

# DIRECT PATH

RAMANA KENDRA  
DELHI

May - July 2023

Vol. XXV, No.2

*"We imagine that we will realize that Self sometime, whereas we are  
never anything but the Self."*

*Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi*



***71. Om sadbhakta vrnda parivrtaya namah***

Surrounded by bands of lovers of Truth.

***72. Om ganesa muni bhrngena sevitanghri  
saroruhaya namah***

One whose lotus feet were sought by the honeybee  
Ganesa Muni.

***73. Om gitopadesa saradi grantha samchinna  
samsayaya namah***

One who dispels all doubts by his Gita, Upadesa Sara and  
such other works.





Original ink sketch of Arunachala by Sri Ramana Maharshi from Kunju Swami's notebook

# Direct Path

VOLUME XXV, ISSUE 2

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# Call for Articles

As the journal depends on articles from volunteer writers, we appeal to you to send in articles for our consideration. We wish to keep the range of subjects both wide and diverse covering aspects such as: Bhagavan's life, teachings, and experiences related to the practice of his methods; life, teachings, and experiences related to the practice of methods taught by other spiritual masters; teachings and stories from religions other than Hinduism; interpretations of sacred texts and verses; spiritual travel and insights; poetry; feedback and suggestions.

As a guideline, articles can be short (around 750 words), medium (around 1500 words) or in longer format (around 2300 words). Please send in your contributions through e-mail to [editor.dp@rkdelhi.org](mailto:editor.dp@rkdelhi.org)

We look forward to hearing from you!

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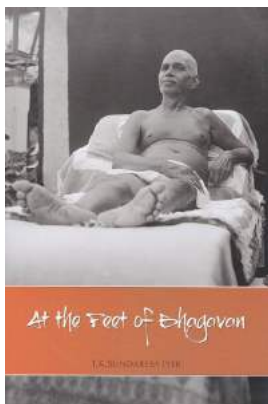
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# Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Advait Shrivastav



William Shakespeare wrote thirty-seven plays, creating multiple characters some of whose names are known all over the world. However, Shakespeare asks a philosophical question in his play *Romeo and Juliet* through a major character. “What’s in a name?”<sup>1</sup> Juliet asks Romeo. She adds, “That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet;”<sup>2</sup>. When it comes to characters like Romeo, Juliet, me, and others, this statement holds true. If the context changes to that of an enlightened human, *a lot* is in a name. The name of an enlightened saint is a powerhouse of energy.

Vasudevaya’ is ancient and well-known. The *Vishnu Purana* highlights the magnitude of its magnificence. It says: “Even the Sun, the Moon, and the other planets return after going to their respective realms but those who recall the twelve-syllable chant (Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya) have not yet returned from their enlightened state.”<sup>3</sup> The point to be noted is that it is the subtle deities of the luminaries and the planets that are referred to here and not their physical mass. Even the divine entities that control the destiny of every being are inferior to those who simply chant these twelve syllables.

The mantra ‘Om Namo Bhagavate

A Master often works through His

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1 *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2, line number 43.

2 *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2, line number 43 and 44.

3 *Vishnu Puraan*, 1.6.40, my translation.

devotees. T. K. Sundaresa Iyer was an ardent devotee of Maharshi. He was a teacher and he helped English-speaking guests and devotees at Sri Ramanasramam by performing the role of an interpreter. This was not the only way in which Maharshi worked through him. Iyer became an instrument to create the basis of a much grander communication. *At the Feet of Bhagavan* contains his thoughts. The second of the four parts of this book is titled 'Reminiscences' and it conveys valuable information in the chapter 'How the *Mantra* came'.

Sundaresa Iyer was devoted to two forms: those of Krishna and Maharshi. This double devotion of Iyer designed a chant that delivers delight to devotees daily. One day he was inspired by a verse in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and thought: "While I have at hand Bhagavan Sri Ramana, who is Himself Vasudeva, why should I worship Vasudeva separately?" He therefore desired a single chant and realized that 'Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya' could be an exact equal to 'Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya': a chant that is dear to the devotees of Krishna and which Iyer himself had recited earlier. He now counted the syllables in the new chant created by him and was delighted to realize that it too contained twelve syllables. Maharshi approved

this mantra when Iyer apprised Him of his invention.



*Maharshi with T. K. Sundaresa Iyer.*  
Source: [archive.arunachala.org](http://archive.arunachala.org)

Saying 'I love you' may not seem very significant if the speaker does not know the meaning of this expression. A stronger effect is created when one knows the meaning of a chant. 'Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya' can be translated as 'I offer my obeisance to the divine Sri Ramana Maharshi'. A sentence that contains 'Om', 'Bhagavat (the basis of 'Bhagavate')', 'Sri', and 'Ramana (the basis of 'Ramanaya')' certainly holds the flow of infinite grace. This chant establishes a subtle communication with Maharshi. It destroys depression

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and axes anxiety.

This chant was recited by Suri Nagamma to Lakshmi the cow, who was diseased and about to shed her four-legged blessed body. In a letter to her brother dated 20 June 1948, she says that she told Maharshi that she would stay with Lakshmi and He assented. She writes further that “Sitting in that place I began repeating *Ramana Dwadasakshari* (twelve letters of Ramana Mantram), *Ashtotharam* (108 names of Ramana), etc. and Lakshmi appeared to hear them attentively.”<sup>4</sup> This animal devotee remained in still surrender till the end. One too must recite this twelve-syllable chant to oneself and make one’s diseased mind listen to it attentively.

Students are free to remember the names of plays written by Shakespeare

along with the characters therein and forget them once the examination ends but the remembrance of Maharshi’s name can make one forget one’s ignorance and finally remember one’s true character that always stays blissfully free. One graduates from a university by remembering certain names whereas some names help one in graduating from the vast worldly ocean. The twelve syllables in this short sentence connect a devotee to the infinite within. Sometimes a short sentence from a judge’s pen can end a prisoner’s long sentence.

We are caged by our egos. We are all wearing subtle handcuffs. May we pronounce our own freedom...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya! ■

[e-mail:editor.dp@rkdelhi.org]

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4 Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, 2014 edition, page number 439.

Mahasivaratri was celebrated at the Kendra with an elaborate Rudrabhishekam. Bhagavan’s 73<sup>rd</sup> Aradhana was observed with a talk by Sri Anish. Michael James, Raghavji, and Gautam Sachdeva gave lucid talks through the online and the offline mode. The recordings of the talks rendered online are available at Ramana Kendra, Delhi’s YouTube channel.

Important events within the time frame of the current issue (May-July 2023) are as follows:

- Maha Puja: 12<sup>th</sup> June
- Cow Lakshmi Day: 30<sup>th</sup> June
- Guru Poornima: 3<sup>rd</sup> July



1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
 SELF + IMAGININGS = MULTIVERSE

# Lakshmi

TEXT : SHARADA BHANU  
 DESIGN : BHARATI MIRCHANDANI

As the dominant species on the planet, we humans tend to think highly of ourselves. Yet we know that many animals have keener senses than we do. And some have more loving hearts than most of us. And some may be spiritually more advanced. Such was a cow called Lakshmi who lived with Bhagavan for many years.



Why all this? Who is there to look after it? Keep it with you.

No, I will not take it away! Please keep it Swami!"



Cows are mothers who generously share their milk with human beings. They are considered blessed gifts especially when given to rishis.

A devotee, Arunachalam Pillai, brought Lakshmi as a calf with her mother to the Ramanasramam in 1926 and insisted she should be accepted, though there were no facilities to keep her.

She was a playful young animal and would jump about ruining the vegetable plants the disciples were trying to grow and go to Bhagavan afterwards to escape a scolding!

So she was sent to the town to live with a caretaker. She learnt the way to the ashram and started coming there on her own every day. She would sit beside Bhagavan's couch and accept fruit only from him. She ate only tasty hill bananas!

Lakshmi would go round the hall every evening. There was no dinner bell then. When it was meal-time, punctual as a clock, she would arrive on her own at exactly the right time before Bhagavan. She would leave most reluctantly.

1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
 EGO + THOUGHTS = THE WORLD



1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1  
 SELF + AWARENESS = ONENESS

When she was carrying her third calf, she was so miserable at having to leave that she shed tears.



Look, Lakshmi is weeping!

She is pregnant and may have confinement any moment. She must go a long distance... she cannot refrain from coming here.

What is she to do?

**1930**

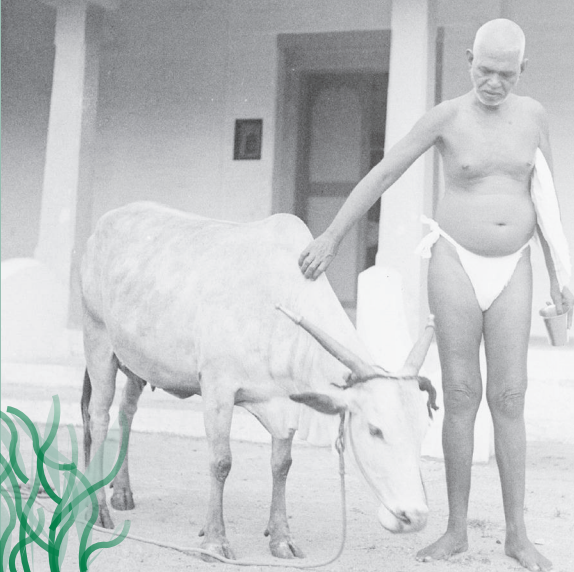
Shortly after she delivered, she was brought to the ashram for good, with all three of her calves. Then Bhagavan asked, placing his right hand on her head, 'Would you like to stay here permanently?'

She sat in utter stillness at his feet with her eyes closed as if she had surrendered the responsibility for her children. She seemed to know they were now placed in Bhagavan's care.



She became an integral part of the ashram and its routine. With her arrival began a new ashram activity – dairy farming. Her coming also led to the construction of more edifices. A devotee donated money to build a shelter for her.

Bhagavan decided that the new goshala would not be a humble shed. He knew that Lakshmi was the first of many cows. On his instruction trees were cut and a fine building was begun. Money came miraculously, as and when needed, and one day, a brand-new goshala was ready.



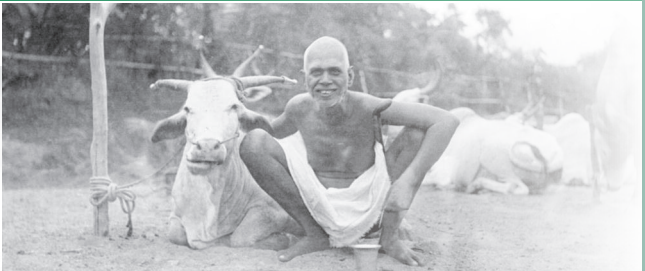
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1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1  
 SELF + AWARENESS = ADVAITA

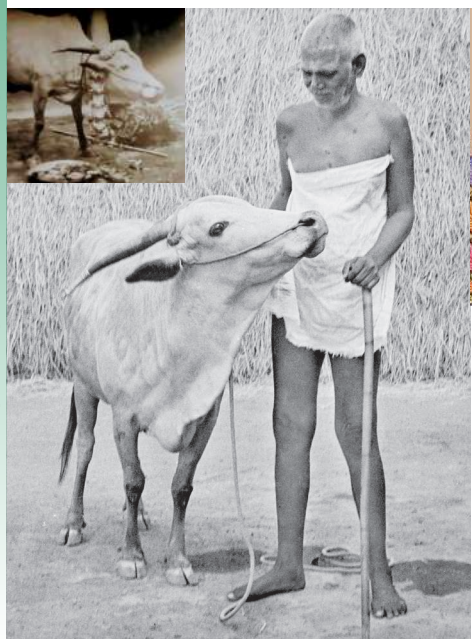
1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
SELF + IMAGININGS = MULTIVERSE



How did Lakshmi know this was to be her house? And that it was ready, and this was the moment of sacred entry? ESP? Divine instinct? She just knew. At the right time she came up to take Bhagavan to her home.



She had nine calves in all, and three were her birthday presents – they were born on, or close to, Bhagavan's Jayanti.



Lakshmi brought her joys and problems to the Lord just as human devotees did. She would arrive after the birth of a calf, and he would visit the new baby. She would come even when the hall was full of people and Bhagavan would feed her bananas and *idlis* (rice cakes).

Lakshmi was more than a pet; she was a much-loved daughter.



1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
EGO + THOUGHTS = THE WORLD



1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1  
 SELF + AWARENESS = ONENESS

All marveled at her response to Bhagavan's touch which could send her into a state resembling samadhi. She understood his words, too. On Pongal in 1946, she was lovingly decorated and a photo was taken. Bhagavan was by her side and asked her to be still. She stood completely steady.

Lakshmi came from the village of Gudiyattam which was also the native place of Keeraipaati, the old lady who collected leaves growing on the hill-side, and daily fed the young Ramana a humble broth of greens. Some thought that perhaps she was the Spinach Granny reincarnated.

1948.

Lakshmi lay quietly, awaiting death. Bhagavan placed his left hand on her head and pressed along her throat down to her heart with the fingers of the right hand, leading her consciousness into the spiritual heart.



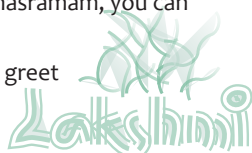
She remained in spiritual stillness till the end. Bhagavan had granted her the *moksha* many humans desire.

Lakshmi!  
 Because of her  
 our family (the ashram)  
 has grown to  
 this extent.



She was buried with the honour due to a saint. One day, if you come to Ramanasramam, you can see Lakshmi's tomb.

And if you visit the goshala, do greet her living descendants...



1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1  
 SELF + AWARENESS = ADVAITA

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# Ramana Maharshi's Three Postulates of Creation

*Prof. Vijay Vancheswar*



Creation, its origin, is a perpetual riddle. Science and rational analysis present the theory of natural evolution. Spiritual masters beseech us to ignore the mind and inquire within. Ramana Maharshi's answer is that 'if you want to go to the fundamentals, the only way out is to seek the questioner'.

Maharshi explains this through three postulates of creation, each of which is tailored to suit the temperament of an individual.

At the ultimate level is the Advaitic principle: 'Tat Tvam Asi' – the Biblical statement in the Book of Exodus, mentions this as 'I am That *I Am*', more directly as the name Jehovah indicates 'I Am'. This postulate is termed 'Ajativada'. The ultimate truth is that there is neither creation, birth

nor death.

The ever-present state is perpetual, the state of being. Interestingly, quantum physics arrives at the conclusion of only one underlying reality akin to Vedanta, a state which transcends space and time. The difference is that while science arrives at this by seeking externally, Vedanta promotes the inner quest.

The second postulate called 'Drishti Srishti' appeals to those who are unable to accept the 'Ajativada' philosophy. Here, it is explained that the world appears alongside our perception of it. It is absent in deep sleep. Yet, we can recall that we slept well. The ever-present consciousness in us enables us to recollect this. Thus, the world as we see is not real. It is the creation of the mind. A dream that ap-

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pears to be real. A good analogy is the illusion of sunrise and sunset. Does the sun really rise and set? Polish scientist Nicolaus Copernicus revolutionised astronomy with his discovery that it is the earth that moves around the sun. The illusion of rising and setting of the sun can be termed as the play of ‘Divine Hypnosis’.

The third postulate termed ‘Srishti Drishti’ seeks to address the needs of a larger section of people, who are unable to comprehend the earlier two postulates. It is proposed that ‘Srishti’, the world, exists and we perceive it through our senses. Accordingly, the world is seen to be a result of evolution spanning creation, preservation and destruction. This cycle is repeated. Here one accepts the individual as an entity in evolution culminating in God as the supremo.

One can advance spiritually to the first level by seeking and dwelling in the substratum of one’s Presence,

the state of ‘I Am’. Interestingly, the Bhagwad Gita begins with the statement that there is no birth, no death, no present, or future. Reality is changeless. As Arjun is unable to disengage his involvement with the gross body, Krishn descends and speaks to him, adopting the third perspective of ‘Srishti Drishti’.

To enable us to mature and progress spiritually, sages and scriptures recommend the process of Shravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana – learning, reflecting and establishing oneself in the Truth that “That Art Thou”.

Deciphering the mystery of creation could help us live our daily life in peace, strengthening our acceptance of the wise dictum “Thy Will be Done”. ■

--- This article first appeared in  
*The Speaking Tree, The Times of India*, 22 April, 2022.

[e-mail:vijay.vancheswar@gmail.com]

### Talk 137

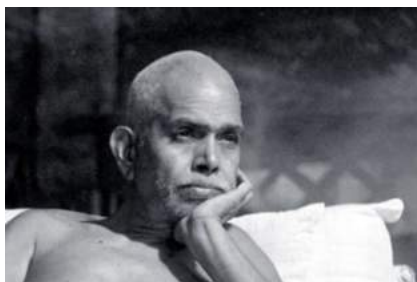
Lakshman Brahmachari of Sri Ramakrishna Mission asked: “Can one imagine oneself as witness of the thoughts?”

M.: It is not the natural state. It is only an idea (*bhavana*) - an aid to stilling the mind. The Self is ever the witness, whether so imagined or not. There is no need to so imagine except for that purpose. But it is best to remain as one’s Self.

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# Bhagavan's Inquiry: Distinguishing the True from the False in the Age of Information (Part II)

*Michael Highburger*



We began the first part inquiring about *the Name that cannot be named* and how we might come to know the Self in light of the complexity of the digital era. We looked at how Bhagavan's inquiry interfaces with the digital reality of our world where social media algorithms take advantage of built-in vulnerabilities within the human psyche and keep us gravitating to our devices. We saw how false online narratives have a six times greater chance at proliferation than truthful ones, and how algorithms select information according to what increases user activity.

What are algorithms, after all? Derived from the name of the ninth-century Persian mathematician, Al-Khwarizmi, algorithms are sequences of detailed instructions guiding a

computation. In the super-computing modern world, they have become advanced. In the social network setting, algorithms prioritise which content a given user will want to see by the likelihood that they will want to see it, which, as we saw last time, selectively presents the user with information he or she will likely agree with. In the first segment, we saw how algorithms unintentionally corral us into filter bubbles and insulate us from alternative views, polarising members of contrasting information silos. If we are evolutionarily hard-wired to give greater importance to negative messages, as neurologists tell us we are, algorithms may have the effect of nudging users toward extreme content over time. If every imaginable hypothesis can

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be found on the internet, each with numerous adherents, filter bubbles seem to reinforce confirmation biases prompting users to continue believing widely debunked theories. We came to see increasingly that the internet is far from infallible, is not the Oracle of Truth we thought it to be.

We also saw that the manner in which the human community arrives at consensus has fundamentally shifted in the digital era. If formerly cultures arrived at ‘truth’ consensually, i.e., according to what a threshold number within a respective community held to be true, in the present digital tribe of billions, the fractional percentage that get on board with a dubious theory can link up online, form a virtual community, and establish a narrative that really could not have gotten traction even just two decades ago. If the way we are evolutionarily hard-wired is getting short-circuited by the new social arrangement, we began to see in the first segment how widespread division within and across nations, within families and across communities is born of a pervasive

lack of agreement on basic questions such as the shape of the earth. When a new theory circulates, we go online to see what others are saying about it. Establishing a given hypothesis based on a threshold consensus from the ‘local community’ of billions is tricky because we have no experience – evolutionarily speaking – of life in a community of that scale. Therefore, our perceptions regarding long-standing verification mechanisms in respect of what is true or false can be easily skewed.<sup>5</sup>

### **Architecture of the Ego**

In the first segment, we saw how the mechanism at work in algorithmic manipulation reflects basic functioning of the ego. The architecture of a filter bubble mimics that of the ego. Filter bubbles have fixed boundaries and establish firm limits on what they allow in. In general, ego only knows what is available within its own confines and is not keenly aware of the context within which it is situated. Algorithm driven opinions are similarly mediated discursively within a closed system, lacking self-reference and context.

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5 The Harvard psychiatrist and Ramana devotee, Dr. Carlos Lopez writes: ‘Social media algorithms uncannily resemble arecent neuroscience paradigm called “predictive coding”. The brain consumes 20% of the body’s total metabolic energy output and in order to use energy efficiently, manages a complex information processing circuitry. While algorithm based computerised technology mimics the brain in processing immense amounts of data per millisecond, it is not meant to mimic the innate wisdom of the body’s evolutionary biology (and instead, for instance, in the interest of increasing user activity, eschews information towards emotionally laden processing circuits such as the limbic system). Daily engagement with algorithm based social media can have devastating biological and psycho-social effects, especially in the developing brains of children, adolescents and young adults.’



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They operate within the frame of what is already known and are unable to see beyond their own boundaries. Their points of reference are inflexibly contained within the bubble itself. By contrast, intuitive knowledge born of *vichara* is self-aware and present to its surroundings. It possesses the potential for new ways of seeing and pans back to survey the full range of present conditions without getting bogged down in identification with them. Conceptual knowledge within a filter bubble is represented by a string of facts, images, labels and names, whereas intuitive knowledge is conscious of itself and what is beyond it. Filter bubbles invariably prompt us to cling to models of the world that conform to the views of its inhabitants and shun the views of those outside it. Intuitive knowledge is all-encompassing awareness that transcends the representational function of the mind and is thus global and unattached to views.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Moksha Element**

Here we may recall the classical teaching on the *object of human pursuit* as composed of four requisites (*purusharthas*), namely, *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*. *Dharma* is ethical life and moral development;

*artha* governs wealth, prosperity and comforts of life; *kama* is sense enjoyment and psychological well-being; and *moksha* is the transcendent dimension concerned with queries into a realm beyond this world, i.e., God, spirituality and ultimate freedom.

In the digital era, the first three largely remain intact, but the fourth has atrophied. In this context, *moksha* should not be seen only as the final goal, namely, realisation, but as the lens through which we view all of experience. Our views and opinions should be scrutinised through the prism of *moksha*, i.e. measured in the context of the larger frame of transcendence beyond this body and this world. This is one of *vichara's* key benefits, namely, to bring the transcendent divine dimension to bear on all our daily concerns, which include not only our fierce attachment to algorithmically driven opinions but the vexations that come with daily living. The *moksha* element puts into sharper focus existential questions about life, death and the reason to live, lightening our burden. Bringing the transcendent to bear on all our dealings helps us shake off the encapsulating power of former assumptions and fixed views that limit

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<sup>6</sup> Those drawn to extreme filter bubbles may suffer, among other things, psychological predispositions to addictive behaviour or social/cultural displacement (perhaps compounded by excessive device use) or deficits in psychological resilience born of early life trauma.

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the range of our understanding.

The tradition teaches us about the *moksha* element and the *vichara* moment when, for example, Arjuna consults Lord Krishna on the battlefield at Kurukshetra. Though Arjuna does not know it, his moral dilemma is born of limiting views. When the Lord illumines him with a transcendent frame for viewing the human predicament, his dilemma is resolved, and he is able to act. Here, Arjuna is the archetypal human person and Kurukshetra is the battlefield of life we all face. It is Arjuna's *vichara* that invokes the *moksha* element in the form of the Charioteer, who frees him from his conflict.



We see a similar moment in the Arunachala story when Vishnu in the form of a boar pauses after one hundred years of digging into the earth to discover the lower limits of the Pillar of Fire. The text says, he ‘humbled himself and sat in meditation.’ He began to inquire meaningfully into what the mighty pillar might actually be. His *vichara* led him to see that the Column of Light was the very Light of Awareness Itself, Its limits beyond any physical discovery, beyond any comprehension of It by the thinking mind.

### **Egoic Identification**

The first step in *vichara* is overcoming the assumption that tightly held views can take us there. *Vichara* overrides engaged thought, especially in its overtly conceptual form, which cuts us off from the direct experience of the Divine. Questioning, by contrast, helps us penetrate appearances in the thinking mind and pierces the veils that prevent us from seeing things as they are. *The Name that cannot be named* is that experience beyond words and labels. Thinking or philosophising about it or culling input from the vast troves of information on the internet cannot match a quiescent mind. Bhagavan tells us:

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*All the texts say that [...] one should render the mind quiescent; once this has been understood, there is no need for endless reading. In order to quieten the mind, one has only to inquire within oneself what one's Self is. How could this search be done in books? One should know one's Self with one's own eye of wisdom.*<sup>7</sup>

Direct experience can be unsettling as it leads us down the rabbit hole of the unconscious into the opaque mysteries of intuitive wisdom. Conceptual thought by contrast feels safe. It is lucid and bright and would seem to insulate us from the more daunting dimensions of life, not least of all, from discovering what we truly are and that all we cling to is without enduring substance. *Vichara*, by contrast, is not for the timid of heart, but helps us see through the comfort that distracting thought offers, born of its veiling power to shield us from the uncomfortable facts of life. In the meditation setting, we see that defilements and karmic imprints are not hidden away accidentally. Rather, at our peril, we deliberately employ compulsive thinking as one of the devices to keep the lid on anything that might be uncomfortable. The

inner silence that *vichara* elicits, however, is the daring path that allows the unconscious to become conscious. Bhagavan tells us:

*Silence is the ocean into which all the rivers of all the religions discharge themselves... It is the speech of the Self. What one fails to know by conversation extending several years can be known in a trice in Silence... That which Is, is Silence.*<sup>8</sup>

The tastelessness that comes with intensive *vichara* is one of the built-in resistances we have toward it, namely, the temporary disenchantment that comes with seeing directly that there is no small self and that the personality we cling to and call ourselves is but a collection of mental and physical functions of the mind and body. The law of change and the flow of changing conditions makes it clear that there is no earthly human security. We avoid the temptation to make thought a refuge by cultivating the psychological strength and the spiritual courage to face facts about our lives and the world around us.

*Vichara* is the means for freeing us up from our egoic identification which includes attachment to filter bubbles. Egoic identification is

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<sup>7</sup> *Who Am I?* §23.

<sup>8</sup> *Talks*, §594, §246; *Letters*, 3 Sept, 29 Nov 1947.

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mostly born of distracting thoughts in the mind. *Vichara* leads us to clear recognition and acceptance which in turn leads us to emerge from our digital cocoons. Like the internet, the mind is a network and has its own ‘algorithms’ designed to attract the user’s attention. It draws on its vast resources of memory and its unlimited capacity for imagination to generate captivating internal media (which invariably includes reverie about the future and reminiscences about the past). This is what we call distraction. *Vichara* is intended to lead us out from distracting thoughts in favour of the mind’s higher functioning. Egoic identification is nothing more than diversion and non-essential thinking. Since Bhagavan tells us there is no ego, and nothing substantial to be identified with, egoic identification can be seen as the mind’s failed struggle to be present to conditions day in and day out:

*You must exist in order that you may think. You may think these thoughts or other thoughts. The thoughts change but not you. Let go the passing thoughts and hold on to the unchanging Self. The thoughts form your bondage. If they are given up, there is release. The bondage is not external. So no external remedy*

*need be sought for release. It is within your competence to think and thus to get bound or to cease thinking and thus be free.*<sup>9</sup>

*Vichara* is all about upsetting the apple cart of egoic identification. If *vichara* is designed to lead us to the ultimate goal, it can also be used to lead us to the next step toward the goal. We don’t have to reach the goal all at once but can proceed step by step, making use of ‘applied *vichara*’ in a gradual process of egoic attrition.

### **Inquiring into the Deathless**

At this point we might ask, *Are all truths born of filter bubbles? Is there a Reality beyond filter bubbles?*

Bhagavan would respond by saying, *Find out who you are first, then take up these questions.* In other words, make use of *vichara* as the penetrating means for transcending egoic identification which would include the entanglements of the thinking mind as it relates to filter bubbles. In Bhagavan’s inquiry, we do not have the luxury of abdicating our role as devotees but with every step, must responsibly take stock of our circumstances – inner and outer – acknowledging moments when we become overconfident in our personal views.

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9 Talks, §524.

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*Vichara* guides us toward taking responsibility for life's hardships rather than conveniently blaming our troubles on those outside our filter bubbles. Clinging to views, opposing those who hold alternate views or bending reality to suit our clung-to narratives is the stuff of egoic identification. For Bhagavan, more important than knowing whether the earth is round or flat is developing the



capacity to disengage from worldly views. *Vichara* is just the tool for such disengagement. It brings the *moksha* element and helps us sift through mundane opinion to reveal genuine faith.

*Vichara* is not about seeking answers but about reframing the questions in order that we live them fully. Bhagavan's teaching is not something to *know* but something to *do*, something to put into practice. It is not that we need to know everything

about what ails us. Bhagavan never advised us to get to know a lot about what we are discarding. Rather, we just discard it. The same applies to what is not Self – we just let go of it. As for combatting algorithmic entanglement, there are simple practical interventions: *regulating device use, digital fasting, increased face-time interactions, and ongoing inquiry into filter-bubble driven opinions and views.*

Following Bhagavan, we bring inquiry into every aspect of our lives, not least of all, in the face of cultural decline. Amid a plethora of personalised information where truth is established by click preference, perfectly conformed to our hidden desires and longings, we have come to question whether the True Name can be known – *or if It even exists.* If we are following a life of *sadhana* offline, still we are 'downstream' from the social effects of algorithms used in social media which have altered the cultural landscape and unwittingly caused alienation within communities, families and in individual hearts, especially among youth.<sup>10</sup>

Bhagavan's inquiry is a life raft. In making use of it, we stand a chance at

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<sup>10</sup> Studies of feral children (i.e. children reared by animals) show that while having normally functioning brains, they are unable to develop healthy human cognition after a certain age. The same would apply to children 'reared' on heavy digital device use. Beyond a certain age, they might be unable to develop healthy human relationship skills.

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seeing clearly what is happening to us. If samsara was hard to push back on in Bhagavan's time, it is more difficult in an era where narcissistic impulses are not only collective and universal (as they have always been) but have now been engineered into the very machinery of modern communication.

In the excess of names flooding the logosphere, what is the True Name? And how would we recognise it if we chanced upon it? Bhagavan responds:

*The Guru's silence is vaster and more emphatic than all the sastras put together... His silence is the highest expression of the realised non-duality which is after all the true content of the Vedas. Though he instructs his disciples, he does not pose as a teacher, in the full conviction that teacher and disciple are mere conventions born of illusion. And so, he continues to utter words... But the other speech lies beyond thought. It is transcendent speech (para vak).<sup>11</sup>*

Theorising about the True Name may be satisfying but it is not liberating. It is understandable that we might mistake reflection on the teaching for true knowing, but true knowing, Bhagavan tells us, only comes when the sense of a separate self is removed.

The True Name cannot be an object in the universe nor mere content in any model of the universe but is rather the Container of the model. Nothing lies outside It. And yet, what does it mean to talk of a model? Is it not just another conceptual convention of the discursive mind?

*The name that can be named is not the eternal Name.* Why? Because in naming it, it becomes something else. *The Unnameable is the eternally real but naming is the origin of only particular things and not the ultimate.* In other words, that which can be named does not exist ultimately and unconditionally; that which exists ultimately and unconditionally cannot be named.

### **Conclusion**

Where does all this trouble originate? How did we get into this mess? What we are talking about here is the human condition, the challenge for every incarnation in a human body. If all organic systems possess a fundamental tendency toward stabilisation (*homeostasis*) and all physical matter is governed by the property of gradual decline into disorder (*entropy*), then conflict will arise for any species endowed with reflexive language and self-aware

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<sup>11</sup> *Talks*, §398, §449, and §68.

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consciousness.

We have alternatives as to how we meet this conflict, one of which is just pretending it is not there; another is forthrightly inquiring into it. If we look at it directly, perhaps the greatest concern is how pervasive it is, affecting billions around the globe.

It is not that the internet is a bad guy or that we should not use it – it offers great opportunities for the spiritual search. But our imperfect nature is having an adjustment problem in the face of machine intelligence that is powerful beyond our capacity to responsibly manage it in the short-run. We should therefore be aware how we use the internet – *and how it uses us* – for example, as a wilful veiling and distraction in the manner of the first alternative. The second alternative is the one Sri Ramana recommends, where we do not deny the reality of the human condition but look to its roots. By such inquiry, Bhagavan tells us, we come to see that while the personality and all we cling to as ‘ourselves’ does in fact die along with the body, we are *not* that. *The Name that cannot be named is beyond names*. The space between *namer* and *objects named* is neither an object nor the subject,

neither concerned with outcomes nor any future event, but is outside time, beyond strategies of gain and loss.

It’s not that there’s no Name. It’s just that we cannot *know* it until we *become* It. At the same time, Bhagavan tells us, *we already are It*. Yet we persist in the illusion of bondage and lose sight of it. *The Unnameable is the eternally real* and remains so, even in a world beset by algorithmic entanglement.

Can we just see all this for what it is? Can we just be aware of what has been perpetrated upon us – *be aware of what we have perpetrated upon ourselves* – and take steps to protect ourselves? If the outlook is not 100% positive, at least we don’t have to blame anyone. This is just humanity being human.

The egoic riddle has always been the same, even if now it has been taken to a new level. A Pali saying, *appamado amathapadan* (‘awareness is the path to the deathless,’) reminds us that the means for *solving* the egoic riddle is also ever the same, namely, to stay true to the path of Bhagavan’s inquiry, even to the last breath. ■

(series concluded)

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## The Blackest of Crows



Even the blackest of crows,  
when it alights upon beautiful golden  
Mount Meru,  
is transformed into the form of pure gold.

In just the same way, even those *jivas*  
who are entirely without distinction will,  
upon joining the presence of divine consciousness,  
one's own reality,  
attain by its glorious majesty  
the sublime form of the Self and shine.

[Therefore], my Lord and Master,  
may you bestow upon me that *mauna*,  
whose form is the expanse of true *jnana*,  
imprinting that truth upon my heart  
so that I no longer perceive myself  
as a form of flesh and blood.

~Ramana Puranam, lines 311-316,  
written jointly by Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Muruganar,  
translated from the original Tamil version by  
Robert Butler, T.V.Venkatasubramanian, and David Godman.

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# The Presence

Neera Kashyap



Unlike the elaborately-sculptured Murugan temple on the peak of the hill nearby, this temple had a simple *gopuram* with low flanking walls as entrance. Its deep veranda with white stone pillars was surmounted by a corrugated sheet and a temple facade with niches displaying deities and animals. The temple door was kept open. At the edge of the *vimana* built over the sanctum sanctorum sat a Nandi bull. It faced the sage sculpted on the sloping roof of an adjoining building housing guests. The sage was bearded, his stomach hollow, his body in *padmasana*. He was Palaniswamy who lived a century ago. The temple, situated on the outskirts of the village was built over his tomb by local villagers some forty years after his death. Little is known

about him except that he seemed not to do any work, but roamed around the village and the countryside. Towards the end of his life people noted, that whoever he touched was healed, especially those suffering from mental illness. No sacred ash, no *prasadam* – just his touch, sometimes deliberate, other times when sought. On either side of his sculptured body, lions sit staring at the sky, their backs to him.

In the central courtyard, beneath the shade of an enormous *neem* tree, 30-year-old Shekhar sat with his mother Shantamma. While she tried to cut his nails, his hands constantly twitched till he lurched away. Dressed in a pair of khaki shorts, his hairless chest bare, spittle hung in a fine thread from his mouth. When we first interviewed them, he had worn no clothes,

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had pulled at his mother's sari and kicked her when she had continued speaking to us. It was only over several interactions were we able to diagnose his condition as that of paranoid schizophrenia. This was the condition of most patients who had come to live here for a period of about six weeks or more - to heal - because they had heard of the sage or their parents had. Delusional and bipolar disorders with current manic episodes were the other conditions we could assess.

My colleague had left but I had stayed on to do an in-depth ethnographic study to understand the healing process. Interviews of the patients' illness experience and the caregivers' views of the possible causes had been culturally adapted. The temple trustee, Sivakumar, a descendant of the sage's family, had given me a room to stay in the temple complex, for the study could stretch over three months. It offered a view of the distant Palani hills. Catering mostly to people of the backward Gounder caste, the temple had simple rituals. There was a short puja in the mornings and the singing of hymns in the evenings. For the rest, the temple door was open at all times. Serving small landowners, farm laborers and factory workers, the stay was free. People donated what they could, though donations came

from other well-off Gounders, once a feudal upper-caste community with businesses that continued to flourish in turmeric and cotton farming, industrial and automobile components, and heavy vehicles.

Annamalai, the caretaker had rounded up some of the inmates and was instructing them on re-potting and manuring plants. Some had been put to work on the vegetable patch on the temple's boundary, while others worked in the kitchen or swept the grounds. A caregiver was ubiquitously present, working alongside. Kanakamma, a 60-year-old bipolar patient, scrubbed a large copper utensil at a hand pump, while her daughter Geetha bent to clean its insides. Two teenage boys followed Vishwanath, the temple priest among the jasmine bushes, plucking flowers as offering. As a psychiatrist I could see that the patients had no real focus in the work, often broken by a static gaze, a leaden stillness or a sudden stream of words. But because the staff worked naturally and the caregivers with motivation, the patients as a group could be moulded into a sort of unmotivated passivity.

Annamalai gestured to Shekhar with a hose pipe to come and water the plants. Shekhar stared back, his spittle blowing lightly in the breeze. He started to unbutton his shorts, but

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his mother shot up and hissed something in his ear. He stood, resisting, then looked in the direction of the temple. He began circumambulating it, slowly at first, then broke into a run. Ten rounds later, he stood before Annamalai who handed him the hose pipe, buttoning up Shekhar's half-open shorts, who then proceeded to liberally splash water on the dusty *champa* leaves till they glistened.

Shantamma pointed to the scars on her arms. He would beat me, beat his father, his brother, she said with a moan. He would break furniture, mobile phones, anything. He hardly ate, hardly slept...just this terrible gaze...anything could come bursting from those...those eyes.

This was their second long visit to this temple. Here, she said, she didn't have to chain him to a tree. Not like in that other temple where he had run wild into the streets. Do you think I have the strength to drag him back, she asked. They said he was possessed so amulets wouldn't work. Every evening we would attend the Guruthy<sup>12</sup>. There would be prayers and chanting to drumbeats. They said the good goddess would possess him and rid him of his evil spirit. When nothing improved after three days, they said we should

try medicines to calm him, to improve his sleep so the Guruthy prayer would work better. But he would spit out the medicines. Would not eat, would not sleep.

The teenagers, Shankar and Senthil followed the priest Vishwanath into the temple, holding brass plates heaped with jasmine. The bell rang for the mid-morning puja. The grey stone walls of the temple hall had niches, each adorned with a stone deity before which burnt an earthen lamp. The ceiling was whitewashed, discolored gray. At the end of the hall, within a granite open-pillar enclosure, on a raised platform, was a stone sculpture of the bearded sage in *padmasana*, a faint smile lighting a face deep in repose. Below were a *shivalinga* and Nandi – all three images garlanded with single strings of marigold.

The smoke from an oil lamp mingled with incense and camphor fumes as Vishwanath waved the offerings to the rhythmic ringing of a bell. The teenager Senthil refused to hand over his plate of jasmine flowers, despite a stern look from the priest, so Vishwanath gestured that he offer them himself. After a few minutes of agonizing, Senthil stepped into the pillared enclosure, stared at the sage

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12 A temple prayer session with drumbeats and chants designed to invoke the goddess to possess the patient in order to rid him/her of evil spirit possession

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and upturned the plate on his head, jasmine falling like slow rain, caught in the stone ridges of hair, beard and loincloth. At the end, as Vishwanath began chanting the Siva mantra, *Karpura Gauram Karuna Avataaram* many joined in, loudest and most tuneless among them was the voice of Kanakamma, her hands fervently folded at her chest, her sari still wet from the washing.

The simple lunch that followed was more strictly supervised. Sambar, rice, a chutney and cucumber slices were served on banana leaves on the floor. Annamalai and the kitchen staff made sure that the used leaves were washed clean of oil and wastes in an iron bucket full of water, the leaves collected to be fed to the cows. By turns, the guests swept clean the dining room floor, using a broom and rationed water.

By mid-October the rains had set in, the north-east monsoon winds cooling the earth, bringing plentiful showers. The evenings were the quietest, the blue outlines of the Palani hills washed and visible in the deepening dusk. This was the time I recorded the events of the day, adapting my notes to new findings revealed by caregivers or by observing changes in the behavior patterns of the patients. Kanakamma, who hailed from a small landowning

family, still spoke delusionally about her sons and sons-in-law being grey cotton kings and export leaders, who treated her like a queen... but less so. The teenager Senthil was still depressed, still withdrawn, still prone to visual hallucinations...but less so. Shekhar seemed not to show any improvement, still an insomniac, still resistant to instructions and to a sense of community. His mother had begun to show signs of depression.

Evening was also the time for the *satsang* in the temple when Pandit Vishwanath sat at his harmonium and sang hymns from the Tevaram, the Tamil compositions of three poet saints. This was the high point of the day when the inmates sat relatively quiet. Except for the occasional outburst which was hissed into silence by caregivers, the priest was able to sing uninterruptedly and with a fervor that rose with every verse. Sivakumar, the trustee usually attended the *satsangs* with his wife and daughter, later chatting freely with the inmates in the courtyard. Despite the sound of the rain, Vishwanath's voice rose clearly in the dim temple light. Eyes fixed on the sage's image, he sang one of Appar's songs that evening, his voice reverberating through the small hall:

*To none are we subject. Death we do not fear.*

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*We do not grieve in hell.*

*No tremblings know we, and no illnesses.*

*It's joy for us, joy day by day, for we are His.*

*Forever His, His; who does reign,  
our Sankara, in bliss.*

There was no preceding flutter, just a howl, a loud importunate howl. It was Shekhar, breathing heavily, his face contorted as he stared at a point in the unlit wall.

‘You are him’, he screamed. ‘You are him. You have come. You have come for me. You have come. At last... I will live...at last...’ Shantamma tried to pull her son down to the floor but he twisted out of her grasp and ran towards the wall, began hitting his head against it several times. With wild eyes he stared at the sage’s image in the pillared enclosure, ran towards it. He fell on the ground, raised his head and placed it on the sage’s lap. For a few minutes there was complete silence. Sivakumar signalled the assembled to leave the hall.

The rain had stopped as I caught up with Sivakumar at the temple entrance. I came straight to the point:

‘Sir, there are projects in many religious places in the country where allopathic clinics have been opened to treat patients with psychiatric ill-

nesses,’ I began. ‘On the premises of temples, *dargahs*, churches. The doctors don’t interfere with the beliefs of the patients, but offer proper diagnoses and medicines based on their mental condition. Sometimes, the religious centres send the patients to the clinics themselves, sometimes they bless the medicines before the patients start to take them. The results have been good, this combination of faith and medicine.’

Sivakumar listened, his face inclined, open. Then with a sweeping gesture towards the temple, he said: ‘He has been there for us. Always there. Now you have come. There must be something in this. Let him reveal his will. We will wait.’ He folded his hands and turned to join his family.

The next morning I saw Shantamma stretched on the cement slab under the *neem* tree. Her eyes were fixed on Shekhar who was assisting Vishwanath pluck flowers. Shekhar’s foot slipped and his plate of flowers fell into slush. As he stared at the mud-streaked flowers, his body trembled with anger. Calmly, Vishwanath picked up the plate, asked Shekhar to wash it and start again. The priest pressed the fallen flowers into a hedge, washed his hands with the garden hose before picking up his



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basket again. He slowed his pace as he waited for Shekhar to re-join him. Shantamma continued to gaze inertly from under the tree.

I noted more and more inmates going into the temple during free hours. The customary quiet of the temple was replaced by a noisy need as some used the temple to speak to each other, some pleaded loudly at the shrine, while others sat inert near their caregivers, staring blankly at the walls. Some caregivers would lead their afflicted kin to enter the shrine and touch Palaniswamy's sculptured image. Flowers or fruit were offered and *vibhuti* smeared liberally on their own foreheads. I never found Shekhar in the temple, though I sometimes saw Shantamma's shadowy figure slumped against a wall.

One wintry full moon night, I stepped out of my room to gaze at the clouds as they covered and uncovered the moon. The leaves of the coconut trees swayed in the breeze like enormous blades. It was nearly midnight. Unthinkingly, I found myself circum-ambulating the temple, as I had seen many others do. I was surprised to find the temple door shut. I pressed on the brass lever. The door opened. Except for one dim electric bulb, the hall was lit only by the oil lamps placed before

the sage and deities in the niches. I heard a voice I could not recognise. A high-pitched voice raised in appeal. A consistent plea. From his bent bare back and unruly hair, I recognised Shekhar. I stood rooted to the spot. After a long while, he turned around to look at me. His face was as clear as the unclouded moon.

At the end of my three-month stay, my colleague returned to help me make a second scientific assessment of the patients' recovery patterns. Of special note was the fact that this temple offered no amulets for healing, no mantras for chanting, and no ritual ceremonies for healing spirit possession. It offered the ever-living presence of a long-dead sage with special healing powers, a supportive trustee and his staff, a participatory work environment and daily reminders of the sage's sacred presence through pujas and hymns. We found an overall improvement in the symptoms of the people with psychotic illnesses who had earlier received no psychopharmacological interventions. We observed an improvement of nearly 20% in the psychiatric rating scale for these patients who had stayed an average of six weeks. This improvement matched what is achieved by prescribed medicines, including the



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newer psychotropic agents.

It was Shekhar who showed signs of a complete recovery. ■

---This story has been fictionalised from a study conducted by scientists from NIMHANS, India's leading institute for mental health sciences, at a healing temple in south India known

as a source of help for people with serious mental disorders. The study was published in the British Medical Journal on 6 July 2002, Volume 325.

--- This short fiction was first published in Yugen Quest Review, Dec-Jan, 2023.

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### Talk 107

Later the Yogi asked: How is the spiritual uplift of the people to be effected? What are the instructions to be given them?

M.: They differ according to the temperaments of the individuals and according to the spiritual ripeness of their minds. There cannot be any instruction *en masse*.

D.: Why does God permit suffering in the world? Should He not with His omnipotence do away with it at one stroke and ordain the universal realisation of God?

M.: Suffering is the way for Realisation of God.

D.: Should He not ordain differently?

M.: It is the way.

D.: Are Yoga, religion, etc., antidotes to suffering?

M.: They help you to overcome suffering.

D.: Why should there be suffering?

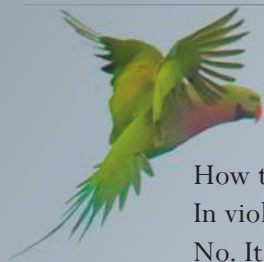
M.: Who suffers? What is suffering?

No answer! Finally the Yogi rose up, prayed for Sri Bhagavan's blessings for his own work and expressed great regret for his hasty return. He looked very sincere and devoted and even emotional.

### Talk 11

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

M.: The *karmas* carry the seeds of their own destruction in themselves.



# Hues of the Soul

Dr. Satish K. Kapoor

How to paint the soul –  
In violet?  
No. It may drive one cynic.  
Indigo?  
No. It may cause self-obsession.  
Blue?  
No. It lacks emotion.  
Green?  
No. Too much of it bores.  
Yellow?  
No. It augurs of caution.  
Orange?  
No. It betrays crassness.  
Red?  
No. It stimulates.

And then rang  
The inner voice:  
'Paint the soul with sensitivity,  
On the canvas of Infinity,  
Soaked in elixir of the Self,  
Using the brush of intuition.'  
Colours? No.  
The soul is colourless.  
It is Light of *chidakasha*—  
'Mental space',  
It is Vital breath,  
That does not breathe.  
It is Energy  
Of visible spectrum,  
Unseen and indivisible.  
It comes and goes,  
Without coming and going.

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# There Are No Others

*Prof. Vijay Vancheswar*



**T**he talk by Gautam Sachdeva, author of books on *advaita* and a disciple of the *advaita* guru Ramesh Balsekar on Sunday, April 23 at the Kendra premises, provoked reflection and an understanding of the core message of Sri Ramana: the only reality that perennially exists is the Source or Self. Everything else is a play of Consciousness. This play as Gautam expounded happens continuously in our minds. We ascribe reality to the individual self and take ownership of it. This generates the dichotomy of me and the other. And no wonder, the trouble starts. This polarisation strengthens our false sense of individuality and egoism.

More troublesome is the conflict that it kindles within us, fuelling the disturbing traits of judging, comparing, envying and condemning others. This dissipating dialogue is an on-going process triggered within us due to the play of duality in our minds. We are thus conditioned to become victims of this hard-wired mental evaluative mode. In turn, this affects our relationships; be it with family, friends, colleagues or strangers. Is there a way out of this trap? Gautam says, indeed there is. It requires us to examine ourselves and understand how life unfolds. On reflection, we find that no one has any autonomy over where (geography and

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location) he or she is born, to whom and with whom one interacts- at home, surroundings, school or college.

In other words, we as individuals cannot alter the so called ‘others’ for the better or worse. Each individual’s conditioning and propensity to get influenced varies and responds differently to situations, circumstances and challenges. A deep acceptance of this dissolves the barriers of others and oneself. It also enables us to shed our sense of ‘superiority’ as compared to ‘others’. The result: the tendency to judge, compare and criticize drops. The polarisation dissolves. The realization dawns that all of us are but pieces in the chessboard of life moved by a Higher Power, appearing as different representations of the divine; some as pawns, others as bishops, king or queen due to the play of divinity. Ultimately, all of us go back into the same box which created this divine hypnosis or persistent delusion. Quoting Joel Goldsmith, the American mystic philosopher, Gautam mentioned that it is far too easy to pray for our loved ones, but very demanding for those whom we typecast as enemies! To enable us do this, Goldsmith says that we need to ‘unself’ ourselves to acknowledge and appreciate that what really exists is only the one Self. All manifestations

that create the bipolar qualities relating to what we see and experience in the world are scripted as per a divine plan as per the will of God. As this truth gets reinforced, we start experiencing the sense of ‘*sakshi-bhav*’ or witness-consciousness. The resultant peace within us and towards others reflects in our attitude to life and our daily living. We are then able to totally accept that there is but one Power that governs what we see and experience.

Recalling Joel Goldsmith’s quote, ‘God resides above the pair of opposites’, Gautam mentioned how Ramesh Balsekar used to quip in jest, ‘From a level of simple imprisonment, we accentuate our entanglements to a level of rigorous imprisonment!’

Ending the talk on a reassuring note Gautam said, ‘God appears as individual beings. The remedy lies in not interrupting the flow of life and strengthening our trust in a Higher Power’. This acceptance will create in us faith in the truism: ‘The absence of me is the Presence of Peace’. What follows will be the understanding of the game of life, a state of awakening, delivering what is our birth right: Equanimity and Peace in daily living. ■

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# Only What Pleases Oneself and God

*S L M Patil*



**W**henever I visit a holy place, I find myself more taken with the devotees themselves than the presiding deity. Though this may sound a little strange, some chosen examples narrated below explain and validate my statement.

Some years ago I was at the not very well known ashram of a great yogi, Shri Bhausaheb Maharaja of Umadi, a village on the border of Maharashtra and Karnataka where the Nimbargi bhakti tradition made a great advancement in spirituality. It was the month of Shravan which is holy for Hindus. I saw in the ashram a senior male devotee who was also a local leader and farmer. He was keeping *mouna vrat* (observance of silence) for the entire month. He told me some time later that he had had

enough of loud songs and rituals in other places during this month. Therefore he attends this ashram every year and maintains silence for a month. Besides this, he practises meditation sitting cross- legged for hours without any movement. It was a lesson in humility for me when he further said that while listening to the discourses in the ashram, he indulges in introspection to check if he is going wrong anywhere in his spiritual practice, and also to find out whether he possesses the qualities being mentioned in the discourses. His humility and his love for silence, introspection, and meditation were inspirational.

In the same ashram, I observed several times, just before the start of bhajans and discourse, a sick, old, and poor man entering the main hall

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with the help of crutches made of two poles. When the discourse got over, he suddenly started singing devotional songs energetically in an enthralling voice. He sang as if God was standing before him and listening to him. When I spoke to him he said he had been visiting the place ever since he was a child. He was not a Hindu.

My next visit to a nearby village, the place of Bhausahab Maharaj's guru, sprang another surprise. I visited the temple which was almost deserted except for two senior local devotees. One was eighty years old. He looked after all the affairs in the temple. He enthusiastically showed all the renovations made for ensuring the comfort of visiting devotees. While departing I casually asked him his name. He said he was Devisab. He then shared some interesting information. "I am a Muslim. My father's name is Imamsab. The yogi of this place and my grandfather were great friends. Hence this relationship," he explained. "Knowing this, people in my village have given me a nickname (it was not clearly audible)," he further said, smiling innocently. I touched his feet with reverence.

Once, during a visit to the Vaishno Devi temple in Jammu, I saw a Punjabi lady ascending the long winding

stretch of steps leading to the temple. She was dancing and singing bhajans all the way to the shrine. She was unaware of everything else around her, and was taken over by the ecstasy of her bhakti.

In another incident, I met a lady, from Germany, at the famous Goddess Mookambika temple in Kollur, a coastal town in Karnataka. Drawn by her devotion and behaviour, my wife and I entered into a conversation with her. She had been visiting that temple for the last twenty years, she told us. She had been interested in spirituality from her childhood and was particularly attracted to the Indian modes of prayer. Whenever she came here, she stayed in a room in a little remote lodging. "Is it comfortable?" I asked. "Comfort is at home," pat came the reply. "It has only the basic needs," she explained. She seemed to be content with her accommodation.

I further asked her if she had visited Sri Ramanasramam in Tiruvannamalai, down south. She said she had visited it some time back in summer when the temperature was as high as 50 degrees and there was nobody out on the streets during the daytime. People came out only in the evenings, she said. In her room she had kept an open bottle of water below a fan to

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bring down the temperature, a little. I asked her if she had felt there the presence of the departed saint. I knew the answer. But I wanted to hear it from her. “It is impossible not to feel it,” she asserted mildly, to my pleasure. But that was not all. The next morning, at the temple, many devotees were queueing up and jostling for the darshan of the goddess Mookambika, which is a normal sight in a big temple. But I noticed in a cubicle in the courtyard of the temple, a woman sitting all by herself in meditation, basking in the glory of the early morning sunshine. It was the same German lady now in *padmasana*, in monk mode, unmindful of other devotees. This was a scene to behold and to emulate.

In a slightly different situation, some time ago I boarded a train. There were two other women passengers in the same bogie with us who were on their way to Tirupati. One of the two was an elderly woman, apparently semi-educated. Her pilgrimage was being sponsored by her companion who was more well off. The first woman was describing her experience of climbing a hill to visit Srisailem temple in Andhra Pradesh. The second woman asked her what if a pilgrim slipped and fell down? The first one replied in a matter-of-fact way that if it so happened, it should be consid-

ered a good death. But immediately she added that God takes care. She further said one should not think of one’s family, home, or anything else when one sets out on a pilgrimage. Interestingly for me, a few days before this incident, I had heard an old, famous Kannada devotional folk song in which the singer tells an imaginary listener not to yearn for one’s hamlet while climbing up the hill to see God. One has to just surrender oneself to Him, the song advised. I felt as if this woman on the train was retelling in the present the lines written by an unknown poet, from a time long past. Apart from leading a devout life, the female passenger was also a good singer of devotional songs, we were told. But by this time we had arrived at our destination, and we had to get off the train.

The above narratives are sporadic, and therefore do not form a systematic approach to a specific spiritual practice. But each one is complete in itself. The first one shows how the Shravan month can be observed in a true spirit of self-restraint. The second one presents an earnest man, looking almost like a destitute, but rich in spiritual feeling. This and the third narrative show how religious denominations are transcended by true believers. It also shows the impact of a great saint, at



least on the people in the region. The dance itself was an offering to the goddess, in the instance of the pilgrim to Vaishnodevi. It was one kind of meditation, if one may like to call it as such. The German lady may not be uncommon, but her endurance, clarity of purpose and steadfastness are. The last episode exhibit the pleasure of going on a pilgrimage in a spirit of

adventure, submission, and faith all of which are deeply rooted in the minds of simple folk.

All my experiences indicate that spiritual life can be lived without rituals, huge donations, or high philosophy, paying attention to only what pleases oneself and God. ■

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### Talk 121

Talks between the Master and two Moslems on a previous occasion.

*D.:* Has God a form?

*M.:* Who says so?

*D.:* Well, if God has no form is it proper to worship idols?

*M.:* Leave God alone because He is unknown. What about you? Have you a form?

*D.:* Yes. I am this and so and so.

*M.:* So then, you are a man with limbs, about three and a half cubits high, with beard, etc. Is it so?

*D.:* *Certainly.*

*M.:* Then do you find yourself so in deep sleep?

*D.:* After waking I perceive that I was asleep. Therefore by inference I remained thus in deep sleep also.

*M.:* If you are the body why do they bury the corpse after death? The body must refuse to be buried.

*D.:* No, I am the subtle jiva within the gross body.

*M.:* So you see that you are really formless; but you are at present identifying yourself with the body. So long as you are formful why should you not worship the formless God as being formful?

The questioner was baffled and perplexed.

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# Aradhana 2023

Bharati M



The day that Sri Ramana Maharshi died is honoured as Aradhana day, when we remember once again the miraculous glory of the meteor that floated up and vanished behind Arunachala hill, the union of self with self, a divine event witnessed by many even as far away as Mumbai.

This year the Delhi Kendra came alive again for one vibrant evening. Each event feels thrilling, coming as it does after interludes of sleepy silence. I had undertaken to document the lecture for publication in the *Direct Path*, but Bhagavan decided to play *Nattkhatt* Gopal, mischievously ensuring that the Presence not be recorded by gadgets and other trivial worldly means. My camera was totally discharged and the battery cable just

would not maintain contact for more than a few seconds. Finally, the cable managed to gather enough charge to take a few photos, provided I did not drain the battery by using the flash for the night photography. I ran, reaching the shrine only after the function had begun. It was a delight to enter the brightly lit hall, full of colourfully dressed people, radiant faces, a mood of joy and festivity. Ramana's smile held a hint of mischief as I noticed my usual seat, right in front of the altar, was vacant.

After the invocatory pujas, Sri Vijay Vancheswar introduced the speaker for the evening. Sri Anish had a spiritual awakening through a series of events during his childhood. Later, education and career led him to the corporate world; but then deaths

of persons close to him jolted him to begin serious search for the meaning of life via exploring death. He took six months leave from his job, thinking a road trip would facilitate the inner quest. Two months later, hungry, he parked his car at an ashram gate where he saw food was being served freely. He joined the line and experienced his first Ramanasramam prasad.

Sri Anish spoke about his experiences and the lessons he had learnt. The very first one at the meditation hall was an instruction from Bhagavan not to read any book for ten years, rather learn through *anubhava*, personal experience. He said that the death day of a saint was even more important than the birthday, as the divine power of the inner presence becomes more profound, more widespread, as the mortal shell is about to be discarded. Thousands had gathered at Tiruvannamalai in 1950 as news of the illness and impending passing of Sri Bhagavan spread. The devotees were feeling great sorrow, dreading the removal of their beloved master's presence from this earth. Sri Anish said that they did not realise that during the period of two hours prior and two hours after the time of death, great transmission occurs. Loved ones and those closely linked with the saint, are showered with immense divine ener-

gy. How much they are able to receive and hold depends upon the intensity of their longing for self-realisation.



He also said that on every anniversary of the transmission, the energies repeat the pattern, and a situation which can only be described as profound is created again. Devotees should benefit from these annual occurrences through intense yearning.

Sri Anish spent the next nine months totally immersed in Ramana Maharshi's teachings, starting with the death experience and other explorations of the phenomenon called death. Invited to address Ramana devotees at the Delhi kendra on this very special occasion, Sri Anish felt he needed to support his theories by referencing texts of the Ramana lineage. Quoting from *Talks with Ramana Maharshi*, January 1935, he told us that Bhagavan answered in the affirmative when asked by a foreign visitor whether a master (guru) was necessary for self-realisation. The master's grace is the primary and essential cause for self-realisation. All other things, study, meditation, *japa*, etc., are secondary.

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From this answer, Sri Anish felt two questions arise. 1. Who is a master? 2. How can one identify a true master when there are so many fakes and pretenders around? Some further quotations from talks were used to address these two questions.

There was simplicity and quiet strength in the way the talk was presented. One would have appreciated a chance to ask questions, and learn more about his personal journey which he seemed quite happy to share. Sri Anish quoted texts only where they supported his own personal experience. He claimed that he taught nothing that he had not explored and discovered by himself.

This talk was followed by music. JayanthiAiyar and a group of ladies, accompanied by a young violinist, sang Bhagavan's *Pancharatnam*, along with other bhajans, ending with the *Arunachala Shiva* composition

(Marital Garland of Verses), which was timed to conclude at 8.47pm, the time when Bhagavan escaped the body, to the singing of this very refrain, 73 years earlier.

Arati, offering of food, and distribution of prasad concluded the evening. Some photographs were taken. My pen strangely acted as though the refill was empty, although it wasn't. Later I learnt that the online live transmission and video recording that had been announced by the kendra for devotees who could not attend personally, also did not happen. I have recounted the evening program in these few paragraphs, but did all this really happen? Was this what was really said? Even photographs can be faked. Finally, each person's truth is only what each chooses to believe and understand. Or rather, what *nattkhatt* Bhagavan wishes us to know! ■

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#### Talk 543.

Many visitors came on one occasion and they all saluted Sri Bhagavan with the single prayer, "Make me a *bhakta*. Give me *moksha*." After they left Sri Bhagavan said, thinking aloud: All of them want *bhakti* and *moksha*. If I say to them, 'Give yourself to me' they will not. How then can they get what they want?

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# आत्म पूछताछ प्रणाली: एक व्यावहारिक दृष्टिकोण

डॉ अमरनाथ कुलकर्णी



डॉक्टर साहब को किसी काम से गाँव जाना था। आज उनका पुराना ड्राइवर नहीं आया था तो उन्होंने किसी नये ड्राइवर को बुलाया। उस ड्राइवर ने नाश्ता नहीं किया था। वह बोला — “मैं नाश्ता करके आधे घंटे में वापस आता हूँ।” ऐसा कहकर वह उनकी कार लेकर चला गया। बहुत समय बीत गया लेकिन वह नहीं आया। डॉक्टर साहब को चिंता होने लगी। मन में अनेक विचार उठने लगे। आधे घंटे से वे उसे फोन कर रहे थे पर ड्राइवर उनका फोन नहीं उठा रहा था। उसका फोन व्यस्त आ रहा था। डॉक्टर लगभग ४० मिनट तक उसे फोन करते रहे लेकिन फोन नहीं उठा।

यह ड्राइवर डॉक्टर साहब के लिए नया था। पहली बार ही वह उसके साथ गए

थे। ऐसा होता है तो मन को क्या लगता है? शंका होती है कि कहीं वह कार लेकर भाग तो नहीं गया होगा? डॉक्टर साहब ने पूरे गाँव में उसे खोजा, जहाँ-जहाँ वह जा सकता था, सभी जगह उसे ढूँढा लेकिन वह नहीं मिला। आखिरकार डॉक्टर जी उसकी शिकायत दर्ज करने के लिए पुलिस स्टेशन गए।

उन्होंने पुलिस स्टेशन के अंदर पैर रखा ही था कि ड्राइवर का फोन आ गया! तब उन्होंने उससे पूछा — “भाई! आपने ऐसा क्यों किया? फोन क्यों नहीं उठाया?” वह बोला — “मैं इतनी देर तक अपनी पत्नी से बात कर रहा था, इसलिये आपके फोन का मुझे पता ही नहीं चला।” (उसका फोन पुराना था, एंड्राइड नहीं था, उस में कॉल वेटिंग का ऑप्शन भी नहीं था।)

और वह अपनी पत्नी के साथ बात करने में व नाश्ता करने में इतना मशगूल था कि उसे किसी और चीज का ख्याल तक नहीं रहा। बाहर के जगत का उसको कुछ पता ही नहीं था।

डॉक्टर जी ने उसे डाँटा और कहा – “तुम ऐसा कैसे कर सकते हो? ४० मिनट कहकर गए थे और एक घंटा ४० मिनट हो गये! हम कितने चिंतित हो गए थे।”

(अब इसके संस्करण को बाजू रखते हैं। ये था इस घटना का पहला पहलू। अब दूसरा पहलू देखते हैं।)

जब भी हम कोई नया नौकर रखते हैं तो उसका फोटो, आधार कार्ड, लाइसेंस आदि पहचान के तौर पर अपने पास रख लेते हैं लेकिन डॉक्टर जी ये भूल गए थे। जब भी ऐसी कोई घटना घटती है तब हमारी अजागरूकता पता चलती है और कार के प्रति कितना ममत्व है, संबंध संग्रह के प्रति कितनी आसक्ति है, इसका पता चलता है। और ‘शुद्ध मैं हूँ’ में कितनी स्थिति है, इसकी भी जाँच हो जाती है।

निसर्गदत्त महाराज के अनुवादक रमेश बालशेखर जी कहते हैं कि मन दो तरह के होते हैं। काम करनेवाला (शुद्ध मैं हूँ वाला) और विचार करने वाला। जब भी ऐसी कोई समस्या आती है तब हमें पूरे मन से काम करना चाहिए, विचार नहीं करना चाहिए लेकिन हम विचार अधिक कर लेते हैं और

काम कम करते हैं। ‘इसका क्या हो गया होगा? उसका क्या हो गया होगा? आगे क्या करना चाहिए? आदि-आदि’। हमारी पूरी योजना चलती रहती है।

डॉक्टर साहब के मन में एक ओर से भगवान का नाम चल रहा था और दूसरी ओर कार का चिंतन भी। बाद में डॉक्टर जी ने देखा कि उनका चिंतन ही है जो की उन्हें दुःख दे रहा था। ड्राइवर या कार आकर उन्हें दुःख नहीं दे रहीं थी। उस ड्राइवर की डॉक्टर साहब को दुखी करने की कोई मंशा नहीं थी। तो इस वक्त डॉक्टर जी की ‘शुद्ध मैं’ में ‘मेरी कार’ की धारणा बनी हुई थी। अब वह धारणा भी समाप्त हो रही है और इसीलिए उनको दुःख हो रहा है। कार तो आधा घंटा पहले भी नहीं थी लेकिन उसके लिए दुःख नहीं हो रहा था। जब उन्होंने ड्राइवर को कार के लिए फोन किया और उसने फोन नहीं उठाया, तब उन्हें दुःख हुआ।

इसका मतलब यह हुआ कि कार से भी कोई दुःख नहीं हुआ। उसकी याद से दुःख हुआ। याद से भी दुःख नहीं हुआ। उस याद को हम निश्चित करना चाहते हैं तो दुःख होता है। मैं-मेरा, बना के रखने में भी दुःख नहीं है लेकिन वह चला जा रहा है, हमसे छिन रहा है, इस पकड़ (आसक्ति) कारण दुःख हो रहा है। इससे पहले एक सत्संग में उन्होंने सुना



था कि कुछ संत केवल आचरण ही करते हैं, बोलना नहीं चाहते। वो एकदम परम शुद्ध संत हैं। इससे उनको पता चला कि — “मैं (डॉक्टर साहब) तो बोलता हूँ, मैं बड़ा ब्रह्मज्ञानी संत जैसी एक्टिंग करता हूँ, लेकिन अभी मेरा “मैं-मेरा” तो हो रहा है। आसक्ति गई नहीं है।” मतलब यह है कि डॉक्टर साहब को कोई ज्ञान नहीं हुआ क्योंकि आत्मा में दृश्य जगत नहीं है। लेकिन डॉक्टर जी का ध्यान केवल एक कार और एक ड्राइवर पर ही केंद्रित था, बाकी सब से (आत्मा से) हट गया था।

डॉक्टर साहब ने इस घटना से कुछ चीजें सीखीं। पहली कि ड्राइवर ड्यूटी पर है, यह भूल ही गया, वह मन से उसकी पत्नी के साथ घर पर ही बैठा है या नाश्ता करने में लगा है, वह जहाँ है, वही है। अर्थात् उसका मन एक ही वृत्ति में टिका है। इसी तरह हमारा मन ध्यान भी ब्रह्म में लगता तो कितना अच्छा होता। लेकिन हमारा मन जहाँ से “मैं हूँ” उठता है, उस पर नहीं, नाम-रूप पर है। कार, ड्राइवर, डॉक्टर, (ये सब नाम-रूप) इनमें रुचि है, ये ज्ञान नहीं है।

दूसरी सीख थी कि ड्राइवर सांसारिक था। वह ड्यूटी पर है, ऐसा होगा, भूल ही गया। (डॉक्टर साहब बुलाएंगे या उसको कोई फोन भी आ सकता है, यह तो वह भूल ही गया।) ऐसा ही हम को — परमात्मा

में संसार है, संसार में कुछ होगा — ऐसा पता ही नहीं चलना चाहिए। ऐसे लगे रहो, जैसे राजा की सवारी आए और आपको पता ही न चले।

तो यहां ध्यान दे की काम भी करना है, ऐसा नहीं है कि काम करना छोड़ देना है। लेकिन व्यवहार आत्मा से जुड़कर करना है। अगर हमारी कोई वस्तु चली जाती है तो क्या करना चाहिए? हमें हर परिस्थिति के लिए तैयार रहना चाहिए। वस्तु रहेगी तो रहेगी या फिर चली जाएगी, यह भी एक संभावना है। (अनुकूल-प्रतिकूल दोनों स्वीकार होनी चाहिए।)

डॉक्टर जी के मन में दो तरह के विचार चल रहे थे — एक तो मन में नारायण— नारायण चल रहा था। दूसरा यह था कि गुरुजी (डॉक्टर साहब के मार्गदर्शक) से मार्ग दर्शन लेंगे। नहीं तो पुलिस में शिकायत दर्ज करेंगे। इसलिए डॉक्टर जी लगातार फोन करते ही रहे, कि—जैसे ही उस की बात खत्म होगी, वह फोन उठाएगा। यह सब अभ्यास से होता है। फिर पता चला, यह ड्राइवर ओवर कॉन्फिडेंट (अति विश्वासी) है।

(अभी आधा घंटा नहीं हुआ, अभी डॉक्टर जी फोन नहीं करेंगे, यह सब नाटक (मन की चाल) है।)

ब्रह्म ज्ञान में ‘जो पता नहीं है’, उसी जगह (अज्ञात अवस्था में) रहना है। ऐसे

ही कार का गुम होना, ड्राइवर का फोन नहीं उठाना, डॉक्टर साहब को पता नहीं था लेकिन इसी से उनको ज्यादा ज्ञान हुआ। जब कोई हमारा अपमान करता है या अपनत्व को छीन लेता है, तभी ज्ञान होता है। सपने से ज्ञान नहीं होता। जब सपना खत्म हो जाता है, तब ज्ञान होता है। ऐसे ही, 'यह कार मेरी है,' यह सपना खत्म हो रहा है। जो चीज आपकी नहीं है वह छीन ली जा रही है। वैसे तो कार किसी की नहीं है, पंचतत्व की है। उसमें "मैं-मेरा" लगा दिया। इसको बार-बार खोजेंगे तो पता चलेगा कि मेरा कुछ नहीं है, सब प्रकृति का है। ऐसे ही यह शरीर भी पंचतत्व का है, मन भी पंचतत्व (शब्द-स्पर्श-रूप-रस-गंध) का ही है।

ध्यान से देखो, जांच करो कि अभी हमारा दुःख किससे हो रहा है? क्या शब्द-स्पर्श-रूप-रस-गंध ज्ञानेन्द्रियों से हो रहा है? यदि हाँ, तो खोजो! क्या वह हम हैं? क्या याद से हो रहा है या चित्त/मेमोरी से हो रहा है? जाँचो कि वह मैं हूँ क्या? जब भी ऐसी घटना घटती है, तब आपको 'शुद्ध मैं हूँ' के बारे में जल्दी पता चलता है। हमारे जीवन में जो भी प्रतिकूलता आती है, आनी ही चाहिए, बहुत अच्छा है। अहंकार का मरण होना चाहिए, यही कोशिश है। मृत्यु की मृत्यु, अहंकार की मृत्यु ही पुरुषार्थ हैं। (पुरुष अर्थात्

आत्मा, मृत्यु अर्थात् अहंकार।)

अभी मैं, (डॉक्टर जी) रोज बोलता हूँ कि मेरा कुछ नहीं, मेरा कुछ नहीं, लेकिन जब कार चली गई, तब पता चला, कि उसमे मेरी कितनी आसक्ति है। ऐसे ही, एक दिन पूरा संसार, पूरी जाग्रत अवस्था, एक सेकंड में बंद हो जाएगी, तब अनंत दुःख होगा। मैं-मेरा बढ़ाकर हम अनंत जन्मों की तैयारी कर रहे हैं और कहते हैं कि हमें ब्रह्मज्ञान हो गया है। सरासर झूठ!, झूठानंद सरस्वती महाराज, बोगसानंद सरस्वती महाराज। इतना सारा 'मैं हूँ-मैं हूँ' (अहंकार) रखते हुए बोलते हो 'मैं हूँ, कुछ नहीं, कुछ नहीं'।

ऐसे ही जब हमारा बच्चा गुम हो जाये, हमारे पैसे खो जाए या सोने की चेन खो जाए, तब वास्तविकता (मैं-मेरे) में पता चलता है कि अपनी शांति कितनी हैं। जो खोया है, वो चाहे मिल जाय या खो जाए, लेकिन जब तक मनोनाश नहीं होता, तब तक आसक्ति मिटती नहीं है। इसलिए जो 'मैं' विचार उठ रहा है, उसको देखते रहना चाहिए। योग वासिष्ठ में आता है आइना का प्रतिबिंब के साथ कोई संबंध नहीं, ऐसे ही मन (शुद्ध मैं) के साथ मैं, तू, यह और वह (वस्तु, व्यक्ति, विचार) का कोई संबंध नहीं है। ■

[e-mail:dramarnathkulkarni2@gmail.com]



12<sup>th</sup> February



Michael James continued the series of discourses on *Anma Viddai*. He took up the latter portion of the first verse and said that only the light of the pure awareness ‘I Am’ is real and the darkness of ignorance is false. All thoughts, and even the body and the world, sprout from this darkness and are unreal.

--- AS

Online link to this talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dU4v7pOHAw4>

18<sup>th</sup> February



Mahasivaratri was celebrated with great devotion at the Kendra. A Rudrabhishekam was conducted in the shrine for the third consecutive year. This special worship went on for twelve hours. Anuraag Sunder, the secretary of the Kendra, participated in this worship along with many devotees who were present in person and virtually.

--- AS

Online link to this event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi8f57AihxI>

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26<sup>th</sup> February

Raghavji spoke on the contents of *Self-Enquiry*. He said that self-enquiry is a comprehensive and complete process which removes one's identification with the gross, subtle, and causal bodies. By the grace of the guru and the practice of self-enquiry one can address much of what that creates distress and results in suffering.

--- AS

Online link to this talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMnNoYpI8J4>

26<sup>th</sup> March



More questions and answers contained in *Self-Enquiry* were explained by Raghavji. He said that there is no separation between an object and consciousness. The more one meditates on the form of Ishvara or of one's guru, the more one is able to disregard the diverse things in the world and develop surrender.

--- AS

Online link to this talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTZsTJaS8H8>

30<sup>th</sup> April

Sri Raghav Kumar covered the eleventh question in *Self-Enquiry*. He said that the mind becomes identical with the Self when it assumes its true nature. The words of the guru dissolve our ignorance which makes us attached to the mind and the world. The mind plays the game of negating the guru's words.

--- AS

Online link to this talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49y0AOqHAg4>

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## Letters to the Editor



We have started this new segment, Letters to the Editor with the aim of relating more closely with our readers. We would truly welcome feedback and suggestions. These should be sent directly to the Editor: [editor.dp@rkdelhi.org](mailto:editor.dp@rkdelhi.org) with the subject line: ‘Letters to the Editor’

Dear Advait,

Very well done!

Your editorial on Bhagavan’s everlasting Presence beyond the mortal frame captures the essence of his Power, which resides as Consciousness within all of us.

I am happy to see the Hindi translation and the professional layout.

Best Wishes. Keep it up.

*Prof. Vijay Vancheswar*

### Talk 13

Mrs. M. A. Piggot, an English lady, who had read “Search in Secret India”, came to see the Maharshi. The services of a disciple as interpreter were provided. There were many visitors at the time in the hall, including some ladies with their infants. The place resounded with noise. At length silence prevailed. Suddenly Maharshi, who seemed to be looking at infinite space, was heard to say softly, “Monkey”! A little baby was then discovered in the doorway (unobserved by the mother who was seated on the other side of the door) with a large monkey standing on his hind legs, who with both hands was fondling the child not hurting it in the slightest, both being at peace with each other in Maharshi’s presence. When Maharshi’s voice was heard the monkey jumped away adroitly and disappeared. The incident greatly impressed the lady.



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*The results of Karma (Action) pass away,  
and yet leave seeds that cast the agent  
into an ocean of Karma.  
Karma yields no salvation*

*Ramana Maharshi {Upadesa Saram (2)}*

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Talk 257.

D.: A certain young man from Dindigul spoke to Sri Bhagavan, saying that he had learnt by his stay for a few days; that all that he need do was to enquire, "Who am I?" He wanted to know if any discipline was to be observed and started with the question: "Where should I do the enquiry?" meaning if he should do it in Guru sannidhi (the presence of the Master).

M.: The enquiry should be from where the 'I' is.

D.: People labour for gaining the summum bonum of life. I think that they are not on the right track. Sri Bhagavan has made considerable tapas and achieved the goal. Sri Bhagavan is also desirous that all should reach the goal and willing to help them to that end. His vicarious tapas must enable others to reach the goal rather easily. They need not undergo all the hardships which Sri Bhagavan has already undergone. Their way has been made easy for them by Sri Bhagavan. Am I not right?

Maharshi smiled and said: If that were so everyone would easily reach the goal, but each one must work for himself.

**"When the mind turns away from the objects, it beholds its source, consciousness. This is Self-abidance."**

**Ramana Maharshi (Upadesa Saram-16)**

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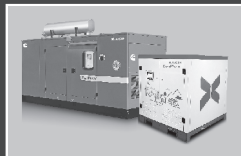


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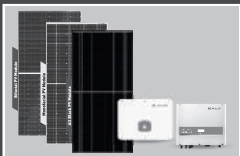
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