

**SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI**



*Dr Paul Brunton*

"MY MOTHERLAND" SERIES

No. 2

**SRI RAMANASHRAM**  
**WITH A LIFE SKETCH OF THE MAHARSHI**

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G.T., MADRAS.

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*[Price 1 Anna.*

## Seeking<sup>1</sup>The Ego Or Killing The Ego

An Answer by Bhagavan Sri Ramana

A visitor, who had previously read "Who Am I" –a booklet containing the teachings of the Bhagavan— put to Him the following question: "All the Messengers of God tell us to kill the ego. You tell us to seek and find the Ego. Why?" The Bhagavan said: "If you want to kill your enemy, you must first find him. Is it no so?" "Yes", said the visitor. Bhagavan said: "The ego is the enemy you want to kill. How can you kill him if you do not find him first?" The visitor agreed that the ego must first be found. Then the Bhagavan said: "To find the ego, you must first seek him." The visitor was satisfied. What the Bhagavan meant was that the ego would die of itself, if it be sought persistently, and not till then.

## SRIRAMANASHRA<sup>2</sup>M

Tiruvannamalai has been for centuries a centre of pilgrimage in South India. Its sacred hill, Arunachala, –belived popularly to be a Sivalingam, and the beautiful temple at its foot, have been attracting worshippers in thousands; but of late years, a new centre, Sri Ramanashrama, has been the destination of no small number of devotees. The Ashram is about a mile from the Railway Station, to the exact south of the hill, to which Sri Ramana Maharshi repaired about nine years ago. The pilgrims who flock to this sacred spot are drawn from all classes and races; occasionally one even finds Westerners or Moslems. And all are equally welcome and at all times, from dawn to night.

The Maharshi had a remarkable life. Born on 30th December, 1879, at Tiruchuzhi, his early years revealed little evidence of greatness. He is said to have been inconspicuous even at school except occasionally on the play ground. He had however been endowed with a strong constitution and had winning manners. He was friendly with all he came in contact, even with those he fought with. But about the fifteenth year, a perceptible change was visible. Once when a relation mentioned the name Arunachala, he felt a strange spiritual current passing in him. It was as if he was reminded of something he had known intimately and he felt he was really trying to bring into an active presence something with which he was very familiar from an unknown past. Thereafter, he was a constant devotee at the Meenakshi temple at Madura, where he invariably became unconscious of his physical body and environment. Another noteworthy experience of these days was his repulsion for food. By the time he took a morsel or two, he felt satiated.

### TheCrisi<sup>3</sup>s

About this time, a sudden feeling came over him that he was about to die. He however soon felt, almost impulsively – obviously it was an inspired moment – that if death comes, it is the body that perishes and not the inner being. And this inner being, he realised, as the I, the Self, quite distinct from the body; not at all subject to it, subject only to something deeper than itself towards which it is drawn and drawn. And this movement in his inner being led him to discover the Father of all existence in his own being and from Him came the command to quit home for the Arunachalam which he described later, in his own hymns, as the immutable rock of peace, light and grace.

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From this moment, he ceased to be a son of man and became the son of God and the separation from the relations soon came. His brother scolded him for not attending to his school work – he was then in the fifth form; and the rebuke ended with the fateful suggestion that the right place for such meditation was not the home. He had uttered the same rebuke many a time before this; but this time Venketraman took up the clue and to facilitate his departure, the elder brother also asked him to take five rupees from home and pay his own school fees. The youth at once devoured his meal, and leaving a letter to his brother that he was going in quest of his Father and that no steps need be taken to trace him, took three out of the five rupees for his expenses and hurried to the railway station. Fortunately the train was late and buying a ticket for Tindivanam, he bade farewell to Madura.

When however he got into the train he had a very hazy conception as to the journey before him. But his doubts were soon at rest. In the compartment he occupied, there was a bearded gentleman, who looked like a Moslem, who asked the youthful devotee where he was going; and on being told the destination, the old man said that his destination too was the same and<sup>4</sup> that the journey had to be broken at Villupuram. But at the next station, the bearded gentleman was nowhere to be seen. The Maharshi now recognises that the incident was wonderful; but at that moment it did not strike him as such.

When he alighted at Villupuram he did not have enough money to buy the ticket to Tiruvannamalai. After great difficulties, and finally mortgaging his earrings, he reached the sacred town on 1st Sept., 1896, where he has been ever since.

This journey was significant from start to finish. One night he found himself at the temple at Arayani Allur where, as he sat meditating, he suddenly found the entire place in brilliant illumination. The young pilgrim thought at first that some big light had been suddenly lit; but soon found it was not so. This temple, he later learnt, had been founded by the great Saint, Jnana Sambandar, and that he had sat at the very place where the Saint was accustomed to sit. It may be added that the Maharshi is believed by many of his devotees to be his reincarnation. That Siddha had passed away in his sixteenth year and Venkatraman had that unique experience at the same age.

### **The Great Plunge**

Once in Tiruvannamalai, he plunged at once into meditation; but one small incident of these early days deserves mention, as it indicates his general outlook even at this stage. At the suggestion of a barber, he had his head clean shaved. The next step,

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specially for a temple devotee, was to have the bath; but he did not think that the body deserved it. So throwing away the balance of cash he had, the sacred thread, and all the dress except the kaupinum, he re-entered the temple and resumed tapas.

Unfortunately, he soon attracted the attention of mischievous urchins, who took a delight in throwing stones at him. To escape their attention, he repaired to a fearful spot, the Patala<sup>5</sup> Lingam, but this was a transfer from the frying pan into the fire; for the denizens of that spot, vermins and insects, soon exacted a heavy toll; and a lady visitor found to her horror that his legs were full of sores, oozing out blood and puss. He was however found to be deeply oblivious of all those pains but friends carried him to a safer spot, where he could also be easily fed. His food at this stage was milk and other ingredients of abhishekam which were poured once a day into his mouth by kindly Sadhus.

From this time, we find the Tapasvi migrating from one spot to another, mainly for the sake of greater seclusion and quietude, which was now found to be more difficult as his austerities became better known. The circle of visitors steadily increased; and one of them took it into his head to find out the youth's identity. He was then in mounam, the vow of silence, and at the repeated request of the inquirer, he wrote on a slip of paper "Venkatraman, Tiruchuzhi." This knowledge soon reached the ears of his relations and his uncle came to take him back. But he found the Tapasvi adamant. Then the mother came in person; and all her fervent appeals were in vain. He wrote down on a slate for her information that she must accept the inevitable *viz.*, his loss to the family.

The mother had to return disappointed; but later on, she came back to her illustrious son and spent her last years as an inmate of his Ashram.

### **Mischievous Attentions**

As his fame spread, Sadhus in Tiruvannamalai, specially those who were after fame and wealth, grew jealous and the Maharshi had to experience not a few pinpricks. One Sadhu even attempted to kill him by hurling down a big stone. Some others laid a trap to kidnap him; but all these attempts failed. One other Sadhu spat at him to provoke a fight but the young Swami was unruffled; and when the assaulter came back very soon, duly punished by a third party for his<sup>6</sup> insolence, Ramana Maharshi would

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not even refer to the previous indignity.

The Maharshi had a similar painful experience from thieves. In 1924, some dacoits invaded the Ashram in the hope of making a big haul. They had seen a large number of visitors coming every day with presents and they expected to find them stored at the place.

When they appeared on the scene, the Maharshi informed them that they could find nothing valuable; but as they refused to accept his word, the inmates went out leaving the Ashram at the disposal of the thieves for personal inspection. As they went out, they all received blows and the Maharshi himself had a severe hit on the legs. Unmoved, he stood there and asked the dacoits to give some more blows if they so desired, which of course they did not. Then a lantern was supplied to them so that they could satisfy themselves more thoroughly. Disappointed in their search, the culprits threatened dire consequences unless the hiding place of the Maharshi's wealth was revealed; but had at last to leave the place with loot hardly worth ten rupees.

During this search of the Ashram, the Maharshi tended the disciples who had received the worst injuries and only later did the inmates learn that the Maharshi himself had been injured. All the time, some of the disciples were asking his permission to fight the dacoits: but a resolute No was the reply. "Let the thieves perform their function. We shall stick to ours. Let them do what they like. It is for us to bear and forbear. Let us not interfere with them."

### **The Circle Grows**

As time passed on all the noble attributes which are associated with the greatest of Rishis were discernible in all his activities. Even more. His abode itself had become permeated with a new atmosphere.

Here is a typical instance. At Skandashram, a common sight was the companionship of a cobra and peacock. These are<sup>7</sup> typified in all literature as most inveterate enemies; but here they moved about freely. When the Maharshi was asked about it, the explanation was that the cobra had abandoned its fear and the peacock its ferocity. Both instinctively felt that none would be harmed; so peaceful had the very atmosphere become.

This non-violence of the Maharshi was put to a serious test at one of his perigrinations on the hill. As he was moving about, his knee struck a nest of hornets, at

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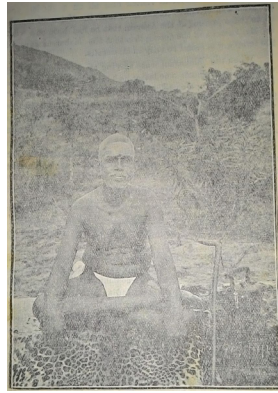
<sup>7</sup> 8



which they came out in large numbers and stung him all over the body. He remained quiet all along, paying that price for his carelessness in disturbing their nest. This incident occurred in a very dense jungle growth and the Maharshi had been there in search of Arunagiri, the Siddha to whom Tiruvannamalai owes its sanctity.

Within a few years of his stay at Tiruvannamalai, disciples and devotees began to gather; and their number today is in hundreds, though very few are to be seen at the Ashram. Some may here be mentioned. Among those known to the wider public, the earliest was Kavyakanta Ganapathi Sastri, a most brilliant personality. By the time he came to Ramana Maharshi—and he it was that gave the name, the Great Seer,—he had become famous as a great Sanskrit scholar and author, winning the Kavyakanta title from a hostile board of north Indian pandits. Strange though it may seem, he has been a most radical social reformer and an ardent patriot—with a devouring passion for the all round liberation of the Motherland, preferably through spiritual means. What brought Kavyakanta to the Maharshi was the in fruitfulness of his own austerities in this direction and the contact thus established has steadily, deepened. It has, in fact, led to some of the “miracles” associated with the Maharshi.

The Kavyakanta was as one time making Tapas at the Ganesha Temple at Tiruvathiyur, the suburb of Madras, when



SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.<sup>8</sup>

he<sup>9</sup> felt that the Maharshi visited him all on a sudden and left after a brief talk. At the same time, the Maharshi reported to those present at the Ashram that he had been on a

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visit to Mr Sastri and the description that the Maharshi gave of the temple was found to tally in all details.

When the Maharshi was staying at Pachiamman Coil with the Kavyakanta, the latter had taken a vow to complete *Umasahasram* by a certain date; but owing to various circumstances, on the last night, eighty verses remained to be written. The Kavyakanta asked four persons to take down his verses and finished the work with amazing rapidity in about four hours.

The Maharshi, who rarely sits with closed eyes, was so seated all this time; and as the last sloka was finished, he opened the eyes and asked:

“Have you taken down all that I said?”

All were surprised at first at those words; but they soon realised its import. Experiences like this have been many, when persons had felt their tasks wonderfully facilitated in his presence.

Another disciple was Masthan, a Mohammadan, who lived with the Maharshi for a number of years and later established an ashram of his own – though he continues to be in touch with the Guru. Many great sages in India have been known for their catholicity; but in these days of orthodoxy and racial animosity, this association of a Moslem disciple with a Hindu Maharshi has a unique interest – incidentally revealing a most noteworthy feature of the Ramnashram, its welcome to all, irrespective of caste and creed. The Maharshi rejects the narrow view that spiritual knowledge must be confined to only Brahmins: in fact non-Brahmins preponderate among his devotees and the only person to obtain Dhiksha from the Maharshi was a non-Brahman, now known as Natanananda Swami. So determined was he to abandon family life, even against the<sup>10</sup> persuasions of the Maharshi, that the latter not only yielded but appeared in dream to every member of the Shishya’s family so as to obtain their consent to his taking Sanyas.

To complete the racial circle, the Maharshi has several Western Bhaktas, some of whom are in constant communication with the Ashram.

### **His Philosophy.**

Though he has had occasion to read very few works in philosophy, the Maharshi is ever ready to solve spiritual problems. No sincere inquirer fails to get guidance and

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enlightenment to his complete satisfaction. On the other hand, persons who came there to parade their own knowledge or to pick holes in his teachings, easily regret their folly. They rarely succeed in drawing him into any discussion. Another trait of his is that he rarely utters a word on subjects with which he is not conversant, such as the writings of European savants.

When, however, he finds the enquirer to be earnest, he is helped in a variety of ways. The Maharshi has the unique knack of descending to the same plane as the enquirer and then helps him along his own channel of understanding. Sometimes the pupil will find himself in a baffling situation; but that will be only to put him in the right way.

The Maharshi's spiritual teachings have been thus summed up by a disciple, Mr T.V. Kapale Sastri, the commentator of his *Satdarshanam*:

Life's little problems trouble you, only until you realise that some deeper Self controls all your movements within or without. When you realise this, you will learn that something else had been doing it all along and that you have no personal burden to carry. This something is intimately related to you as your own deepest self, call it the supreme being or your own supreme self. This is really the divine. It is seated within<sup>11</sup> yourself – you can get at it by a sort of mental analysis if you are of a gigantic will; but if you are conscious of your limitations, you can realise the truth, that yourself is nothing but a wave of that oceanic being, the divine, from which all your movements of mind or body emanate, by a wholesale surrender of all that you are and have, with the implicit devotion and faith that it is there ready backing every movement.

Thus the Maharshi reconciles the path of knowledge with the path of devotion. He does not place one above the other. To him one implies the other.

Though he does not refute the various philosophical theories dinned into his ears by the visitors, in practice there seems to be vast difference between himself and other Acharyas, at any rate as interpreted by their followers. In his conception and precept of the path of knowledge and devotion, he is more akin to a Paramahansa or a Thayumanavar, than to the latter day Acharyas of medieval India carrying their dialectical warfare with those following systems other than their own.

### **A Day At Ashram.**

These details are enough to enable one to appreciate the daily routine at the

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Ramanashram.

The day starts at 3 A.M. when the Maharshi gets up, soon followed by the resident disciples. After ablutions, he takes to some work or other incidental to Ashram life, such as cutting of vegetables for the day's meals.

At sunrise, he is on his seat in the Hall, with one or more disciples singing devotional songs and the stream of visitors starts. At 7 A.M. the morning tiffin is served, the Maharshi sitting in the general enclosure—Brahman residents occupying the other. Thereafter, some literary work will be looked into or read by some of those present; or questions asked and answered. By eleven<sup>12</sup> the midday meal is served, after which there will be more visitors. In the evenings, there are devotional songs and meditation. Supper at 7 P.M.; meditation and bed at 9 P.M.

In respect of meals and tiffin, one feature is noteworthy. It is not confined to what may be termed Satwic food—not to speak of diet suitable to Sadhaks. The Maharshi is indifferent to the food served, whether sweet or pungent, digestible or indigestible; and the underlying idea seems to be that one must not be too inquisitive or censorial in the matter of diet. Nor is the quantity eaten restricted. Often devotees arrange for a sumptuous tiffin in the afternoon, and in addition, there are the presents from visitors which are at once distributed among all those present.

At one such distribution, a Bhakta\* suffering from acute dispepsia, naturally shrank from eating a lump of halva. At the Maharshi's suggestion, he however gathered courage to swallow it; and the outcome was surprising. Not only did he feel no bad consequence, but he found that he had got rid of his weakness in digestion. According to the Maharshi, the responsibility for digestion is not ours when we eat the food in the proper spirit. And it is the experience of almost every Bhakta that during his stay at Sri Ramanashram he takes in, with safety, far more food than he would venture to do outside.

Both at the tiffin and meals, the food is first served to the dependents, human or non-human. The cats, the dogs and the cows and servants or beggars at the Ashram are first attended to—in keeping with the principle that to the sage all living creatures stand on the same footing.

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\*For full details, please refer to "Self Realisation—the biography of Sri Ramana Maharshi Ramavastram," Tiruvannamalai.

Price Rs. 2-8-0.

## **Animal Companions.**

Many<sup>13</sup> are the interesting stories heard at the Ashram in connection with dogs, monkeys and cows. They are all cared for as lovingly as the human inmates. "We do not know what souls may be tenanted these bodies and for what portion of their unfinished Karma they seek our company" once explained the Maharshi when it was reported to him that an Ashram dog had committed suicide for being badly reproached. Most of these had exhibited remarkable intelligence and even *Vairagya*. One of them, *Kamala*, used to take the visitors to all the thirthams and lingams on the hill at Maharshi's orders.

At the present moment, the most interesting of these animal inmates is Laxmi, the daughter of a cow presented by a bhakta. During tiffin time, she would come straight into the hall and have her quota and she gets it at all other times as well, if she is in the compound. It is believed that she is no other than an old woman, who for several years had fed the Maharshi, when he was on the hill, with greens and other edibles.

The Maharshi's relations with even wild animals have been quite pleasant. They have so often been in his proximity without doing him the least harm. When he was one day on the 'varandah of the Virupaksha cave, a tiger sat staring at him for quite a long time, at a distance of about six to eight feet and then went away quietly. When some bhaktas heard of the incident, they at once put up a powerful fencing which continues to this day.

## **The Hall of Inspiration.**

The most remarkable part of the Ashram is the Hall where the Maharshi spends all his time. It is a fountain of spiritual strength for all who are anxious to have it. Its very atmosphere is so charged—of course, most inspirational during the evening devotional hours.

Numerous<sup>14</sup> have been the happy experiences of bhaktas and disciples in that sacred spot. Some have seen miraculous phenomena; others have felt a clearness of thought never before experienced in their life; while a good many had their problems solved without any outward reference to the Maharshi.

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The advantage one gets in this sphere naturally depends on his own person—his own attitude of mind and faith in the divine personage. The Maharshi is like a mirror. If you look into it with a crooked face, the reflection will naturally be ugly. But if you approach in the right way, he strengthens your mind and powers in the direction you need. It is not even necessary to express your thoughts or difficulties verbally. Sometimes he addresses you on the very problem you have in mind before you open the topic.

There are three festive days at the Ashram. One on Karthikai fullmoon, the second on the anniversary of his mother's departure and the third is his own Jayanti. On all these occasions, most of his disciples and bhaktas make it a point to be present; and hundreds of people are fed. The Maharshi is specially careful on these occasions that every one is properly looked after and his own food he will take last, after all others are fed. On none of these occasions is there the least pomp. The Maharshi has consistently refused to give any room for it. Though he uses a sofa presented by a devotee, he is himself content with a khadi kaupinam and the only permanent fixture in the hall is a bust of Mahatma Gandhi with a yarn garland.

The Ashram has now an ideal site—situated at a convenient distance from the town, far enough to permit quietude. It consists of three buildings, the Hall, the dining and residential section and the temple of the Mother. Adjacent is the Palithirtham for bathing purposes and to the west is the Agastya thirtham, with a perennial supply of drinking water and by its side are a few huts for visitors. To the North is the<sup>15</sup> sacred hill, Arunachala. It is an ideal centre for pilgrims and as time passes on, their stream is bound to grow. For every visitor is not only anxious to renew the contact but to extend the blessing to his friends.

Though the Maharshi has never cared for wealth, it has been steadily flowing in.

At the present Ashram, well built cottages and a good garden have steadily arisen and a deep well is now complete—all from spontaneous gifts.

Every day about forty to fifty people receive their food and the sudden appearance of half a dozen guests hardly occasions any worry. But whatever comes is always spent. Very little remains for the next day. All the same there is no want. That is also the case when on special occasions, thousands are fed. The requirements flow in of their own accord. This has led some people to think that plenty of wealth is in store. Occasions there have, therefore, been, when some unscrupulous people, as in the case

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<sup>15</sup> 16

of the robbery already referred to, have tried short cuts to wealth; but they have uniformly been disappointed. They find to their chagrin that it is not the type of mutt or temple they see all around them and that it is in reality the Ashram of a Maharshi.

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**UPADESA SARAM**

OF

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BY

**B.V. NARASIMHASWAMI**

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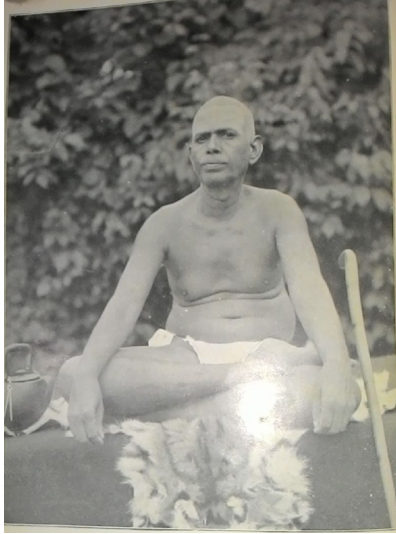
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## PREFACE<sup>18</sup>

In presenting this work of Sri Ramana Maharshi a few words\* of introduction about his life and works may be expected. He is the son of Sundaramaier, a pleader of Tiruchuzhi in the Ramnad District. Born in December, 1879, he received his early education at Tiruchuzhi and Dindigul and then proceeded to Madura where he studied in Scott's Middle School and the American Mission High School. His relatives and companions noticed nothing extraordinary about him except perhaps his occasional sleep-walking at night and absent-mindedness during working hours. The subject of this abstraction was a mystery to his companions as he did not disclose it to anyone at the time. This strange young man was proceeding however without any guidance from books or men to introspect into his own personality and discover his nature. "Who am I?" "What am I?" "Whence am I?" were the queries which, even as a boy, he had started; and he had obtained distinct and frequent realisation that he was not the mere perishing body but something deep, subtle, and suffused with awareness and Reality-feeling. Alongside of this untaught mysticism and philosophy, he had a deep and<sup>19</sup> simple devotion that centered round "Arunachala." With that holy name, which haunted his memory from childhood, he associated all ideas of God—omnipotence, omniscience, holiness and kindness. He had lost his earthly father at an early age, and Arunachala was to him the "Father in Heaven." He did not know where "Arunachala" was till 1895, when a relative arriving at Madura stated that he had just returned from Arunachala. "From Arunachala!" cried the startled young man, "where is It?" The relative was surprised at his ignorance and remarked, "What! do you not know Tiruvannamalai? That is Arunachala." With such leanings, it is no wonder that young Ramana or Venkatraman—that was his real name—took little interest in most of his studies. Neglect of studies brought on impositions and reprimands from his elders; and these seem to have produced little effect. On 29th August, 1896, he was writing an imposition from Bain's English Grammar. The work after some time disgusted him; and he bundled up Bain and the imposition paper and tossing them across the room, sat up, closed his eyes and dived within himself. The elder brother who was in the same room watched him in silence for awhile, and then broke out with a rebuke, intended to chasten the young spirit, "What business has a fellow here, who behaves like this?" The rebuke struck home. "True," thought young Ramana, "truly, I have no business here. I will leave home, relations and everything here, for good." Immediately<sup>20</sup> he resolved

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<sup>18</sup> 1

\*For a fuller account, see the books noted on the cover.

<sup>19</sup> 2

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<sup>20</sup> 3

PREFACE

on going away to Tiruvannamalai—far from his old moorings—and remaining there totally unknown to his relations. He took three rupees out of the money given to him to pay his brother's college fees and took train northward, leaving a note at home which ran as follows: "As I am going to seek my Father by His command, and as the object is meritorious, no sorrow need be felt for this absence and no money need be wasted in searching for *this*" ("Tamil passage omitted here"). The reference in the third person to his body which others regarded as Venkatraman, to the Father who commanded him to quit home and seek Him, and the omission to sign the note are significant of the stage of development he had already reached at seventeen. While he was in the train, he passed almost the whole of his time till he reached Villupuram, absorbed in his own thought, and unattracted by his fellow-passengers' chat or the variegated and picturesque scenery of Nature. Finding his funds insufficient for the entire journey, he alighted at Mambalappattu and walked the distance of ten miles to Tirukkoilur where he pledged the only ornaments he wore—a pair of gold ear-rings—and again took train for Tiruvannamalai. As soon as he reached that place, he proceeded straight to the temple of Arunachala and there offered himself with these words, "Father, by Thy command have I come here before Thee." Since then, that is, all these forty years and more, he has remained, without any break, at Tiruvannamalai in the presence of<sup>21</sup> his "Father." Here the hill itself is revered as *Jyotir-Lingam*, i.e. God in the form of light.

Ramana spent the first six months in the temple precincts and then removed to a saint's tomb, a mango grove in the outskirts of the town and later still to various caves on the hill. He is now at the foot of the hill, near Paliteertha by the side of the tomb of his mother (who came and resided with him from 1916 till she passed away in 1922). The first ten years of his life at Tiruvannamalai were characterised by rigorous *Tapas* (penance) including *Mowna* (silence), remarkable *Vairagya* (non-attachment), and an almost perpetual plunge in deep *Samadhi*. His fame as an ascetic began to spread and his relatives came to see him. They entreated hard and bade him return home. But he was adamant and declined to leave Tiruvannamalai.\* He then began to get acquainted with many religious works in Tamil and a few in Sanskrit, and as days progressed, he obtained considerable mastery in Tamil. He has written a few original Tamil poems,† which are marked alike by literary grace, passionate devotion and philosophic insight;

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<sup>21</sup> 4

#### PREFACE

\* Into this village, famous in song and history for the sanctity of its hill and its shrines, crowds of pious devotees, especially Saivites, have daily poured for centuries and taken a keen delight in feeding and serving holy men, in circumambulating the hill, and visiting the shrine of Arunachala. Several of these almost from the beginning of Ramanaswami's *tapas* (i.e. austerities) have offered him their homage and some have permanently attached themselves to him so that they may serve and feed him and if possible, learn and realise the truths of religion at his holy feet.

† Arunachala Stotras, Upadesa Saram or Undiyar and Ullathu Narpathu etc.

and he rendered some<sup>22</sup> standard Sanskrit works\* into Tamil prose and verse. His replies to disciples are embodied in Ramana Gita. His proficiency in other languages is evidenced by the fact that he rendered his own Upadesa Undiyar into Sanskrit, Malayalam and Telugu verse. The school of philosophy embodied in his works is Sri Sankaracharya's Advaita. His main discourse is on the realisation of the Self. Hundreds, and in the month of Karthika (*i.e.*, November-December) thousands, flock to pay their respects to the great soul whom they variously style Ramanaswami, Brahmanaswami, Ramanarishi, Ramanamaharshi and Bhagavan; and some worship him as God incarnate and offer their praise, repetition of (108) names, waving of lights and food at his feet, or before his picture. Several of the visitors seek his help for solving the riddle of existence and other problems which may be vexing them. To these he offers mostly the hoary Delphic instruction: "Know thyself," "Seek the source from which you come." His works also mostly centre round the same topic.

*Upadesa Saram* is a synopsis, in thirty short stanzas, of the Maharshi's teaching about man's spiritual course. It is constantly sung at the Ramana-Asram by the disciples along with its Sanskrit, Telugu and Malayalam versions and thus serves to fix in their minds the course that leads to realisation<sup>23</sup> of the Self. Importance is attached to the work, not because of anything new in the subject-matter or its presentation, but because it is a short epigrammatic statement, by a man of realisation, as to the method and state of realisation and is well adapted for use as a manual for contemplation. For the benefit of those who have not the time, patience and desire to go through that work, at any rate without a prefatory foretaste, and for those who require matters taught to be summed up, an explanatory summary of the poem is given here.

## SUMMARY<sup>24</sup>

Man wants happiness and to attain it seeks and welcomes pleasures. These he gets by 'Karma'\* *i.e.*, activity of one sort or another. Hence to a superficial view, it may appear, that activity – one's own – confers all pleasures and happiness on one, and that there is no need to look to any other or higher power. This view was acted upon by

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<sup>22</sup> 5

### PREFACE

\* Sri Sankara's Vivekachudamani into Tamil prose and a part of Devikalottaram and Sri Sankara's Dakshinamoorthy Stotra etc. into Tamil verse.

<sup>23</sup> 6

### PREFACE

<sup>24</sup> 7

\* Karma is the intentional action of one with a moral sense, who under that sense acts as a free agent to produce a desired result.

some *rishis* (*Mimamsakas*) of the Daruka Forest, who trusted entirely to their sacrificial rites to obtain all that they wanted, and failed to honour God in His highest embodiments.† In consequence of such failure, their sacrifices suffered shipwreck, and soon they had to recant their heresy. Even the slightest examination would serve to explode their theory. If they and their ‘Karma’ (action) did not owe their power of attaining and yielding fruit to any ulterior power, they must be the First Cause, the Prime Mover, the Great Creator, God Himself. The *rishis* did not claim Godhead to themselves; could it be ascribed to their action? Man’s ‘Karma’, being the product of his finite intelligence, is but a feeble and unintelligent instrument. Its force is like any other force, *e.g.* that of a shell (discharged from cannon)<sup>25</sup> which is marked by some power while it moves, and reveals its full potentiality when it strikes an object—obeying therein, well-established laws—but is incapable of reflection, choice, self-direction, self-development and other features of personality, human or divine. Not ‘Karma’, nor the man that performed it, but the Great Creator who ordained the existence of man, his power to act, and the law or force compelling such action to produce its results, is to be revered.

It may be fancied, however, by some, that ‘Karma’ with its immediate and remoter\* results can satisfy the human heart. But does it? ‘Karma’ and the pleasures it yields have an end and a very quick end; they cannot provide the lasting bliss that God alone bestows. God is the goal or ‘Home’ to which humanity is drawn. Karma or activity, as we find it in the world, *i.e.*, desire-born activity, can never take us on to that goal. On the other hand, it takes one in the opposite direction. Its product, the shortlived pleasure followed by pain, far from wiping off desire through satisfaction, gives it a fresh lease of life, an increase of strength and a deeper and firmer footing in the agent’s<sup>26</sup> personality. Acts and attitudes tend to become habits which grip the agent with an iron grip. Desire-born acts thus tend to perpetuate themselves, not merely from day to day and year to year, but also from life to life, endlessly, as their still unreaped

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† *i.e.* God Mahadeva and God Maha Vishnu.

<sup>25</sup> g

#### SUMMARY

\* ‘Immediate’ result is the ‘*Vasana*’ *i.e.* the recoil of the action back on the agent, leaving an impression on his nature, character and tendencies.

‘Remoter’ result is the ‘*Phala*’ or fruit consisting of pleasant rewards for good action, and painful punishments for evil action. Such pleasure and pain generally take long periods to come, and seldom come during the life in which the action occurs. Sometimes, though rarely, they follow close on the heels of action, *e.g.* where it is very highly virtuous or grossly wicked.

<sup>26</sup> g

#### SUMMARY

reward and the unexpended fund of Desire – *Samskaras*\* – remaining at the time of death force one to take fresh birth.

### The Right Attitude

What then should our attitude be towards 'Karma' or activity? Should we or can we refrain from all action? No. The Law of Karma, that like produces like, and that individual acts tend to become habits growing stronger with exercise, is a neutral law. If acts performed with desire for worldly objects develop such desire endlessly, so do acts performed without such desire develop desirelessness, *Vairagya*; and so do acts performed with love of God and in a spirit of surrender to Him develop such love and spirit.

Hence to avoid the ever-lengthening chain of births and deaths, *Samsara* or the ocean of desire-born *Karmic* results, with its perpetual waves of pain and pleasure, one must ceaselessly curb desire, confine oneself to unavoidable acts and do these without attachment to their fruit; and the best practical steps to secure non-attachment are (1)<sup>27</sup> to turn one's love from worldly objects on to God (2) to surrender every object one has and even oneself to Him and (3) to maintain this spirit of love, surrender and detachment *throughout*, *i.e.* alike before and at the time of doing what one has to do and of reaping its fruit. With increasing success in such endeavour, one rises to one's fullest stature in God.

### Karma Marga or Path of Works

What are the acts generally performed for this purpose, *i.e.* to attain the Highest? They are: (1) Worship (with the body) termed *Pooja*, consisting of ceremonial worship accompanied by external activities; (2) Worship (with the voice) termed *Japa*, consisting of praise or repetition of the holy name; and (3) Mental Worship termed *Dhyana*. External\* and internal elements are found in all these in varying degrees. This classification, though a rough one, is still popular; and Maharshi adopts it and makes a few remarks on each.

The advance of an aspirant in "inwardliness" is often noticeable by his

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\* *Samskaras* are the seed-forms or potentialities arising from action, which after due time begin to germinate, as desires, tendencies, aptitudes, &c. The term *Vasanas* is generally used as synonymous with *Samskaras*.

<sup>27</sup> 10

#### SUMMARY

\* The words 'external' and 'internal' are based on the supposition that the body is one's self and that the mind is something spatial, inside the brain. Though these are unwarranted assumptions, they are of use in practice to the aspirant and mystic.

proceeding from a grosser to a finer, from a somewhat external to a decidedly more internal form. The higher and keener one's spirit, the finer and simpler is his method of approach, his *Sadhana*. In the beginning of his turn from<sup>28</sup> worldliness, an aspirant may take to ceremonial worship, especially at holy places like Kasi or Rameshwar, and be very keen on procuring numerous accessories of worship, e.g., silver images, and basketsful of sacred basil or 'bel'. But later, less emphasis is laid on these, and more on the praise of God with thrilling hymns and songs. Later still, even these are left behind, and bare repetition of the sacred name, *Japa*, is felt to be distinctly more advantageous and efficient. Next, this also drops off, and all the aspirant's heart and soul are poured out in a purely inward flow on God, drawing him more and more into God, and transforming his indirect and mediate perception into immediate intuition—through meditation (*Dharana*) concentration (*Dhyana*) and absorption (*Samadhi*). All this is tersely summed up by Maharshi in his remark that the order of progress is, *Pooja, Japa*, and *Dhyana* which ends in *Samadhi*.

### Hints on Meditation

Early attempts at meditation are generally unsuccessful and result in short, broken, uneven, and taxing spells of concentration. But with bold and unflinching perseverance, one can reach the stage where meditation will be a prolonged, continuous, even, unstrained and joyous flow—in fact, it would become as natural and unperceived as respiration. Early attempts at meditation, again, are generally on some form of God—felt, at first, to be other than the meditator, and far away. But with increasing intensity<sup>29</sup> of devotion, the distance diminishes;\* and when God is literally seen everywhere and everything is seen to be but God, He is felt to be near, very near, inside oneself and finally identical with one's Self. When the idea of "otherness" vanishes, God personal has become impersonal; one's ego or personal self also has become impersonal; and both merge in "The One", "The Nameless", "Boundless Being". This is what is actually realised in the experience of Mystics† and this is what

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<sup>28</sup> 11

SUMMARY

<sup>29</sup> 12

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\* Four stages of advance typifying this diminution are clearly expressed in Sanskrit, thus:—First, '*Saloka*' where the devotee is 'co-sphered' with his object of worship; second '*Sameepa*' where the devotee is on the threshold of Divinity; thirdly '*Saropa*' where the devotee takes on more and more the form and attributes of that object; and lastly '*Sayujya*' where he unites with or merges in God.

† The term 'Mysticism' is used in a number of senses. In this book, it is used to denote the system wherein the aspirant seeks to get and gets direct, immediate and blissful contact with God or the Real, through intuition. As an example, Alfred Tennyson's mystic experience may be cited. He thus described



the metaphysics of Advaitism or Monism points to.

### The Four Paths

As<sup>30</sup> for ways and means to reach union with God or the Real, there are said to be four paths styled, *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Yoga* and *Jnana*, which may be roughly described as (1) the Path of Works or Activity (2) of Devotion (3) of Mind Control and Union and (4) of Inquiry, Wisdom or Illumination. In practising any one of these methods, elements of the other paths are often freely mingled up. The paths coalesce. They all adopt, says Maharshi, a common formula:—"Seek the Source, and rest absorbed there."\*

### The Path of Yoga

Some observations have already been made about *Karma Marga* or the Path of Works. One may next dispose of the *Yoga* Path or at least of what is considered by some to be its chief distinguishing characteristic *i.e.* the attempt to control mind through control of breath. One may ask what breath has to do with the mind. But it is the experience of many that an even breathing accompanies an even flow of thoughts, a ruffled breathing accompanies mental disturbance, and that an attempt to steady a ruffled mind by severe control and regulation of breath is successful. And the reason is not far<sup>31</sup> to seek. The root of all spiritual success is a well developed and unified or one-pointed will; and this development or unification can be obtained by exercising the will

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it in a letter to Mr B.P. Blood:—

".....a kind of waking trance, I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself, silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being: and this, not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life.....I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words?..."

Alfred Tennyson.

<sup>30</sup> 13

#### SUMMARY

\* 'cf' Brahma Sutra. which means 'Brahman (or God) is that whence all this Universe arises, in which it is supported and into which it returns.' and Chandogya Upanishad III 14-1 — which means 'Calmly worship That as the Source, the Stay and End of all this Universe.'

<sup>31</sup> 14

#### SUMMARY

either about respiration or about any other matter which the will can influence. In the case of concentration on respiratory control, however, there is a great advantage. Respiration, vegetative life and thought are the outflow of one evolving life-principle; and respiration is a matter of urgent importance for the continuance of life. Any checking or regulation of it must naturally draw the mind away from all matters over which it may be fretting or brooding. Whatever the explanation, there is the fact that breath-control leads to mind-control. But this control is only temporary. It just lulls the mind for a while, but provides no permanent cure for the mind's perpetual restlessness, and until such a cure is effected, one cannot enjoy permanent peace.

### **Misconceptions and Needless Fears**

What then is the step or expedient to be adopted? Before discussing it, one may note in passing the phrase employed to describe this permanent cure for restlessness. It is often described as *Manonasha*, i.e. destruction of the mind, and of the 'ego' or 'personality'; and these phrases have created needless confusion and terror. The reader may be assured that the aspirant is not called upon to become crazy or a lunatic or to commit mental or spiritual suicide. The extract from Lord Tennyson on<sup>32</sup> a previous page will show that personality and consciousness are not lost in the process of the highest realisation, but broadened, deepened and transformed (on such a gigantic scale as to produce at first a 'weird' impression) into the clearer and broader life of Illumination,—“the only true life,” where death is impossible. It is the 'restlessness' and other defects and limitations of the mind that are destroyed and not the mind itself or the person himself. Other phrases employed in describing this process of realisation which might shock some are clear references to the disappearance of God Personal and of devotion to Him, and to the apparently audacious claim of the individual worshipper to be He—nay more, to be the Impersonal Brahman which absorbs and swallows up both the worshipper and the God he worships. There is, however, no need to be shocked. Maharshi and all mystics fully recognise that so long as the sense of duality, (i.e. of one's being a separate individual) is retained, he must revere and worship his God and that this worship itself is the means for his attaining the greatest benefit he can. It is the experience of many mystics that the God Personal that they worship takes them on to the Impersonal Brahman and to the apparent loss of the individuality of oneself and of Personal God. What “true life” is (without personality, as we know it) need not frighten or worry one, when he is still in the dualist stage. Sufficient unto the day is the work thereof. Having trusted to God and to one's guru, one is in safe

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<sup>32</sup> 15

hands—and if the guidance<sup>33</sup> received takes one to the Impersonal, one feels also fearlessness and Bliss as part of that crowning achievement. That assurance is given by the scriptures and is confirmed by the actual experience of Maharshi and other realisers. Spiritual guidance prepares the way to Impersonal realisation by gradation of steps which makes the change almost imperceptible; *e.g.* one is asked to worship God not as existing in a single form or body or under a single name, but in all the objects of the Universe; and if one succeeds in transferring his reverence to the entire universe and all objects in it, one's religion becomes impersonal.

Another example of the gradation of steps is furnished by the life of Swami Vivekananda who was strongly under the influence of Dualism and the need for a personal God to revere—a God distinct from himself—till the miraculous touch of his guru made him realise that differences of individuality are not as certain as they first appear and that the truth is that differences exist only to be swallowed up in a strange and mysterious manner in the One Real. Vivekananda for sometime clearly perceived that carriages and himself were of one stuff, that his plate, the food on it, the server and himself were That One, and was thus convinced of the truth of Advaita.

Loss of individuality far from being a shock to devotees is by no means an uncommon experience among them. Many lose themselves daily in their meditation<sup>34</sup> on God. A Gopi's\* intense love carried her, as Sri Krishna Chaitanya's carried his devotion, to the point of identification of the self with Sri Krishna. This is neither shocking nor irreligious but the height of devotion; and hence the loss of oneself in the Impersonal is justly described by Maharshi as the perfection of Devotion.

Now for the method of securing permanent peace for the restless mind or soul: Frequent efforts to secure a temporary lull have their use in preparing the mind for its final course. But the *coup de grace* that completes the course is chaining the mind or rivetting it to That which knows no Change—God, Brahman, The Real or what other name one may give to That 'Nameless.' The weak and finite mind gets paralysed in gazing at that Infinite with awe, and "drops head foremost in the jaws" of That Boundless Being. This process termed by Maharshi *Eka Chintana* takes different shapes

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<sup>33</sup> 16

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<sup>34</sup> 17

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\* A lady devotee of Sri Krishna belonging to the shepherd caste.

with different mystics but the result is the same – viz. that already described by Lord Tennyson (which is the first stage, – with further stages to be described hereafter.)

### **Path of Devotion**

As mentioned already, devotion is a powerful instrument, and in the case of vast masses, the only instrument to take them on to their spiritual goal. *Eka Chintana* i.e. concentration on the one, in<sup>35</sup> the case of devotees is on God Personal; and this is quite as efficient as any other method. Maharshi devotes some lines of his poem to it – treating it as a very good preparation for the next Path, that of Inquiry, which is his chief method or Path. The major portion of this poem and other works of Maharshi are devoted to that Path.

### **Path of Inquiry or Illumination**

(a) *Barriers and Qualifications*: Maharshi does not regard any considerations of sex, age, caste, creed, race, literacy or position as bars to one's entering on this path. The only qualification demanded is seriousness, an earnest desire to learn and realise the Truth.

(b) *Discipline and Regimen*: Maharshi imposes no disciplinary regulation on the aspirant, but recognises the great value of *Iswaropasana* and *Dharmacharana* i.e. devotion to God and ethical behaviour as valuable helps to purify and strengthen the mind. When the aspirant starts on this path, his first step is to sit quiet and draw his senses and mind away from all worldly objects. The withdrawal of the body from physical contact is fairly easy but the mind cannot be so easily withdrawn. For centuries, it has been running after desired objects and a mountain-load of the consequent *Vasanas* or tendencies has accumulated, the lifting up of which is no joke. One may close his eyes and try concentration of mind, but it jumps outward all too soon, recalling familiar images of objects of desire. In this<sup>36</sup> arduous task, ardent devotion to God, beginning often with awe and fear, and supported by strictly ethical conduct\* is a great help, as it keeps out attractions of the external world and fixes the

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<sup>35</sup> 18

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<sup>36</sup> 19

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\* especially the development of the virtues known as,  
("Hindi passage omitted here") Control of mind.  
("Hindi passage omitted here") Control of the senses.  
("Hindi passage omitted here") Forbearance.  
("Hindi passage omitted here") Endurance.

mind on the one thing, pure and inspiring. This help is often mysterious and is termed *Iswara Kripa* i.e. Grace of God. It leads one also to seek and serve a Guru; and *Guru Kripa*<sup>†</sup> i.e. grace of the Guru is a factor that greatly helps or even accomplishes Self-Realisation or God-Realisation which is the goal of this path and all other paths.

(c) *The Graded Steps:* The aspirant has to begin his practice at a quiet, clean and solitary place, free<sup>37</sup> from troubles and distractions. Then he has to shut out contact of his senses with, and withdraw his mind from, external objects. The next step is to bridle that mind, totally overcoming its restiveness, and making it a docile servant that will simply carry out the behests of the higher will. In practice, this is generally achieved by fixing the mind on God i.e. the form of personal God that makes the most forcible appeal to the aspirant. But to another type of mind, the contemplation and metaphysical analysis of one's self are found more suitable and efficient. Maharshi deals with this type of mind here; and *Jnana Vichara* or "Inquiry into Wisdom" is the name given to its progress along this line. To such a mind, when it has withdrawn itself from external contact of every sort, the most appropriate subject for contemplation is itself. Unless it is ceaselessly directed on to itself, it will fly out to objects of desire. So engage it perpetually on these questions "Who am I?" "Whence am I?"

These are very hard questions—which cannot be answered offhand. They require the most strenuous attention of the concentrated mind. The attempt to face an apparently insoluble problem has a definite psychological benefit. The fore-consciousness may stop working at it; but the sub-conscious would take it up and spend its unseen and immeasurable force on it, night and day,—aided or lit up especially<sup>38</sup> by faith in the declarations of the scripture confirmed by those of the Guru.

### Flash of Realisation

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("Hindi passage omitted here") Earnestness; Faith.

("Hindi passage omitted here") Equanimity.

† *Guru Kripa* (i.e. grace of the Guru) and grace of God may appear to most people totally distinct. But to those who have thoroughly identified their Guru with God, (and even the Upanishads extol such identification) there is no distinction. The Guru's grace cannot but be God's grace; and whatever grace is received is immediately felt to be the boon of the God-Guru or Guru-God. There are degrees of grace; e.g. by the Guru's grace, vices are checked, passions are cooled down, interest in the world pales, and the mind gets sensitive enough faithfully to reflect the Real. As the last, i.e. Realisation of the Real, is the highest point of Attainment, some confine the term "grace of the Guru" to some visible or invisible act of the Guru by which perfect Realisation descends on the disciple. The more implicit one's belief in the divinity of one's Guru, the quicker and surer is one's Attainment.

<sup>37</sup> 20

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<sup>38</sup> 21

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The Vedas and Vedanta have poured forth, in loud organ tones, the reply to these queries in their *Mahavakyas*, literally, “grand utterances” or gems of speech (1) *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma: i.e.* All this (Universe) is Brahman, (2) *Tat Twam Asi’ i.e.* “That (Brahman) Thou (individual soul, or aspirant) art.” &c. With these ringing constantly in his ears and stored up in the chambers of the sub-conscious and gathering great momentum there, an aspirant trying ceaselessly to explore into his own nature is bound at some stage to pass into “a kind of waking trance” with his fore-consciousness apparently arrested. Then will the truth come out with its explosive force and make the aspirant see it, hear it, feel it, and be it. “That art Thou” said the Scripture and the Guru. The believing soul accordingly realises that he is *That*. Faith\* has turned then into sight, vision or Realisation.

Such flashing forth of the Real is vouchsafed to very few. The majority of learners are obliged to toil through a prolonged and trying course. They have first to accept the teachings of the Guru and the Scriptures on trust, though to a faithless soul they<sup>39</sup> may appear to be a hopeless jumble of meaningless assertions, absurdities and self-contradictions; but as they go on gathering bits of experience and wisdom, the jumble appears to be a system, the absurdity appears self-evident truth; and all contradictions vanish in a blaze of wisdom.

### Hints for Practice

How is one to set about this long and arduous course? What practical hints are available to help one on the path? Maharshi reminds most people of the universally accepted dictum that to a person totally unfamiliar with the way, when no way is visible, or numerous and widely divergent tracks puzzle the wayfarer, the safest course is to ask one that knows and if possible secure him as one’s guide for the entire journey, and that as such a guide is termed the Guru (or *Marga darsaka*—shower of the path), the general run of people must early in their course prepare for, seek and obtain a Guru in whom their unwavering faith must be placed. The Guru knows which path suits the aspirant and what directions should be given and what steps taken at each stage.

If a person has heard that the *Atman* (or Self) is some glorious and blissful substratum of all that lives, moves, or is, or has read about it in the Vedas or Vedanta, and wants to learn more about It and pick his way to It, he goes to some one who, by repute or otherwise, is considered the most likely<sup>40</sup> to know all about It and impart his

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\* As Swetaswatara Upanishad in its last stanza says:—“To one who has perfect faith in God and equal faith in his Guru, the inmost secrets of the Vedanta enshrined in the Upanishad flash out”.

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knowledge to the earnest seeker. Indra a god and Virochana, an asura, (demon) had this desire to know and they approached their progenitor, Prajapati who told them that *Atman* is the 'self' and made them discover it for themselves by the system of trial and error. "Do you not see yourself in a mirror when grandly and joyously attired?" was the first direction given. The pupils were asked to see if the "Bodily Me" the physical body, the *Annamaya Kosha* (i.e. food-sheath) was the Self. The Asura was satisfied with the explanation and went his way. But the God Indra found that the body was not a source of unalloyed or permanent bliss and went up to the Guru to seek a more correct solution. He was next asked to try if the self in the dream-state was the Atman and failing that, whether his mind, reason and personality were the Atman; and when he found all these unsatisfactory, he reached the real Atman as Being-Consciousness-Bliss. The sage Bhrigu was taught a similar lesson by his father Varuna, when he asked the latter, what that glorious, much talked-of "Brahman" was. The latter described it as the "source and substratum, the stay, and ultimate goal or state of all that exists in the universe," and asked the pupil by *Tapas i.e.*, the austerity of severe thinking, to discover what that was. Bhrigu then adopted the trial and error system, and first took food to be Brahman, and next tried if life-breath,<sup>41</sup> mind and intellect would be correct solutions. Failing all these, it dawned on him, that there was an indescribable state of Bliss, beyond all these four rejected forms, transcending the manifested universe, which consequently may be styled, the source, stay and end of the universe; and that *That* must be Brahman.

Maharshi asks the earnest aspirant similarly to face the questions "Who am I"? "Whence am I"? Almost everyone, when asked who he is and where he is, points to his body even by touching it. The first answer then is " 'I' am the body." Then he is asked to think further about himself and verify the answer. Are you not feeling that you are something living and intelligent or conscious? The body, now alive, will be a corpse at some time. Can it be "I" then? So the first solution is shown to be faulty. Other solutions are then tried. "Am I not the senses?" But the senses are part of and suffer the same fate as the body. "Am I not the life-breath or life?" The pupil then is made to see that trees have life and that he is more than life. "Am I not the mind, and intellect then?", the pupil might ask, and fancy he has arrived at the truth of his self at last. But the quest is not yet ended. The mind and intellect are after all instruments wielded by something else. They are possessions which are now held, now lost, and again regained; and they are not the possessor. Then the pupil concludes that his soul, *Jiva*, or personality is that possessor.<sup>42</sup> Then he is made to feel that his answer is right, if he

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dives to the heart or core of personality and identifies himself or his "Self" therewith. He is *That*.

What is the core of one's personality? One discovers by strenuous striving that his ultimate essence is "being". He cannot but be. At the same moment, he feels that he is awareness or aware that he "is". "I am" and "I am conscious" co-exist as two aspects of the One. Awareness exists. Existence is self-conscious. That which is, is also aware. So Being-Consciousness (*Sat-Chit*) is the core of the soul or self. Internal analysis and discovery cannot go beyond this.

Next starting to analyse the external, when one dives into the core (the Unity behind everything in the Universe), all attributes are lost. The aspirant soul starts with its devotion to God, and at that stage it feels that there are three entities existing, – (a) one's self, marked by intelligence and powers circumscribed within very narrow limits; (b) one's God marked by these attributes in infinite proportion *i.e.* without any such limits and (c) the world or universe of inert unconscious matter. When diving to the core, nothing unconscious survives. The inert world is eliminated. The Jiva and God remain. Their core is then sought. Then the Universe and its core Brahman (*i.e.* the Real underlying the manifested universe) are found to be identical with<sup>43</sup> the core of one's personality *i.e.* Atman.\* God is the same there as the individual worshipper. Being is felt to be the same as Awareness. Self-Realisation can be equally described as God-Realisation, as "Being That", "Knowing That" or merely "Being-Consciousness-Bliss". That is bliss, because in that state none of the pain that characterises sensation and ideas arising from the senses and the unillumined mind can remain. It is thus *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. This is the end of the course which began with attempts to answer the questions "Who am I?" "Whence am I?" The mystic inspired with faith in the Vedas, God and his Guru arrives at the same realisation without all this ado by merely diving within himself, his "Heart" or core.†

The first effect of such mystic diving is generally one or more temporary glimpses of that "Boundless Being"; but the aspirant comes back to his previous state or "mentality" and retains only a memory of his marvellous experience. Maharshi and

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\* The truth thus discovered is set out in one of the four great utterances of the Vedas or Mahavakyas, thus, – "Ayamatma Brahma, ("Hindi passage omitted here") *i.e.* This Atman is the Brahman".

† Maharshi has composed an inspiring Tamil song: "Ayye Athi Sulabham" in which he points out that the aspirant need not fear that the task of realising the Self is very hard. and that he can very soon have direct intuition of the Self, rendering doubt impossible (of course, by the grace of the Guru).



other realisers point out that the *final state* is that Supreme state from which there is no return, where that “true life” is the only life, and always persists. There is no going back from that to the old state; and it is named *Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi*.<sup>‡</sup>

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<sup>‡</sup> For further details see pages 40-42 *infra*.