

RUPEE SERIES



BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

.....

# ERASE THE EGO

Sri Ramana Maharshi

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI

R. DIWAKAR

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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF  
ADVANCED STUDY  
SIMLA



Knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, iddas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

- (a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and
- (b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—
  - (i) respect for the teacher,
  - (ii) a spirit of inquiry,
  - (iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.

**DATA ENTERED**



**CATALOGUED**



आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

*Let noble thoughts come to us from every side*

—Rigveda, I. 89. i

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By

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

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# ERASE THE EGO

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

*Compiled by*

SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA



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## GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bhavan's Book University volumes had rare success. About a million and a quarter volumes have been sold in about eleven years. However, there is an insistent demand for the stray volumes which the Bhavan has issued from time to time at a lower price. In order to meet this demand, it has been decided to issue the new One-Rupee Book University Series side by side with the Book University Series.

I hope this new One-Rupee Series will have the same good fortune which the other Series had, of being useful to those who are interested in the fundamental values of Indian Culture, and of reaching out to a wider audience.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,  
Chowpatty Road, Bombay-7.  
*Vijaya Dashami*  
September 28, 1963

K. M. MUNSHI



## FOREWORD

Herein are a few salient and solemn Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Sage of Tiruvannamalai, South India. These sacred teachings were culled from His Talks and works published by Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai. They are all in His own words.

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## INVOCATORY.

THAT in which all these worlds are fixed, of which they are, from which they all arise, for which they all exist, because of which they all come into being, and which they in truth are—THAT alone is the Real, the Truth. May we adore THAT at Heart!

The One Self, the Sole Reality, alone exists eternally. When even the Ancient Teacher, Dakshinamurthi, revealed IT through speechless Eloquence, how could any other convey IT by speech?

That Sankara, who appeared as Dakshinamurthi to grant peace to the great ascetics (Sanaka, etc.), who revealed his real state of silence, and who has expressed the nature of the Self in this hymn, abides in me.

Aruna 'A', 'RU', and 'NA' signify *Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ananda* (Being, Consciousness and Bliss), or again the Supreme Self, the individual Self, and their union as the One Absolute, expressed in the *mahavakya* 'That thou art'; 'Achala' signifies Perfection. So worship Aruna-chala of shining golden lustre, for mere remembrance of Him endures Deliverance.

"Thou art my father, Thou art my mother, Thou art my relations, my possessions and all," and so on, a song was sung in prayer. Sri Ramana remarked with a smile, "Yes, yes, Thou art this, that and the other, everything except 'I'. Why not say "I am Thou" and have done with it.

—*Sri Ramana Maharshi*

## BENEDICTION

*Master:* What is the Light for you?

*Disciple:* By day the sun, by night a lamp.

*Master:* What is the light that perceives the light?

*Disciple:* The eye.

*Master:* What is the light that illumines the eye?

*Disciple:* That light is the intellect.

*Master:* What is the light that knows the intellect?

*Disciple:* The 'I'.

*Master:* You are (therefore) the supreme Light of (all) lights.

*Disciple:* Yes, That I am.

—*Sri Ramana*

To stay where a *Jnani*, who is none else but the Supreme Self, stays is *mukti*. He who serves a *Jnani* is so great that I permanently bear on my head his feet. None can equal the spotless and supreme *Jnani*, neither Siva, Vishnu nor I Brahma. Who else then can equal him?

—*Brahma Gita*

Vishnu will carry on his head all that a real *Jnani* wants. Siva will follow him everywhere. While virtuous kings and all the devas do obeisance to the dust of such a *Jnani*'s feet, Brahma will beg that those feet may be placed on his head.

—*Kurunthirettu*

## PREFATORY

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was the personification of emancipation, the source of supreme peace, and the boundless ocean of freedom. He was indeed the answer to the riddle of all life on earth.

His very solemn presence lifted us beyond our body and brain to our true Self. This truth of Self-realization, in his holy presence, was as though coursing through our veins, pulsating in our bosom, tingling with every drop of blood and becoming consonant with our very heart-beats.

His words make us even to-day stand in the Glory of our Self, the infinite, the eternal, and the deathless. His silent and sacred look had power to instill the nectar of Self-knowledge that became part and parcel of our constitution and the very vitality of our life.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana was the ideal of the human race. He was the wonder of the world, emitting the perfume of spiritual peace. He was the mystery beyond masterminds. His life is a study in divine illumination based on dynamic silence.

All worries and wounds of the world simply melted in his presence like ice before fire. His was the discovery of a lost technique in divine awareness, a gift to humanity.

He touches life at all aspects, not cramped in or confined by any. No school of philosophy, cult, creed, yoga could claim him, as he did not fit easily into any ready-made classification. He lived free and remained free, and let every one remain free likewise.

A sage, a philosopher, a recluse, an incarnation of God, none of these terms adequately describe him. All of them fall flat, since he transcends them. He was not the present day product of some past tradition.

No Guru or Sastras made him great or illuminated him. He was unique in remaining true to himself and being himself. His theoretical knowledge in Sastras and Bhashyas came to him after his Self-realization. He was in himself the quest and the goal.

He set before us, as the glory and goal of life, the recovery of full divine consciousness of our own native and naked nature, which is not something to be created or attained but which is fully aware of itself with an awareness that can neither begin nor end, being eternal. He proclaimed the Absolute as the Self, the "I AM" in each individual life, ever being itself.

Such a realization endows every one ultimately with Pure Consciousness, a state of impersonality, timelessness, spacelessness, causelessness, egolessness, freedom and peace. He was himself a testimony for such an august revelation that always stands at the very doorstep of one and all.

Thus the heart of our being is the heart of the universe. It is there that illusions and dreams, confusions and contradictions take to flight and illumination floods in with the Kindly Light in one's life, be the individual black or brown, white or yellow.

This was the cure-all that restores the human race to its lost heritage and happiness, bereft of social, political and economical diseases of the present day, together with their hundred and one ghosts. The remedy for all such troubles as divide man from man, class from class, nation

from nation, and that spring up like weeds into new growths again and again, lies in awakening the spiritual consciousness of the human race.

No society or country can endure without a spiritual basis, a moral basis, a recognition of the value of fellowship, brotherhood and neighbourliness. Such a sublime atmosphere of the higher life automatically ends all troubles, frictions, hatreds and discords. Such a divine balm heals the hurts of man's trinity, body, mind and soul, now in topsy-turvy condition, and restores its lost balance.

In the realm of divinity are indeed the unseen forces that are the real sources of power, peace and plenty. Sri Ramana awakens every one of us to the spiritual glory, within which is contained all the worlds without an iota of worldliness.

Bhagavan's gospel is a practical expression of Self, which is Reality, Intelligence and Bliss. It cannot be delimited by determinations and differentiations. It is not objective and visionary to result in scepticism and agnosticism. It is not a datum of sense to result in materialism and naturalism. It is not a stream of ideas to result in subjectivism and solipsism. It is not acosmism, anthropomorphism, manicheism, or the like. It is not idealism or pessimism. Nor is it an amalgam of *isms*.

Reality is not existent but Existence. It is not consciousness of, but Consciousness itself. Objects bring in distinction in empirical knowledge and are not applicable to the distinctionless, non-dual Absolute, the Self.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana stands for the unity of existence, the non-duality of the Godhead and the harmony of religions. He shines as the sun of wisdom in the firmament of the Self, radiating serenity, sublimity and solemnity.

He is a beaconlight, a centre of the spiritual world-impulse.

His teachings are refreshingly plain and powerful. They throw open the flood-gates of the soul and make the living waters of the highest consciousness gush forth.

His gospel, free from any dogma or doctrine, is not hampered by fossilised traditions. It is as broad as the sky, as deep as the sea, and as universal as the rays of the sun. He kindles in every one of us the dormant divinity, the potential power, the primary principle, which is at the back of the flow of finite phenomena. His very life was a practical demonstration of the reality of Brahman, the Supreme Self, and of the unsubstantiality of the phenomenal world.

His gospel reveals clearly the divinity of the soul, the oneness of humanity and the indivisibility of the God-head, not as articles of belief or opinion, cult or creed, dogma or doctrine, but as the truths of his own experience. To know Bhagavan is to be Bhagavan himself, because Knowing is Being and Being is Knowing.

Even a single word from Bhagavan's holy lips was enough to go with us through our life, to stir the soul and awaken it to its intrinsic immortality and infinity, whereas splendid orations from persons without divine wisdom, shouted from platforms, fall flat on our ears and fail to carry any effect.

Bhagavan's sacred and solid silence spoke louder than words and his solemn and sublime look was always vividly significant.

Birth and death of the mundane world exist not in him or for him. We cannot seek him anywhere but can see

(realize) him everywhere. He alone shines forth from every face.

He is the wisdom of the wise, the strength of the strong, the brilliancy of brain and the illumination of soul. He is the real "I", the one in all our apparent "I-s", the many.

He is the Supreme Consciousness that includes and transcends all the lesser forms of consciousness, such as outward, inward, ingathered, intermediary and homogeneous.

He is the only reality in us and we are merely an expression of Him. We may not every one of us be capable of realizing the truth of it but we should not at any time degrade it. One day or other, we shall have to express the divine presence of our Bhagavan as a living reality in our lives.

He is the Absolute and lives in the Infinite. He is the Eternal rooted in Immortality. He is the Centre to which all radii of individual souls converge. He is the Centre of an infinite circle without a circumference. He is the Centre and Circumference as well.

Break the seeming structure of an individual consciousness, there shines forth Sri Ramana in his Holy Majesty, in all bliss and glory. We then come face to face with him.

He is the harmony and peace in the melody of the cosmos. He is the One and only Truth in the shrine of wisdom, in the temple of every soul and in the temple of the universe.

He is the underlying Unity in the midst of all diversities that exist on the surface. He is above all *isms*, schools, caste, creed, colour, country and the like. He is

the sexless Self in us, the immortal and eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.

The truth of Sri Ramana is not provincial or parochial. Provincialism in truth is a contradiction in terms. The highest truth knows no boundary lines and does not limp from limit to limit. There is no division in the Infinite. . .

Whenever we lose faith, or cannot trust ourselves, or commit blunders, let us think of and meditate on Sri Ramana to instil into us the courage and conviction of Divinity to conquer our lower instincts that drag us down. It is we who make a Sage live by constant remembrance or make Him die by forgetfulness.

Let us stand with noble and sublime fixity of purpose and not waver in life. Let us flower into perfection with the manifestation of Sri Ramana, the Living and Liberated in us. Let us not rob ourselves of the blessings of our own Ideal, the realization of the Supreme Self.

It is great privilege to say that the writer has been blessed with the rare opportunity of being in contact with Bhagavan Sri Ramana for nearly 40 years. He has also had several occasions of prolonged and continuous stay at Bhagavan's Lotus Feet for months together. He feels from the bottom of his heart highly fortunate to claim that he is a mere particle of dust from the Holy Feet of our beloved and blessed Bhagavan unto whom is offered this publication as homage.

*Om Sri Ramana Arpanamastu!*

Sri Ramana Asram,  
Tiruvannamalai,  
Madras State, India.

SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA

## TEACHINGS

On one occasion an Andhra youth came and said: "Bhagavan, having great desire for Moksha and anxious to know the way thereto, I have read all kinds of books on Vedanta. They all describe it in different ways. I have also visited a number of learned people and when I asked them, each recommended a different path. I got puzzled and have come to you; please tell me which path to take."

With a smile on his face, Bhagavan said: "All right, then go the way you came". Devotees that were present there then felt amused at this. The poor young man did not know what to say. He waited until Bhagavan left the hall and then with a depressed look turned appealingly to the others there and said, "Gentlemen, I have come a long way with great hope and with no regard for the expense or discomfort, out of my ardent desire to know the way to Moksha, is it fair to tell me to go the way I came? Is this such a huge joke?"

Thereupon one of them replied "No, Sir, it is no joke, it is the most appropriate answer: "Who am I?" is the easiest path to Moksha. You asked him which way "I" should go, and his saying "*Go the way you came*" meant that if you investigate and pursue the path from which that "I" came, you will attain Moksha."

Peace is the goal to be realized, whether it is for the individual or for the society. Peace is for self-purification; power is for the improvement of society. Having advanced the interests of society by means of power, peace should be established there later. Society is the body; its constituent members are the limbs, and their duties are its

functions. A member of a society thrives when, through selfless service, he is loyal to it, just as the limbs thrive, when by sound co-ordination they function well within the body. While serving society faithfully in thought, word and deed, a member of it should also promote its cause among the other members of his community by awakening them to similar service.

Guru's Grace is always there. You imagine it is something, somewhere high up in the sky, far away and has to descend. It is really inside you, in your heart, and the moment you effect subsidence or merger of the mind into its source, the Grace rushes forth, spouting, as from a spring, from within you.

When a devotee reaches a certain stage and becomes fit for enlightenment, the same God whom he was worshipping comes as Guru and leads him on. The Guru comes only to tell him, 'God is within yourself. Dive within and realize'. God, Guru and the Self are the same.

Grace is within you. If it were external, it would be useless. Grace is the Self. It is not something to be acquired from others. All that is necessary is to know its existence in you. You are never out of its operation. Grace is ever there. It is not manifest because of ignorance prevailing. With *sraddha*, it will become manifest. *Sraddha*, Grace, Light, Spirit are all synonymous with the Self.

Grace is the beginning, middle and end. Grace is the Self. Because of the false identification with the body, grace is considered to be embodied. But the Guru's outlook is to see only the Self. The Self is only one. He tells you that the Self alone is, is not the Self your Grace? Where will grace come from? From the Self only. Manifestation of the Self is the manifestation of grace and vice

versa. All its doubts arise because of one's wrong outlook and consequent expectation of things external to oneself. Nothing is external to the Self.

The highest form of grace is silence. It is also the highest spiritual instruction. All other modes of instruction are derivations from silence and are therefore secondary. Silence is the primary form. If the Guru is silent the seeker's mind gets purified by itself.

*Mouna* is the utmost eloquence. Peace is the utmost activity. How? Because the person remains in his essential nature and so permeates all the recesses of the Self. Thus he can call up any power into play whenever it is necessary. That is the highest *Siddhi*.

The state which transcends speech and thought is *mouna*; it is meditation without mental activity. Subjugation of the mind is meditation; deep meditation is eternal speech. Silence is ever-speaking; it is the perennial flow of 'language'. It is interrupted by speaking; for words obstruct this mute 'language'. Lectures may entertain individuals for hours without improving them. Silence, on the other hand, is permanent and benefits the whole of mankind. By silence Eloquence is meant. Oral lectures are not so eloquent as Silence. Silence is unceasing Eloquence —it is the best Language.

Silence is of four kinds: Silence of speech, Silence of the eyes, Silence of the ear, and Silence of the mind. Only the last is pure Silence and this is the most important. The Commentary of Silence is the best commentary as illustrated in Lord Dakshinamurthi. Only Silence is the Eternal Speech, the One Word, the Heart-to-Heart Talk.

Dakshinamurthi observed silence when the disciples approached Him. That is the highest form of initiation.

It includes the other forms. There must be subject-object relationship established in the other *dikshas*. First the subject must emanate and then the object. Unless these two are there how is the one to look at the other or touch him? *Mouna diksha* (vow of silence) is the most perfect; it comprises looking, touching and teaching. It will purify the individual in every way and establish him in Reality.

Silence is like the even flow of electric current. Speech is like obstructing the current for lighting and other purposes. However much a Jnani may talk, he is still the Silent One. However much he may work, he is still Inactive. His voice is the incorporeal voice. His tread is not on the earth. It is like measuring the sky with the sky.

Realization of the Self is the greatest help that can be rendered to humanity. Therefore, the saints are said to be helpful, though they remain in forests. The help is imperceptible but is still there. A saint helps the whole of mankind, unknown to them.

Realization is beyond expression. Expression always fails to describe it. Although the expression of realization is impossible, still its existence is indicated.

It is said the whole Vedanta can be compressed into four words, *deham, naham, koham, soham*. *Deham* is *naham*; the body is not 'I'. If one enquires *koham*, i.e. Who am I?, i.e., if one enquires whence this 'I' springs and realises it, then, in the heart of such a one, the Omnipresent God will shine as 'I', as *sa aham* or *soham*; i.e., he will know 'That I am,' i.e., that is 'I'.

Just as a lamp spontaneously goes out if not fed with oil, so also the ego becomes extinct if one meditates unceasingly and becomes merged in the Self. There is no higher gain than the Self.

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

A traveller in a cart has fallen asleep. The bulls move, stand still or are unyoked during the journey. He does not know these events but finds himself in a different place after he wakes up. He has been blissfully ignorant of the occurrences on the way, but the journey has been finished. Similarly with the Self of a person. The ever-wakeful Self is compared to the traveller asleep in the cart. The waking state is the moving of the bulls; *Samadhi* is their standing still (because Samadhi means *Jagrat-Sushupti*, that is to say, the person is aware but not concerned in the action; the bulls are yoked but do not move); sleep is the unyoking of the bulls, for there is complete stoppage of activity corresponding to the relief of the bulls from the yoke.

He who sees the Self sees the Self alone in the world also. It is immaterial to the Enlightened whether the world appears or not. In either case, his attention is turned to the Self. It is like the letters and the paper on which they are printed. You are so engrossed in the letters that you forget about the paper, but the Enlightened sees the paper as the substratum whether the letters appear on it or not.

He who is forgetful of the Self, mistaking the physical body for it, and goes through innumerable births, is like one who wanders all over the world in a dream. Thus realizing the Self would only be like waking up from the dream-wanderings.

One who asks himself 'Who am I?' and 'Where am I?', though existing all the while as the Self, is like a drunken man who enquires about his own identity and whereabouts.

While in fact the body is in the Self, he who thinks that the Self is within the insentient body is like one who considers the cloth of the screen which supports a cinema picture to be contained within the picture.

Does an ornament exist apart from the gold of which it is made? Where is the body apart from the Self? He who considers the body to be himself is an ignorant man. He who regards himself as the Self is the Enlightened One and has realized the Self.

Just as the lotus bud, flourishing in marshy pools, blossoms at sunrise, so also the heart, behind the mind, shines forth by the Grace of God, who is the Self of all selves, and who is externally visible as Arunachala. But this sun, after rising, never sets again and the Heart of the Realized Soul is in blossom once and for all.

The ocean, being the store of all waters, evaporates, clouds are formed and rain falls, giving rise to rivers which, as soon as formed, become restless, as it were, course along as if to find their origin and repose only after being discharged into the ocean. Similarly, the individual emanating from the Heart is restless, and becomes eager to find his own source. The way is the trail of the 'ego' into the Heart.

The *Jnani* sees no one as an *Ajnani*. All are only *Jnanis* in his sight. In the ignorant state one superimposes one's ignorance on a *Jnani* and mistakes him for a doer. In the state of *Jnana*, the *Jnani* sees nothing separate from the Self. The Self is all shining and only pure

Jnana. Two friends went to sleep side by side. One of them dreamt that both of them had gone on a long journey and had strange experiences. On waking up he recapitulated them and asked his friend if it were not so. The other one simply ridiculed him saying that it was only his dream and could not affect the other. So it is with the *Ajnani* who super-imposes his illusive ideas on others.

If the Self has a form, then the world and God have too; but if the Self is formless, then how and by whom are forms to be seen? Is the spectacle ever different from the eye that sees it? The real Eye is just the real Self; It is infinite Consciousness, formless, and worldless.

One 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. Sri Maharshi replied: Yes, Ishvara. A devotee: (With astonishment)—what with eyes, ears, nose, etc.? Sri Maharshi: Yes, if you have them why should not God also have them? A devotee: When I read in the Kabbala and in Hindu books that God has these organs, I laugh. Sri Maharshi: Then why don't you laugh at yourself for having them?

There are different ways to Tiruvannamalai, but Tiruvannamalai is the same by whichever way it is gained. Similarly the approach to Realization varies according to the personality. Yet the Self is the same. But still, being in Tiruvannamalai, to ask the way to it is ridiculous. So also, being the Self, to ask how to realise the Self looks absurd. You are the Self. Remain as the Self. That is all. Questions arise because of the present wrong identification of the Self with the body. That is ignorance. That must go. On its removal the Self alone is.

The world being a mere shadow of the Real, it is impossible to know it aright or get hold of it. A child tries to touch the head of its own shadow, but cannot do so, because as he moves, the shadow-head also moves. The mother then puts his hand on his own head, and shows that the shadow-head is touched. So too the world is got hold of, or known aright, only by getting hold of the Self.

You give up this and that of "my" possessions. If you give up 'my', 'mine' and 'I' instead, all are given up at a stroke. The very seed of possession is lost. Thus evil is nipped in the bud or crushed in the very germ. Dispassion (*vairagya*) must be very strong to do this. Eagerness to do it must be equal to that of a man kept under water trying to rise up to the surface for his life.

Scenes are projected on the screen in the cinema-show, but the moving pictures do not affect or alter the screen. The spectator pays attention to them, not to the screen. They cannot exist apart from the screen, yet the screen is ignored. So also the Self is the screen where the pictures, activities, etc. are seen going on. The man is aware of the latter, the pictures, but not aware of the essential former, the screen. All the same the world of pictures is not apart from the Self. Whether the man is aware of the screen or unaware, the actions continue.

If we look on the Self as the ego then we become the ego, if as the mind we become the mind, if as the body we become the body. It is the thought which builds up sheaths in so many ways. A shadow on the water is found to be shaking. Can any one stop its shaking? If it should cease to shake you would not notice the water but only the light. Similarly take no notice of the ego and its acti-

vities, but see only the light behind. The ego is the I-thought. The true 'I' is the Self.

As the sky is in no way affected by the formation and dispersion of clouds, so the Real Self is in no way affected by the birth and death of the body.

As a sculptured dog conceals the stone (of which it is made) when taken to be a (real) dog, and is (seen to be) only stone, and not a dog when its truth is known, so is this world (in the states of ignorance and of illumination respectively).

As the many-hued peacock is but the substance of the egg, so this (variegated) world is the Self and nothing else; thus wilt thou see when thou art in thy Natural State (as the real Self).

The individual, the world and God are illusory creations in the Supreme Reality, like the snake in the rope; knowing this, be happy in unity with that blissful One, by dissolving the three in HIm.

All religions postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the soul and God. The one Reality alone manifests Itself as the three. To say "The three are indeed three" is only while the ego lasts. Therefore to inhere in one's own Being, where the 'I', the ego, is dead, is the perfect state.

Self-enquiry by following the clue of *Ahamvritti*, is just like the dog tracing its master by his scent. The master may be at some distant, unknown place, but that does not at all stand in the way of the dog tracing him. The master's scent is an infallible clue for the animal, and nothing else, such as the dress he wears, or his build, stature, etc., counts. To that scent the dog holds on undis-

tractedly while searching for him, and finally it succeeds in tracing him.

The ego in its purity is experienced in the intervals between two states or between two thoughts. The ego is like the caterpillar which leaves its hold on one leaf only after it catches on to another. Its true nature is known when it is out of contact with objects or thoughts. You should realize this interval as the abiding, unchangeable Reality, your true being, through the conviction gained by the study of the three states, *jagrat*, *swapna* and *sushupti*.

The word, *Aham*, (Self) is very suggestive. The two letters of the word denote that it comprises all. How? Because *Aham* signifies existence itself. Although the concept of 'I'-ness or 'I-am'-ness is by usage known as *Aham-vritti*, it is not really a *vritti* like the other *vrittis* of the mind. Because unlike the other *vrittis* which have no essential inter-relation, the *Aham-vritti* is equally and essentially related to each and every *vritti* of the mind. Without the *Aham-vritti* there can be no other *vritti*, but the *Aham-vritti* can subsist by itself without depending on any other *vritti* of the mind. The *Aham-vritti* is therefore fundamentally different from the other *vrittis*.

The ego functions as the knot between the Self which is pure Consciousness, and the physical body, which is inert and insentient. The ego is therefore called the *Chit-jada granthi*. In your investigation into the Source of *Aham-vritti*, you take the essential Chit, aspect of the ego; and for this reason the enquiry must lead to the realization of the pure Consciousness of the Self.

The State of non-emergence of the little or ego 'I'

is the state of your being THAT. Without questing for that State of the non-emergence of ego 'I' and attaining it, how can one accomplish one's own extinction, whereafter the ego 'I' never revives? Without that attainment how is it possible to abide in one's own State where one is THAT?

Without uttering the word 'I', to quest with the mind turned inwards, as to whence the ego 'I' rises, is alone the enquiry leading to Self-Knowledge. Other than this, can contemplation, 'This I am not; That I am', be by itself the enquiry, though it may be an aid thereto?

Questing 'Who am I' within one's mind, when one reaches the Heart, the individual 'I' sinks crest-fallen, and at once Reality manifests itself spontaneously as 'I' 'I'. Though it reveals itself thus, it is not the ego 'I', but the Perfect Being, the Absolute Self.

The 'I' casts off the illusion of the ego, 'I' and remains as 'I'. Take the case of the *bhakta*. His ego 'I' prays to the Lord to unite it with Him, which is its surrender. What remains as residuum after this surrender, is the eternal 'I', which is the Absolute God or *Paramatman* Himself. What has happened to the 'I' which had originally prayed? Being unreal, it simply vanished.

Who is it that says that 'I' is not perceptible? Is there an "I" ignorant and an "I" elusive? Are there two "I"s in the same person? It is the mind that says that "I" is not perceptible. What is the source of that mind? If you seek for the mind you will find it to be unreal.

Non-action is unceasing activity. The Sage is characterized by eternal and incessant activity. His stillness is like the apparent stillness of a fast rotating top. It is moving too fast for the eye to see, so it appears to be still. Yet

it is rotating. So is the apparent inaction of the Sage. This has to be explained because people generally mistake his stillness for inertness. It is not so.

Why does not Revelation tell us what the Self is? All that one needs to do, to find the Self, is to peel off the non-selves, the sheaths. If a man is in doubt as to his being a man, he goes to some one and asks him. The latter tells him that he is not a tree, nor a cow, and so on, making it clear that he is not anything other than a man. If the man is not satisfied and says: 'You have not told me what I am,' the reply would be 'You have not been told that you are not a man'. If even then he cannot see that he is a man, it will be useless to tell him so. So too we are told what we are not, in order that, by eliminating all that, we shall find the Remainder, the Real Self.

"How can one make the Quest, 'who am I'?" The way is subjective, not objective; so it cannot and need not be shown by another. Is it necessary to show anyone the way inside his own house? If the seeker keeps his mind still, that will be enough.

Objects exist in space. Objects and space are together reflected in a mirror. Just as the objects are in space, so they are in the reflection also. The mirror is itself thin. How can these objects be contained in its compass? There is no reflection in the *akasa* of the pot. The reflection is only in the water in it. You put several pots filled with water in a tank, the *akasa* is reflected equally in the water in each of the pots and in the water of the tank. Similarly the whole universe is reflected in each individual. Pure ether cannot take reflections; only the ether of water can do so. Glass cannot reflect objects; only a plate of glass with an opaque lining at the back can reflect

the objects in front of it. Similarly Pure Knowledge does not contain objects or reflect them. Only with the limiting adjunct, the mind, it reflects the world. Mind is a mixture of *Chit* (intelligence) and *Sankalpas* (thoughts). Therefore it forms all these—the mirror, light, darkness and the reflections.

‘I’—‘I’ is the Self. ‘I am this’ is the ego. When the ‘I’ is kept as the ‘I’ only, it is the Self. When it flies off at a tangent and says, ‘I am this or that’, ‘I am such and such’, —it is the ego.

The ‘I’-‘I’ is always there. It is not some newly acquired knowledge. That which is new and which is not here and now will be evanescent only. The ‘I’ is always there. There is obstruction to its knowledge. Such obstruction is called ignorance. Remove the ignorance, that is all. And even knowledge is not of the Self. Knowledge and ignorance are excrescences to be cleared away. That is why the Self is said to be beyond knowledge and ignorance. It is natural, that is all.

If the thought ‘I am bound’ arises, then the thought of deliverance will also arise. When, by Quest of ‘I’, ‘who am I that is bound,’ the ever free real Self alone remains, ageless and deathless, how then can the thought of bondage arise? If that thought does not arise, then how can the thought of deliverance arise to him that has done with actions?

Breath and mind arise from the same place and when one of them is controlled, the other is also. As a matter of fact, in the enquiry method—which is more correctly, ‘whence am I?’ and not merely ‘Who am I?’—we are not simply trying to eliminate by saying we are not the body, not the senses and so on, to reach what remains as the ul-

timate reality, but we are trying to find whence the 'I'-thought, or ego, arises within us. The method contains within it, though implicitly and not expressly, the watching of the breath. When we watch where the 'I'-thought, the root of all thoughts, springs from, we are necessarily watching the source of breath also, as the 'I'-thought and the breath arise from the same source.

The ego is merely a ghost with no form of its own but feeding on any form it holds, which when sought for takes to flight. Since, with the rise of the ego, all else rises and with its subsidence all else subsides, to destroy the ego through Self-enquiry is alone true renunciation. The Self-conscious Being of 'I-less-ness' is the That which is one's true State realized by destroying the ego through Self-enquiry.

No learning or knowledge of Scriptures is necessary to know the Self, as no man requires a mirror to know that he is himself. All knowledge is acquired only to be given up eventually as not-Self. Nor is household work or care of children necessarily an obstacle. If you can do nothing more, at least continue saying 'I' 'I' to yourself mentally all the time, whatever work you may be doing and whether you are sitting, standing or walking. 'I' is the name of God. It is the first and greatest of all mantras. Even OM is second to it.

When the 'I' rises, it itself becomes both subject and object. When the 'I' does not rise (as ego), there is neither subject, nor object. For one who is ripe, no more need be said; knowing this, he turns his mind inward, away from all this. To be able to do this, one must be a Hero, a Dhira. But what heroism is needed for finding Oneself.? 'Dhi' means mind and 'ra' means the saving of its energies from

flowing out in thoughts. He is a *Dhira* who can stem the flood of thoughts and turn the mind inward.

*Knowing* the Self is *being* the Self, and *being* means existence—one's own existence, which no one denies, any more than one denies one's eyes, although one cannot see them. The trouble lies with one's desire to objectify the Self, in the same way as one objectifies one's eyes, when one places a mirror before them. One has been so accustomed to objectify that one has lost the knowledge of oneself, simply because the Self cannot be objectified. Who is to know the Self? Can the insentient body or mind know it? All the time one speaks and thinks of one's 'I', 'I', 'I', yet when questioned one denies knowledge of it. You are the Self, yet you ask how to know the Self?

What is realization? Is it to see God with four hands, bearing conch, wheel, club, etc.? Even were God to appear in that form, how is the disciple's ignorance wiped out? Such appearance is phenomenal and illusory. All perceptions are indirect or secondary knowledge. The truth must be eternal realization. The direct perception is ever-present Experience. There must be a Seer. The present superimposition of the body as 'I' is so deep-rooted, that the vision before the eyes is considered *Pratyaksha* (self-evident) *but not the Seer himself*. The Seer alone is real and eternal. Abiding in the Self and Being the Self, and not seeing the Self, is realization.

"Be still and know that I am God". Here stillness is total surrender without a vestige of ego. Stillness will prevail and there will be no agitation of mind. Agitation of mind is the cause of desire, the sense of doership, personality. If that is stopped there is quiet. There 'Knowing' means 'Being'. It is not the relative knowledge in-

volving the triads. "I am that I am." "I am" is God—not thinking "I am God." Realise "I am" and do not *think* I am. "Know I am God"—it is said, and not "Think I am God." Your duty is TO BE, and not to be this or that. "I AM THAT I AM" sums up the whole truth; the method is summarised in BE STILL. And what does Stillness mean? It means 'Destroy yourself'; because every name and form is the cause of trouble.

"Know Thyself" is what is usually said. Even that is not correct. For, if we talk of knowing the Self, there must be two-Selves, one a Self knowing, another the Self which is known. The state we call realization is simply being Self, not knowing anything or becoming anything. If one has realized, one is that which alone is and which alone has always been.

'I exist' is the only permanent, self-evident experience of every one. Nothing else is so self-evident (*pratyaksha*) as 'I am'. What people call 'self-evident' viz., the experience they get through the senses, is far from self-evident. The Self alone is *that*. *Pratyaksha* is another name for the Self.

Upanishadic saying 'I am Brahman' simply means, Brahman exists as 'I' and not 'I am Brahman'. It is not to be supposed that a man is advised to contemplate 'I am Brahman', 'I am Brahman'. Does a man keep on thinking 'I am a man', 'I am a man'? He is that, and except when a doubt arises as to whether he is an animal or a tree, there is no need for him to assert 'I am a man'. Similarly the Self is Self. Brahman exists as 'I am' in every thing and every being.

What is *Atmasakshatkara* (Self-Realization)? You are the *Atma* (Self) and that *sakshat* (here and now)

also. Where is the place for *kara* (accomplishment) in it? This question shows that you think you are the non-Self. Or you think that there are two selves, the one to realise the other. It is absurd.

I rather lay stress upon Self-knowledge, for you are first concerned with your Self before you proceed to know the world and its Lord. The “*Soham*”, or ‘I am Brahman’ meditation is more or less a mental process. But the quest for the Self I speak of is a direct method, 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 and 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.

The Self is being alone, not being this way or that. It is simple being. Be, and there is an end of this ignorance. Enquire who has the ignorance. The ego arises when you wake up from sleep; you do not say that you are sleeping, that you are going to wake up or that you have been sleeping so long. But still you are there. You say that you have slept, only when you are awake, and your wakefulness comprises the sleep also in it. Realise your pure being. Let there be no confusion as regards Self. The body is the result of thoughts. The thoughts will play as usual but you will not be affected. You were not concerned with the body when asleep; thus you can always be.

Brahman is beyond *vidya* and *avidya*, knowledge and ignorance. It is beyond maya, the illusion of duality. What Brahman is cannot be described. All things in the world—the Vedas, the Puranas, the Tantras, the six systems of

philosophy—have been defined and defiled, like food that has been touched by the tongue, for they have been read or uttered. Only one thing has not been defined in this way, and that is Brahman. Suppose a man has seen the ocean, and somebody asks him, “Well, what is the ocean like”? The man first opens his mouth as wide as he can and says: ‘What a sight! What tremendous waves and sounds!’ The description of Brahman in the sacred books is like that. It is said in the Vedas that Brahman is of the nature of Bliss—it is *Satchidananda*.

For one who has realized that State of Perfect Being, which is the inherent Bliss indescribable of the Self Absolute, nothing else remains to accomplish. The Self is one; and Self-knowledge is unique in that the knowing Self is itself the known Self. It can never become a known or unknown object.

To him who is one with the formless Self, everything is formless. Existence of the world is merely relative. The world is really synonymous with the mind. Since it is knowledge that illuminates the world, the former is ultimate to the latter. That knowledge alone is real which ever remains changeless. Worship under name and form is only a means to realize one’s absolute identity with the Nameless and Formless.

Self-knowledge, in which both relative knowledge and phenomena fall off, is alone True Knowledge, because the Self is the Source of all. To know all else except the Knower is but ignorance. The Self being Knowledge Absolute, it is neither knowing nor not knowing. It can never be nescience. The Self, being one and universal, knowledge of diversity is but ignorance which too is not apart from the Self.

*Sat* (Being), *Chit* (Consciousness), *Ananda* (Bliss). The *Sat* aspect is emphasized by *jnanis* who are said to repose in the Essence of Being after incessant search for the same and with their individuality lost in the Supreme. The *Chit* aspect is for yogis who exert themselves to control their breath in order to steady the mind and are then said to see the Glory (consciousness of Being) of God as the One light radiating in all directions. The *Ananda* aspect is for devotees who become intoxicated with the nectar of the love of God and lose themselves in Blissful experience. Unwilling to leave this, they remain for ever merged in God.

*Pranayama* according to *jnana* is

“*Na aham*” I am not this=out-breathing

“*Koham*” Who am I?=in-breathing

“*Soham*” I am He=Retention of breath

This is *vichara*. This *vichara* brings about the desired result.

The Yoga Sastras say that the *Sahasrara* or brain is the seat of the *Self*. The *Purusha Sukta* declares that the Heart is its seat. To enable the aspirant to steer clear of any possible doubt, I tell him to take up the thread or the clue of ‘I’-ness and follow it to its source. Because, firstly, it is impossible for anybody to entertain any doubt about this ‘I’ notion; secondly, whatever be the means adopted, the final goal is Realization of the source of I-am-ness, which is what you begin from in your experience. If you, therefore, practise Self-enquiry you will reach the Heart which is the *Self*.

How is it that *Atma vidya* is said to be the easiest? Any other *Vidya* requires a knower, knowledge and the object to be known, whereas *Atma vidya* does not require

any of them. It is the Self. Can anything be more obvious as that? Hence it is the easiest. All that you need do is to enquire, "Who am I?" A man's true name is *mukti* (liberation).

You are told that the ego is not your real Self; if you accept it, then you have only to search for and find that which is your real Self, the real being of which the ego is a false appearance. Why then do you meditate 'I am that?' That only gives a fresh lease of life to the ego. It is like some one trying to avoid 'thinking of the monkey when taking medicine'; by the very act of trying, he admits the thought. The source of truth of the ego must be traced and found. Meditating 'I am That' is of no use; for meditation is by the mind, and the Self is beyond the mind. In the Quest of its own reality, the ego perishes of itself; hence, this is the direct method; in all else the ego is retained and thus many doubts arise and the eternal question remains to be faced. Until that question is faced there will be no end to the ego; then why not face that question at once, without going through those other methods?

What is meditation but mental repetition of a concept? It is a mental *japam*, which begins with words and ends in the silence of the Self. Meditation and control of mind 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.

Meditation requires an object to meditate upon, whereas in *vichara* or introspection, there is only the subject without the object. Meditation differs from *vichara*

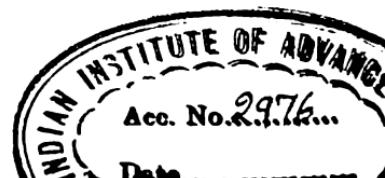
in this way. *Vichara* is the process and the goal also. 'I AM', the goal, is the final Reality. To hold on with effort to this Pure Being is *vichara*. When it is spontaneous and natural, it is realization.

What is meditation? It consists in expulsion of thoughts. All the present troubles are due to thoughts and are themselves thoughts. Give up thoughts. That is happiness, and also meditation. The thoughts are for the thinker. Remain as the Self of the thinker and there is an end of thoughts.

Where can you go, fleeing from the world or objects? They are like the shadow of a man from which he cannot escape. There is a story of a man who wanted to bury his shadow. He dug a deep pit and, seeing his shadow at the bottom, was glad he could bury it so deep. He filled in the pit and when he had finished he was surprised and disappointed to find the shadow on top of it. In the same way, objects or thoughts of them will be with you always, till you realise the Self.

Consciousness is pure knowledge. The mind arises out of it and is made up of thoughts. The essence of the mind is only awareness or consciousness. However, when the ego over-shadows it, it functions as reasoning, thinking or perceiving. The universal mind, not being limited by the ego, has nothing outside itself and is therefore only aware. This is what the Bible means by 'I am that I am'. The ego-ridden mind has its strength sapped and is too weak to resist thought, whether distressing or happy.

The mind is nothing but the stream of thoughts that pass over Consciousness. Of all these thoughts, the first one is the thought 'I am this body'. This is a false thought; but because it is taken as true, it is possible for



other thoughts to arise. So the mind is just an outgrowth of the primary ignorance, and is therefore unreal.

Absence of thought does not mean a blank. There must be some one to be aware of that absence. Knowledge and ignorance pertain only to the mind and are in duality, but the Self is beyond them both. There is no need for one Self to see another. There are no two Selves. What is not the Self is mere self which cannot see the Self. The Self has no sight or hearing; It lies beyond them, all alone, as pure Consciousness, pure Light.

“What is the easiest way to attain one-pointedness of mind?” The best way is to see the source of the mind. See if there is such a thing as mind. It is only if there is a mind that the question of making it one-pointed will arise. When you investigate by turning inwards, you find there is no such thing.

There are not two minds, one good and the other evil. It is only the *Vasanas* or tendencies of the mind that are of two kinds, good and favourable, evil and unfavourable. When the mind is associated with the former, it is called good; and when associated with the latter, it is called evil. However evil-minded people may appear to you, it is not proper to hate or despise them. Likes and dislikes, love and hatred are equally to be eschewed. It is also not proper to let the mind often rest on objects or affairs of mundane life. As far as possible, one should not interfere in the affairs of others.

What is the *Sarupa* (form) and *arupa* (formlessness) of the mind? When you wake up from sleep a light appears, that is the light of the Self passing through *Mahat tatva*. It is called cosmic consciousness. That is *arupa*. The light falls on the ego and is reflected there-

from. Then the body and the world are seen. This mind is *sarupa*. The objects appear in the light of this reflected consciousness. This light is called *jyoti*.

Mind, ego, intellect are all different names for one single inner organ (*Antahkarana*). The mind is only the aggregate of thoughts. Thoughts cannot exist but for the ego. So all thoughts are pervaded by ego (*aham*). Seek wherefrom the 'I' rises and the other thoughts will disappear. Mind is consciousness which has put on limitations. You are originally unlimited and perfect. Later you take on limitations and become the mind.

To ask the mind to kill the mind is like making the thief the policeman. He will go with you and pretend to catch the thief, but nothing will be gained. So you must turn inward and see from where the mind arises and then it will cease to exist. Of course we must use the mind. Only with the help of the mind can the mind be killed.

In the case of the *jnani* (Enlightened), the rise or existence of the ego is only apparent and the *jnani* enjoys his unbroken transcendental experience in spite of such apparent rise or existence of the ego, keeping his attention always on the source. This ego is harmless; it is like the skeleton of a burnt rope—though it has a form it is of no use for tying anything.

Once I was asked about the Christian doctrine of 'original sin'—that every man is born in sin and can be delivered from it only by faith in Jesus Christ; I replied; "The sin is said to be in man; but there is no manhood in sleep; manhood comes on waking, along with the thought 'I am this body; ' this thought is the real original sin; it must be removed by the death of the ego, after which this thought will not arise."

Is there Knowledge of the Self in the Egoless State? The truth about the Egoless State is conveyed by means of negations. What is called Self-Knowledge is that State in which there can be neither knowledge nor ignorance; for what is commonly regarded as knowledge is not true knowledge; the Self is Itself true Knowledge, because It shines alone—without any other that could become an object of Its knowledge or a knower of It. Understand that the Self is not a void.

To a comment regarding the impact of Self-realization being so forceful that the weak physical body cannot bear it for more than twenty-one days at the longest, Bhagavan replied: 'What is your idea of a *Jnani*? Is he the body or something different? If he is something apart from the body, how can he be affected by the body? Books speak of different kinds of Liberation. There may be different stages on the path but there are no degrees of Liberation.'

The body is insentient and cannot say 'I'. The Self is pure consciousness and non-dual. It cannot say 'I'. No one says 'I' in sleep. What is the ego then? It is something intermediate between the inert body and the Self. It has no *locus standi*. If sought for it vanishes like a ghost. You see, a man imagines that there is something by his side in darkness; it may be some dark object. If he looks closely the ghost is not to be seen, but some dark object which he may identify as a tree, or a post, etc. If he does not look closely, the ghost strikes terror in him. All that is required is only to look closely and the ghost vanishes. The ghost was the link between the body and Pure Consciousness. It is not real. So long as one does

not look closely, it continues to give trouble. But when one really looks for it, it is found to be non-existent.

All talk of surrender is like filching jaggery from the jaggery image of Ganesa and offering it as *Naivedya* to the same Ganesa. You say you offer your body, soul and all possessions to God. Were they yours to offer? At best, you can only say, 'I falsely imagined till now that all these which are yours (God's) were mine. Now I realize they are yours. I shall no more act as if they were mine.' And this knowledge that there is nothing but God or Self, that I and mine don't exist and that only the Self exists, is *jnana*.

The Bhagavad Gita says, 'The wise man will think the senses move among the sense objects and be unattached to the activities of the sense organs'. I would go farther and say that the *jnani* does not think even that. He is the Self and sees nothing apart from himself. What the Gita says in the above passage is for the *abhyasi* or the practiser.

There is no difference between *jivanmukti* and *videhamukti*. For those who ask, it is said, 'A *jnani* with a body is a *jivanmukta* and he attains *videhamukti* when he drops off this body.' But this difference is only for the onlooker, not for the *jnani*. His state is the same before and after the body is dropped. We think of the *jnani* as a human form or as being in that form. But the *jnani* knows he is the Self, the only Reality which is both inside and outside, and which is not bound by any form or shape.

There are no stages in Realization, or *mukti*, itself. There are no degrees of *jnana*. So that there cannot be one stage of *jnana* with the body and another stage when

the body is dropped. The *Jnani* knows that nothing exists but the Self. To such an one what difference could the presence or absence of body make?

The *jnani* is the embodiment of all virtues which accrue to him spontaneously. Apparently active, the *jnani* is not engaged in any act. Apparently inactive, the *jnani* is really acting. Having transcended the three states, the *jnani* abides merely as pure Consciousness, unaffected by the dispositions of the body and the mind. For him, *turiyateeta* is identical with *turiya*; and the other three states do not exist for him. Since the *jnani* is not the doer, it is ludicrous to attribute *prarabdha karma* to him.

There must be a seer for objects to be seen. Find out the seer first. Why worry yourself with what will be in the hereafter? What does it matter if the world is perceived or not? Have you lost anything where there is no such perception in your sleep? The appearance or disappearance of the *world* is immaterial. The *ajnani* sees the *jnani* active and is confounded. The world is perceived by both, but their outlooks differ. Take the instance of the cinema. There are pictures moving. Try to take hold of them. What do you hold? Only the screen. Let the picture disappear. What remains over? The screen again. So also here; even when the world appears, see to whom it appears. Hold the substratum. Once the substratum is held, what does it matter if the world appears or disappears. The *ajnani* thinks the world to be real, whereas the *jnani* sees it only as the manifestation of the Self. It is immaterial if the Self manifests or ceases to manifest.

To see wrong in another is one's own wrong projected. The discrimination between right and wrong is

the origin of the sin. One's own sin is reflected outside and the individual in ignorance superimposes it on another. The best course is to reach the state in which such discrimination does not arise. Do you see wrong or right in your sleep? Be asleep even in the wakeful state, abide as the Self and remain uncontaminated by what goes on around. Your silence will have more effect than your words and deeds. That is the development of will-power. Then the world becomes the Kingdom of Heaven, which is within you.

There is solitude everywhere. The individual is solitary always. His business is to find out within and not outside. Do not allow yourself to be distracted. Enquire for whom there is distraction. You say the answer does not come from the search inwards. The enquirer is the answer and no other answer can come. What comes cannot be true. What is, is true.

This world, which you try to prove to be real, is all the time mocking at you for seeking to know it, without first knowing yourself. How can the knowledge of objects, arising in relative existence to one who knows not the truth of himself, the knower, be true knowledge? If one rightly knows the truth of him named 'I', in whom both knowledge and its opposite subsist, then, along with ignorance, relative knowledge also will cease.

The world and the mind arise and set together as one; but of the two, the world owes its appearance to the mind alone; That alone is the Real in which this (inseparable) pair, the world and the mind, has its risings and settings; that Reality is the one infinite Consciousness, having neither rising nor setting.

Where are time and space apart from the sense of

'I'? If we were the same as bodies, then it could be said that we were in time and space. But are we bodies? We are the same at all times and in all places; hence we are that Reality which transcends time and space.

Illusion is itself illusory. Illusion must be seen by one beyond it. Can such a seer be subject to illusion? Can he then speak of degrees of illusion? There are scenes floating on the screen in a cinema show. Fire appears to burn buildings to ashes. Water seems to wreck vessels. But the screen on which the pictures were projected remains unscorched and dry. Why? Because the pictures were unreal and the screen is real. Again reflections pass out from a mirror; but the mirror is not in any way affected by the quality of the reflections. So the world is a phenomenon on the single Reality which is not affected in any manner. Reality is only one.

Reality is at once Being and Consciousness. To know that is to be That in the Heart, transcending thought. Absolute surrender to the Supreme Lord, whereby the 'I' and 'mine' are destroyed, is the one means to realize Immortality. The Supreme Being, the one ultimate Cause of the universe, manifests Himself as many, which do not exist apart from Him. To destroy the ego and BE the Self, is the Supreme method of attainment. Answer to the question, 'Who am I?': An answer that comes in and by the mind is no answer at all. The answer is in the Egoless State.

The bliss (*ananda*) which is enjoyed unconsciously in deep sleep, is enjoyed consciously in *turiya*. That is the difference. The *ananda* enjoyed during *jagrat* is *upadhi ananda*. But there are not different *anandas*. There is only one *ananda*, including the *ananda* enjoyed

during the waking state, the *ananda* of all kinds of beings from the lowest animal to the Brahma, the *ananda* of the Self.

In deep sleep you are entirely free from thoughts, because the 'I'-thought is absent. The moment the 'I'-thought arises 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 sleep you were not aware of 'your family'. And you are the same being now. But now you are aware of the family and feel that it binds you, and think of renouncing it. Do the members of 'your' family bind you to themselves, or do you bind yourself to them? It is enough if you give up the thought 'This is my family'. Thoughts change, but not you. Keep hold of the unchanging you. To do so, you do not need to stop the mind's thinking. Just remember the Source of the thoughts and be in earnest to find It.

Sleep is not ignorance, it is one's pure state; wakefulness is not knowledge, it is ignorance. There is full awareness in sleep and total ignorance in waking. Your real nature covers both and extends beyond. The Self is beyond both knowledge and ignorance. The sleep, dream and waking states are only modes passing before the Self: they proceed whether you are aware of them or not. That is the state of the *Jnani*, in whom pass the states *samadhi*, waking, dream and deep sleep, like the bullocks moving, standing, or being unyoked, while the passenger

is asleep. These answers are from the point of view of the *ajnani*; otherwise such questions would not arise.

It is only you say dreamless sleep is empty of all consciousness after waking from sleep; you do not say so while actually asleep. That is the you which now says that sleep is unconsciousness of your mind. But it was not present in your sleep, and it is natural for the mind to be ignorant of the consciousness that is in sleep. Not having experienced sleep, it is unable to remember what it was like, and makes mistakes about it. The state of deep sleep is beyond the mind.

You dream in your sleep, while lying in bed in Tiruvannamalai and you find yourself in another town. This is real to you, although your body is here and you are in fact in bed in your 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 the dream has vanished. Another "I" speaks of the dream. This "I" was not in the dream. Both the "I"s are unreal. There is the substratum of the mind which continues all along, giving rise to so many scenes. With every thought rises "I" and with its disappearance that "I" disappears too. So the "I"s are born, and die every moment. The subsisting mind is the real trouble. That is the thief according to Janaka.

In a dream, you have no inkling that it is a dream and so you don't have the duty of trying to get away from it by your own effort. But in this life you have some intuition, from your sleep experience, from reading and listening, that it is something like a dream, and hence the

duty is cast upon you to make an effort and get away from it. However, who wants you to realise the Self, if you don't want to? If you prefer to stay in the dream, do so.

Just as you seek corroboration about waking state experiences from those whom you meet in the waking state, so you have to ask for corroboration about the dream experiences from those whom you meet in the dream state. The main point is, are you prepared, when awake, to affirm the reality of any of your dream experiences? Similarly, one who has awakened into *jnana* cannot affirm the reality of the waking experience. From his viewpoint, the waking state is dream.

There is only one state real, that of consciousness or awareness or existence. The three states of waking, dream and sleep cannot be real. They simply come and go. The real must always exist. The 'I' or existence that alone persists through all the three states is real. The other three are not real and so it is not possible to say they have such and such a degree of reality. We may roughly put it like this. Existence or consciousness is the only reality. Consciousness plus waking, we call waking. Consciousness plus sleep, we call sleep. Consciousness plus dream, we call dream. The screen is real, the pictures are mere shadows on it. Because from long habit we have been regarding these three states as real, we call the states of mere awareness or consciousness the fourth. There is however no fourth state, but only one state.

Does the Self say these states come and go? It is the seer who says these states come and go. The seer and the seen together constitute the mind. See if there is such a thing as a mind. Then the mind will merge in the Self,

and there will be neither seer nor seen. So the real answer to the question is "Do the states come and go?" They neither come nor go. The Self alone remains as it always is. The three states owe their existence to non-Enquiry, and Enquiry puts an end to them. However much one may explain, the fact will not become clear till one attains Self-realisation and wonders how one was blind so long to the self-evident and only existence.

There is only one consciousness subsisting in the states of waking, dream and sleep. In sleep, there is no 'I'; thought arises on waking and then the world appears. Where was this 'I' in sleep? Was it there or was it not? It must have been there also, but not in the way that you feel now. The sleeping 'I' is the real 'I'. That subsists all through. That is consciousness. If that is known, you will see that it is beyond thoughts.

Men speak of divine visions, yet paint them differently, with the seer himself in the scene. Even hypnotists can make you see strange scenes and phenomena, which you condemn as tricks and jugglery, whereas the visions you extol as Divine. Why this difference? The fact is that all sights are unreal, whether they come from the senses or from the mind as pure concepts.

You speak of a vision of Siva. Vision is always of an object. That implies the existence of a subject. The value of the vision is the same as that of the seer. That is to say, the nature of the vision is on the same plane as that of the seer. Appearance implies disappearance also. Whatever appears must also disappear. A vision can never be eternal. But Siva is eternal.

The vision implies the seer. The seer cannot deny the existence of the Self. There is no moment when the Self

as Consciousness does not exist; nor can the seer remain apart from Consciousness. This Consciousness is the eternal Being and the only Being. The seer cannot see himself. Does he deny his existence because he cannot see himself with the eyes, as in *pratyaksha* (a vision)? No! So, *pratyaksha* does not mean seeing but BE-ing.

Visions are not external. They appear only internally. If external they would have to assert themselves without there being a seer. In that case what is the warranty for their existence? The seer only.

In the vision of the Cosmic Form of God seen by Arjuna, Sri Krishna told Arjuna, 'I am formless, transcending all the worlds.' Arjuna sees himself, the gods and all the worlds in what? Krishna also said, 'Neither gods nor men can see Me.' And yet Arjuna sees His form. Krishna says 'I am Time.' Has Time any form? Again, if the universe be really His form, it must be one and unchanging. Why does He tell Arjuna: 'See in Me whatever you wish to see?' The answer is that the vision was mental—just according to the wishes of the seer. Hence it should not be interpreted literally. It was not a vision according to the Truth of God. They call it a 'divine vision'. If a mesmerist shows you something, you call it a trick, but you call this divine! Why this difference? Krishna gave Arjuna '*divya chakshus*',—the divine eye—not '*jnana chakshus*'—the Eye that is Pure Consciousness, which has no visions. Nothing that is seen is real.

Divine sight means Self-luminosity. The word *divya* shows it. The full word means the Self. Who is to bestow a divine eye? And who is to see? Again, people read in books, "hearing, reflection and one-pointed-ness are necessary". They think that they must pass through *Savi-*

*kalpa Samadhi* and *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* before attaining Realisation. Hence all these questions. Why should they wander in that maze? What do they gain at the end? Only cessation of the trouble of seeking. They find that the Self is eternal and self-evident. Why should they not get that repose even at this moment?

To a question "have you seen God", the Sage answered, laughing "If any one had appeared to me and said, 'I am Siva' or 'I am Rama' or 'I am Krishna,' I could know I had seen such an one. But no one appeared to me, telling me who he was." The answer was according to the questioner's ignorance. God, who is the Real Self, is formless, and cannot be seen as an object.

Seeing objects and conceiving God in them are mental processes. But that is not seeing God, because He is within. The expression 'seeing God in all things' means the understanding that God is the Reality on which the world-appearance is imposed. This is called '*pravilapadrishti*'—remembering the Truth underlying variety—and is recommended as a means of purifying and strengthening the mind.

To see an object that is in the dark, both the eye and the light of a lamp are required. To see the light only, the eye is enough. But to see the Sun, there is no need of any other light. Even if you take a lamp with you, its light will be drowned in that of the Sun. Our intellect, or *Buddhi*, is of no use to realise the Self. To see the world or external objects, the mind and the reflected light (or *Chidabhasa*), which always arises with it, are necessary. To see the Self, the mind has simply to be turned inwards and there is no need of the reflected light.

To know an object, an ordinary light, inimical to

darkness is needed. To know the Self a Light is needed, which lights both light and darkness. This Light is neither light nor darkness. But it is called Light, because by It they are known. This Light is the Self, the Infinite Consciousness, of which no one is unaware. No one is an *Ajnani*, non-knower of the Self. Not knowing this, men wish to become *Jnanis*!

The question about the Heart arises because you are interested in seeking the Source of Consciousness. To all deep-thinking minds, the enquiry about the 'I' and its nature has an irresistible fascination. Call it by any name, God, Self, the Heart, or the Seat of Consciousness, it is all the same. The point to be grasped is this, that Heart means the very core of one's being, the Centre without which there is nothing whatsoever.

From this absolute standpoint, the Heart, Self or Consciousness can have no particular place assigned to it in the physical body. What is the reason? The body is itself a mere projection of the mind and the mind is but a poor reflection of the radiant Heart. How can that, in which everything is contained, be itself confirmed to be a tiny part within the physical body, which is but an infinitesimal phenomenal manifestation of the One Reality?

To be as the Self in the Heart is supreme Wisdom. All verbal wrangling about the nature and existence of the Self is but the play of *maya*. To abide as the eternal, self-existent Reality is the supreme *siddhi*. All other *siddhis* are as unreal as a dream. Those awake to the Self are never concerned with them.

It is not at all correct to say that *advaitins* or the Sankara school deny the existence of the world, or that they call it unreal. On the contrary, it is more real to

them than to others. Their world will always exist, whereas the world of the other schools will have origin, growth and decay and, as such, cannot be real. Only, the *advaitins* say the world as world is not real, but the world as Brahman is real. All is Brahman, nothing exists but Brahman, and the world as Brahman is real. Sankara says *maya* does not exist. He who denies the existence of *maya* and calls it *mithya*, or non-existent, cannot be called a *mayavadin* but *mayavivadin*.

Do not even murmur “I” but enquire keenly within what is it that now shines within the heart as ‘I’. Transcending the intermittent flow of diverse thoughts, there arises the continuous unbroken awareness, silent and spontaneous, as “I-I” in the Heart. If one catches it and remains still, it will completely annihilate the sense of “I” in the body and itself disappear as a fire of burning camphor. Sages and scriptures proclaim this to be liberation.

“Tell me what it is that is described as the Heart of all the jivas of the world, in which as in a big mirror all this universe is perceived as a reflection.” To Rama thus enquiring, the Sage Vasishtha said, “After investigation it has been declared that the Heart for all the jivas is two-fold. Hear me and know well the characteristics of the two kinds of Heart, the acceptable and the rejectable. That organ called the heart and situated at a particular place within the chest of the measurable body is the one to be rejected. That heart, which is of the form of Absolute Knowledge, is the acceptable. Though that Heart is both within and without, it is devoid of an inner and outer side.”

In the interior of the Heart cave (there) shines alone the One Brahman as the “I-I”, the self-conscious Atman.

Realize that state of steadfast inherence in the Self, entering into the heart by diving deep within through Self-enquiry.

Without the Reality existing, can there be knowledge of existence? Free from all thoughts, that Reality abides in the Heart, the Source of all thoughts. It is, therefore, called the Heart. How then to contemplate it? To be, as it is, in the Heart, is its contemplation.

The undifferentiated Consciousness of pure Being is the Heart or Hrudayam which you really are, as signified by the word itself (Hrit-Ayam=Heart am I). From the Heart arises the 'I-am'-ness as the primary datum of one's experience. By itself it is *suddha-satva* in character. It is in this *suddha satva svarupa* (that is, uncontaminated by *rajas* and *tamas*) that the 'I' appears to subsist in the *Jnani*.

The Self is the Heart, self-luminous. Illumination arises from the Heart and reaches the brain, which is the seat of mind. The world is seen with the mind; so you see the world by the reflected light of the Self. The world is perceived by an act of the mind. When the mind is illumined it is aware of the world; when it is not so illumined, it is not aware of the world.

I ask you to see where the 'I' arises in your body, but it is really not quite correct to say that it rises from and merges into the heart on the right side of the chest. The Heart is another name for Reality and it is neither inside nor outside the body; there can be no in or out for it, since it alone is. I do not mean by 'heart' any physiological organ or any plexus of nerves or anything like that, but so long as one identifies oneself with the body and thinks one is in the body one is advised to see where

in the body the I-thought rises and merges again. It must be the heart at the right side of the chest since every man, of whatever race and religion and in whatever language he may be saying 'I', points to the right side of the chest to indicate himself. This is so all over the world, so that must be the place. And, with keenly watching the daily emergence of this I-thought on waking and its subsiding in sleep, one can see that it is in the heart on the right side.

If a desire could be got rid of by satisfying it, there would be no harm in doing so. But generally desires are not eradicated by satisfaction of them. Trying to root them out that way is like pouring spirits of fire to quench it. The proper way to get rid of a desire is to find out "Who gets the desire? What is its source?" When these are found, the desire is rooted out and it will never again emerge or grow.

*Jiva* is so-called because he sees the world. A dreamer sees many *jivas* in a dream but none of them are real. The dreamer alone exists and sees them all. So it is with the individual and the world. There is the assertion of only one Self which is also called the assertion of one *Jiva*. It says that the *Jiva* is the only one who sees the whole world and the *Jivas* therein. Then *Jiva* means Self here. But the Self is not a seer. But here he is said to see the world. So he is differentiated as the *jiva*.

The world is not external. Impressions cannot have an outer origin, because the world can be cognised only by consciousness. The world does not say that it exists. It is your impression of it. Even so this impression is not consistent and unbroken. In deep sleep the world is not cognised; and so it does not exist for a sleeping man.

Therefore the world is the sequence of the ego. Seek out the ego. To find its source is the final goal.

Renunciation and realization are the same. They are different aspects of the same state. Giving up the non-Self is renunciation. Inhering in the Self is *jnana*, or Self-realization. One is the negative, and the other the positive, aspect of the same, single truth.

You must cease to be the three kinds of ordinary Purusha, i.e. the *adhamma*, *madhyama*, *uttama*. But be the Purushothama. Attain that state and see for yourself what that state is and whether there is any *vritti* in it. To speak even of *brahmakara vritti*, as we sometimes do, is not accurate. If we talk of the river that has merged in the ocean as still a river, and call it '*samudrakara river*', we can talk of the final stage in spiritual growth as having *brahmakara vritti*.

There is neither Past nor Future. There is only the present. Yesterday was the present to you when you experienced it, and to-morrow will also be present to you when you experience it. Therefore experience takes place only in the present, and beyond experience nothing exists.

If the eye that sees be the eye of flesh, then gross forms are seen; if that eye be assisted by a lense, then even invisible things are seen to have form; if the mind be the eye, then subtle forms are seen; thus the seeing eye and the objects seen are of the same nature; that is, if the eye be itself a form, it sees nothing but forms. But neither the physical eye nor the mind have any power of vision of their own; the real Eye is the Self; as He is formless, being the pure and infinite Consciousness, the Reality, He does not see forms.

Regarding the significance of the name Rama, the

‘Ra’ stands for the Self and ‘ma’ for the ego. As one goes on repeating ‘Rama’, ‘Rama’, the ‘ma’ disappears. In that state there is no conscious effort at *dhyana*, but it is there, for *dhyana* is our real nature.

Real rebirth is dying from the ego into the Self. This is the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus. Whenever identification with the body exists, a body is always available, whether in this particular one or in a successor to it, till the body-sense disappears by merging into the Source—the Self.

The *sastras* become useless when their essence is realized. The scriptures are useful to indicate the existence of the Higher Power (the Self) and the way to gain it. That is all. When the essence is assimilated, the rest is useless. As one rises in the scale, he finds the positions he has transcended to be steps to the higher stage, and so on. When the goal is reached, it remains alone and all the rest become useless to him. That is the stage when the *sastras* become useless.

It is false to speak of Realisation. What is there to realise? The real is as it is, always. How to realise it? All that is required is this. We have realised the unreal, i.e. regarded as the real that which is unreal. We have to give up this attitude. That is all that is required for us to attain *Jnana*. We are not creating anything new or achieving some-thing which we did not have before. We dig a well and create a pit. The *akasa* (space) in the pit or well has not been created by us. We have just removed the earth which was filling the *akasa* there. The *akasa* was there then and is also there now. Similarly we have simply to throw out all the age-long *samskaras* which are inside

us; and when all of them have been given up, the Self will shine, alone.

There is no greater mystery than this, that being the Reality ourselves, we seek to gain Reality. We think that there is something binding our Reality and that it must be destroyed before the Reality is gained. It is ridiculous. A day will dawn when we will ourselves laugh at our efforts. That which is on the day of laughter is also now.

The very doubt 'Can I realize?' or the feeling 'I have not realized', are obstacles to Realization. Realization is not something to be gained afresh. The Self is already realized. All that is necessary is to get rid of the thought 'I have not realized'.

## TALKS

*A devotee:* Pray tell us about the nature of happiness.

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* If a man thinks that his happiness is due to external causes and his possessions, it is reasonable to conclude that his happiness must increase with the increase of possessions and diminish in proportion to their diminution. Therefore if he is devoid of possessions, his happiness should be NIL. What is the real experience of man? Does it confirm this view. In deep sleep, a man is devoid of possessions, including his own body. Instead of being unhappy he is quite happy. Every one desires to sleep soundly. The conclusion is that happiness is inherent in man and not due to external causes. One must realize one's Self in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness. Happiness is your own nature. Hence it is not wrong to desire it. What is wrong is seeking it outside, because it is inside.

*Devotee:* Can destiny (*karma*) ever come to an end?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* The karmas carry the seeds of their own destruction in themselves.

*Devotee:* Please tell us about the nature of Perception.

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* Whatever state one is in, the perceptions partake of that state. The explanation is that in the waking state (*jagrat*) the gross body perceives gross names and forms; in the dreaming state (*swapna*) the mental body perceives mental creations in their manifold names and forms; in deep sleep state (*sushupti*) the identification with the body being lost, there are no per-

ceptions; similarly in the Transcendental state, identity with Brahman places the man in harmony with everything, and there is nothing apart from his Self.

*Paul Brunton:* Is the Hill hollow?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* The *Puranas* say so. When it is said that the Heart is a cavity, penetration into it proves it to be an expanse of light. Similarly the Hill is one of light.

*Paul Brunton:* Are there caves inside?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* In visions, I have seen caves, cities with streets etc., and a whole world.

*Paul Brunton:* Are there *siddhas* there?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* All the *siddhas* are reported to be there.

*Paul Brunton:* Just like this world?

*A visitor:* *Siddhas* are reported to be in the Himalayas.

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* Kailas is in the Himalayas. It is the abode of Siva, whereas this Hill is Siva Himself. All the paraphernalia of His Abode must be where He Himself is.

*Paul Brunton:* Does Maharshi share the view point that the Hill is hollow?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* Everything depends on the viewpoint of the individual. You yourself had seen hermitages etc. on this Hill in the vision you have described in your book.

*Paul Brunton:* Yes, but that was on the surface of the Hill and the vision was within me.

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* Exactly. Everything is within oneself. To see the world there must be a spectator. There could be no world without the Self. The Self is all

encompassing. In fact all is Self. There is nothing besides the Self.

*Paul Brunton*: What is the mystery of the Hill?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana*: The mystery of this Hill is the mystery of the Self.

*Devotee*: What is the purpose of Self-realization?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana*: Self-realization is the final goal and is itself the purpose.

*Devotee*: I mean, what use is it?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana*: Why do you ask about Self-realization? Why don't you rest content with your present state? It is evident that you are discontented and your discontent will come to an end if you realize yourself.

*Devotee*: What is the goal of this process?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana*: Realizing the Real.

*Devotee*: What is the nature of Reality?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana*:

- (a) Existence without beginning or end—eternal.
- (b) Existence everywhere, endless—Infinite.
- (c) Existence underlying all forms, all changes, all forces, all matter and all spirit.

The many change and pass away, whereas the One always endures.

- (d) The one displaces the triads such as knower, knowledge and known. The triads are only appearances in time and space, whereas the Reality lies beyond and behind them. They are like a mirage over the Reality. They are the result of delusion.

*Devotee*: If 'I' am also an illusion, who casts off the illusion?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* The real 'I' casts off the illusion of false 'I' and yet remains as the only 'I'. Such is the paradox of Self-realization. The Realized do not see any contradiction in it.

*Devotee:* Will Maharshi give his opinion on the future of the world, as we are living in critical times?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* Why should you worry about the future? You don't even know the present properly. Take care of the present and future will take care of itself.

*Devotee:* Will the world soon enter a new era of friendliness and mutual help or will it go down in chaos and war?

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* There is One who governs the world and it is His task to look after the world. He who has given life to the world knows how to look after it also. He bears the burden of this world, not you.

*Devotee:* Yet if one looks around with unprejudiced eyes it is hard to see where this benevolent regard comes in.

*Maharshi Sri Ramana:* As you are, so is the world. Without understanding yourself what is the use of trying to understand the world? This is a question that seekers after Truth need not consider. People waste their energies over all such questions. First find out the Truth behind yourself, then you will be in a better position to understand the Truth behind the world of which yourself is part.

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

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

*Bhagavan*: Everything is predetermined.

*Arthur Osborne*: Then what responsibility, what free will has Man?

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

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

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

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

The only path of *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *jnana* is to enquire who it is who has the *karma*, *vibhakti*, *viyoga* and *ajnana*. Through this investigation, the ego disappears and the state of abidance in the Self in which none of these negative qualities ever existed, remains as the Truth.

As long as a man is the doer he also reaps the fruits of his deeds, but as soon as he realizes the Self through enquiry as to who is the doer, his sense of being the doer

falls away and the triple karma (destiny) is ended. This is the state of eternal liberation.

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

*Arthur Osborne*: Why we imagine this, why this state of ignorance (*ajnana*) comes over us?

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

*Devotee*: Is there predestination? And if what is destined to happen will happen, is there any use in prayer or effort or should we just remain idle?

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

Since past and future have never been without the present, to know the eternal, *Now* is to know the Truth. The changeless, infinite Self transcends time and space, which are relative to the body and the mind. The Sage who has realized the Self transcends both free-will and destiny, with which only the ignorant are concerned. To the ignorant the 'I' is the Self limited to the body; to the Wise the 'I' is the Self Infinite.

"Can free will conquer fate?" Such questions worry only those who have not found the source both of free will and fate. Those who have found this source have left all such discussions behind. Who is it that has this fate or free will? Find that out and then this question will not arise.





### SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI (1879 to 1950 A.D.)

Venkataramana was a lad in his teens in Madurai in South India. Urged by an inner call, the boy played the truant, slipped away from home and soon found himself in the solitary caves of the Arunachala Hills. There he forgot the world, and, insensible to hunger and thirst and reckless of the ravages which crawling creatures wrought on his body, he immersed himself in concentrated meditation.

After a number of years of this phenomenal *tapas*, incredibly unrelieved by any break whatsoever, he emerged with the realization of the Supreme Reality and of the identity of his Self with It. Liberated by that realization from the chains of finitude, he became a *Jivanmukta*. Proclaimed a Maharshi from that time, Bhagavan Ramana, as he was reverently adored, lived ever after in his *ashram* at Tiruvannamalai in *Sahaja Samadhi*, always established in the Spirit and overlooking the things of the World with a smiling serenity.

A living witness to *Advaita anubhava*, Sri Ramana spent the remainder of his days parted lips and providing c eyes to the countless discip at his holy feet from their Self and the world will not ing of this modern editio

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