if you make complete surrender. You will be free from worries. Mind becomes calm and peace will prevail.⁶

* * *

D: When I am here I am convinced; I am impressed. But when I go out and think of society or of my country and I remember your answer 'Know thyself'...

B: What can you do to society or your country when you are weak? You must become strong first. But I tell you, Self attainment is the supreme strength. Do not fear that you will lose strength to act when you become a jnani.

D: I have that fear.

B: You should not have it. If you are destined or chosen to do a particular thing, it will be done.

D: Then should I resign everything? Can I not perform penance and ask God to grant my desires?

B: You can. But there must be some sadhana for your prayers to reach God. When you are doing sadhana, whether it be meditation or prayer, will you be thinking of your desires or of God?

D: I think of my desires in meditation. It is no meditation at all.

- B: Then take it that there is the same Dhyana, the same Tapas the same meditation, for both Sakama and Nishkama, whether it is actuated by desire or is disinterested. Even when your desires are fulfilled, the Tapas grows. It does not cease. That is its true character. It is the same in the case of devotion also. Now I put a question to you. When a man with luggage gets into a railway carriage where does he keep it?
- D: He keeps it in its compartment or in the luggage van.
- B: So he does not carry it upon his head or on his lap.
- D: None but a fool would do so.
- B: If you call him a fool who keeps it on his head a thousand times more foolish is it to bear your burden when you get into the spiritual life, whether it is the path of knowledge, or the path of devotion.
- D: But can I throw off all my responsibilities, all my commitments?
- B: Now, look at the temple tower. There are many statues in it and there is a big statue, one in each corner. Have you seen them?
- D: Yes. I have.
- B: Now I tell you this. The big tall tower is supported by those statues.

- D: How can that be? What do you mean?
- B: I mean, when speaking thus, that it is not more foolish than your attitude when you say that you have to carry and are carrying all cares, burdens, responsibilities etc...The Lord of the Universe carries the whole burden. You imagine you do. You can handover all your burden to his care. Whatever you have to do you will be made an instrument for doing that at the right time. Do not think you cannot do it unless you have the desire to do it. Desire does not give you the strength to do. The strength is the Lord's.
- D: Am I to understand that you are giving me the essence of Karma Yoga?
- B: It is the essence of Karma Yoga, or Bhakti Yoga, why, even the Jnana Yoga, for even though the paths in the beginning may differ, they all eventually lead to this position.⁷

* * *

- D: How is renunciation at all possible if the entire manifested existence is nothing but the one divine? What is it that should be renounced?
- B: One must renounce wrong knowledge, that anything but the divine exists. That is one must give up the notion that there is any duality or multiplicity, whatever the manifested

appearance may appear to be. The Supreme Being is the only Reality. It alone is and sustains the apparent multiplicity. Therefore, renounce the knowledge that anything except the divine exists. In other words, renounce the sense of duality or multiplicity.

D: It is no doubt good that the scriptures should admonish the layman and make him give up the notion of duality, but how are we to reconcile this teaching of the scriptures with the no less important injunction, namely, that of self-surrender to the divine? If there is no duality whatsoever, where is the necessity or possibility of self-surrender?

B: We are familiar with a custom among some people in these parts based on deep sentiment of devotion to Lord Ganesa. Daily worship to his image, which is found installed in all the temples of the locality, is an indispensable ritual for these people before their daily meal. A certain poor traveller of this persuasion was passing through a sparsely inhabited country. Not finding a temple of Ganesa anywhere nearby where he could perform his daily worship to the image before his mid-day meal, he resolved to make an idol of the deity out of the small quantity of jaggery (brown sugar) he was carrying with him for his meal. Having

made the idol out of jaggery, he proceeded earnestly with the ritual. However, when it came to the point in the ceremony where he had to make a small food offering to the deity, he discovered that he had nothing left in his baggage since he had used all the jaggery he had to make the idol. But since no worship can be complete without the customary food offering, the simple minded wayfarer pinched a small bit of jaggery from the idol itself and offered it to the deity. It did not occur to him that in the very act of pinching out a bit of jaggery he had defiled the very idol that he wanted to worship and had therefore made both the worship and the offering worthless. Your idea of self surrender is nothing better than the offering made by the wayfarer. By presuming your existence as something apart from the Supreme Being you have merely defiled it. Whether you surrender yourself or not, you have never been apart from that Supreme Being. Indeed at this moment, even as in the past or the future, the divine alone is.⁸

* * *

D: Is not surrender the chief sadhana?

B: The sadhana of surrender is accepted, no doubt. But when surrender is complete, there will be no distinction. Often, when a disciple

gets initiation into a mantra from a guru and believes that he has surrendered, his surrender is not real. In surrender, one has to give up one's mind, and after the mind is given away, there will be no duality of any kind. He who remains separate from God has not surrendered.

D: If all actions and their results are surrendered to God, will the mind be controlled or not?

B: By doing so, the mind will be purified but it will not die. Suppose a drunkard thinks that he has surrendered his actions and its fruits to God, and in his drunken state, if he commits a mistake and someone beats him with a stick for that mistake, he must surrender this beating also to God. But no one acts like that. His state changes at the time he gets the beating.

D: It is believed that if we surrender to Guru or God, then the reality of the individual goes away, and in exchange we get the support of a bigger Reality and divine power shines in us.

B: To expect to receive a bigger divine power after surrendering is not the true attitude of surrender.

* * *

Someone presented a chiming clock to Mother's temple and this started a trail of loud thinking by Bhagavan.

B: A small quantity of camphor is enough for worship. This is not done and people expect disproportionate bounty from God. Some strut about with the feeling that they have given a lot to God. But what is theirs really for them to offer? A little of what belongs to God is returned and nothing more. To remain free from thoughts is the best offering that one can make to God.¹⁰

* * *

D: For one's practice, is it not legitimate for one to pray to God to remove one's karma or to counteract it, and to hasten one's attainment of moksha?

B: It is legitimate. As long as you feel that you are different from the higher power, pray to it; as long as you feel that there are burdens on you, pray in respect of them. But better still, attain prapatti, the state of self-surrender, and entrust your entire burden to the Lord, who will then take the burden off your back and give you the feeling that you are in Him and are one with Him.¹¹

* * *

EGO

When the ego is uprooted, the Self shines limitless. Ramana says that this is true penance. What is meant by the uprooting of the ego? Is it an independent entity? No. It is a formless link between the Self which is consciousness, and the body which is inert. The only way to tackle it is to enquire wherefrom it arises. Then one goes to its very root. Since it has a scent of consciousness, once the ego merges in the source it becomes a wave in the sea of consciousness. Tackling the ego through other methods is like attempting to bury one's shadow. For such methods are based on the wrong notion of its reality.

Ramana would not allow one to indulge in negative forms of ego, that one is impure and so on. For, one's essential nature is purity and this truth has to be remembered.

Ramana uses the terms 'ego' and 'mind' as interchangeable expressions.



Mrs. D. Jinarajadasa, wife of the late President of the Theosophical Society and resident of Adyar, Madras, wanted to go to the root of the human ego, which is the cause of so much discord between nations, families and individuals.

Mrs. J: What is the difference between the ego and the Self?

- B: That which comes and goes, rises and sets, is born and dies is the ego. That which always abides, never changes and is devoid of qualities is the Self.
- J: I suppose one has to sublimate the ego-self into the true Self.
- B: The ego-self does not exist at all.
- J: Then why does it give so much trouble? Look at the havoc it has created among nations and people. It is dreadful even to oneself.
- B: To whom is the trouble? The trouble also is imagined. Pain and pleasure are to the ego, which is itself imagined. When the ego disappears through constant enquiry into its nature, the illusion of pleasure and pain also disappears, and the Self, their source, alone remains. There is neither ego nor ignorance in reality.
- J: But how did the ego arise?
- B: Ego is non-existent, otherwise you would be two instead of one - you the ego, and you the Self. You are a single, indivisible whole. Enquire into yourself and the apparent ego and ignorance will disappear.¹

* * *

D: Then, if I am neither the Self nor the not-self...

B: I am coming to the rescue. Between spirit and matter, the Self and the body, there is born something which is called the ahamkara, the ego-self. Now what you call your self is this ego-self which is different from the ever-conscious Self and from unconscious matter, but which at the same time partakes of the character of both spirit and the matter, chetana and jada.

D: Then when you say 'Know thyself' do you want me to know this ego-self?

B: But the moment the ego-self tries to know itself, it changes its character; it begins to partake less and less of the jada in which it is absorbed, and more and more of the consciousness of the Self.²

* * *

D: In my present state, is there sufficient faith, humility and surrender in me? If not, how to make them perfect?

B: You are perfect, so abandon the idea of imperfection and need for development. Ego is not a real thing. It is the mind which makes the efforts and the mind is not real. Just as it is not necessary to kill the rope which one imagines to be a snake, so also, there is no need

to destroy the mind. Knowing the form of the mind makes the mind disappear.³

* * *

D: Please don't put any appreciative reference about me in the Telugu translation of 'Ramana Gita'.

B: Why do you worry? To ask for the omission of your name is as much egoism as to desire its inclusion. So let it be.⁴

* * *

THE WORLD

There are many controversies about the nature of the world in philosophic parlance. Some say it is real, others that it is unreal; some others say it is insentient opposing those who claim it to be sentient. When reality is superimposed on the separate 'I', then the world too is real. But this view can exist only till ignorance of one's true identity lasts.

Till knowledge dawns, the world seems to appear and disappear with the mind. Both are absent in sleep and surface on waking. Even though the world and mind seem to appear simultaneously, the world is perceived by the light of the mind. During spiritual practice, one should never lose hold of the truth that the world has no separate existence and is not apart from the One Self. For, the Self is the only reality, the substratum on which movements of individuality and the world take place.



Bhagavan: (suo moto) Is there a world apart from you? Does the world say it exists? Find out the truth of 'I' first. The stock version of the ignorant is always that they see the world in front of them and take it as real. The world is only like a reflection in a mirror. If the world is whisked away as a non-entity there will be no illusion. Everything merges into the vastness of the absolute consciousness... For the sake of those

who are not convinced still, we can say that the world is unreal as world when viewed as a separate entity, but it is real as a manifestation of the Self. It is not apart from the Self.

D: That is to say-we should not lose hold of the Self when seeing the world?

B: Yes. Exactly so. It is like a film show in which all the pictures appear to be real But the screen only is real and not the pictures which come and go. If you see the manifestation without realising the reality, the Self behind everything, then there is only illusion. The Self is the substratum and the only reality.¹

* * *

D: It is said by some that God has created various kinds of worlds and is still going to create a new world.

b: Our present world itself is not true. Each one sees a different imaginary world according to his imagination, and so where is the guarantee that the new world will be real? The individual, the world and God, all of these are dependent on the True State. As long as there is the individual sense of 'I', these are also there. From this individual sense of 'I', from the mind,

these three have arisen. If you destroy the mind, the three will not remain, but Brahman alone will remain, as it remains and abides even now. We see something incorrectly. This misperception will be rectified by enquiring into the real nature of this individual. Again after surrendering the mind, there will be nothing remaining but Brahman. Whether this world is real or unreal, consciousness or matter, a place of happiness or a place of misery, all these questions arise in the state of ignorance. They are not useful after Realisation. The state of being fixed in the Self devoid of the individual feeling of 'I' is the supreme state. In this state, there is no room for objective thinking, nor for this feeling of individual being. There is no doubt of any kind in this natural state of Being-Consciousness-Bliss.²

* * *

D: You often say, 'the whole world exists not without you', 'everything depends upon you', 'what is there without you?', etc. This is really baffling. The world was there before my birth. It will be there after my death even as it has survived the deaths of so many who once lived as I am living now.

B: Did I ever say that the world is there because

of you? But I have put to you the question, What is there without your Self?’

You must know that by the Self the body, subtle or gross, was not meant. Besides, the idea is put to you that if you once know the self in which all the ideas move, not excluding the idea of yourself, of others like yourself and of the world, you can realise the truth that there is a Reality, a supreme Truth, which is the Self of all the world you now see, the Self of all the selves, the one Real, the Supreme, the Eternal, as distinguished from the ego-self which is impermanent. You must not mistake the ego-self or the bodily idea for the Atman.

D: Does not the world exist even when I am asleep?

B: Such a world mocks you also for seeing it without knowing yourself. The world is a result of your own mind. Know the mind and then see the world and you will see that it is not different from the Self.³

* * *

GOD

God can be experienced by oneself as the divinity within. Otherwise all descriptions have the limitation of using the finite, the mind for fathoming the infinite. The best form of worship of God is to understand that he is the light manifesting in the eight-fold forms which constitute the universe. The eightfold forms being, the five elements, the sun, the moon and all life. It would also be best to regard God as non-separate, to regard him as oneself so that the distinction between the worshipper and the worshipped is obliterated. This is also achieved by superimposing the idea of God on everything, by 'breaking of a habit', by ceasing to think of anything as an object but as the only real subject God.

A general doubt exists as to whether God can have form. How can the formless have form too? Is it right to posit a particular name and form on the universal? So long as one responds to a name, so long as one regards oneself to be a particular individual, then it is logical and natural for one to be related to God through particular names and forms. The mind attaches sanctity and auspiciousness to that name which it regards as the embodiment of the divine. The worship of the Supreme through any chosen name and form undoubtedly has a purificatory effect on the mind since the object of worship symbolises immaculate purity for the worshipper. While worshipping thus one should also simultaneously enquire and find out the truth about the one who sees duality. For it is only such enquiry which would

make one aware of the formless source of everything that has form, the One Self. Then Self, God and Guru would also be seen to be identical.

□ □ □

D: What is the common ground of all religions?

B: That one point where all religions meet is the realisation, in no mystical sense, but in the most worldly and everyday sense - and the more worldly and everyday and practical the better - the fact is that 'God is everything, and everything is God'.

From this point the work of the practice of this mental comprehension begins, and all it amounts to is the breaking of a habit. One has to cease calling things 'things' and to call them God; and instead of thinking them to be things, to know them to be God; instead of imagining 'existence' to be the only thing possible, to realise that existence is only the creation of the mind (for if there were not existence the mind could not see anything) and that non-existence is a necessity if you are going to postulate existence. The knowledge of things only shows the existence of an organ to cognize. There are no sounds to the deaf, nothing to see for the blind, and the mind is merely an organ of

conception or of appreciation of certain sides of God.

God is infinite, and therefore existence and non-existence are merely component parts. Not that I wish to say God is made up of definite component parts. It is hard to be comprehensible when talking of God...True knowledge comes from within and not from without. And true knowledge is not 'knowing' but 'seeing'.

D: How can one worship God best?

B: How can you best worship God? Why, by not trying to worship him, by giving up your whole self to him, and showing that every thought, every action, is only a working of that One Life (God).

God works perfectly in our unconscious virtuous actions. A Master when instructing is far from any thought of instructing; but to feel a doubt or a difficulty in his presence is to call forth, at once, before you can express the doubt, the wonderful words which will clear away that doubt. The words never fail and the Master with his heart fixed on GOD, realising perfectly that no action is a personal one, making no claim to have either originated the

thought or to have been the means of destroying a doubt, saying never 'I' or 'Mine' seeing only God in every thought and action, whether they be yours or his, feels no surprise, no especial pleasure to himself in having allayed your doubt. He never desires to feel pleasure. He says:

Who is it that feels pleasure? Why, God.

What is pleasure? Why the appreciation instinctive or otherwise-of God.

Who is the so-called 'I'? I is God.

God is pleasure. If I desire perpetual pleasure, I must forget myself, and be that which is pleasure itself, viz., God.

A Master sacrifices his whole self, lets it down as an artificial idea into the Ocean of God Who Is, and Who is, literally, the Material and the Cause of everything and becomes the embodiment of happiness. Similarly he flings every personal desire aside, even the desire for virtue. He denies it being his own action and attributes it to God, till he becomes the embodiment of that personal virtue he once desired, and no one can come near him without being blessed. He is the embodiment of all virtues. Such is true worship and its results.¹

* * *

D: Whenever I worship God with name and form, I feel tempted to think whether I am not wrong in doing so, as that would be limiting the limitless, giving form to the formless. At the same time I feel I am not constant in my adherence to worship of God without form.

B: As long as you respond to a name what objection could there be to your worshipping a God with name or form? Worship God with or without form till you know who you are.²

* * *

D: It is said there are three aspects of God and that Vishnu is in the 'vaikuntalokam' (a heavenly region). Is that a real world, real like this world, or is it only fictional?

B: If you and others and this world are real, why are Maha Vishnu and Vaikunta unreal? So long as you consider this reality, that also is reality.

D: I am not referring to the Advaita state or truth that Brahman alone is real and all else is fiction. But I am trying to find out if accepting the standards for truth that we have here, Vaikunta is true. This body exists now and though it may not be found at other times, it is

true in one sense. In that sense, is Vaikunta true? Does it exist?

B: Why not?

D: Are Mahavishnu, Siva, etc. then included among jivakotis?

B: There are jivas and Iswara. Jivas are not the only beings known.

D: Is there dissolution for Mahavishnu, and do the three God-heads also meet with their end? Or are they eternal?

B: Instead of pursuing the inquiry in that direction, why do you not turn attention to yourself? To whom does the notion of Vaikunta or Vishnu arise?

D: Is Mahavishnu or Vaikunta a mere notion or idea?

B: Everything to you is a notion. Nothing appears to you except through the mind and as its notion.

D: Then Vishnu and Vaikunta are creatures of my imagination and pure fiction? They have no more reality than the snake fancied in the rope.

B: No. When you consider your body and life and other things as real, how can you treat Mahavishnu or Iswara as unreal? If you are real, he is real too.

- D: It is not about reality in that sense that I am asking. None has seen that world. It is a case of absolute non-existence, whereas this body is felt and exists at least as an object of sense experienced for the present.
- B: No. Just as you experience this world and this body and say it is true, there are others who have experienced Vaikunta and say that is true. Why call that alone unreal, while you talk of your sense experience as real?
- D: Then Vaikunta must exist somewhere. Where is it?
- B: It is in you.
- D: Then it is only my idea, what I can create and control?
- B: Everything is like that-your idea.
- D: That is coming back to the Advaitic idea. But what I wish to know is, is there a separate person like ourselves who is the rewarder of virtue and the punisher of sins?
- B: Yes.
- D: I have my doubts yet.
- B: He who has doubts will go on doubting up to the end of the world.

D: No. I am anxious to get rid of that doubt and request you to remove my doubts begotten of ignorance. Pray, enlighten me.

B: Enlighten yourself by realising your Self.³

* * *

Dr. H. of the small group of Americans who spent a few weeks in the Asram asked Sri Maharshi if there exists such a thing as a Personal God.

B: Yes, Iswara.

Dr. H. : What? With eyes, nose, ears, etc.?

(with
astonishment)

B Yes, if you have them why should not God also have them?

D: When I read in the Kabbala and the Puranas that God has these organs, I laugh.

B: Why don't you laugh at yourself for having them?⁴

* * *

D: People scoff at me and call me a superstitious idolator.

B: Why don't you retort by calling them worse idolators? For do they not wash, dress, feed and worship their body so many times every day. Is not the body the biggest idol? Then is he not an idol worshipper?⁵

* * *

D: It is hard to conceive God, the formless, giving rise to forms.

B: Why hard? Does not your mind remain formless when you do not perceive or think, say, in deep sleep, in samadhi or in a swoon? And does it not create space and relationship when it thinks and impels your body to act? Just as your mind devises and your body executes in one homogeneous, automatic act, so automatic, in fact, that most people are not aware of the process, so does the divine intelligence devise and plan, and his energy automatically and spontaneously acts-the thought and the act are one integral whole. This creative energy which is implicit in pure intelligence is called by various names, one of which is ⁶Maya or Shakti, the Creator of forms or Image.

* * *

DREAM WAKING AND ILLUSION

The three mental states of waking, dream and sleep are 'unreal', because they have no permanence. They come and go. There must be a substratum or a base on which such movements take place. One knows nothing about sleep except the recollection of its repose on waking. On the other hand, on waking one labels one's dream as unreal. The reason for this is the apparent absence of continuity of events between two or more dreams and the absence of corroboration about the dream on waking. Ramana points out the error in this view point. One would then be judging one's dream state from the standpoint of another state, waking. However, if one goes into it, since each dream, barring exceptions, is self-contained, it has a perfect inner logic and sequence. During the subsistence of dream there is no doubt about its reality. The conclusion is that each state has its own illusion which can be got over only if one wakes up from that particular illusory state into another. Just as dream appears 'unreal' to one who is awake, so too would waking itself be if one awakes from it to the state of 'turiya'. 'Turiya' is the egoless state in which the mind stays merged in the heart. It is only when one traverses beyond the mind's framework through self-enquiry that the waking state is negated. One moves into a state of waking-sleep, a state which combines the alertness of the waking state with the repose of sleeping. When one abides in that state one recognises that the waking state which appeared 'real' is also 'unreal'



Chadwick: Dreams are disconnected, while the waking experience goes on from where it left off and is admitted by all to be more or less continuous.

Bhagavan: Do you say that in your dreams? They seemed perfectly consistent and real to you then. It is only now, in your waking state that you question the reality of the experience. This is not logical...Raise your doubts when in the dream state itself. You do not question the waking state when you are awake, you accept it, in the same way you accept your dreams. Go beyond both states, all three states including deep sleep, and study them from that point of view. You now study one limitation from the point of view of another limitation. Could anything be more absurd? Go beyond all limitations, then come here with your doubts.¹

* * *

Mr. Subbaramayya is a frequent visitor. Whenever he comes he discusses ancient Vedantic books with the Master. Today's talk is about 'Kaivalyam'. Maya comes up in the middle and claims attention. Sri Bhagavan explains:

B: Every plane has its own illusion, which can be destroyed only by another illusion on the same plane. For example, a man takes a full meal and goes to sleep. He dreams of being hungry

in spite of the food he ate while awake. To satisfy the dream hunger, he has to take dream food. A wound in a dream requires dream treatment. A great king once dreamt that he was ill but was too poor to call a doctor. He had to beg the doctor's fees from his friends to receive medical help. Although he had fabulous wealth in the waking state, it could be of no use to him in the dream state. Similarly the illusion of ignorance can be destroyed only by the illusion of the Master's teaching. Liberation is ever present and bondage absent, yet the universal experience is the reverse.²

* * *

D: Can all of us be unreal and non-existent? Please enlighten me.

B; Suppose now I ask you to go and wake all those people in the dream and tell them they are not real, how absurd it would be! That is how it is to me. There is nothing but the dreamer, so where does the question of dream people, real or unreal, arise; still more of waking them up and telling them that they are not real? We are all unreal, why do you doubt it? That alone is real. Everything is unreal, like dream objects. However, at a certain stage there exists Truth, the Reality, and World, the unreality; and a

jnani's job is to awaken the ignorant to the fact that what they see and feel is unreal and that the Reality is their own Being. This can be compared to an elephant dreaming of a lion and suddenly waking up and finding that the lion is unreal and that itself alone is real. The elephant is the jiva or individual, the dream is the unreal world and the lion, the jnani or guru. The guru, is the link between the unreal and the real.³

* * *

A frequent visitor to the Asram is cogitating over the problems of Maya, illusion, and its relation to the waking and dream state.

D: Is there any genuine difference between the experience of waking and that of dreams?

B: None, except that waking appears to be more enduring than the other to the person who is awake, though not so to the dreamer himself. The person in his waking state relates his dream to have sometimes covered hundreds of years, hence he calls it transitory, whereas actually there is not the slightest difference between the nature of the two states.

D: There is this difference: each time we return to the waking state we come to the same place, same people, same activities and interests,

which is not the case with going to the dream state.

B: This is because things move very rapidly in dreams, as they appear now to you in the waking state. But each time you go to the dream world do you feel being a stranger in it? Do you not feel thoroughly at home with the people and places as you do here? Don't you sometimes dream of being a minister, or meeting your father who had died long ago, or seeing God seated on a throne, etc., without noticing any incongruity in it? The dream is as real then to you as the waking state is now. Where is the difference? If you call the dream illusion, why do you not do so to the waking state also?⁴

* * *

D: How can one control dreams?

B: One who can control them during waking state can also control them while asleep. Dreams are only impressions which have been received in the waking state and are recalled to mind in the dream state (i.e., semi-sleeping state as distinct from deep sleep).

Referring to what he saw in dreams, the enquirer remarked:

- D: I could not understand what they were. There were huge figures with monkey faces in my dream.
- B: The Self is not limited; it is the mind which produces a form that is limited; that which has got dimensions is the mind and it gives rise to dimensions in others. The real limitation is in the mind. The mind is not different from the Supreme Being. A gold ornament is not gold itself, but is also not different from gold. The mind is a wonderful power of the Supreme Being. It is after the rise of the mind that God, world and individuals appear. Whereas in sleep we are not aware of any of these three. That is the mysterious power of God. But although we are not aware of these in sleep, yet we know that we existed in sleep also. On the rising of the mind we awaken from sleep. Consciousness and unconsciousness are with reference to the mind only. If now we find the real Self behind the mind, then we shall not have these limitations. In the deep sleep state, what limitations were there?
- D: None that I am aware of.
- B: That which says I was not aware then is also the mind. In deep sleep you are one with the real Self. That which appears in the interval also disappears. The Self always remains, whether

in sleep, dream or waking state. It is the substratum both of the waking state and the sleep state. The different states of dream, sleep and wakefulness are only for the mind. Trance and unconsciousness also are only for the mind; they do not affect the Self.⁵

* * *

D: What about the theory of unity in difference, the higher and lower natures in man, evolution in time, descent of the Spirit, etc.

B: With regard to this theory, where there is the least difference, there is also the ego, and if difference is conceded, unity would merely be a theoretical proposition. It is accepted on all sides that in the Absolute there can be no ego. The transition from the ego to the egoless state, if it can at all be called a transition, is not through change or evolution from lower to the higher nature in man, but through the total denial of the ego. It is like a man waking up from a dream; this transition from the dreaming state to the waking state cannot be called an evolution from a lower to a higher state, it is the total negation of the one state in the other.⁶

* * *

D: Even so, there will be self-differentiation.

B: Really there is no self-differentiation. All objects are in the seer. In a dream, just as all objects are in the seer, so in the waking state, all the objects are also in the seer. When the seer is found out, there will be nothing seen. In dreamless sleep there is no self-differentiation. If it is real it must be felt in dreamless sleep also. Reality is achieved when there will be no modifications of seer, seeing and seen. That vision is the nature of consciousness itself, non-dual and undivided. It is limitless infinite and perfect.⁷

* * *

D: The Turiya is said to be the background of jagrat swapna and sushupti. There is objective knowledge in the first two and blank in the third. How shall I get over the blank and reach transcendence?

B: The three states are dependent on Turiya. They are passing phases in it. The Turiya is the Self. There cannot be a moment when it is not. Transcendence means getting over the three states. It cannot mean something which is not in these three states but lies beyond and should be gained hereafter. In that case it would be new. What is new may also perish. But this is eternal. Therefore it should be now and here.

Turiya is consciousness itself or knowledge Absolute. It knows itself. But you say you do not know it. Why? Because you have objectified yourself and see the world as external to yourself. This is relative knowledge.

Because you see the things in jagrat, you stand as the seer. In sushupti there is no world, there is no seer. But have you disappeared? No. This means that you stand apart from the seer and the object seen i.e., from the subject and the object. When you say that you do not know the Self, it is the seer who speaks. Similarly, who says that he sees the blank? The experiencer, in sushupti did not say it. The experiencer in jagrat says it. Why? Because he sees the world now and feels that he did not see it in deep sleep. Yet he is. This being is the Self.

D: When I say that I saw blank in sushupti it is from memory that I speak.

B: When it is said that the world itself is unreal and that you seek to be rid of it in order to be established in the truth, what is the degree of reality of memory which is only the impressions left by the world already known as false?

You are always the Self. There is the world now and the seer. There is no world and no seer in

sushupti. Just when you wake up you decide yourself as the seer and the object seen. Consider deep sleep in which there was no subject and also the present state of subject and object. It follows that in the short interval of deep sleep and waking the division takes place and you identify yourself as the seer. Be alert and do not identify yourself with the seer even at the very source of division. Then you must stay in transcendence.

D: But the world exists and displays itself?

B: Sat is seen as Cit. Imagine a picture in which a king witnesses a drama. The picture contains both subject and object. They cannot remain independent of each other. The one implies the other.

The pictures pass on the screen. Where is the screen? Is it to be formed from the pictures?⁸

* * *

DESTINY, FREE WILL AND BEYOND

The experiences which the body has to go through are predetermined. This is so because the body is a product of one's 'karma' 'and will last only as long as the karma which gave rise to it is not exhausted. However, one is free to be an onlooker to the body's enjoyment and suffering. For, one is not the body and one need not attach oneself to its doing. One is free to detach oneself from the karmic experiences which the body is going through.

The emphasis in the scriptures on the need for cultivation of the eight-fold virtues, adherence to the ethical code for developing a sense of discrimination between the permanent and transient, presupposes the existence of free-will. The exercise of the will in the direction which purifies the mind is possible only when one is free to channelise the sense of doership in particular ways.

Freedom from the pair of opposites, destiny and free-will comes about on enquiring with the questions 'For whom is free-will?' 'For whom is destiny?' Then one would be on the trail of the essential question, 'Who am I?' When one enquires into this question, the mind merges in the heart. The one to whom destiny and free-will pertain ceases to exist. Destiny and free will are nullified since 'one is established in a state which transcends them'.

A related question is about the role of the sadguru. Where does his protection come in as a shield against destiny? If one surrenders to the sadguru the burden of karma is shifted on to his shoulders. As for free-will for its

proper use his guidance is there all along the way for supporting the effort at self-enquiry, to find out the 'I' which is beyond fate and free-will.

* * *

Azhagamma:

Why are you silent? Are my pleadings of no avail?

D: Your mother is weeping. You need not break your silence but you can at least write. Here is some paper and a pencil.

B: (Written reply) The Creator remaining everywhere makes each one play his role in life according to their karma. That which is not destined will not happen despite every effort. What is destined is bound to happen. This is certain. Therefore the best course is to remain silent.¹

* * *

D: What are the roles of fate and free will in our life?

B: Yes. This is a common doubt. First of all you should ask who is affected by fate and free-will? Who is undergoing the experience?

D: Of course, it is the question we put to ourselves. But still there is no clarity.

B: Yes. But who is asking the question now?

D: I am here now and I am asking Bhagavan.

B: You say 'I'. Find out that 'I'. If you enquire and find out the truth, then everything will be clear.

The visitor was puzzled and was unable to say anything further. However, Bhagavan came to his rescue.

B: Fate cannot arise without the free-will, which is the origin. It causes its effect and shapes the destiny. Virtuous thoughts and actions bring favourable results. Likewise undesirable ones cause bad effects. First the mind should be made pure to avoid adverse reactions. Free-will should be exercised judiciously. When unfavourable destiny is at play, the mind also will not be pure. Mind goes the way of destiny. Virtuous thoughts bring in favourable destiny. Free-will and destiny are interlinked. In a limited way, the fate can be altered by the force of the free-will. But, the present fate is due to past actions. The actions are already over and done with. How are you going to erase them now?

D: Yes. It is difficult. Then what is the way out?

B: As I told you before only spiritual wisdom and discrimination will solve the problem. Through self-enquiry come to the decision about the real 'I'. Then there will be no problem. In the enlightened state, the seeker himself is no more. Fate and free-will become null and void.

One is established in a state which transcends them.²

* * *

D: I can understand that outstanding events in a man's life, such as his country, nationality, family, career, profession, marriage, death etc. are all predetermined in his karma, but can it be that all the details of his life down to the minutest, have already been determined?

B: Certainly, whatever the body is to do, whatever experiences it is to pass through were already determined when it came into existence.

D: What becomes of man's freedom and responsibility for action?

B: The only freedom man has is to strive for and acquire jnana which will enable him not to identify himself with his body. The body will go through the actions rendered inevitable by 'prarabdha' but a man is free to identify himself with the body and be attached to the fruits of its actions, or be detached from it and be a mere witness of its actions.³

* * *

D: You must take pity on me, hold me by the neck and see that I don't fall and get injured.

B: That is impossible. It is necessary for you to strive and for the guru to help.⁴

* * *

B: We should not make elaborate plans to get anything. I don't object to you enjoying something which comes your way of its own accord.

D: Does that mean Bhagavan that if something comes to me without any planning on my part and I enjoy it, there would be no bad consequences from it?

B: That is not what it means. If by reason of your prarabdha something comes your way you cannot help it. If you take what comes without any special attachment and without any desire for more of it or for repeating it, it may not harm you by leading to further births. On the other hand if you enjoy it with great attachment and therefore desire more of it that is bound to lead to more births.⁵

* * *

D: Should not the omnipotent God protect the devotees from the consequences of their prarabdha?

B: What can I say? That is the plan...You want good and happiness but these terms have no meaning at all without their happening. Good and bad are inevitable until you transcend the pairs of opposites.⁶

* * *

D: The Bhagavad Gita says that mortals cast off their worn bodies and acquire new bodies, just as one casts off worn out clothes and wears new garments. How does it apply to the death of infants whose bodies are new and fresh?

B: How do you know that the body of the dead child is not worn out. It may not be apparent but unless it is worn out it will not die. That is the law of nature.⁷

* * *

D: Are the fruits of karma (actions) done in one birth to be undergone in the next birth or not?

B: Have you been born now? If really you have not been born now, then why think of the next birth? Truly, karma (action) does not trouble us, it is only the sense of doership that does. The idea of doing the karma or leaving it is false. Think who is the doer of karma.⁸

* * *

One cultured aristocratic lady came and sought permission to enter the hall. The attendant politely asked her to come in and be seated.

D: It is said that liberty is already there to choose between good deeds and bad deeds and their respective consequences. It is also said that the results would fructify after death. So we should choose wisely. Is it not so?

B: Yes. But why care for things after death. Take care of the present. Choose virtuous acts of merit without caring for the results. Events after death do not really concern us. Do you know if you are enjoying the fruits of your past karma now? Why all these things now? Such questions will not be raised while you are in sleep. You feel only happiness in your sleep. Are you a different person when you wake up? There is no mind in your sleep and so you are happy. Find out the truth. Try to experience the same happiness in the waking state also. When you say 'I'- which is the real 'I'? This should be solved?⁹

* * *

BIRTH AND REBIRTH

What has caused this birth? Is it not the unfulfilled desires? So long as desires remain to be satisfied, rebirth too is inevitable. But our fears really do not revolve round rebirth which one can intellectually perceive to be certain, but about what happens after death to one's numerous attachments and the many things one holds dear. One likes to believe that one had been linked with them in the past and would continue to be connected to them in the future as well. This is in respect of those attachments which are strongly rooted. Hence the questions as to whether the memory of the past lives would be there and the interest in what is to happen in future.

At the time of death the mind gathers the vital force and links itself to a new body. Till Self-knowledge is attained there is no break in the continuity of the body identification. It may be to a subtle astral body or a gross physical body. Only the identification should be to the new body. What about continuity of relationships? Since relationships are karmic bonds, it is likely that those which have been fostered and developed would continue through many lives. By an act of divine grace past memories are erased for, the burden of that memory, with its attachments and worries, would be too much if it is added to the present load.

Since the wrong identification with the body continues from rebirth to rebirth, basically one who wishes to be free of it has to go into the questions, 'For whom is birth?', 'For whom is death?' Such an enquiry frees one from the cycle. For

one then becomes aware of one's true identity, as intelligence, not bound by the limitation of a particular individuality, of a particular name and form.

□ □ □

- D: Is reincarnation a fact?
- B: You are incarnated now, aren't you? Then you will be so again. But as the body is illusion then the illusion will repeat itself and keep on repeating itself until you find the Real Self.
- D: What is death and what is birth?
- B: Only the body has death and birth, and the body is illusion. There is, in reality, neither birth nor death.
- D: How much time may elapse between death and rebirth?
- B: Perhaps one is reborn within a year, three years or thousands of years. Who can say? Anyway what is time? Time does not exist.
- D: Why have we no memory of past lives?
- B: Memory is a faculty of the mind and part of the illusion. Why do you want to remember other lives that are also illusions? If you abide as the Self, there is no past or future and not even a present since the Self is out of time-timeless.
- D: Are the world, the mind, ego and the body all the same thing?

- B: Yes. They are one and the same thing. The mind and the ego are one thing, but there is no word to explain this. You see, the world cannot exist without the mind, the mind cannot exist without what we call the ego, it is itself the ego and the ego cannot exist without a body.
- D: Then when we leave this body, that is, when the ego leaves it, does it immediately grasp another body?
- B: Oh, yes it must. It cannot exist without a body.
- D: What sort of body will it grasp then?
- B: Either a physical body or a subtle mental body.
- D: Do you call his present physical body the gross body?
- B: Only to distinguish it-to set it apart in conversation. It is really a subtle-mental-body also.
- D: What causes us to be reborn?
- B: Desires. Your unfulfilled desires bring you back. And in each case-in each body-as your desires are fulfilled, you create new ones. You must conquer desire to be absorbed into the One and thus end rebirth.
- D: Does one who has realised the Self lose the sense of 'I'?
- B: Absolutely.

- D: Then to you there is no difference between yourself and myself, that man over there, my servant, are all the same?
- B: All are the same, including those monkeys.
- D: But the monkeys are not people. Are they not different?
- B: They are exactly the same as people. All creatures are the same in One Consciousness.
- D: Do we lose our individuality when we merge into the Self?
- B: There is no individuality in the Self. The Self is One-Supreme.
- D: Then individuality and identity are lost?
- B: You don't retain them in deep sleep, do you?
- D: But we retain them from one birth to another don't we?
- B: Oh, yes. The 'I' thought (the ego) will recur again, only each time you identify it with a different body and different surroundings around the body. The effects of past acts (karma) will continue to control the new body just as they did the old one. It is karma that has given you this particular body and placed it in a particular family, race, sex, surroundings and so forth.

These questions are good but you must not become too intellectual about these things. It is better just to meditate and have no thought. Let the mind rest quietly on the Self in the cave of the spiritual Heart. Soon this will become natural and then there will be no need for questions. Do not imagine that this means being inactive. Silence is the only real activity.¹

* * *

RENUNCIATION

There is the impulse of renunciation in each of us at times of great sorrow and stress. We are overcome with dispassion while returning from the cremation ground. 'All this is a passing show after all' is the mood. So one might feel, and feel strongly too about the transience of everything. After a painful child-birth a woman may say- 'No more please'. But all this is only temporary. The mood passes away all too soon. This is because one has to ripen into wisdom by steady practice of self-enquiry. True renunciation implies cutting off the attachments which really bind one down. It is not the job, wife, children or activities which stand between one and wisdom but the deep rooted attachments of the mind. The fault lies not in one's possessions but in the possessor. One might leave home and hearth, give away all his wealth, and yet be rooted in attachments.

It is the mind which has to be tackled wherever one might be in a forest or home. When attachments wane one is ready to drop down like a ripe fruit from a tree. There is an expansion of the heart in love. This happens only when the mind turns inwards towards its source through vigilant attention to the 'I' thought and its source.

□ □ □

D: I have a good mind to resign from service and remain constantly with Sri Bhagavan.

B: Bhagavan is always with you, in you, and you are yourself Bhagavan. To realise this it is neither necessary to resign your job nor run away from home. Renunciation does not imply apparent divesting of costumes, family ties, home, etc., but renunciation of desires, affection and attachment. There is no need to resign your job, but resign yourself to Him, the bearer of the burden of all. One who renounces desires, etc., actually merges in the world and expands his love to the whole universe. Expansion of love and affection would be a far better term for a true devotee of God than renunciation, for one who renounces the immediate ties actually extends the bonds of affection and love to a wider world beyond the borders of caste, creed and race. A sannyasi, who apparently casts away his clothes and leaves his home does not do so out of aversion to his immediate relations but because of the expansion of his love to others around him. When this expansion comes, one does not feel that one is running away from home, but drops from it like ripe fruit from a tree; till then it would be folly to leave one's home or his job.¹

* * *

- D: I have not yet learnt to control my mind so I intend to seek life in solitude, in north India, and want Sri Bhagavan's grace.
- B: You have come all the way to Tiruvannamalai for it and that too in the immediate presence and vicinity of Ramana Bhagavan, yet you do not appear to have obtained that mental quiet; you now want to go elsewhere and from there you will desire to go to some other place. At this rate there will be no end to your travels. You do not realise that it is your mind that drives you in this manner. Control that first and you will be happy wherever you are. I do not know if you have read Vivekananda's lectures. It is my impression that he has somewhere told the story of a man trying to bury his shadow and finding that over every sod of earth he put in the grave he had dug for it, it only appeared again, so that it could never be buried. Such is the case of the person who tries to bury his thoughts. One must therefore attempt to get at the very bottom from which thoughts spring and root out thoughts, mind and desire.
- D: When I spent an hour or two on the hill yonder, I sometimes feel there even better peace than here, which suggests that a solitary place is after all more conducive to mind-control.

- B: True, but if you had stayed there for an hour longer, you would have found that place too not giving you the calm of which you speak. Control the mind and even hell will be heaven to you. All other talk of solitude, living in a forest etc., is mere prattle.
- D: If solitude and abandonment of home were not required, where then was the necessity of Sri Bhagavan to come here in his seventeenth year?
- B: If the same force that took this (meaning himself) here, should take you also out of your home by all means let it, but there is no use of your deserting your home by an effort of your own. Your duty lies in practice, continuous practice of self-enquiry.²

* * *

One day Bhagavan noticed that I was restless and unable to sleep. He asked:

- B: Why don't you sleep? What is bothering you?
- D: I want to take sannyasa.

Bhagavan went inside and brought 'Bhakta Vijayam' and started reading from it. When Vitoba wanted to take sannyasa, his son, Jnaneswar the famous Maharastrain saint, advised him, "Whether you remain here or go to the forest, the mind is the same is it not? It remains with you", Bhagavan added:

B: You can attain Self-knowledge even if you remain a householder.³

* * *

This is a conversation between the Maharshi and Bezwada Sundararama Reddi from the Nellore District. It took place on the morning of 23-2-1930:

D: What to do to get moksha?

B: Learn what moksha is.

D: Should I not leave my wife and family?

B: What harm do they do? First find out what you are.

D: Should not one give up wife, home, wealth, etc.?

B: Well, first learn what samsara is. Is all that samsara? Are there not people who live in their midst and get realisation?

D: Is it permissible to adopt sannyasa asrama directly from brahmacharya asrama without taking up the two intermediary orders of life namely, grhastha asrama and vanaprastha asrama?

B: It is not imperative that those who are fully qualified for attaining jnana should pass successively through all the orders of life. He

that knows his real Being pays no attention to the distinctions between one order of life and another. Therefore to which ever of them he may belong, he finds it neither favourable, that is conducive to spiritual development, nor unfavourable, that is obstructing and retarding his progress.

D: Is the adoption of Sannyasa asrama (leading the life of an anchorite) one of the indispensable steps for realising Atmanishta, that is firm and disciplined state of abidance in the Self?

B: It is the sustained effort to get rid of the attachments to one's body that constitutes the only means for attaining Atmanishta. Without ripeness and purity of mind and without atmavichara, the mere adoption of any of the four asramas does not remove this attachment. Because the attachment one has to the body is a complex of the mind, whereas the symbols of asram life, such as tonsure and ochre robes, pertain merely to the body and are external. The purpose of the rules of conduct of the respective asramas is to purify the mind. So how can the mere external conformity to such rules of conduct and much less the wearing of symbols, remove the attachments that are of the mind?

Since the attachment one has to the body is really due to the mind being unripe and impure and due to the want of atmavichara, it can be removed only when the mind has become ripe and pure and when one takes up atmavichara. Sannyasa asrama is merely a means for gaining vairagya or dispassion, and vairagya in its turn, is a means for taking up atmavichara. Therefore, sannyasa asrama, adopted by those who earnestly seek liberation, is merely indirectly instrumental for taking up atmavichara through the cultivation of dispassion.

Adoption of sannyasa asrama presupposes purity and ripeness of mind in the individual. In their absence it is much more beneficial to lead the life of a householder faithfully discharging his duties than to waste his life by adopting sannyasa asrama.

The very significance of sannyasa or renuciation consists in getting rid of sankalpa and vikalpa which busily engage the mind and which really constitute the 'family of attachments'. In other words, it consists in renouncing attachments of the mind and not merely adopting the symbols of renunciation

or observing the external conformity to rules of conduct. Only by such renunciation of attachments can the mind be made to abide firmly in the Self.

Since sankalpa and vikalpa arise from the ego, the prevention of the rising of ego is of the essence of renunciation or sannyasa. To such sannyasins there is no difference between solitude and active life. Thus sage Vasistha says, "Just as a man, when his mind is preoccupied, is not aware of what is in front of him, so also the sage though engaged in work is not the doer thereof; because his mind remains immersed in the Self without the uprising of the ego." Just as a man lying on his bed dreams that he is falling headlong over a precipice, so also the ignorant person, whose ego is still present, though engaged in deep meditation in solitude, does not cease to be the doer of actions.⁴

* * *

SIDDHIS

The mind is dazzled when a miracle is performed, when somebody walks on water, becomes invisible, or is able to accurately recount past lives, and predict future happenings. It appears attractive to those who do not have such powers. But one has to look at these powers fundamentally. How important are they as yardsticks of spiritual progress? Do they help in finding out one's true identity or do they hinder its discovery? Are they side-tracks? The purpose of all spiritual practices is to find out one's true identity, to be restored to the natural bliss. Given this purpose these powers are diversions from the royal road of self-enquiry for they deflect one from questing for Self-knowledge. The desire for name and fame may well make a back-door entry. Again, miracles are the product of heightened mental powers in particular ways whereas the purpose of self-enquiry is to cross the mental barrier by searching for the mind's source.

In contrast when one attains Self-knowledge he becomes a repository of all powers, though he would not admit it. For the purpose of such great ones is to guide the aspirants to be free from body-consciousness. However, automatically, when their help is sought in a spirit of surrender, the divine remedial force begins to operate. Problems get solved. The spiritual path is made easy.

The only true miracle is Self-abidance says Ramana. Other miracles are like dreams which last till one wakes up.

When one is awake to his true state all powers will come seeking him unasked. Such powers are eight-fold.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| (1) Anima- | Capacity to become as small as an atom. |
| (2) Mahima- | Capacity to become as gigantic as he wishes. |
| (3) Garima- | Capacity to become heavy. |
| (4) Laghima- | Capacity to become light. |
| (5) Prapti- | Capacity for unfailing success. |
| (6) Prakamyam- | Capacity to achieve anything. |
| (7) Isitwa- | Power to command. |
| (8) Vasitwa- | Power to charm everyone. |

A jnani would be unaffected by having all these powers for his mind is steadily submerged in the source. However, seekers should be wary if such powers come to them. They would do well to consciously reject them. Otherwise they may be taken in by the temptation of using them and thus miss out on the purpose of spiritual practice, which is to quest for the source of the mind, and to abide in the heart.



D: Hithero I had great fear of liberation. Now I see that it is a very agreeable state. Now as regards the powers called siddhis, are they to be achieved and are they opposed to liberation?

B: The highest siddhi is realisation of the Self, for, here you realise the truth, you cease to be drawn to the path of ignorance.¹

* * *

D: Then what are the siddhis..?

B: They are of two kinds. One kind may well be a stumbling block to realisation. It is said that by 'mantra' by some drug, possessing occult virtues, by severe austerities or by 'samadhi' of a certain kind, powers can be acquired; but these are not means of Self-knowledge; even when you acquire them, you may quite well be in ignorance.

D: What is the other kind?

B: They are manifestations of power and knowledge quite natural to you when you realise the Self. They are the product of the normal and natural penance of the man who has become Self-aware. They come of their own accord, they are God-given; they come according to one's own karma so to say, but whether they come or not, the siddhi of being settled in the real, and the supreme peace, is not disturbed. For he knows the Self and that is the unshakable siddhi. But these powers do not come by for them. When you are in

the state of realisation, you will know what these powers are.

D: You have said that a liberated person can by his natural penance become intangible, invisible, can assume any form...

B: Yes; he is most competent for such developments. But you cannot judge the jnani by these developments, as they are not signs of true knowledge which essentially consists in possessing an eye of equality.²

* * *

D: Saints exist to save mankind. Nowadays, people are so materialistic that they do not believe in anything which cannot be seen physically. The unbelievers can easily be converted towards the spiritual state if some miracles are exhibited before their eyes. The miracles performed by Christ form the backbone of the Christian faith. Why don't modern saints perform miracles and save mankind?

B: Did those saints of the past know and act as if they knew while they were performing those miracles?³

* * *

JNANI

A jnani is a person of steady wisdom. Can wisdom be steady and unsteady? Yes. Experience of the natural state, the awareness of the heart's throb, comes about during practice of self enquiry. But due to externalisation of the mind caused by tendencies that experience is lost. It has to be regained by repeated practice. When all tendencies get erased due to such repeated, though intermittent experience, the mind remains always in the heart. This is the state of unswerving wisdom, jnana.

There are many misconceptions about what happens as a consequence. As the One Self alone is all pervasive for the jnani how does he think and act in this dualistic world? Can he act at all if he is free of thoughts and has no sense of doership? Ramana explains clearly that the absence of continuity of thought, without any break, is not a bar to thinking itself. For the mind though dead in the sense as it is known now, becomes sharp as a blade of kusa grass, for it becomes integral, whole and pure. Therefore it functions with total attention to the present. Thoughts arise automatically when required and subside immediately when their purpose is done, leaving no thought residuum as memories of those experiences. To assume the contrary would be to deny the evidence of the life of jnanis like Ramana himself and God who shoulders the responsibility of creating, sustaining and destroying life according to his karmic law.

Another common doubt is how one can reconcile the perception of difference with the equal vision of the jnanis. For one thing awareness of differences does not affect their state of wisdom since everything is seen by them as the One Self. To the jnani the differences are only appearances on the surface while unity underlies everything. Equality does not mean negation of difference but awareness of the unifying oneness.

The jnani's body undergoes all the infirmities of age, of ill-health. The onlooker therefore assumes that he too is subject to karma. Nothing can be farther from truth. For karma is for the one who experiences it. In the jnani, the sense of separate identity is not there. Where is the one to suffer the karma? Ramana would say that because the questioner regards himself as a body he regards the jnani also as body and superimposes karma on him. In truth the jnani is an onlooker of the happenings to his body.



D: Who is a Jivanmukta?

B: The Jivanmukta is one without sankalpas (inherent tendencies). Some power makes him do things. So he is not the doer but the one who is made to do.¹

* * *

D: Can a man move about, act and speak who has attained the Self, as is now described?

- B: Why not? Do you mean to say that realisation of Self means to be like a stone or to become nothing?
- D: I do not know, but they say that to withdraw from all sense-activity, from all thoughts, all life-experiences is the highest state.
- B: If so, what is the difference between this state and deep sleep? Great men, Muktas, Siddhas, are said to have been very active and are indeed active; Iswara Himself, the one who presides over this world directing its activities, is obviously not in the supremely inactive state. Otherwise you may as well say that God as well as the Muktapurushas have not attained the highest state.
- D: But you have always laid great stress on Mounam (silence)...
- B: Yes. I have. But silence does not mean negation of activity or stagnant inertness. It is not a mere negation of thoughts but something more positive than you can imagine.
- D: Is it unthinkable...?
- B: Yes. As long as you run with the running mind you cannot have it. The silence of the Self is ever there. It is a supreme Peace immutable like a rock that supports all your activities, in

fact, all movements. It is that in which God and the Muktapurusha are rooted.²

* * *

- D: You have said that the jnani can be and is active, and deals with men and things. I have no doubt about it now. But you say at the same time, that he has no differences; to him all is one, he is always in the consciousness...; if so, how does he deal with differences, with men, with things which are surely different?
- B: He see these differences as but appearances, he sees them as not separate from the truth, the real, with which he is one.
- D: The jnani seems to be more accurate in his expressions, he appreciates the differences better than the ordinary man... If sugar is sweet and wormwood is bitter to me, he too seems to realise it so. In fact, all forms, all sounds, all tastes, etc., are the same to him as they are to others. If so, how can it be said that these are mere appearances? Do they not form part of his life-experiences?
- B: I have said that equality is the true sign of jnana. The very term equality implies the existence of differences. It is a unity that the jnani perceives in all differences, which I call equality. Equality does not mean ignorance of

distinction. When you have the Realisation, you can see that these differences are very formal, they are not at all substantial or permanent, and what is essential in all these appearances is the one Truth, the Real. That I call unity...You referred to sound, taste, form, smell, etc. True the jnani appreciates the distinctions, but he always perceives and experiences the one Real in all of them. That is why he has no preferences. Whether he moves about, or talks or acts, it is all the One Real in which he acts or moves or talks. He has nothing apart from the one supreme Truth.³

* * *

- D: Will the Master say there is no difference between the poet, the artist, the clerk and the engineer, etc.
- B: The difference is only in the mind; according to the pre-disposition of each, the differences exist. No two individuals are alike, due to vasanas. The ignorant mind is like the sensitive plate taking images of things as they appear, whereas the wise man's mind is like a clean mirror.
- D: Is the Master here?
- B: Who is the Master? You think there is the Master here. You see the body of the Master,

but how does the Master conceive of himself? Only if there is a world apart from him could he see a world. That which exists is consciousness. Consciousness and existence are not different. Existence is the same as consciousness. You say I am conscious of the body and so on, but pure consciousness is beyond all this. There is no question of transition from unconsciousness to pure consciousness. Giving up these two, self-consciousness and unconsciousness, you inhere naturally in pure consciousness.⁴

* * *

D: How can a householder, who is ever engaged in the active discharge of his household duties-which should naturally urge him to still greater activity, be expected to obtain the supreme peace of retirement? Can he be free from the urge for greater activity even while thus busily engaged?

B: Only to the onlooker would the enlightened householder appear to be thus busy with his household activity; for, even though he is thus apparently engaged in the discharge of the interminable duties towards his family, he is indeed not engaged in any kind of activity whatever. His outward activity does not stand at all in his way of realising - even while he is

thus busily engaged-the perfect peace of retirement and entire freedom from the restless urge for action.

The rationale for this paradox is that the jnani or the enlightened one is never dependent on the laws of dharma which, however, depend on him for their validity and proof. Having realised the goal for attaining which the laws are intended, he is no longer subject to them. But he does act in conformity to them and that is because he knows the source of all dharma. It is for this very reason that his acts constitute the source and support of dharma. Being well aware of the truth underlying this fact, he ever remains aloof, a mere spectator of his own activity, and is never lost in it.⁵

* * *

D: It may be conceded that due to prarabdha the jnani acts as he does. But could it be said that such acts do not leave their after-effects as vasanas which sticking to his mind would necessarily urge him to engage in further activity?

B: He alone is a jnani who is free from these vasanas. Therefore how can his acts done without attachment of any kind whatever ever

produce the vasanās? Since none are produced none can stick to his mind.⁶

* * *

D: People say that even a jnani is not free from the effects of prarabdha (the matured past karma).

B: He does appear to others as if undergoing the results of his karma, eating the same as they do, sleeping and suffering from the ailments of the body. These after-effects are just like the running of the flywheel by its momentum after the engine has stopped. But the jnani is neither affected by this nor does he think that he is experiencing the pleasure and pains thereof because he has no thought of being the doer.⁷

D: But we see the arrow of karma moving even for jnanis.

B: Then to your sight there is prarabdha. However, what meaning does it have, except to one who knows it or its effect? That body which you see is not the jnani; it is his former body or it is like cast off slough. The serpent's slough may be blown about by the wind, but the serpent itself is free, happy and unaffected.⁸

* * *

D: What is the exact attitude of the one who has attained realisation? Is he aware that he has

realised and is a perfect jnani, that he has been released from the bondage of ignorance, that he is God or the Self or all the triad, of seer, seen and the act of seeing, that he is the one thing that is real and that all these phenomena are unreal?

- B: These are all intellectual concepts. No concept is realisation. You must leave the intellect behind and be firm in intuition of the Self. None of these concepts are required even as aids for ensuring firmness, once perfect realisation is attained. A man does not go on saying to himself, 'I am free, I am conscious', and so on. Realisation is fullness of consciousness and is not complicated by thoughts like these.⁹

* * *

- D: Swami, I am going far away from you. I am not sure when it would be possible for me to return. The devotees who are staying in the Ashram are enjoying the bliss of your company every minute. Please accept me also in the same manner.

- B: If one thinks that a particular person should be protected he is not a jnani. Everyone thinks that special grace is bestowed on the devotees who stay here. If there is such a preference,

how would he be a jnani? The frog stays near the lotus but it is only the bees which suck out the honey from it, however far they may come from.¹⁰

* * *

D: If a woman liberated while alive sheds her body, what would be the right thing to do, cremation or burial?

B: In liberation and Self-knowledge there is no difference between men and women. The body of a woman liberated while alive is not to be cremated as it is a temple of God.¹¹

* * *

GLOSSARY

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| advaita | Non-duality; also a subdivision of vedanta philosophy |
| Adyar | A suburb of Madras |
| ahamkara | Ego |
| ahamsphoorti | The continuous feeling of the fullness of consciousness described as 'I'-'I' |
| ahamvritti | The 'I'-thought |
| ajnani | One who has not realised the Self |
| 'Anma Viddai' | Self knowledge |
| aroodha | Rooted |
| arul | Grace |
| Arunachala | The holy mountain at Tiruvannamalai regarded as the embodiment of God Siva |
| Arunachala temple | Siva temple at Tiruvannamalai |
| atman | The Self |
| atmanishta | One who abides in the Self |
| atmanubhuti | Experience of the bliss of the Self |
| atmavichara | self-enquiry |
| avesam | Loss of consciousness of the body |
| avidya | Ignorance |
| Bangalore | Capital city of Karnataka State |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Benaras | A holy place for Hindus in North India |
| Besant, Mrs | Theosophist and Indian National Leader |
| Bezawada | Present Vijayawada, a town in Andhra State |
| Bhagavad Gita | One of the texts of Prasthanatraya |
| Bhagavan | In this text it refers to Sri Ramana Maharshi |
| bhakta | Devotee |
| ‘Bhakta Vijayam’ | Book which deals with the lives of devotees of God |
| bhakti | Devotion |
| Bible | Christian scripture |
| brahmacharya | One of the four asramas of Hindu way of life (celibacy) |
| Brahmaloka | The heaven of Brahma |
| Brahman | The impersonal absolute of Hinduism |
| Christ | Jesus Christ |
| Cuddalore | A town in Tamil Nadu |
| Cit | Consciousness |
| Dattatreya | God - the Hindu Trinity in a single form. |
| deep sleep | One of the states of consciousness |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| dharma | The ethical code which should govern life |
| dhyana | Meditation |
| dream state | One of the states of consciousness |
| Ganesa | God in Hindu Pantheon |
| Ganges | The sacred river of India |
| gruhasta asrama | One of the four asramas (householder) of Hindu way of life |
| guru | Teacher, the Master, one who removes ignorance |
| Hari | Also Vishnu, one of the Trinity of Hindu Gods |
| Himalayas | The sacred mountain in North India |
| Iswara | Also Siva, one of the Trinity of Hindu Gods |
| Iswaraprasadam | Grace of Iswara |
| jada | Matter |
| jagrat | Waking state |
| Jnaneshwar | A Maharashtrian saint |
| japa | Repetition of sacred syllable |
| jayanti | Birthday celebration of a saint or God |
| jiivanmukta | One who attained liberation while living |
| jnana | Knowledge of the Self |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| jnanasiddha | One who has attained knowledge of the Self |
| jnani | One who has realised the Self |
| ‘Kaivalyam’ | A Tamil text on Advaita ‘Kaivalya Navaneetham’ |
| karma | Action, consequences of action, destiny |
| Kumbakonam | A town in Tanjore district of Tamil Nadu |
| kumbhaka | Retention of breath |
| Madras | One of the metropoliton cities of India, capital of Tamil Nadu |
| Madurai | A town in Tamil Nadu, the place of the famous Meenakshi temple |
| Maharshi | In this text it refers to Sri Ramana Bhagavan |
| Maha Vishnu | See Hari |
| maya | Illusion |
| moksha | Liberation |
| mounam | Silence |
| mukta | One who has attained liberation |
| Nellore | A town in Andhra State |
| Om | Monosyllable mantra |
| Patanjali sutras | A text on yoga |
| Periapuranam | A text in Tamil narrating the lives of sixty-three Saivite saints, composed by Sekkilar |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| prana | The vital energy that sustains the body |
| pranayama | The science of breath regulation |
| Prasthanatraya | Three important texts of Hinduism viz., Dasopanisad, Brahma-Sutra and Bhagavad Gita |
| Raja-yoga | The system of yoga formulated by Patanjali |
| Ramana Gita | Dialogues between seekers and Ramana recorded by Ganapati Muni between 1913 and 1917 |
| Ramanasramam | The place in which Ramana lived between December 1922 and April 1950 |
| sadhakas | Spiritual seekers |
| sadhana | Spiritual practice |
| sahaja | Natural |
| samadhi | Self-Abidance |
| samskaras | Past innate tendencies |
| sannyasa | Renunciation |
| sannyasa asrama | One of the four asramas (donning the ochre robes) of Hindu way of life |
| sastras | Scriptures, Texts |
| Sat | Existence |
| sat-cit-ananda | Existence, Consciousness, Bliss |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| ‘Sat-Darsana Bhasya’ | A commentary by Kapali Sastri on the book ‘Sat-Darsana’ |
| sat-sangam | Association with realised sages |
| sattavaguna | One of the three gunas (The Pure) |
| siddha | One who has supernatural powers |
| siddhi | Supernatural powers |
| Siva | One of the three principal Gods of Hindu Pantheon |
| Sivaguru | Subrahmanya, son of Siva |
| Sivoham | Affirmation of ‘I am Siva’ |
| Soham | Affirmation of ‘I am He’ |
| ‘Song of the Self’ | A composition of Ramana in Tamil ‘Anma Viddai’ |
| Sri Aurobindo | Twentieth century mystic of India, renowned throughout the world |
| Sri Krishna | One of the incarnations of Vishnu |
| Sri Rama | One of the incarnations of Vishnu |
| Sri Sankara | Also known as Adi Sankara or Sankara Bhagavadpada, a 8th century philosopher who expounded the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta |
| swapna | Dream |
| swarga | Heaven |
| swarupa | Real form or real nature |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| tapas | Meditation, Penance, religious austerity |
| Tayumanavar | Tamil mystic, author of many works in Tamil |
| Telugu | One of the Dravidian languages, mainly spoken in Andhra State |
| Tiruvannamalai | A town in Tamil Nadu where Ramanasramam, Arunachala Hill, and Annamalai Temple are situated |
| turiya | The fourth state |
| Upanisads | The concluding portions of Vedas and the primary scriptural authority of Hinduism, the Upanisads are texts from which the Vedanta philosophy is derived |
| upasana | Experience of the natural state during practice |
| Vaikunta | The heaven of Vishnu |
| vanaprastha asrama | One of the four asramas (retiring to forest) of Hindu way of life |
| Vararuchi | Renowned grammarian |
| vasanas | Mental tendencies |
| Vasistha | One of the ‘Saptarishis’ |
| Vedas | The four collections of scriptures and the ultimate source of authority for Hindus |
| vichara | Self-enquiry |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| ‘Vicharasangraham’ | A Vedantic text by Nisenaladasa |
| Vishnu | Also Hari, one of the three principal Gods of Hindu Pantheon |
| Viswamitra | A renowned sage |
| Vitoba | The father of Jnaneswar, a Maharashtrian saint |
| ‘Viveka Choodamani’ | An Advaitic work by Adi Sankaracharya |
| Vivekananda | The chief disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna |
| vritti | Modifications of mind |
| waking state | One of the three states of consciousness |

REFERENCES

CHAPTER 3: SADGURU RAMANA

1. A. Osborne(Ed.), 'Miscellaneous Verses', Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi, 1979, p. 141.
2. T.S. Anantamurti, Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, 1972, Ch. 16.
3. Ibid.
4. Conversations: Old Devotees' Papers.
5. G. V. Subbaramayya, Sri Ramana Reminiscences, 1967, p. 68
6. Ibid., pp.119, 120.
7. Kapali Sastri, The Maharshi, 1955, p.102.
8. K. R. K. Murti, 'My Reminiscences of Sri Ramana Bhagavan', The Mountain Path, July 1985, p. 183.

CHAPTER 4: POWER OF SILENCE

1. T.S. Anantamurti, Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Ch. 16.

CHAPTER 5: GOD, GURU, SELF

1. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, 1980, pp. 67, 68.
2. A.W. Chadwick (Sadhu Arunachala), A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi, 1976, p. 74.
3. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, pp. 66, 67.
4. A. Devaraja Mudaliar, Day by Day with Bhagavan, 1989, p. 145.

5. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, *Crumbs from His Table*, 1981. pp. 43, 44.
6. S.S. Cohen, *Guru Ramana*, p. 68.
7. A. Devaraja Mudaliar, *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, p.145.
8. A. Osborne (ed.), 'Spiritual Instructions', *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, p. 49.
9. *Maharshi's Gospel*, 1987, p.34.

CHAPTER 6: RAMANA'S DEATH EXPERIENCE

1. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'The Death Experience of Bhagavan', *The Mountain Path*, Apr. 1981, p.68.

CHAPTER 7: THE NATURAL STATE

1. *Ramana Gita*, 1986, 'The Science of the Heart', Ch. V,v. 10.
2. *Ibid.*, 'The Importance of Self-abidance', Ch. I, vv. 6, 15.
3. *Ibid.*, vv. 5, 12, 13.
4. S.S. Cohen, *Guru Ramana*, p. 143.
5. A.R. Natarajan (tr. and ed.), *Unforgettable Years*, 1991, 'Sishtla Subba Rao', p. 121.
6. *Ibid.*, 'Rangan', p.48.
7. N.N. Rajan, "Leaves from the Diary" *The Ramana Way*, Feb. 1991, p. 13.

8. Paul Brunton and Mungala Venkataramiah, *Conscious Immortality*, 1984, p. 83.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
10. G.V. Subbaramayya, *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*, p. 17.

CHAPTER 8: HAPPINESS

1. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'A Dialogue with the Maharshi-I', *The Mountain Path*, July 1982, p. 192.
2. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary', *The Ramana Way*, Oct. 1990, p. 14.
3. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'A Dialogue with the Maharshi-IV' *The Mountain Path*, Apr. 1983, p. 89.

CHAPTER 9: THE HEART

1. *Ramana Gita*, 'The Science of the Heart', Ch. V, vv. 2-21.
2. Kapali Sastri, *Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi*, 1975, pp. xxx, xx.
3. *Ibid.*, p. xxv.
4. Swami Madhava Tirtha, 'A Visit to the Maharshi', *The Mountain Path*, Oct. 1981, p. 223.
5. K.K. Nambiar, *The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana*, 1984, p.50.
6. *Ramana Gita*, 'The Three Paths', Ch. II, v.2.
7. *Maharshi's Gospel*, p. 66.

CHAPTER 10: FLOW OF CONSCIOUSNESS

1. Ramana Gita, 'The Science of the Heart', Ch. V, vv. 6, 7.
2. Ibid., 'On Cutting the Knot', Ch. IX, vv. 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 19, 20, 22, 16.

CHAPTER 11: MIND

1. Bhagavan Ramana, 'Upadesa Saram', v. 17.
2. Ibid., v. 18.
3. Bhagavan Ramana, 'Sat Darsanam', Ganapati Muni (tr.), v. 24.
4. Ibid., v. 25.
5. A.R. Natarajan (tr, and ed.), Unforgettable Years, 'Santamma', p. 71.
6. Ramana Gita, 'The Science of the Heart', Ch. V, v.3.
7. Maharshi's Gospel, p. 84.
8. Munagala Venkataramiah (recorder), Talks with Ramana Maharshi, 1984, Talk 647, p. 608.
9. Ibid., Talk 91, p. 87.
10. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary', The Ramana Way, Dec. 1990, p. 230
11. A. Devaraja Mudaliar, Day by Day with Bhagavan, p. 230.

CHAPTER 12: THE PURE MIND

1. A. Osborne (ed.), 'Self-Enquiry' Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi - pp. 11, 12, 13, 14.
2. Ibid., 'Spiritual Instruction', pp. 68, 69.

CHAPTER 13: 'I'-'I' AWARENESS

1. Kapali Sastri, Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi, pp. xx. xxi.
2. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, p. 81.
3. Ibid., pp. 82, 83.

CHAPTER 14: NON-OBJECTIVE MEDITATION

1. Ramana Gita, 'The Paramount Duty', Ch. III, vv. 2, 3, 4, 5.
2. M. A. Piggot, 'The Way of the Spirit', 'The Mountain Path, Jan. 1970, p. 4.
3. G.L.N., 'Easy Yet Difficult', The Mountain Path, Jan. 1966, p. 104.

CHAPTER 15: AM I THE BODY?

1. A. Meenakshisundaram Iyer, 'Reminiscences of Bhagavan Sri Ramana', The Call Divine, Vol. VII, No. 5, Jan. 1989, pp. 194-203.
2. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Crumbs from His Table, pp.11, 12.
3. Swami Abhishiktananda, 'In the Company of Devotees', The Ramana Way, Jan. 1990. p. 18.
4. Conversations: Old Devotees' Papers.

CHAPTER 16: AM I THE MIND?

1. Ramana Gita, 'Self-Enquiry', Ch. VII, vv. 2, 4, 6, 7, 19.

2. Kapali Sastri, Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with to Maharshi, pp. iii, iv, ix and v, respectively.
- 5.
6. Ramana Dasa Sadananda, Ramana Stuti Dasakam, 1933, pp. 31-35
7. A.R.Natarajan (tr. and ed.), Unforgettable Years, 'Rangaswami', pp. 53, 54.
8. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'Scenes from Ramana's Life-II', The Mountain Path, Apr. 1980, pp. 86, 87.
9. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Crumbs from His Table, pp. 29, 30.

CHAPTER 17: SELF ENQUIRY - WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

1. Swami Madhava Thirtha, 'Conversations with Sri Ramana Maharshi', The Mountain Path, Jan. 1981, pp. 33, 34 and also Old Devotees' Papers.
2. M.M. Menon, 'Bhagavan Sri Ramana - The Ocean of Mercy', Call Divine, Jan. 1958, pp. 284, 285.
3. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, p. 77.
4. Kapali Sastri, Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi, pp.vii, viii.
5. S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, p.75.
6. Conversations: Old Devotees' Papers.

CHAPTER 18: OTHER SPIRITUAL PRACTICES - PRANAYAMA

1. Ramana Gita, 'Mind Control', Ch. VI, vv. 1-12.

CHAPTER 19: SPIRITUAL PRACTICES - DOUBTS AND ANSWERS

1. M.J. Kalyana Raman, 'Maharshi in our Midst', The Mountain Path, May-June 1989, p.49.
2. A.R. Natarajan (tr. and ed.), Unforgettable Years, 'Subbalakshmi Amma', p. 87.
3. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary', The Ramana Way, Mar. 1991, p. 9.
4. Ibid., July 1991, p. 139.
5. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'Scenes from Ramana's Life-III', The Mountain Path, July 1980, pp.159, 160.
6. Swami Madhava Thirtha 'Coversations with Sri Ramana Maharshi', The Mountain Path. Jan. 1981, pp. 33, 34.
7. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, pp. 54, 55.
8. Ibid., pp. 72, 73.
9. Ibid., pp. 42, 43.
10. B.V. Narasimha Swami, Self Realisation, 1985, pp. 111, 112.
11. Ibid., pp. 116, 117.
12. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'Scenes from Ramana's Life-I', The Mountain Path, Jan. 1980, pp. 19-21.
13. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Crumbs from His Table, p. 24.
14. Ibid., pp. 31, 32.

15. Swami Madhava Thirtha, 'A Visit to the Maharshi', The Mountain Path, 1981, p. 221.

CHAPTER 20: MORE DOUBTS AND ANSWERS

1. Conversations: Old Devotees' Papers.
2. Ramana Gita, 'On Attainment of Wisdom', Ch XVII, vv. 4, 5.
3. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary', The Ramana Way, Dec. 1990, p. 11.
4. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'A Dialogue with the Maharshi-IV', The Mountain Path, Apr. 1983, p. 89.
5. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary', The Ramana Way, Oct. 1990, pp. 14, 15.
6. G.V. Subbaramayya, Sri Ramana Reminiscences, p. 3.
7. A.R. Natarajan (tr. and ed.), Unforgettable Years, 'Subbalakshmi Amma', p. 87.
8. G.V. Subbaramayya, Sri Ramana Reminiscences, p. 9.
9. G.L.N., 'Easy Yet Difficult', The Mountain Path, Jan. 1966, p. 104.
10. Ramanashrayee (Venkataratnam), 'More Ramana Reminiscences', The Ramana Way, Jan. 1992. p. 345.

CHAPTER 21: PITFALLS AND DEFLECTIONS

1. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Crumbs from His Table, pp. 25-27.
2. Kapali Sastri, Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi, pp. xi, xii.

3. Vishnu, 'Divine Glimpses', The Mountain Path, Jan. 1966, pp. 100, 101.
4. Conversations: Old Devotees' Papers.
5. T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, At the Feet of Bhagavan, 1980, p. 73.
6. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'Scenes From Ramana's Life-III', The Mountain Path, July 1980, pg. 161.
7. Ibid.
8. Swami Atmananda, 'What Sri Ramana Means to Me', The Call Divine, Vol. VI, No. 5, Jan 1958, pp. 238, 239.
9. Swami Madhava Thirtha, 'A Visit to the Maharshi', The Mountain Path, Oct. 1981, p. 226.
10. Swami Madhava Thirtha, 'Conversations with Sri Ramana Maharshi', The Mountain Path, Jan. 1981, p. 34.
11. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Crumbs from His Table, pp. 30, 31.

CHAPTER 22: PRACTICE

1. A.R. Natarajan (tr. and ed.), Unforgettable Years, 'Rangan', p. 41.
2. Ibid., 'Santamma', p. 73.
3. Ibid., 'Subbalakshmi Amma', p. 89.
4. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary', The Ramana Way, Dec. 1990, p. 10.
5. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'Scenes from Ramana's Life-I', The Mountain Path, Jan. 1980, p. 21.

6. S.S. Cohen, *Guru Ramana*, p. 74.
7. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, *Crumbs from His Table*, pp. 21, 22.
8. A.R. Natarajan (tr. and ed.), *Unforgettable Years*, 'Krishna Bhikshu' p. 103.
9. *Ibid.*, 'Sishtla Subba Rao,' p. 122.

CHAPTER 23: GRACE

1. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'Scenes from Ramana's Life-I', *The Mountain Path*, Jan. 1980, pp. 20, 21.
2. G.V. Subbaramayya, *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*, p. 67.
3. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary', *The Ramana Way*, July 1991, p. 137.
4. Swami Chidbhavananda, 'Ramana Smrti' Souvenir, 1980.

CHAPTER 24: SAMADHI

1. *Ramana Gita*, 'The Science of the Heart', Ch. V. vv. 20, 21.
2. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, *Crumbs from His Table*, pp. 41, 42.
3. Kapali Sastri, *Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi*, p. xi.
4. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'A Dialogue with the Maharshi-IV', *The Mountain Path*, Apr. 1983, p. 90.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

CHAPTER 25: HAND OVER YOUR BURDEN TO THE SADGURU

1. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, p. 59.
2. K.R.K. Murti, 'My Reminiscences of Sri Ramana Bhagavan', The Mountain Path, July 1985, p. 183.
3. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Dairy', The Ramana Way, May 1991, p. 75.
4. A. Devaraja Mudaliar, My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, 1960, p. 113.
5. Ibid., p. 118
6. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary', The Ramana Way, Mar. 1991, p. 9.
7. Kapali Sastri, Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi, pp. xxiv-xxvi.
8. Swami Madhava Thirtha, 'A Visit to the Maharshi', The Mountain Path, Oct. 1981, p. 225.
9. Swami Madhava Thirtha, 'Conversations with the Maharshi-I', The Mountain Path, Oct. 1980, p. 211.
10. A.R. Natarajan (tr. and ed.), Unforgettable Years, 'Subbalakshmi Amma', p. 89.
11. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'A Dialogue with the Maharshi-IV', The Mountain Path, Apr. 1983, p. 90.

CHAPTER 26: EGO

1. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, pp. 53, 54.

2. Kapali Sastri, Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi, p. xvi.
3. Swami Madhava Thirtha, 'Conversations with Sri Ramana Maharshi', The Mountain Path, Jan. 1981, p. 33.
4. G.V. Subbaramayya, Sri Ramana Reminiscences, p. 15.

CHAPTER 27: THE WORLD

1. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary' The Ramana Way, Sep.1990, p. 13.
2. Swami Madhava Thirtha, 'Conversations with Bhagavan', The Mountain Path, July 1981, p. 153.
3. Kapali Sastri, Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi, p. xii.

CHAPTER 28: GOD

1. F.H. Humphreys, Glimpses of the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, 1982, pp. 21, 22, 25, 26.
2. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Crumbs from His Table, pp. 42-44.
3. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'Scenes from Ramana's Life-II', The Mountain Path, Apr. 1980, pp. 87, 88.
4. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, p. 31.
5. G.V. Subbaramayya, Sri Ramana Reminiscences, p. 26.

6. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, p. 62.

CHAPTER 29: DREAM, WAKING AND ILLUSION

1. A.W. Chadwick, 'Dreams', The Mountain Path, Oct. 1974, p. 203.
2. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, pp. 62, 63.
3. Vishnu, 'Divine Glimpses', The Mountain Path, Jan. 1966, p. 101.
4. S.S. Cohen, Guru Ramana, p. 69.
5. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Crumbs from his Table, pp. 64, 65.
6. Swami Madhava Thirtha, 'A Visit to the Maharshi', The Mountain Path, Oct. 1981, p. 224.
7. Ibid., p. 227.
8. Conversations: Old Devotees' Papers.

CHAPTER 30: DESTINY, FREE-WILL AND BEYOND

1. A.R. Natarajan, Bhagavan Ramana and Mother, 1982, p. 11.
2. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary', The Ramana Way, Sep. 1990, pp. 13, 14.
3. A. Devaraja Mudaliar, My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, p. 89.
4. Ibid., p. 105.
5. Ibid., p. 62.
6. Ibid., p. 100.

7. G.V. Subbaramayya, Sri Ramana Reminiscences, p. 2.
8. Swami Madhava Thirtha, 'A Visit to the Maharshi', The Mountain Path, Oct. 1981, P. 226.
9. N.N. Rajan, 'Leaves from the Diary', The Ramana Way, Jan. 1991, p. 13.

CHAPTER 31: BIRTH-REBIRTH

1. Mercedes de Acosta, 'How I Came to Bhagavan', The Mountain Path, Oct. 1988, pp. 228. 229.

CHAPTER 32: RENUNCIATION

1. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Crumbs from His Table, p. 43.
2. Ibid., pp. 30, 31.
3. A.R. Natarajan (tr and ed.), Unforgettable Years, 'Rangan', pp. 47, 48.
4. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'Scenes from Ramana's Life -III', The Mountain Path, 1980, p. 159.
5. Conversations: Old Devotees' Papers.

CHAPTER 33: SIDDHIS

1. Kapali Sastri, Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi, p. xxii.
2. Ibid., pp. xxii, xxiii.
3. K.K. Nambiar, The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana, pp. 14, 15.

CHAPTER 34 : JNANI

1. Vishnu, 'Divine Glimpses', The Mountain Path, Jan. 1966, pp. 100, 101.
2. Kapali Sastri, Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi, pp. ix, x.
3. Ibid., pp. xxix, xx.
4. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Crumbs from His Table, pp. 40, 41.
5. Conversations: Old Devotees' Papers.
6. Ibid.
7. Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Crumbs from His Table, p. 42.
8. B.V. Narasimha Swami, 'A Dialogue with the Maharshi-IV', The Mountain Path, Apr. 1983, p. 89.
9. Ibid., p. 88.
10. A.R. Natarajan (tr. and ed.), Unforgettable Years, 'Santamma', p.72.
11. Ramana Gita, 'Women Eligible for Sannyasa', Ch. XIII, vv. 6, 9.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS:

At the Feet of Bhagavan - T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1980.

Bhagavan Ramana and Mother - A.R. Natarajan, Bangalore, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 1982.

The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi - Arthur Osborne (Ed.), Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1979.

Conscious Immortality - Paul Brunton, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1984.

Crumbs from His Table - Ramanananda Swarnagiri, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1981.

Day by Day with Bhagavan - A. Devaraja Mudaliar, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1989.

The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana - K.K. Nambiar, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1984.

Guru Ramana - Memories and Notes - S.S. Cohen, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1980.

Interview of B.V. Narasimhaswami, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramana Centenary Library.

The Maharshi - T.V. Kapali Sastri, Sirsi, S.P. Pandit, 1955.

Maharshi's Gospel (Book I & II), Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1979.

Ramana Gita - A.R. Natarajan (Tr.& Comm.), Bangalore, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 1986.

A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi - Sadhu Arunachala (A.W. Chadwick), Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1976.

Sat Darsanam (Forty Verses on Reality) - A.R. Natarajan (Tr. and Comm), Bangalore, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 1982.

Sat Darsana Bhasya and Talks with Maharshi - K, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1975.

Self-Realisation, The Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi - B.V. Narasimha Swami, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1985.

Sri Ramana Reminiscences - G.V. Subbaramayya, Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1967.

Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi - Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1984.

Unforgettable Years - A. R. Natarajan (Tr. & Ed.), Bangalore, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 1990.

Upadesa Saram (Essence of Teaching) - A.R. Natarajan (Tr. & Comm.), Bangalore, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 1984.

PERIODICALS:

Call Divine (1958) pg. 238, 239, 284-85.

Mountain Path, V. 3, (1966); V.7, (1970); V.17 (1980); V.18, (1981); V.19, (1982); V.20, (1983); V.25, (1988); V.26, (1989); Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, Ed. V. Ganesan.

Ramana Smrti Souvenir, A Birth Centenary Offering,
Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramanasramam, 1980.

The Ramana Way, V.9, (No.1-12), 1989-90; V.10 (No.1-12),
1990-91; Vol.11 (No.1-12), 1991-92; Bangalore, Ramana
Maharshi Centre for Learning, Ed. Dr. Sarada.

INDEX

abhyasa, 69, 84
absolute, 181
absolute brahman, 19
absolute consciousness, 54
accumulated tendencies - hindrance to Self Realisation, 57
advaita, 93, 170
advaitic idea, 172
Adyar, 158
ahamkara, 160
ahamsphoorti, 52; eternal expression of the self, 53
aham vritti, 43, is the activity of the ego, 53
ajnani, 52
'Am I the Body?', 61
amritanadi, 35, 39
Americans, 173
Anantamurti, 3
'Anma Viddai', 138
anthara vichara, 68
anubhava, 109
aroodha, 69
arul, 137
Arunachala, 10, 99, 100
Arunachala Ramana, 3; as Supreme Self, 3
Arunachala Temple, 19
A.S.K., 102
ashram, 99, 104, 124, 173, 178, 217
ashramam, 133
ashram hall, 102

atma, 80
atman, 52, 76, 82, 95, 107, 125, 165, is immutable, 52; is
self-effulgent, 52
atmanadi, 35, 39
atmanishta, 202
atmanubhuti, 110
atmavichara, 202, 203
avesam, 19
avidya, 69
awareness, 39, 98
Azhagammal, 186

B.Mr., 99
Bangalore, 12
Benaras, 36
Besant, Mrs., 13
Be Still - is God, 123
Be Quiet - is truth, 123
Bezawada, 201
Bhagavadgita, 18, 190
Bhagavan, 1-3, 10, 54, 81, 99, 100, 106, 111, 114, 119, 123,
130, 134, 138, 157, 162, 176, 187, 189, 197-200; beyond time,
place, distance, 3; ever content, 4
Bhagavan's grace - limitless, 3
bhajans, 93, 95
bhakta, 137
'Bhakta Vijayam', 200
bhakti, 48, 104
Bhaktiyoga, 153

Bhat, Ganapati, 102
Bible, 18, 114
blissful, 'I', 70
body consciousness, 64, 128
body - is insentient, 42; is matter, 39
brahmacharya asrama, 201
Brahmaloka, 124, 125
brahmanadi, 35
brahma-nishta, 102, 124
Brahman, 36, 47, 49, 50, 54, 122, 125, 163, 164, 170
breath control, 36, 87

celibacy, 92
Chadwick, 176
chetana, 160
Chicago lectures, 18
Christ, 208
Christian faith, 208
Cit, 184
clairvoyance, 101
cognition, 118
concentration, 92, 96, 101, 119, 120, 131, 150
consciousness, 37, 38, 49, 50, 52, 87, 91, 98, 121, 180, 195,
212, 214, 217; bliss, 144, 164; flows through various channels
in the body, 39
creation, 90
creative energy, 174
creator, 186
Cuddalore, 102

Daivārtha, 58
Dattatreya, 10
death experience, 17
deep sleep, 81, 176, 179, 183, 184, 195, 211
desires, 194
destiny, 150, 187
dharma, 215
dhyāna, 68, 78, 87, 93, 94, 152
discrimination, 147
divine grace, 69, 114
divine intelligence, 174
dream state, 178, 179
dreaming sleep, 25
dreamless sleep, 26, 54, 97, 182
drishti, 142
Echammal, 102
effort - is itself yoga, 98
ego, 42, 53, 54, 66, 67, 70, 76-80, 83, 95, 147, 148, 150, 158, 159, 181, 193; does not exist, 95; is impermanent, 34; is non-existent, 159; is the link between spirit and matter, 34; not a real thing, 160
egoless state, 181
ego-self, 159, 160; is impermanent, 165
elixir, 112
empirical experience, 47
equality, 212
everything - is God, 167
existence - is awareness, 96

experiencer, 183
extraneous things, 25, 26

faith, 99
fate, 186, 187
feet of Bhagavan - everywhere, 5
forgetfulness, 22
formless, 170
freewill, 186, 187

Ganapati Muni, 21, 39

Ganesa, 154

Ganges, 112, 119, 120, 125

G.L.N., 59

God, 10-13, 44, 73, 82, 83, 91-95, 100, 105, 107, 114, 142, 151, 156, 157, 163, 167-170, 173, 174, 179, 180, 198, 207, 211, 212, 217, 218; is everything, 167; is the Self, 104; is infinite, 168; is pleasure, 169

God's grace, 73, 99, 134, 135, 149

God-realisation, 137

Gopal, 96

Grace, 69, 132, 134, 149

grihasta asrama, 201

guhavasam, 103

guru, 10-13, 47, 73, 74, 105, 106, 133, 147, 156, 178, 188; as goal, 11; and God are same, 12; dispels ignorance, 11; goal of man, 11; is God, 10; not his body, 13; necessity of the, 10; viewed as Iswara, 138

guru's grace, 73, 74

guru anugraham, 138
guru mantra, 94

habits of thought - hindrance to Self Realisation, 58

hathayoga, 86

happiness, 24; is eternal, 27; is inborn, 27

Hari, 2

Heart, 30, 31, 33-39, 52, 54, 56, 71, 76, 86, 87, 131, 141, 148, 196; as the seat of the Self, 33; is centre of the ego - self, 34; centre of radiation, 39; centre of the Real Self, 34; centre of spiritual experience, 36; located on the right side, 38; seat of awareness, 37; source of 'I' thought, 43; where 'I' notion springs, 33

Himalayas, 21, 22

Hindu sastras, 109

'Hridaya Kuhara Madhye', 36

'I', 33, 63, 66, 67, 73, 74, 76, 80, 81, 83, 84, 110, 114-116, 118, 125, 127, 128, 149, 163, 187, 191, 194; also a gurumantra, 94; consciousness, 52; is God, 169; has no location, 33; rises between body and Self, 42; the first thought, 66; the first name of God, 94; universe conceived as, 33

'I Am', 97

'I am' ness, 43

'I am' Brahman', 47, 82

'I am That I Am', 97

'I am the body', 12, 36, 47, 48, 87, 125

'I am the Self', 48

'I-thought, 42, 43, 67, 72, 81, 111, 195; fundamentally different, 43; not real, 43; root of all thoughts, 43
 'I-I', 36, 54, 55
 'I-I' consciousness, 54, 56; is absolute, 54; prelude to Self-Realisation, 56
 idolator, 173
 impure mind, 122; when consciousness assumes various forms, 49
 infinite - is absolute, 28
 inner self, 68
 intergral whole, 174
 intellect, 39
 interdependent, 132
 intuition, 144
 involution, 141
 Iswara, 104, 171, 173, 211
 Iswara anugraham, 137, 138
 Iswara prasadam, 137
 Iyer, Narayana, 11
 Iyer, Viswanatha, 102

 jada, 160
 jaggery, 154, 155
 jagrat, 182, 183
 Jnaneswar, 200
 japa, 76, 93-95, 103, 113, 115, 132
 jayanti, 5
 jeeva, 54 (see jiva)
 Jesus, 100

Jinarajadasa, Mrs., 13, 158
jiva, 33, 171, 178 (see jiva)
jivakoti, 171
jivanmukta, 210
jnana, 48, 78, 94, 98, 104, 112, 143, 188, 201, 212
jnanasiddha, 34
jnanayoga, 153
jnani, 13, 44, 52, 127, 130, 139, 151, 177, 178, 208, 212, 213,
215-217

Kabbala, 173
'Kaivalyam', 176
karma, 72, 104, 105, 157, 186, 188, 190, 195, 207, 216
karmayoga, 153
kevala kumbhaka, 77
kevala nirvikalpa-samadhi, 142, 143
kitchen work, 90
knot, 39, 40
koham, 76, 77
Krishnamurti, J., 13
Kumbakonam, 130, 131
'kumbhaka', 77
kushasan, 78
kutoham, 76

laws of dharma, 215
liberation, 35, 98, 112, 119, 131, 177, 206
limitless, 170

Madras, 36, 158
 Madurai, 21, 99
 Maharshi, 9, 39, 59, 73, 90, 93, 99, 102, 109, 137, 173, 201
 Mahadevan, 102
 Mahatma Gandhi, 126
 Maha Vishnu, 170, 171
 man's nature - is happiness, 27
 manolaya, 118, 119, 121
 manonasa, 121, 123
 'Manobuddhayahamkara cittani naham', 77
 mantra, 76, 81, 94, 103, 113, 131, 156, 207
 mantrajapa, 115
 maya, 174, 176, 178
 meditation, 47, 56, 58, 59, 78, 80, 82-84, 90, 91, 94, 96, 101, 104, 114, 127, 132, 151, 152, 204; on concrete or abstract creates duality, 59; on concrete or abstract destroys oneness, 59; on object is unhelpful, 59
 memory - hindrance to Self Realisation, 58
 mind, 42-44, 46, 64, 69-71, 77, 79, 83, 84, 87, 90, 91; a bundle of thoughts, 42; born of forms, 42; control, 82; itself formless, 42; not real, 160, 161
 moksha, 125, 130, 157, 201
 Mother India, 126
 Mother's temple, 157
 mounam, 211
 Mudaliar, 5
 mukta, 126, 211
 muktapurusha, 211, 212
 Muruganar, 4, 102, 130, 138

Narayanaswami, 62
Natesan, 96
native state, 49
natural state - is firm awareness, 20
Nellore, 201
nidra, 141
Niranjanananda swami, 102
Nirvikalpa samadhi, 143
nikshama, 152
non-objective enquiry, 58
non-Self, 64, 84, 112; no place but the Self for, 64
Noye Mrs., 161

occult powers, 66
Om, 94
omnipotent, 189

paramatma, 93
Parashuram, 96
Patanjali sutras, 97
peace, is real nature, 22
Periapuranam, 18
perpetual consciousness, 94
personal God, 173
Pillai,Ramaswami, 22
prana, 142
prananadi, 39
pranayama, 77
prarabdha, 48, 188, 189, 215, 216

Prasthanatraya, 111
prayer, 151
puranas, 173
pure consciousness, 56, 214
pure intelligence, 174
pure mind, 47, 122
purified mind, 47

Raja-yoga, 143
rambling thoughts, 25, 26
Ramana Gita, 161
Ramanasramam, 13, 109, 113
Ramanashrayee, 114
Reality, 78, 98, 143, 154, 156, 159, 165, 177, 182
realisation, 78, 124, 126, 144, 145, 164, 167, 201, 207, 208,
213, 217
Real Self, 4, 77, 82, 94, 142, 193
Reddi, Sunadararama, 201
reincarnation, 193
religions, 167
renunciation, 84, 153, 198, 204
restlessness, 90
Roy, Dilip Kumar, 9

sadhakas, 5
sadhana, 69, 90-92, 151, 155
sadguru, 14, 111, 147; marks of, 14
sadhu, 127
saguna meditation, 94

sahasrara, 34, 35, 38
sahaja, 54, 73
sahaja nirvikalpa, 54
sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi, 142, 143
sahaja nishta, 143
sahaja samadhi, 141, 143
sahaja sthiti, 143
sakama, 152
salvation, 118, 119, 133, 142, 144
samadhana, 142
samadhi, 55, 73, 120, 141-145, 174, 207
samrajyam, 137
samsara, 201
samskaras, 92, 142
sankalpa, 203, 210
sannyasa, 200, 203, 204
sannyasa asrama, 201-203
sannyasi, 63, 133, 198, 204
sastras, 124
Sastri, Jagadiswara, 36
Sastri, Raghupati, 102
Sat, 69, 184
Sat-asat-vicharana, 102
Sat-cit-ananda, 69
Sat Darsana Bhasya, 54
sat-sangam, 103
sattvaguna, 47
scripture, 123, 124, 154

Self, 4, 13, 14, 23, 35, 39, 42, 49, 54, 60, 62-64, 67, 69, 72-74, 78-82, 99, 103, 105, 111, 122, 123, 132, 139, 141-144, 147, 158-161, 163-165, 180, 181, 193, 195, 196, 202, 204, 207, 211, 217; and happiness are identical, 27; Master and God are one, 13; as guide, 13; in all selves, 34; is all pervading, 78; is eternal and immutable, 34; is everywhere, 22; is happiness, 27; is the substratum, 163; supreme consciousness, 13

Self aware, 72

Self bliss, 47

Self consciousness, 55, 214; its vibration can be felt by calm mind, 55

self differentiation, 181, 182

self-enquiry, 36, 39, 66, 84, 87, 115, 187, 200; alone gives liberation, 66; cure of sorrows is the result of, 66; most meritorious, 66; is most purifying, 66; not critical study of scriptures, 66

Self-experience, 46, 48

self-hypnotism, 121

Self-knowledge, 73, 82, 201, 207, 218

Self-reality, 78

Self-realisation, 43, 58, 70, 73, 105, 106, 114

Self-state, 49

self-surrender, 147, 154, 155, 157

shakti, 174

siddha, 211

siddhasan, 78

siddhi, 206, 207, 210

sin, 113
Siva, 171
Sivaguru, 2
Sivoham, 77, 78, 82
soham, 82
‘Song of the Self’, 138
sookshma sarira, 17
sphurana, 55, 56
spiritual aspirant, 33, 133
spiritual practice, 21, 122
sraddha, 133
Sri Aurobindo, 10
Sri Aurobindo Asram, 9
Sri Krishna, 100
Sri Rama, 35
Sri Sankara, 77
Subbaramayya, 138, 176
Subrahmanya, 2
substratum, 98
suo-moto, 20, 38, 141, 162
supreme being, 143, 155, 180
supreme bliss, 48
supreme consciousness, 13
supreme I, 70
supreme power, 40
Supreme Self, 5
Supreme state, 164
‘sushuma’, 35, 38, 39 channel through which consciousness flows 39

susupti, 182-184
swadhyaya, 79
swapna, 182
swarga, 126
swaroopa, 53; is consciousness, 53; is jnana, 53; is
omnipotent, 53; is sat-cit, 53

tapas, 152
Tayumunavar, 11
Telugu, 6
Theosophical Society, 158
Theosophist, 13
thought force, 45
time and space, 35
Tiruvannamalai, 36, 63, 199
trance, 181
truth, 54, 97, 102, 122, 123, 143, 165, 177, 191, 212, 213;
turiya, 182; is consciousness itself, 183; is the Self, 182

ultimate consciousness, 55, 56, 100
ultimate reality, 109
unconsciousness, 214
Upanisads, 10, 35
upasana, 21

Vaikunta, 170-172
Vaikuntalokam, 170
vairagya, 84, 203
vanaprasta asrama, 201

Vararuchi, 2
vasanas, 142, 213, 215
Vasishtha, 35, 204
Vedas, 111
Vedanta jnana, 52
Vedantic texts, 176
Venkataramana, 4
vibratory movement, 56
vichara, 68, 69, 73, 82, 83, 115
vichara marga, 81
Vichara Sangraham, 113
vikalpa, 203
viparita bhavana, 72
viparita jnana, 64
Vishnu, 2
Viswamitra, 125
Vitoba, 200
vivechana, 102
Vivekachudamani, 54
Vivekananda, 18, 199
vritti, 43, 47
vritti jnana, 53

waking state, 97, 98, 176, 178, 179, 181, 191
wavering mind - result of dissipation of energy, 44
‘Whence am I?’, 77
‘Who am I?, 17, 48, 55, 49, 67, 69, 70, 72, 76, 77, 81, 94, 103, 128
‘whom do they occur to?’, 80

Yatiswara, 2
yoga, 48, 97, 98, 104, 115
yoganidra, 121
yogi, 44, 55, 119, 137
Yogi, Amritananda, 2

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

1. BHAGAVAN RAMANA AND MOTHER
2. DIVINITY HERE AND NOW
3. SAT-DARSHANAM
English Translation and Commentary
4. BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI'S UPADESA SARAM
English Translation and Commentary
5. SELECTIONS FROM RAMANA GITA
Selections, Translation and Commentary
6. RAMANA GITA - Dialogues with Ramana Maharshi
English Translation and Commentary
7. THE SILENT MIND
8. MEDITATIONS
9. SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI'S TEACHINGS - AN ANTHOLOGY
10. UNFORGETTABLE YEARS
Memoirs of 29 old devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
11. THE DIRECT PATH
12. RAMANA'S MURUGANAR
Edited and Compiled
13. SAYINGS OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI
Edited and Compiled
14. A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO KNOW YOURSELF
Conversations with Ramana Maharshi
Edited and Compiled

ISBN 81-85378-09-6