

# Aham Sphurana

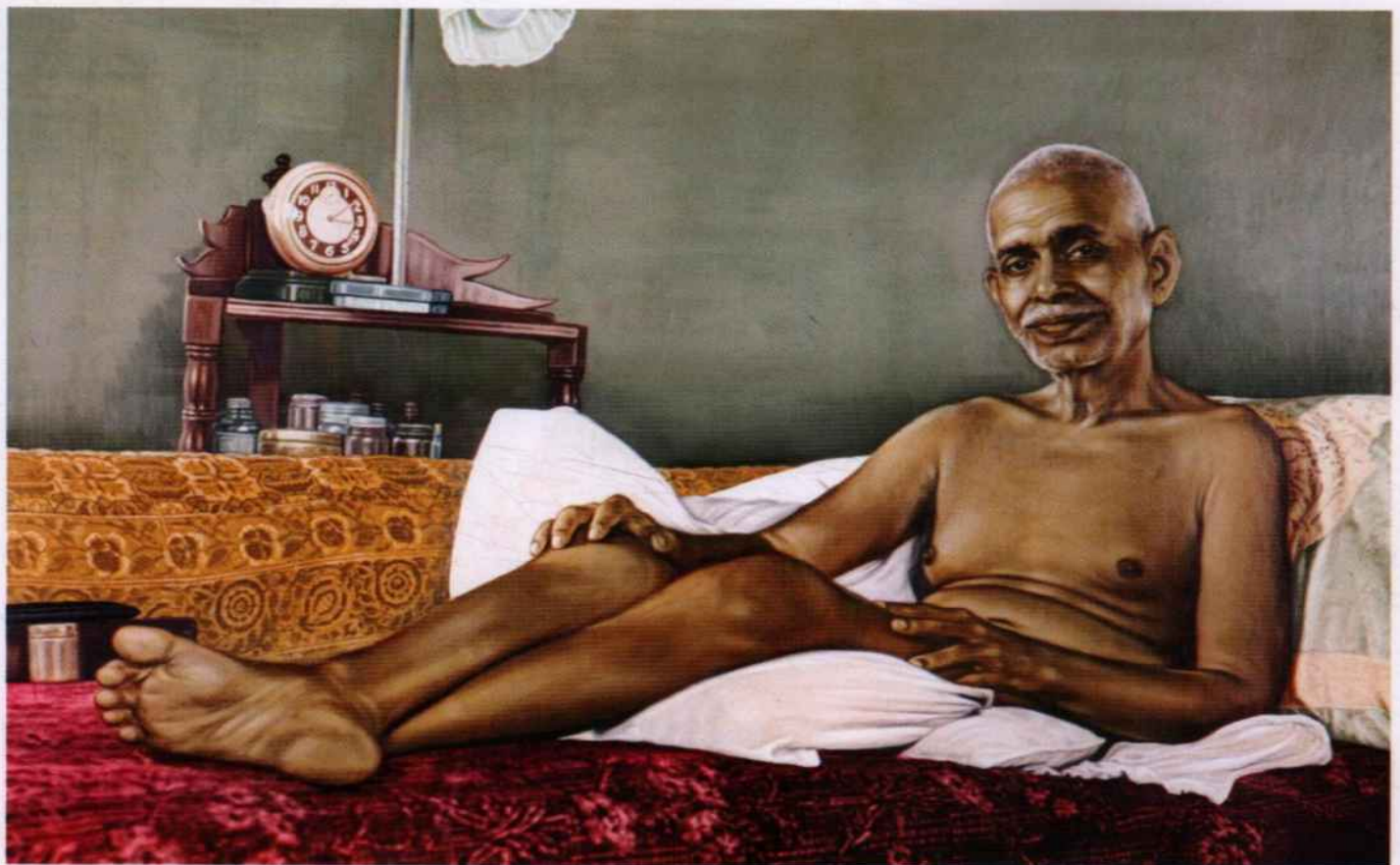
Scintillations of Jnana

from

**Sri Ramana Maharshi**

*A Journal Containing  
Previously Unpublished Conversations  
with the Master*

Transcribed by Swami Coopananda & A. R. Athreya



**Aham Sphurana : Scintillations of Jnana**  
**from**  
**Sri Ramana Maharshi -**  
**A Journal Containing Previously Unpublished**  
**Conversations with the Master**

**Compiler's Note to the Reader:**

Highly Esteemed Reader,

I consider it my duty to make certain clarifications to you at the outset. The tome that you are holding in your hands is not a book. It is merely a manuscript that has been digitised and presented here in its original form. But surely, you will question, what is a manuscript doing in a printed form before it is made ready for publication? The answer is that it contained so many interesting features in its original manuscript form that I simply did not have the heart to deprive the reader of the fun that I had going through it. This manuscript is meant for you only if you have a TRULY ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF PATIENCE. I am quite aware that the language used in the work is cumbersome and causes strain upon the reader's mind; it easily resembles content that can be expected to flow out of a Victorian gentleman's pen. Yet, I have not made the effort to simplify it, for fear that my poor linguistic skills may tamper with the precious meaning. You will further notice that the linguistic flow of Bhagawan's words throughout this work is somewhat jumpy and not at all the kind of shiny, polished language that you would expect to find in an expertly edited volume of this size and price. You may take it that this could be so on purpose, since the master always preferred his works to be translated strictly in literal fashion, although considerations of aesthetic taste might have to suffer setbacks in consequence.

The task of bringing out this work in a way that will appeal to a reader who has not much time in his hands, but would simply like to glimpse some further useful material on the technique of self-enquiry in addition to the stuff contained in the Ashram publications, has been left to the Ashram itself. A copy of this material has been forwarded to the Ashram sometime prior to the outbreak of the Coronavirus Pandemic, and they are either making efforts to bring out in a form that can be published as a book or they have thrown it away after having decided that the entire text is spurious and does not deserve the slightest consideration or serious attention. This material, I repeat, is not a book, and is a manuscript that demands to consume every last reserve of patience that you have got before it can provide you with any useful material about self-enquiry or surrender. And yes, this work does contain additional material about surrender and self-enquiry. By additional material, I only mean previously unpublished material. I certainly don't mean to say that this work contains something that Bhagawan did not say anywhere else. The single common thread running through all his teachings can be found here also: either investigate the "I" or surrender it. This material is only a supplement. Sincere aspirants can realise the Absolute Self simply by reading Ramana Noottirattu {The Collected

Works of Ramana Maharshi}. This material is for those who like reading more and more Ramana stories, because the persona of the sage entralls them.

This work does not pretend to be a systematic compendium or presentation of the Maharshi's teachings. If you want to be presented with a systematic introduction to the master's teachings, I would highly recommend Mr. David Godman's 'Be as you Are' or Mr. Arthur Osborne's 'True Happiness: The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words'. This manuscript is a collection of conversations that the master had in 1936 about vichara and sharanagati, the only tools ever suggested by the Maharshi to those who want a safe and direct path leading towards Enlightenment. It also contains conversations that Bhagawan had about other topics, wherein he can be found narrating amusing anecdotes about people known to him or incidents from his life. If you are a complete newcomer to Sri Ramana's teachings or philosophy, I suggest you try one of the two books I have recommended and then come back to reading this work; that way you will be doing both yourself and this manuscript greater justice. This product is intended for consumption by the eyes of seasoned devotees of the master; therefore, absolutely no effort has been made to explain the various advaitic terminologies used.

Now for the authenticity of this material: during the course of reading this material, you will come to understand that the entire content is structured in such a manner as to address the Ashram authorities, who have, as far as I am aware, till now not brought it out in book form. What if the Ashram authorities are of the decided opinion that this work contains spurious and fake content that should NOT be released to the public? Now, we are wading into somewhat controversial waters. Let me say that I simply carried out the task of digitisation of this work's contents, and have no idea about their authenticity or otherwise. The elderly gentleman who granted me access to the material also does not know how authentic the work is. He, however, believes that the work should be made public and the final decision as to the truthfulness or otherwise of the work's contents ought to be left to the individual reader into whose hands the work might happen to fall. There is no guarantee that the work is an authentic record of the events and conversations that took place during those obscure years of the Ashram's history. In fact, my own opinion is that the chances are somewhat slim that the work could be authentic, because in several places Bhagawan does not sound like the beloved Bhagawan whose words, actions and continued presence we all relish with delight. However, in other places, he sounds quite like himself. What are we to make of this? Perhaps as it changed hands (as it seems to have done upon a careful perusal of the covering letters) the work was deliberately embellished and falsified. It is perfectly possible that many pieces of writing constituting this manuscript were contributed by a variety of authors, some of whom felt inclined to add 'spices' to the work, so that the overall 'flavour' of the work stood 'improved'. Whatever the case might be, should not the reader be left to make the final decision for himself on the question of whether this work is a total fake or whether it contains some useful sayings from Bhagawan that he could have actually uttered during his earthly sojourn? What arrogance to think that since I suspect it to be a fraud, I shall debar all from ever setting eyes upon it!

The Gospel of Judas was brought out in the early 2000s by the National Geographic magazine. In this gospel Jesus does not behave, nor sound, like the Jesus we read about in the New Testament. Shall we therefore ban all the books that reproduce the content of the Gospel of Judas, that are available for sale on Amazon? Isn't that silly? Same goes for the Gospel of Thomas, and the other New Testament Apocrypha. So, the benefit of doubt must be given to any ancient work that we suspect to be a forgery. The foregoing paragraph is not intended to be a homily to the Ashram authorities; it merely reflects my own views on the matter. If the Ashram sees not fit to publish this manuscript, that is not my business and I have nothing to say about their decision except that I appreciate their resolve to banish spurious works about Bhagawan to the waste-paper basket. As for the person who has set me about the task to cause the digitisation of this manuscript, he is of the opinion that the work much reach devotees of the master who are interested in perusing it. So, this work is being brought out through a Print On Demand Platform, so that it might reach as many of Bhagawan's devotees who evince interest in it.

As for the high price of this product, let me assure you that I am not profiting from selling this book, and the reason that it is so pricey is that it has been brought to you through a self-publishing platform. All self-publishing platforms sell books at expensive prices: that is how the business mechanism of the self-publication industry [also known as the Print On Demand Industry] works. If I had added a profit margin, you would have had to purchase the tome you are holding now at even higher a price. So, since my labour consists only of digitally recording and disseminating the information that this manuscript contains, I am voluntarily keeping myself away from profiting out of it.

I have repeatedly scanned this work for typographical errors, but even so, it is bound to contain some, as I did the job in a hurry. Typo errors may be present both in the English words and words in other languages, sentences and short phrases in which this work does contain profusely. The material in other languages has been left as it is and not translated, because, as I explained, this is a manuscript and not a book. If you would like to understand the translation of the material in languages other than English that this book contains, it is for the Ashram to fulfill this need of yours by bringing out this material in the form of a proper book. If many devotees of Bhagawan feel a similar need to see this material brought out in the form of a proper book, I feel sure that the Ashram President Dr. Venkat and other trustees might oblige, even if they personally have no conviction that this material is worth anything.

The manuscript contains the proper names 'Son of R.N.' and 'Blutkeim'. Blutkeim or Ratthabidan is the pen-name of the person on the basis of whose instructions I am digitising this work. Son of R.N. is myself because R. Nalina is the name of my late mother; that is how I wish to be known. Both names are pseudonyms. Why use pseudonyms, you ask? This is why; please refer Page 31 of this link: <http://www.sriramana.org/ramanfiles/mountainpath/2020%20III%20July.pdf>, and read the article 'The Question of Integrity' by Mrs. Katya Douglas of Kodaikkanal. The good lady has used strong language to lambast those who are manufacturing fake content about Sri Ramana Maharshi. Although primarily her dissatisfaction seems to stem from the

activities of Mr. Robert Adams, she does indicate her strong disapproval of all those from whom emanates content about Ramana Maharshi whose authenticity appears to be in doubt. When people decide the message causes offence, they also decide that the messenger must be sliced up into tiny, bloody pieces. Unfortunately, today in India a cultural climate has been created wherein it has become the mindset to take offence at anything and everything. The riotous man feels that it is his birthright to take offence at whatever he chooses to be offended by. Perhaps next he will be offended by the blue of the sky. Who can tell? The media uses the word 'intolerance' for this phenomenon. In fact it is insanity. Taking offence is just a pretext for perpetration of mindless violence. Violence has become a popular outlet for frustration, a means of instant self-glorification, a way to quickly draw attention to oneself, so that self-gratification may result. Offenders remain always the same in number. Offence-takers have increased themselves in number exponentially, because today there are more angry people out on the streets than ever before, and when a man is angry even a new-born kitten offends his eye- he wants to crush its life out of existence, so that he can assert his dominion over such weaklings cowering at his feet. The desire for dominion and assertion of superiority arise out of anger. Anger arises when one feels he has been deprived of his rights, that are legitimately due to him. Constant access to western media leads to a situation where the mind of the average Indian youth always dwells in a virtual zone which is set in a fictionalised, romanticized impression of the West. He wants to emigrate to the west or a west-like society to exist or be created here. Blocking western media is now not possible, for it is ubiquitous and unstoppable; nor would such a proposal be desirable, for one must, ideally, be receptive to all kinds of information, but seek to apply or follow in his own case only what is perceived to be acceptable within the framework of the moral standards governing him. The average Indian youth seems to feel that it is his legitimate right to enjoy all the comforts that the western man does but without being able to put in the tiniest fraction of the effort that must needs go into the building of the level of affordability required to sustain such a lifestyle over the long-run; such effort is usually impossible not owing to laziness but because the relevant skills are absent. The solution to the problem of violence amongst Indian youth is to move toward a skill-based education system. A skilled man always has a job on hand. A man with a job is able to afford two things- fulfillment of self-esteem cravings and fulfillment of materialistic cravings for sense-objects that are believed to yield pleasure. A man fulfilled in this way will not feel that his legitimate rights are being denied to him. Thus he does not go looking around angrily for 'the offenders'. The way to look for societal peace therefore is to obliterate feelings of resentment and anger from the mind, and while skill-based education remains a dream this will not happen. The way for India to move forward is to take up Skill-based education to the pragmatic level; through this alone can man loosen the tenacious grip of hate that divides man from man and makes him a predator unto his own species. However, who is to bell the cat? Can we wait for the politicians to take the initiative? Is that not an anticipation in futility? Therefore, we should endeavour to implement assiduously Mahatma Gandhi's wise words of advice that one ought to be the change he wishes to see in the world. To return to the point with which this paragraph was commenced, the protection of the identity of those persons who are trying to bring out this work to the public is necessary and their actual names or whereabouts must not be revealed, because some self-professed devotee of Bhagawan, purportedly offended



by what he perceives to be 'fake books on Sri Ramana Maharshi circulating in the literary market', take matters into his own hands and attack such persons. It cannot be denied that some of the writings forming part of this work, mainly concerning Bhagawan, who we consider and conceive as being our spiritual lighthouse, patently spew forth opinions that could "cause offence". So, to protect the identities of those responsible for posting this work on this Print On Demand Platform, pseudonyms have been used. 'Son of R. Nalina' is clear, but what on earth is Blutkeim or Ratthabidan? It is the name of a demon. See here for more information: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raktab%C4%ABja>. The elderly gentleman, being my relative on the side of my mother, who requested me to undertake the digitisation of this manuscript, used to refer to himself by this name when he was writing articles for Tamil magazines during the mid-70s to mid-90s. The rationale behind the name is that the gentleman's ego, which he has been trying to obliterate using the method of vichara for the past half-century, is like this demon according to him: as soon as one thought is got rid of using the method of Who am I?, a thousand thoughts take its place.

Every author who has something to say about Ramana Maharshi conveys his own point of view and I being the one responsible for the digitisation of this manuscript neither support nor defend nor oppose any of the views stated herein. Anyone who feels upset by anything in this work should contact the author of the offensive opinion, and sort out the matter directly with him, inasmuch as anybody knows who the author is/ authors are, for I do not, and neither does Blutkeim. In other words, those responsible for bringing out this book to the public are not responsible for the correctness, appropriateness or moral prudence of its contents. It may be asked why such contemptuous writings ought to be published at all. The answer is the attitude of Journalism. Thousands of people may praise Sri Ramana as the Perfected Being, but if one man says, "I don't think his teachings are easy to follow." his voice also deserves equally to be heard. I may remind gently that the times of suppression of free speech belong only to the past. Green or Orange, terrorism is dastardly terrorism and violence dastardly violence; neither can escape condemnation, whether such evil has as the cause of its perpetration some poisonous, rancorous, hate-infusing ideology that glorifies its own ideas and reviles everything else or otherwise. We are living in times wherein the free spirit characterising a liberalist democracy is held in high esteem, for this is free India. We are free children who refuse to be swayed by fundamentalists, reactionaries, and their left-wing or right-wing ideologies, whether dyed in red, saffronism, jingoism or otherwise. Savarkar's, Lenin's and Periyar's statue may be brought down, but we will not permit our joyful ethos of freedom to be crushed; let us cherish that sweet spirit. To clarify matters, both Blutkeim and myself are devotees of Bhagawan and have been devotees for a long time. Anything scandalous written about Bhagawan would cause us pain and distress. And, yes, there are such pain-causing and distress-causing sentences in this book. That is why this paragraph was necessary.

Last but not least, I am obliged to mention that without the vigorous efforts continuously put in by those persons who are actively looking after the Maharshi's ashram today, we would not have today by our side such a wealth of literature and other resources for ready reference, whenever we feel like tuning into Sri Ramana's nectar-like words; the

same persons also maintain the ashram in a tidy and organised manner, keeping it ready for visit by seekers from any corner of the globe. So, hats off to all those persons looking after the management of the ashram, whom we deeply venerate, admire and stand in awe of day after day for keeping the Maharshi's precious spiritual legacy alive and throbbing.

Finally, we pay grateful homage to Mr. Ramanan, the president of the Ashram who passed away recently. Under his able and dynamic leadership, the Ashram made significant accomplishments, including implementing and significantly expanding its digital footprint across the World Wide Web. We will forever remain indebted to him for his laudable efforts in safeguarding the Ashram property from inter alia Anti-Hindu miscreants who are filing fake land-grabbing legal cases against the Ashram. We are certain that the new president Dr. Venkat will follow in his illustrious father's footsteps. Also thanks to Mr. Matthew Greenblatt and Mr. Dennis Hartel of the Arunachala Ashrama in NYC, who tirelessly endeavour to disseminate the master's teachings in the Americas.

We pray and hope without ceasing that the master's blessings descend upon and remain in perpetuity with this work. Om Shri Ramanarpanam Asthu.

## **Covering Letters**

Letter 1

To the Principal Archivist  
Ramanasramam Archives  
Sri Ramanasramam  
Tiruvannamalai  
Tamilnadu- 606603

28 November 2018

BLUTKEIM [nom de guerre] &  
Son of Smt. R. N.,  
145 Sri Ayyapa Nagar  
Madras 600111

Respected Sir,

Sub.- Availability of Previously Unpublished Manuscript concerning Ramana Maharshi

Let us spare a moment to pay homage to the last Prussian Emperor, who on this very day a 100 years ago was forced to step down from his crown as a result of perverse circumstances. May this tragedy ever remain writ upon the annals of history.

On 14 Aug. 2016, my mother, Smt. R. N., attained the lotus feet of Sri Bhagawan Ramana, to merge there, in my opinion, once and for all.

Her possessions were numerous and I rummage through them whenever I get the time to do so and feel like it. Recently, I found a plastic cover with a CD inside, as also pages from an old notebook with pencil writing. On top of the CD was written in my mother's handwriting, "Spring-file and most of old notebook destroyed by Nisha Cyclone in 2008; had successfully digitised contents of file; result stored here; sadly, contents of notebook, except what is available by virtue of the surviving fragments, lost to posterity."

Here is further contextual information:

In 2008 we were living in the ground floor of a tiny apartment near Virugambakkam. In November of that year water entered the house. It was a low-lying area. The water level rose to the second floor, which means all objects in the ground and first floors were completely submerged in water for around the two weeks it took for the water-draining process to commence with electric motor-pumps once the rain had stopped.

We salvaged ourselves, the TV, fridge and washing machine, by taking these to the roofed portion of the terrace and ourselves to the third floor, but not much else. All contents of the Beureau were turned into sticky, smelly mulch. Smelly because during rains here Sewerage water overflows into the stagnated water on the road, and the entire stagnated water therefore becomes Sewerage water, because Sewerage water plus rain water can give you at best diluted Sewerage water. Many important documents became unrecognisable excreta-like pulp. Where had my mother stored the CD, the file and the notebook that provided fascinating insights into the life of the greatest sage of the 20th century? In her iron Beureau, safely- or so she must have thought.

This, in my opinion, is the explanation underlying the words on the CD. I never asked her why she did not send the contents of the parcel immediately to the Ashram [as Mohan Mama seems to have wanted her to]. The whole existence of these documents is revealed to me only after her death, upon some chance rummaging through her things, and now I cannot ask her because she is with Bhagawan. Why did the otherwise meticulous gentleman, one clever enough to obtain Spain Citizenship, not bother to verify whether his instruction was carried out or not? To this the answer is easy to guess- It would have been the last thing on his mind. His cancer became serious and it made him bed-ridden from the beginning of 2002, I think. He died on 13 November 2005. This is his paid obituary:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20071226051919/http://www.thehindu.com/2005/11/14/16hdline.htm>.

Incidentally colon cancer is known as the king of cancers. If you get it, have the courage to commit suicide and don't be a coward like me, he told me one day. His appearance had totally changed. He was skin and bone. 2 bags and corresponding tubes stuck out of his body. One was for solid excreta and the other was for urine. The bags had to be emptied into the lavatory every hour, because using bigger bags would mean forcing the already decimated frame to carry more weight; on the other hand, walking to the lavatory every hour caused pain throughout the body. Calling someone else to do it involved considerable embarresment. The places where the tubes punctured the flesh oozed pus



and periodically a nurse had to be called to redress the nodes. Because of chemotherapy the body burnt with agony. The cheeks were black, and what was left of the hair was white. The curly-dark-haired cheery-eyed plump chubby man who came to visit occasionally from Spain, carrying Toblerone chocolates, was now an example of what ill-fated prarabdha karma can do to one. Anyone who wanted to know what Hell would be like could come and satisfy their curiosity- it was occupying this body. He on one occasion pleaded with an advocate-visitor to move the court seeking merciful termination of life; that emotional gentleman refused to be part of such a cause. So he had to suffer it out till the very end, for around 4 years. When, in his final, excruciating days, my mother and I paid him a visit, he told me, as though speaking to himself: "Desire for material wealth leads man only into the abyss of never-ending suffering, from which no purgation or redemption is possible, as has been sadly proven in my own case..." My mother asked if there was anything she could do to ameliorate his inquietude. 'Yes...' he responded. 'I have seen your young son, at this pubescent age, practising lofty spiritual austerities with the utmost punctiliousness and conscientiousness. At this age, this is certainly more than prodigious; it is a sign of the thirst for Liberation clamouring from within. I ask you this, that the boy not be discouraged from his fervent devotional practices...' [At the time I was in the habit of reciting the Bhagawad Gita everyday, in the mornings; in the evenings, contemplation on the meaning of the verses was undertaken. He had probably observed me at these activities; he stayed a few months with us directly he returned from Spain.] My mother said that she was only too happy to see me engaged in devotional practices. This pleased the sick man. Knowing that I was a fervid reader of all sorts of books, from metaphysics to astrophysics, he held out a present for me- "Self, the Truth Absolute, A review of Advaita Vedanta, by G. Subramanian." (More information about this book is available in Page 124 of this link: <http://www.sriramana.org/ramanafiles/mountainpath/1999%20Aradhana.pdf>.) Weeks later the man was dead- the deadly cancer had eaten him away from the inside.

The question of suffering provoked by spectating this tragedy initiated a search in me that finally led me to the Maharshi's tomb in Tiruvannamalai; I had first heard of the Maharshi from the book obtained as a gift from the dying man's hands; thereafter, being drawn to the Sage with the sparkling eyes and his curious ideas, I made the effort to find out more about him. Eventually I managed to convince myself that the Sage's teachings were for me, and practise them to the extent my competence will allow. Only in the recent past did I get out of the obsessive habit of broodingly reflecting on this bizarre connection that seems to exist between Johan Mohan Shanker and myself: both of us are destined to be fascinated by the Master who made the Red Mountain His Abode and the silent teachings that he radiated rather than expounded.

This text has many lines that purport to be Sri Ramana's original sayings on various matters. They may not be unique and may possibly find place elsewhere in the Ramanasramam literature. They may be based on existing Ramanasramam literature. Since we have no conclusive proof of their authenticity, we must also be prepared to consider one more, radical, option- was this text simply manufactured for the sake of attempted monetary gain, by, perhaps, an avaricious and audacious publisher specialising in hiring ghost-writers for dead saints, so that he could publish it and make

money? If so, has it been published? If yes, where? If no, why was such attempt aborted? I have no answers.

While the text appears canonical Ramana-esque at face value, my judgement is not very highly estimable. I have only read Godman's *Be as You are* and Osborne's *Teachings of Sri Ramana*. Your good self, on the other hand, are clearly an expert on the topic. You have interviewed former Ramana devotees, spent time with Self-realised people, mediated consciously in order to realise the Self and are thus quite intimately associated with Sri Bhagawan, if to say such a thing be not considered absurd regard having been had to the fact that the Saint shed his mortal coil before you took up yours. Your books, websites, blogs and Youtube Videos are doing a fine job[but one only wishes you would keep supplying a steady stream of them, say something like a new blog-page every month and a new video every 6 months]. Thus your judgement should be able to decisively settle the matter, which is why I chose to write to you. I hope I have spelled your name right [atleast] upon the envelope.

The contents of this flood-hit CD were badly scrambled; also, they were old wordstar files. It took quite a bit of time and effort putting them aright. I think I have managed to recover the contents of the CD unscathed, but original place-of-Paragraph-break information was lost with the mulching of the actual typewritten manuscript, which I have never set eyes upon and whose existence I infer solely from the contents of the CD and what was written on it. These are Wordstar text files, which means the text essentially is just that- we have no idea how they were intended to be displayed on the face of a printed page. For the letters I guessed. For the main body of text I cannot take that responsibility.

I own a small Acer laptop computer that has no CD or DVD drive, and I had to make use of a borrowed external drive. The owner took it back in a hurry, and has himself since misplaced it; unfortunately the CD was still inside when it was removed from my possession. Thus I have no longer the CD. These files survive as local files on my hard-drive.

According to the text, Swami Rajeshwarananda says that struck out sentences should not be included in the published version. No indication is available to me to ascertain now as to which these might be. Using hints I picked up in his lines [detriment to vocation, profession, etc.] I have made the font colour of the words green where I had the suspicion that these might be them. I must state that it is entirely possible that my mother simply did not type\feed the struck out words into the computer, thinking, perhaps, that there was no need.

An examination of the letters stored in the CD show that along with the file [that is, the typewritten manuscript of this work], a notebook also was in Mr. Vasu's custody in March 1951. A few pages from this notebook must have been removed from the main body of the notebook before the cyclone described above flooded our house, and stored safely away elsewhere; evidently that is how they still survive. Why was not the whole notebook "stored safely away elsewhere"? Since certain particular pages were selected for special

safe-keeping, what is the motive behind selecting solely those particular pages and not any other pages? Why rip pages out of the notebook at all? I do not know. I simply found these objects in the condition in which I found them, not daring to ask them, "Excuse me, dear objects, but why have I found you in the condition in which I am finding you- or why are you in this condition?" for the terrifying fear that their response might be, "What is the guarantee that, if you had found us in a different condition, it would not occur to you to ask this precise same question?". [Physicists talk of the weak anthropic principle whilst discussing this point.] Were my mother alive in illusion I could learn more about this collection of documents; she is alive in the sense that she is now one with Bhagawan, the formless Reality which cannot be apprehended by the mind. As I recollect reading Bhagawan putting it: "Reality being incapable of being apprehended by the mind, one cannot obviously deploy the mind to ask Reality questions or argue with Reality. There is no one [left] in Reality to ask questions; that which asks questions is fully incompetent to reach or even see Reality."

What I have left thus is these files in the electronic format and a few worn pages from an old notebook. These I dutifully send to Sri Ramanasramam.

To the Ramanasramam management, should you- at your sole discretion and risk- show them this material, I have this to express, for certain previous dealings with the said management have caused much mutual embitterment, if not rancour-

I do not expect remuneration for my services and do not anticipate that something- or anything- is going to be offered. I shall have no truck with the Ramanasramam management, with which some of my family members have had nightmarish experiences in the past. I wanted to do my duty to my beloved Bhagawan, and I have done it. Even if what I am sending is simply dumped in the trash-can according to the said management's instructions, it is not going to bother me. This is between me and my Lord and Saviour; he sees all and he sees always; he knows all and he knows always. That is enough.

Attempts to initiate communication soliciting whether further material is available at my disposal that I am withholding from revelation are NOT welcome. I have sent everything I had and have. There is a statement at the end of this manuscript to the effect that a Second, Concluding part to this work will be sent to the Ashram later, after the Ashram has finished publishing this work which is at present being forwarded. However, on second thought, most of the conversations which take place in the last three months of 1936 have already been included herein. That statement at the end was added when I was of the opinion that the bulk of this material should be sent in two installments to facilitate parallel processing; whilst I would take care of the digitisation of Part Two, the Ashram authorities would be attending to the editing process required to bring out Part One in the form of an easily readable book; however, subsequently I have changed my opinion, and now the entire thing is sent to you in one go.

Please do not feel annoyed with me for all the typo errors in this work. As it is I could simply not send this and the Ashram authorities would know nothing of the matter, ever. If

ever at any time I have felt the moral obligation to work with this material and bring it to the notice of the Ashram in a coherent form, that moral obligation was felt toward Bhagawan and Bhagawan only; in my world only moral obligations exist and all obligations that exist are exclusively moral in nature, and the only world that exists is my world, because in the Seer there can be no multiplicity.

To reiterate-

1. I am making no assertions concerning the correctness or otherwise of the opinions contained in this book,
2. I have no idea whether this text is authentic, and hereby do state that I have no idea,
3. I am not entering into any agreement, tacit, explicit or otherwise, by sending this communication,
4. I do not recognise that obligations may flow so as to be binding upon me as a result of or by reason of me sending this communication, and
5. I hereby give up the right to be able to obligate through or by reason of this communication, in so far as any such right was available with me uptill this time.

Attempts to trace out my whereabouts, physical, electronic or otherwise, may be met with total hostility and may, according to my will, be interpreted by me as an Act of War, necessitating perhaps a fitting retaliation/retribution from my side.

The above lines are merely "standard legal statements or pronouncements", and not an expression of any ill-will. In fact I admire the management for keeping such a huge premises neat and tidy, and making efforts to spread Bhagawan's sacred teachings around the world by publishing books, maintaining websites, and launching applications on the Android platform, all of which are gratefully appreciated by everyone.

Hoping that the material received in your hands is of some use to you,  
I remain,

YOURS SINCERELY in Bhagawan's Omnipotent Grace,

BLUTKEIM [nom de guerre] &  
Son of Smt. R. N.

Contents of CD and spring-file:

Letter 2

To Smt. R. N.  
145 Sri Ayyapa Nagar  
Madras 600111

11 Dec. 2001

Johan Mohan Shanker  
Barcelona

Spain

sent by electronic mail  
powered by sify

Sub.- Dear Vimala! Happy wedding day!

Again Happy wedding day! How is R., and A., the 'Son and Sun' of your life? How is your father-in-law's health? Any chance of complete recovery? Are your mother-in-law and husband keeping sugar under control?

If A. wants anything from Spain apart from the usual Toblerone chocolates, do let me know.

There is some disturbing news- I have been diagnosed with Colon Cancer, but nothing life-threatening. Soon for treatment I will come back to India.

I hope you have received the old notebook and the spring-file from Rama.

There is an obligation I ask from you: Please take a printout of the enclosed word document and post it to Sri Ramanasramam, along with the notebook and the file. If you can successfully type out both of their contents in Wordstar [I know that is the application you are using on your computer; newer products are available nowadays but it is alright.], include a floppy disk into which you may copy the finished files. The file includes old letters and a typed manuscript; handle them with care since they are half-a-century old. If you find it unmanagably voluminous you may refrain; the Asram management will have staff to type out the text.

The address is:  
Mr. T.N. Venkataraman  
Sri Ramanasramam  
Chengam Road  
Tiruvannamalai  
606603

Thank you!

Convey my love to A. and R. . Visit Thiruvanmiyur often and keep an eye on my mother and sister, will you!

Again Happy wedding day!

Your brother,  
Mohan

Letter 3

To T. N. Venkatraman  
Sri Ramanasramam  
Tiruvannamalai

11 Dec. 2001

Johan Mohan Shanker  
Barcelona  
Spain

Respected Sir,

Sub- Old Ramanasramam documents [NO APPARENT COOMERCIAL VALUE] came accidentally into my possession. Wish to return them.

My grandfather Sri Muthusami Aiyyer was an eccentric charecter who during the last few years of his life in Tiruvanmiyoor suffered from some form Brain degeneration- perhaps Schizophrenia. He kept saying nonsensical things and no one paid any attention to him. On one of these occasions he called me to his side and began to speak. Out of love and affection for him I pretended to be interested, though most of the time he spoke mere unintelligible gibberish. This incident took place in the 1980s. This time his voice was clear: He started talking about Subhas Chandra Bose. Whenever he talked about Netaji his voice became crystal clear. Netaji was his Hero. According to him Netaji could never have died- not in 1945, not anytime else, because Netaji was immortal, a demi-god with super-human capabilities. He occasionally roamed the streets of Valmiki Nagar seriously conversing with Netaji. The neighbors were used to the mumble. The problem was the police. He would be wearing only a koupeenam [loin-cloth] and ladies new in the area were alarmed to see the almost nude nonagenarian talking to the air. Someone or the other would invariably call the police; when they tried to apprehend him, he would scream in the top of his voice "Who are you trying to arrest? I am a Brahmajnani. My name is Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Moreover I am the Secretary of Netaji. Even Indira Gandhi is afraid of me. She declared the emergency only after asking my permission. Even MGR came to take my blessings after becoming Chief Minister.... In Tiruvannamalai I am very famous. Just get down at the Railway station and ask the jutka-wala for Sri Ramana Maharshi's ashram. Once they take you to the place enter the Hall behind the flower-garden. I will be sitting there on a sofa taking notes for Netaji. What, you insist on dragging me away? Netaji will not spare you remember..." Due to this problem, he was tied up at home when his madness came to wax with time. Sometimes he would use vulgar words also. This time also I prepared to hear about Netaji's victory over British Singapore. However, he began in a cinematic style the following narrative- Four decades ago a drunk man was waiting outside the post-office in George Town. He was tottering back and forth and was unable keep his knees straight. The smell on him was revolting, because he had vomited over his shirt. Everyone was looking at him in disgust. He was crying, saying to himself over and over again, "Indian Bank also lost. Who will support Sheila?". I came close to him to see whether any whisky was left with him, but on seeing



the empty bottle near his feet, I began to move away. He caught hold of my shirt collar and begged me to post a large parcel for him. He gave me the money for it; I promised to do as he had instructed and he went away, leaving the parcel with me. Before leaving he asked my name. I said, My name is Subas Chandra Bose; affectionately they call me Netaji. This seemed to make him happy and he danced away from me, to God knows where. But he kept saying, Narayana! Burn Tons! Ananda! Narayana! Burn Tons! Ananda! I- not exactly sober myself either- shouted after him saying, "There is a Perumal temple near Linghi Chetty Street. Netaji himself prayed there to obtain Hitler's blessings to succeed in the German Invasion of the USSR. The temple is not far from here. If you go there Narayana will burn away tons and tons of your sins, and then you may attain Mukthi and reach the state of Eternal Ananda..." Thank you, sir, the other man called out, without turning to face me again, and tottered away from sight jumping up and down in joy, crying "Narayana! Burn Tons! Ananda! Ask Perumal, give me new job!" I happily returned home clutching the Money and the Parcel. Using the money I was able to smoke beedis for an entire year.

I mechanically asked, "Did the parcel contain a photo of Netaji?"

He glared at me for a second and then said, "Hope you are not making fun of me. Sinners beware! The Armageddon contract has been awarded to Netaji by God, because God was impressed by Netaji's absolute victory over the British in Singapore; the battle was so intense and ferocious that God's beard caught fire; coming to know of this, Sri Ramana Maharshi decided to sport a clean-shaven look henceforth..." I assured him I was not making fun of him. He said "I also hoped it would contain Netaji's photo. But no." I asked him what it contained then. In response he handed to me a parcel containing a spring file and a notebook, both old and worn. "I have analyzed it in detail." he said. I asked, unable to resist the temptation, 'Is it Netaji's autobiography?' Again he glared at me and said "One must not be greedy like this. I have examined it in detail. It is a point-by-point analysis of why Operation Barbarossa failed to take Moscow. It is written by Sri Ramana Maharshi himself, a Brahmajani. As for the notebook, it precribes treatment for Piles in the Ayurvedic manner. It is written by Sri Aurobindo, also a Brahmajani. If you promise to return the parcel to Netaji I will let you have it..." I dutifully promised.

That was the last time I saw my grandfather alive. Next morning I returned for his funeral.

I forgot all about this parcel, for decades, until a few weeks before now when I suddenly remembered and curiosity got the better out of me. I telephoned my sister Rama from Barcelona. It is her observation that the documents might be of some interest to those still living in the ashram of Ramana Maharshi, which, in fact, functioned as a memorial to the Holy Sage till the present day. I therefore asked her to send the documents to my cousin sister Vimala who has computer-knowledge which could be productively channelised to record the contents of the book in the digital form. I hope I have properly discharged my duties.

I am recently diagnosed with colon cancer. After treatment I will visit Bhagawan's Samadhi to beg him for his grace. Meanwhile I beg you to pray to Sri Bhagawan for the malady to pass without serious consequences.

I have provided you the above detailed account of my experiences with my grandfather not to waste your time but only to explain to you the matter in full detail without holding back anything in reserve.

If the documents are not of interest to you, I apologise in advance for wasting your precious time.

Thanking you,  
Yours ever in Sri Ramana's benign grace,

Johan Mohan Shanker,  
Barcelona, Spain

The following are the contents of the spring-file:

Letter 4

/Carbon Copy/

To Mr. Anand Lal Sharma  
Digambara House  
Vinay Nagar  
Delhi

10 March 1951

"Vasu"  
St. Marys Road  
Madras

Dei Pannada! [Remember, Ha Ha!]

Fired from Jaico Mumbai long ago. In a bad way, not on talking terms. Anyway, they only distribute foreign books in India. No publishing activity. Now working in Indian Bank, First Line Beach.

Yes, remember Maharshi who cured me. Can't forget his eyes. They're not human. In a good way.

Tell you what- I have a colleague who says studied Maharaja college with writer RK Narayan, who heads Indian Thought Publication in Mysore.

Sending it there. He's a nutcase just like your Maharshi. He's bound to be interested. He's a big-time chum of yet another totally crazed hyper-nut, Paul Brunton, according to my colleague. This manuscript of yours and the notebook [not even able to find out if I am

holding them the right way up]- loony narayan should be interested, definitely. If not, I'll write to him to hand them over to super-loony Brunton. That should definitely settle it.

Meanwhile, you should read give that monk of yours loony Narayan's 'English Teacher' or super-loony Brunton's 'Wisdom of the Overself' to read. That should keep him busy. So that he won't go around nagging people like, Can thou pleaseth publisheth the wonderfulous wordia of my Mastairre, which arte moste fabulosia? [Isin't that how monks are supposed to speak?]

Sheila talks to me only. Won't go to school. Take some time before all restored to normalcy. Other two fine.

I'm on therapy for alcohol. That's why its getting worse.

Don't want to come to Delhi to get roasted.

Take Care  
Love,  
Vasu

P.S.- Just before sealing this envelope, your second letter dated 5th March popped up on me. Sorry for the delay. Forgot, that simple. Big effort keeping this job. For the children. Someone called Gajapathi Aiyer died in a freak accident, he was only 42 or 45 or whatever. So Monk has just written to you. Why are you so upset about it man? As I bear testimony, tragedies happen. No one knows where his notebooks are. Wife devastated. Dosen't know a thing about a thing. Only legacy of his is with me. I should make sure 'tis published. Yes, yes, sure thing. Those maniacs narayan and bruntun will gobble this up like a fly gobbles up you-know-what. Don't worry. I'm sending the thing to the right place.

But look here, don't have too much to do with these monks. They're really psychotics. Their alternate states of consciousness is because of drugs, synthetic drugs, amphetamines, see. Stay away from them. Maharshi genuine. You can see it in his eyes. They're not human. In a good way. Eyes have smile that dosen't belong here. But his way bit steep. Followers want short-cuts. When told none, resort to amphies. Stay away from the monks, do you good.

Also read the amusing rejection letter. The old John Bull sure knows how to sledge, eh?!

Sending the thing straightaway to Mysore. Won't disappoint you. Taking it to office tomorrow, on the way back will send it by RP. Alrite?

Yes, will remember also to enclose correspondence between you and monk that you have sent, to prove to narayan and brunton how unselfish the monk is in troubling people left, right and centre to get Ramana's words the limelight. Like Stalin, Truman and Attlee are fighting tooth-and-nail over the copyright, so the entire world's interested.

No, existing therapist fine. Just tough to keep the Scotch away.

Love,  
Vasu

Letter 5

To "Vasu"  
St. Marys Road  
Madras

3.Feb.1951

Anand Lal Sharma  
Digambara House  
Vinay Nagar  
Delhi

Dear fellow!

How are you? Why won't you write? But if you ask me the same question I don't know the answer. How are you coping with life? Please do not be depressed- for I know you are somewhat prone to succumb to it [How can I cease to remember the occasion when on that infamous Kartigai Deepam day you suddenly announced your decision to jump down from the Tiruvannamalai Hill and end your life, having failed in all papers in the II Sem. in our third year? I recollect everyone grabbed you immediately, but you had an epileptic seizure on the spot, and were carried to Skandashram. Thank goodness Sri Ramana Maharshi was living on the Hill at the time. Hope you remember his magnetic eyes. He just looked at you and you stopped jerking. The Sage passed away just months back- did you hear?]- and now this. How are Shekar and Babu? Is Sheila feeling any better? In my opinion, the ailment is not physical. The sudden loss of her mother has caused severe mental trauma. I advice a change in environment- there are spots of exotic physical beauty in India, where the landscape brings great calm to the mind and soothes the soul. Try taking her there- it will be better if you can take the other two children also... Or you can visit me in Delhi? I can spare a day or two to show you around, but the heat here is terrible...

There is one more specific reason why I am writing... A monk at Ramanasramam wants to publish a book on the Master. I cant understand it- filled with technical Advaita concepts. The ashram is in no position to publish it. Understandably, Ramana gone, the money has stopped coming: the old men left there are feeling difficulty to make ends meet everyday. Why would anyone be interested in Tiruvannamalai again, except for the usual Deepam festival, I don't know.... Anyway, I told him nobody would be interested or understand all this high-level philosophy, "Atman" alone is real, world is a dream, etc., people want something practical they can do like asanas or pranayamas, etc. He is an adamant fellow. Won't listen. I foolishly promised him during the Kumbabishekam function at Ramanasramam, thinking, Let us say yes as a formality, anyway some white-

man here will take it up and deal with it, they are crazy about such things, seem to actually fall in tune with Ramana's mad proposition, 'world is a dream'... now there are a handful of old beleaguered brown-men there thats all. I remember the Sadhu's yearning face and don't want to say no... If he reads a certain rejection letter I have just received, he will probably fall down in a heart-attack on the spot... I tried Gita Press as suggested by him, but they sent it to an old stodgy English snob, who they said was their agent or something, and he wrote back just to insult me... I have no knowledge in the publication field... You were working for a book distribution company in Mumbai... See if you cannot do anything productive with this manuscript... I am enclosing the same plus one of the original notebooks it was compiled from, so that if the publisher you [might?!] approach is interested, you can show him that also...

Lest I forget my usual: I hope for the sake of your children atleast you will abstain from excessive alcohol. I do not wish to rub salt on the wound, but without this alcohol habit, would such intense marital discord have come up in your life- would your wife have been pushed to such an extreme? Reflect on it please. Invest wisely in the children, for they are all you have now. Don't mean to be supercilious. Only concern pushes me to say this....

Love,  
Anand  
Delhi  
Letter 6

To Mr. Anand Lal Sharma  
Digambara House  
Vinay Nagar  
Delhi

29.Jan.1951

Alfred Daniel Holland, M.A., B. Litt.,  
Acting Literary Correspondent  
Gita Press  
Gorakpor

Respected Sir,

Sub.- Concerning your manuscript and the request for its publication

I have examined the manuscript on behalf of Messers Gita Press, Gorakpor. It is my inveterate opinion that our client would not benefit from its publication- not commercially, not otherwise. Therefore on behalf of our client I reject it unequivocally.

On a personal note, please do not take the claims of these orange-robed-people too seriously. They gather around the so called holy-man and celebrate these men as divine

Incarnations, perhaps even genuinely believing that they are in the vicinity of God. They treat his every word as sacred Scripture. After my retirement, I am also planning to lean back on my deckchair, light my pipe, and proclaim loudly, "Why bother to do anything? No such thing as the cosmos was ever created." Let us see if I also cannot attract disciples. If being nude in public is an essential pre-requisite, doubtless I shall fail.

The only spiritual Icon of your country I genuinely admire is Swami Vivekananda, that lion among men, who did not advocate abandoning the world, despising it as a mere imaginary solipsistic mental projection, and moving man back into the jungles, but laid the foundation for social reform and intellectual enrichment throughout his countrymen. If spirituality had ever a genuine face it is this.

As for the manuscript, it is hopeless. I acknowledge that I have read many meaningful Hindu texts: this is not among them. There is no central thread of connectivity running through the conversations, no common theme uniting them. It is pure... ramble- a hotchpotch of recollections, opinions and poetical musings. Please do not waste your time on it. Another man would not even- I am sure of it- bother sending a rejection letter; if he did by the unlikeliest chance it would not be so polite as this one.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavours, unless, of course, they are going to happen to be as ridiculous as this one...

Thanking you [for nothing but time wasted],

Yours Sincerely,

A.D. Holland, M.A., B. Litt.,

Letter 7

To Mr. Anand Lal Sharma  
Digambara House  
Vinay Nagar  
Delhi

11.Jan.1951

Dhyan Chand  
Gita Press  
Gorakpor

Sir,

Received your letter and parcel dated 5.Jan.1951.  
For English books, desicion not taken here.  
Manuscript forwarded to our agent Mr. A.D. Holland.



He will reply to you directly.  
Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,  
Dhyan Chand  
Gita Press  
Gorakpor

Letter 8

To Mr. Anand Lal Sharma  
Digambara House  
Vinay Nagar  
Delhi

30.Dec.1950

Swami Rajeshwarananda  
Sri Ramanasramam  
Chengam Road  
Tiruvannamalai

Kind Sir,

Sub.- Regarding our conversation [at the event of Mahakumbhabhishekam of Sri Matrubuteshwara Shrine at Sri Ramanasramam] pertaining to publication of book on Sri Ramana Maharshi

Hope this letter finds you in good health and fine spirits.

I am certain that you recollect our conversation about the notebooks penned by a young savant who visited Sri Maharshi in 1936 and stayed for a half-year with him. I am glad to announce that the lad has prepared a publishable synopsis of their contents, which is enclosed herewith as a neatly filed collection of typewritten sheets. As you requested, one of the original notebooks themselves are enclosed as proof of authenticity.

Please note that the struck out sentences in the typewritten sheets should not form part of the final published manuscript; they of such a nature as to cause detriment to the chronicler's means of livelihood, namely his profession or vocation.

If you do not find Gita Press willing to take up the publication, I have no objection to any other publisher accepting it, but I wish that atleast the first edition should be published in India and by an India-based publisher, for the reason that otherwise people will laugh and say "Poor India! The teachings of her Sages evoke no interest from Her own masses, and always are picked up by some publisher overseas, for the West is always an attentive listener to the Mystic moods of the East. It shows just how successfully Her

Majesty's Imperial Reign has managed since the 17th century to wipe out Indian traditions and fill the heads of the Indian youth with western ideas, and beliefs concerning the superiority of Western Civilisation, so as to generate demand for imported goods and services, thus pushing India into further material impoverishment and cultural malnutrition. The vision enshrined in the speech that Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay made on 2 February 1835 to the English parliament has been well executed after all by the Colonial Administration..."

I think you will appreciate that I do not wish to become even an indirect reason why the Indian youth or people should become the target of such perverse attention or pity from around the world.

Persuant to your suggestions and seriously against my better judgement I tried my best to convince the Ashram's Symposium that publication of the book would enthuse Sri Bhagawan's devotees, but no productive initiative has come from that direction, nor, I think will; financial constraints are, understandably, the reason, and no one is blaming any one. [In fact, citing lack of patronage after Sri Bh.'s death, publication of even many an existing title sold here during the Sage's lifetime has been stopped. For instance, there is a book called "Maha Yoga" that lucidly explains Atma-Vichara, the principal form of Sadhana taught by the Master; yesterday its last copy in the book-depot was sold, but yet no replenishment is intended to be ordered to be printed. If we succeed in finding a publisher for this book, perhaps I can seek permission for Maha Yoga also to be brought out under the same publisher's banner, if that publisher be willing.]

I therefore hope that Sri Bhagawan blesses you with all success in seeing this book through to print.

Yours in Bhagawan,

Swami Rajeshwarananda  
Sri Ramanasramam  
Tiruvannamalai

### **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Sun of Suns, who gave up his body in martyrdom on 14 April 1950 for the welfare of all sentient beings, and who uninterruptedly shines as 'I-I' in the Hridaya Pundarikam of them all, as the One Perfect Reality.

### **Invocation**

Oh Arunachala!, you are my Father who authoritatively told me that the names and forms of this world are Real only as the Impersonal Absolute Reality known as Brahmaswarupam underlying them;  
Oh ArunachalaShivaRamanaMahaMrutyunjayaRudraBhagawanae!, you are my mother who authoritatively told me that Brahman is none but Guheshan, the In-dweller of the Heart-cave who shines as "I-I";

I place myself completely in the hands of my parents, so that I may at last escape from the horrific ocean of pain known as the Samsarasagaram;  
What greater liberation could anyone aspire to or seek for?  
I do not long for any Brahmanirvanam;  
I am merely a tiny child that never wishes to leave the side of its beautiful parents.

SHALOM Y'ALL

LOKAN SAMASTHA SUKHINO BHAVANTHU

OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTIHI

### **Epigraph**

> "He who sacrifices himself upto the Supreme Self- he indeed is the most excellent amongst devotees."

> "No life can be more secure than a life that is surrendered to God."

> "What comes let come; what goes let go; see what remains."

> "Complete surrender to God Almighty is another name for Jnana or Enlightenment."

> " 'I am that I am.' [YHWH] is the means and the final goal also. The technique is summarised in 'Be Still and know that "I am" is God.' You are not asked to think or imagine that you are God, but to know with none to make known to."

- Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi [1879-1950]

### **Foreword**

As a devotee of Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi I consider it my blessed God-given opportunity for performing obeisance to him to be given the good fortune of penning a Foreword to this book.

According to the writer he stayed at Sri Ramanasramam from 5.Jul.1936 to 21.Dec.1936, and made notes of the various spiritual advices and anecdotes graciously shared by the master.

I have gone through a few leaves from this manuscript and find the Master's winsome words full of spritual nectar.

I am confident this book will exude utility even beyond the limited circle of Sri Bhagawan's immediate followers.

I am looking forward to seeing this book in print and wishing all success to the writer, Mr. Gajpathy, and the editor, Swami Rajeshwarananda, in all their current and future endeavours.

Again my humble pranams to Sri Bhgawan Ramana, the embodiment of compassion.

O. P. Ramasamy Reddy

[Former Premier of Madras State]

Madras

Dec.1950

### **Preface**

I consider it my supreme good fortune to write a preface to a book which contains the words of my beloved Sadhguru, the sage of the Hill of the Holy Beacon, Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the most widely revered exponent of Advaita since Adi Sankara. In times when lecturers on the subject are to be had a-dozen-for-a-dime, he shines as an outstanding exemplification of the state of unswerving Brahmanishta. The unique thing about Sri Bhagawan is that there is no one Sri Ramana Maharshi. Each one saw a different Maharshi according to his or her own psychological constitution. The vichara-marga stands out as the preeminent form of sadhana advocated by him; yet he did not expound only this. The guidance each received from him was unique and distinctive to his own case; in this sense, therefore, there is unquestionably heterogeneity in his approach to sadhakas soliciting him for guidance on the spiritual path. He did not propagate any dogma, but by his silent influence inspired people to follow the technique of Jnana-vichara, and thus win Salvation. He was the personification of emancipation; his very presence lifted us beyond our body and brain to our true Self. This truth of Self-realization, in his holy presence, was as if coursing through our veins, pulsating in our bosom, tingling with every drop of blood and becoming consonant with our very heartbeats. His words make us even today stand in the Glory of our Self, the infinite, the eternal, the deathless. His silent and sacred look was significant to instill the nectar of Self-knowledge that became a part and parcel of our constitution and the very vitality of our life. Bhagawan Sri Ramana was the ideal of the human race. He was the wonder of the world with the perfume of spiritual peace. He was the secret of many masterminds.

He was a Christ-like being who turned the other cheek if attacked, as the following incident narrated to me by Sri B. himself elucidates- "During the Skandashram days a man from the Kavale Mutt at Govapuri came to see me. He had a good knowledge of the Advaitic scriptures and lectured me day and night, quoting liberally from the Upanishads and other Sanskrit texts. Occasionally he would pause and glare at me, and ask, 'Well? Do you not acknowledge the correctness of what I am saying?'. Some wanted my permission to drive him away, but I did not say anything. Soon his behaviour grew uncontrollably ebullient. It seems he was expecting praise from me for his knowledge. When I just kept quiet, it made him angry. He said, 'You are sitting inert like a stone, without knowing anything. Everyone is calling you Bhagawan. I am well-versed in the Scriptures. Really, only I deserve to be called Bhagawan.' Seeing me remain in silence to this also, he started howling, jeering and laughing at me, saying, "Without doing anything he is uselessly idling away, for this they are calling him Bhagawan! What a worthless fellow! Ha! ha! ha!" thinking I would be provoked into some angry retaliation. To his surprise I joined him in laughing at myself, telling him, "Yes, yes, I agree with your remarks... how foolish these people are to believe I am a Bhagawan!" He was shocked and stopped laughing. Seeing the look on his face, I started laughing. I laughed and laughed and laughed; tears rolled down my cheeks and yet I laughed. Everyone was stunned. The man quietly gathered up his belongings and went away." B.'s Godly nature stands revealed in these and other similar incidents- he harbours no resentment or ill-will toward those who try to hurt or harm him, but rather tries to help them to see the error of their ways and turn them towards the Sat-margam.

His life is a study in divine illumination based on the dynamic silence. All worries and wounds of the world simply melted in his presence like ice before fire. His was a

discovery of a lost technique in divine awareness, a gift to humanity. He touched life at all aspects, not cramped and confined by any. No school of philosophy, cult, creed, yoga and the like could claim him, as he did not fit easily into any readymade classification. He lived free and remained free and let everyone remain free likewise. A sage, a philosopher, a recluse, an incarnation of God or Being — none of these terms adequately describe him. They fall flat since he transcends them.

He was not the present day product of some past tradition. No Guru or scriptures made him great or illuminated him. He was unique in remaining true to himself and being himself. His extensive knowledge of sastras and bhashyas came to him after his Self-realization. He was in himself the quest and the goal. He set before us, as the glory and goal of life, the recovery of full divine consciousness of our own native and naked nature which is not something to be created or attained but which is fully aware of itself with an awareness that can neither begin nor end, as it is eternal. He proclaimed the Absolute as the natural Self, the 'I AM' in each individual life, ever being itself. Such a realization endows every one ultimately with the Pure Consciousness, a state of impersonality, timelessness, causelessness, egolessness, freedom and peace. He was himself a testimony for such an august revelation that always stands at the very doorstep of one and all. Thus the heart of our being is the heart of the universe. It is there that illusions and dreams, confusions and contradictions take to flight and illumination floods in with the Kindly Light in one's life, notwithstanding the individual's cultural, racial, intellectual or even moral background. His was the cure-all that restores the human race to its lost heritage and happiness, bereft of social, political and economic diseases of the present day, together with their hundred and one ghosts. The remedy for all such troubles that divide man from man, class from class, nation from nation, and that spring up like weeds into new growths again and again, lies in awakening the spiritual consciousness of men and nature which unites them. No society or country can endure without a spiritual basis, a moral basis, a recognition of the value of fellowship, brotherhood and neighbourhood. Such a sublime atmosphere of the higher life ends all troubles, frictions, hatreds and discords automatically. Such a divine balm heals the hurts of man's trinity — body, mind and soul — now in an upside down condition, and restores its lost balance. In the realm of divinity are indeed the unseen forces that are the real sources of power, peace and plenty. Sri Ramana awakens everyone of us to the spiritual glory within which are contained all the worlds without an iota of worldliness. Bhagavan's seemingly lofty message is actually a practical expression of Self, the Reality, Intelligence and Bliss. Reality is not existent but Existence. It is not consciousness of but consciousness — as subjective substance. Objects bring in distinction in the empirical knowledge and are not applicable to the distinctionless, non-dual Absolute, the Self. Bhagavan Sri Ramana stands for the unity of existence, the non-duality of the Godhead and the harmony of religions. He shines as the sun of wisdom in the firmament of the Self, radiating serenity, sublimity and solemnity. He is a beacon-light, a centre of the spiritual world-impulse. His teachings are refreshingly plain and powerful. They throw open the floodgates of the soul and make the living waters of the highest consciousness rush forth. His gospel, free from any dogma or doctrine, is not hampered by fossilised traditions. It is as broad as the sky, as deep as the sea, and as universal as the rays of the sun. He kindles in everyone of us the dormant divinity, the potential power, the primary principle, which is at the back of the flow and flicker of the finite phenomena. His very life was a practical demonstration of the

reality of Brahman, the Supreme Self and the unsubstantiality of the phenomenal world. His gospel reveals clearly the divinity of the soul, the oneness of humanity and the indivisibility of the Godhead, not as articles of belief or opinion, cult or creed, dogma or doctrine but as the truths of his own experience. To know Bhagavan is to be Bhagavan himself. Because Knowing is Being and Being is Knowing. Even a single word from Bhagavan's holy lips was enough to enable us to carry it all through our life to stir the soul, and awaken it to its intrinsic immortality and infinity, whereas splendid orations from persons without divine wisdom shouted from platforms fall flat on our ears and fail to carry any effect at all. Bhagavan's sacred and solid silence spoke louder than words at times, and his solemn and sublime look was vividly significant at all times.

I have endeavoured in this preface to explain how this book came about, and since it is intended for the limited circle of Bhagawan's devotees, [seeing that it contains the Master's words unembellished by dogmatic explanations and would thus be unlikely to find a place in a shelf stacked with texts on Metaphysical Treatises,] I have adopted a relatively informal style that I hope will bolster the devotee's eagerness to absorb the cherished and priceless words of Our Master.

Sri Gajapathi Aiyer is a distinguished lawyer and a devotee par excellence of the Maharshi. He came to Ramanasramam in the late 1930s as, in his own words, a "Nihilist"; from the moment Sri Bhagawan's benign eye of grace fell on him he became intoxicated with the nectar of Ecstatic Divine Love for God.

One might wonder why the influence of a Jnani should invoke or trigger feelings of Bhakti in a man coming into his vicinity, rather than initiate him into the Jnana Marga. It may be borne in mind that the Maharshi did not impose his Vichara Marga on anyone; indeed, unless drawn into a conversation on the topic, he would not recommend, or even mention it; he was not the lecture-giving type of Swami; he never professed or claimed to know anything special or out-of-the-ordinary; the waves of peace-radiation flowing from him caused people to flock to him of their own accord. Each one found in him what he was looking for, and direction of spiritual development in every case was according to respective individual temperament. Not all felt attracted to Who am I?, but those who were doing their other spiritual practises found they were making rapid progress after even a single- and often chance- encounter with the Maharshi. Thus, by whatever path a man was fit to approach God according to his poorvasamskaras, the Maharshi helped him up by that path only; when, in the due course of time, the man became ripe enough for the ultimate Vichara Marga, he would of his own accord change over to it effortlessly and spontaneously. Many think Sri Bhagawan is a staunch exponent of the Jnana Yoga method, and disapproves of all others; whereas, the truth is that he is prepared to haul you up no matter by which path you climb- only, you must hold on tightly to the rope of Sadhana, and never relax your grip! It might be that the Sadhaka is temperamentally suited primarily to the path of devotion, worship and self-surrender, but has hitherto done no Sadhana; when he sits in the Master's presence his poorvasamskaras propel him automatically to take up some devotional activity, or atleast the devotional strain of thought; in due course of time he steadily progresses until he becomes a Bhaktha of the highest order- that is, acquires the Stithaprajna of Jnana. Swami Vivekananda has said of Sri Ramakrishna, "A mere glance from him could change a whole life." I am no Vivekananda, but I proceed to emphatically assert that merely being in the Hallowed Presence of the Maharshi could bring about a total transformation for the good in one's



life. Many have benefitted just from seeing his form in the flesh and blood- which privilege, alas!, is denied to us hereafter- and some have left glowing accounts that bear testimony to the unique splendour of this unrivalled Master of the world of Spiritualism. Reading accounts of how he, though apparently disinterested, rechartered the lives of many toward the One True Goal, lifts one's spirits and reaffirms his faith in the Master. One such is the case of Sri Gajapathi Aiyyer.

Sri Gajapathi Aiyyer lost his parents when he was very young, in a tragic incident that left him with a sneering, cynical approach to life, one that questioned the need for system regulation and order in a world so tightly ruled by the iron fist of fate. He was raised by his father's sister's family, one I am in acquaintance with, and attempted to be given a B.Sc. Education in the St. Joseph's college at Trichinopoly, but eventually fell into evil ways on account of bad company. He became an anarchist in his views and began to participate in activities that fall within the region of questionable morality. I mention these details without fear that the reader's opinion of the man would be framed in poor light, because the transformations that manifested in him should be seen as being exclusively the miraculous work of Sri Bhagawan; only if one forms a picture of the man as he was before he met the Maharshi, does he realize the magnitude of change that the Master's influence has managed to bring about. In the late 1930s he was afflicted with a severe gastroenterological condition that left him unable to eat anything. What the reason is I do not mention here. The family that he was staying with did not know what to do with him, as in those days western systems of medicine could not be afforded by such small Agraharam people, whose only affluence was that they abounded in penury- indeed they were largely unknown, and everyone depended upon community-made herbal concoctions and decoctions and powders for everything from tooth-ache to muscular sprains. One day a relative brought some Thiruneer from the Tiruvannamalai Annamalaiyaar Temple. This was secretly mixed in the liquid intake ingested by the boy, and the same night he had a dream in which a yogi wearing nothing but a ragged koupeenam was doing intense Tapas in a cave on the side of a mountain. Soon the boy recovered, but began to brood more and more on the dream, because thinking of the yogi mysteriously brought tears in his eyes. Then someone in the family told him he had recovered only by the grace of Lord Annamalaiyaar, because only after consuming the Thiruneer secretly mixed in his liquid diet for a few days did he begin consuming solid food again. The youth was enraged when he learnt that they had been mixing things in his intake without obtaining his permission beforehand, but when his anger cooled down he paid heed to his elders' advice to visit the Annamalaiyaar Temple and express gratitude for the recovery, to Lord Shiva. Thus, never having heard of Tiruvannamalai before, he visited there with his aunt's family, proclaiming before starting, "Don't think I will bow before Shiva. If Shiva himself personally appears before me and begs me to do obeisance to him, I may oblige. Otherwise there is no chance... I am coming with you only to admire the architecture of the Temple, since you say that it is very grand and marvellous..." Notwithstanding his blasphemous attitude and speech, they started. When the train reached close enough to the Arunachala Hill, the boy was 'flabbergasted' to see the same mountain that he had seen in his dream. After the temple visit he was very keen to find out if the portion of his dream of the yogi performing penance in a cave on the Hill, was also true. He made enquiries as to whether there was any such cave and person. He was told that nowadays the yogi no longer stayed up on the Hill, and that his

followers had constructed an Ashram for him. The yogi's name? Sri Ramana Maharshi. The boy- much to the astonishment of the family members- wanted to visit the yogi. They went to Sri Ramanasramam. What happened next was that the young man, in the middle of his 20s, began to behave like an infant with its mother, and refused outright to leave the presence of the Sage, whose glance seemed to have touched some chord deep within him. He tearfully requested the Sage to give him Deeksha into his order of Monks. The Sage was not forthcoming with any reply, but sat motionless. The boy did not budge either, but continually tried to persuade Sri Bhagawan to give him Sannyasa, saying repeatedly, "Now, you are my only hope..." Ashramites told him that there was no Order in the Ashram. He refused to believe it, saying, "Because I am young you want to dissuade me from taking Sannyasa..." Meanwhile his relatives were totally shocked to see the boy's instantaneous decisive jump to the exact opposite end of the spectrum. They pleaded with Sri Bhagawan to bless the boy with a well-paying job and a happy married life, at which juncture the boy glared at them angrily through his tear-filled eyes. Sri Bhagawan did not give any reply to this either. Eventually they permitted the boy to stay for 6 months, fearing that if they completely refused to yield he might run away and they might never see him again. Cheap accomodation was found in the Town for him. After this stay at Tiruvannamalai, the boy had changed completely. When his relatives came to take him back to Thiruchchi, they feared he might want to stay for a still longer duration, but the boy had become silent and withdrawn, and left with them without protest or demur. Now- what miraculous operation of ego-exorcism did Bhagawan, Our Light and Our Way, perform on this boy? Gajapathi Aiyer himself did not know. Soon he married and then went to Madras for further studies, in Law. Thereafter he went abroad, and returned only after Independence.

1948 found Gajapathi Aiyer shifting to Madras, now an ex-Civil-Service-man and a newly-established practising advocate at that city; for employment reasons, and since he, having no [plans for] offspring, wanted to be near relatives who were at that city, so that when old age attacked him he would have someone to draw support from [in the physical sense; psychologically I know that Sri Bhagawan has been his pillar of support from the moment the Master's eyes looked into his for the first time], he had, with my encouragement, decided to move to Madras.

I visited him when he was bundling the contents of his somewhat dilapidated house at Trichinopoly into oblong Tin crates, to be shifted to Madras. On one corner was a heap of old yellowed-with-age documents. He said he wanted it burned and asked whether it would be better to do so near the well at the backyard, since the heap was huge and the fire could become unweildy in case the wind were to be unruly, for the house being of the olden Agraharam type and made mostly out of wodden beams and rafters, one had to exercise caution. Smilingly recollecting the impetuous pre-Bhagawan Gajapathi I remembered from a decade earlier, I agreed and we both carried the bundles to the backyard. I noticed a few notebooks that were filled in his scrupulous, tidy writing. They did not seem like account books or case files. So I asked Gajapathi what they were. He laughed and said, "Oh! That! You remember the 6 months I spent in Tiruvannamalai with Bhagawan? I made notes of whatever Bhagawan did and said everyday during those 6 months, every night in my lodgings..." I asked him why he did not want to preserve these memories. HE is Here, said Gajapathi, thumping the right-hand side of his chest with his fist. I told him that these volumes might not be useful to him anymore, but those at the

Asramam, not excluding Bhagawan himself, would relish memoirs pertaining to the Master. "Oh, no! Please don't tell Bhagawan! It will become a big Abacharam. I did not seek his permission before writing these..." I told him it was alright, that I had observed Sri Devaraja Mudaliar [a resident of the Ashram] maintaining a similar record, that Bhagawan had only encouraged Mudaliarval and not upbraided him- but he was adamant, and went on saying, "If Bhagawan asks me why I have done such an act without asking him first, where will I take and keep my face? It will be considered as Guru-nindhanai, for which there is no atonement in the three worlds. Even God cannot remedy the offence done to the Guru. I will be condemned to Eternal Damnation. Everyone will say, what an Abacharam he has committed against Bhagawan." I tried to reason with him further, but that only upset him into quietly saying, "What has prompted you to visit me at this busy hour, I wonder? Why don't you visit me next week at Madras? Vaidehi has already left. She is at her brother's house in Madras. Shall I give you the address?". Saying so he reached for the can of Keosene. I deftly caught hold of his wrist, and shouted, "If the first Abacharam is writing these diaries secretly, the second is destroying them secretly. A wise man stops with the first." Gajapathi stopped dead. He seemed paralyzed by fear. "What to do now?" he asked. He was sitting on the floor with his hands on top of his head. "I have lost everything..." I said, "Let us show it to Bhagawan, and let him judge." Eventually he agreed to this proposal. All the diaries- around half-a-dozen in number, I think- were packed into a trunk. [They are hardbound notebooks as such, all of the same variety, done in beautiful red rexine. The pages are serially numbered from one to three hundred, in black ink; the pages opening on to the left-hand side have their number inscribed at the top left corner and those on the right-hand side at the top right corner. The pages are lined with bluish lines in narrow spacing, and filled with young Gajapathi's meticulous note-making competencies, all expressed by pencil.] The trunk was unpacked in front of Bhagawan in Dec. 1948. He ran through the books patiently. When he came to the record of his experiences at the Madurai Meenakshi Temple ["I was like that in Madurai, shedding tears of longing at the Meenakshi Temple, without having the slightest clue why... even the thought, 'Why am I crying?' did not occur..."] he smiled and said, குழந்தை என்ன சமத்தாக எல்லாவற்றையும் எழுதி வைத்து கொண்டு இருக்கிறது பார்! I remarked, "Gajapathi feels that he has committed an offence by chronicling your words without having sought out your permission."

B.: பறவா இல்லை.

Gaja.: I only wrote for my own recollection; if shown to others, will it not lead to confusion? Bhagawan gives specific advice to individual persons on spiritual matters; if shown to an unrelated person will that person not erroneously think that the advice is applicable to his own case also, and thus mislead himself, with unwarranted consequences? Yet Swami wants to make it available for all in the Ashram to inspect...

I: Bhagawan's words are more solemn and sacred than the Upanishads even. Why opine they could mislead anyone?

B.: இந்த புத்தகங்களில் பதிவாகியிருக்கும் அதே சந்தேகங்கள் யாருக்கு ஆவது வரலாம்...

Gaja.: But Bhagawan gives different responses to the same question to different persons, depending upon individual temperament!

B.: If the reply found is not satisfactory, the search continues! The earnest Sadhaka does not make himself content with the receipt of a response felt by him to be unsuitable, or only partially satisfactory.... An intellect made subtler and subtler by repeated and prolonged submergence in Being, will automatically reject advice that directs it away from the Heart... Practising firm Inherence in the Heart strengthens the faculty of intuition to the extent that it seeks out, time and again, only those words that redirect its course toward the self-resplendant Heart; such discrimination is not a function of the fictitious sense of individual free will; rather, it is automatic and comes by God's Grace to the sincere seeker...

Gajapathi was about to say something, but it was time for the veda parayanam to begin, and Bhagawan, reaching for his stick, remarked before leaving, "There is a destiny guiding the course of events... One need not fret about anything, imagining oneself to be personally responsible for it..."

Now the master is in the body no more, but we feel his guidance nonetheless. I humbly believe that it is the Master's will which is prompting me to take the step of making the contents of these notebooks available to a wider audience. I have discussed the idea with Gajapathi and he agreed to make a combined synopsis out of the notebooks, so that the Master's teachings shining in them may be published as a convenient volume, with contents arranged either date-wise or thematically. After the Mahakumbabhishekam, the ashram is short on financial resources; the ashram, I think, now sells only Ramanar Nool Thirattu and Who am I? in its book-depot; to say that visitors have dwindled would be unjust, for it would be a massively disproportional understatement; after B.'s passing, the place resembles a desert. Houses in Ramana Nagar and Bose Compound have been looted, and all inhabitants have fled away. Only a few old ashram inmates like myself are left; in Palakoththu some sadhus remain; that is all. Young men like Gajapathi say they cannot stomach the idea of setting eyes upon a Ramanasramam without the Ramana Maharshi, that their stomachs turn at the very thought. In these circumstances any idea for publishing a book would invite massive ridicule- or if not, gratitude for introducing some humour in their life that day- with the members of the Ramanasramam Managing Symposium. I am merely stating facts as they are: this is not a fault-finding exercise. Keeping these circumstances in mind, I contacted Gita Press, Gorakhpur, through a mutual acquaintance; although they primarily publish sanskrit works, it is my confidence and anticipation that a work composed from the words of the legendary sage of the Hill of the Holy Beacon, our Bhagawan, will be gladly taken up for publication.

Swami Rajeshwarananda

Tiruvannamalai

Dec. 1950

## **Introduction**

Lectori salutem! Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi is widely regarded as the most important exponent of Advaita since the days of Sri Adi Sankara.

Nowadays pseudo-advaitins are to be found in nearly every major pilgrimage centre.

They proclaim "Aham-Brahmasmi" as their doctrine and make a luxuriant living out of their devotees' hard-earned savings, leading a sybaritic, hedonistic or epicurean, parasitic, and often lecherous, debauched lifestyle. Many young women fall into the snares of these fake sadhus and are unable to rescue themselves from the fatal allure of

mesmerism cast by such scoundrels. When they realise the truth it is too late already, and they are never again able to return to family life or gain acceptance in society. These charlatans have no teachings, and according to them every man is inherently Brahman and therefore already Self-realised. No effort is needed to discover the Self, they proclaim, for it is always in Realisation. Man is free here and now, they assert, and therefore only the foolish engage in sadhana. Yet another kind of fraudster turns into an exercise of intellection the quest for the Advaita state. He goes on talking about it from what he has read in books but has not had the least experience of the state itself. He has no idea that the actual Advaita teaching is not conceptual or intellectual, but rather encompasses at its core the transcendental aspect of Brahmajnana. He pretends that he knows Brahman, by quoting from all kinds of texts and scriptures. The public is also conned easily into thinking, "Wow! What a knowledgeable man! He must be a realised soul." That the intellect cannot know Brahman, and that it is the destruction of the Intellect which allows Brahman to shine forth, not the amount of objective knowledge it has assimilated or accumulated, is not known to people widely. A man is judged by what he does; but a true Saint cannot be judged because he has long ago left behind the realm of doing, and now abides blissfully in absolute non-doing. Because there is no mind in the Saint no possibility of activity remains. One whose quest for Brahmajnana is all-consuming will never be satisfied with anyone who tries to convince him through words that Brahman is verily himself. So long as subject-object relationship remains, thus long ignorance remains. So long as there is something to see or do, thus long ignorance remains. Perception or objective knowledge is supreme ignorance. Listening to lectures or speeches to gain the Advaita state is therefore counter-productive and harmful, for it strengthens the fetters of bondage by impregnating the idea in the mind, "I, the ego-self, am searching for Self-Realisation or the Real Self." Nothing could be farther from Bhagawan's teachings: "Scorch the ego by ignoring its apparent existence." Anyone who thinks that he has known Advaita after listening to some useless verbiage is radically mistaken. The actual teaching of Advaita is not through words at all, but rather in Silent Experience. Fraudsters who claim to teach Advaita through lectures are taking the public for a ride. These sorts of poisonous teaching has corrupted the mind of many sincere seekers aspiring to reach the Advaita-Siddhi or Sahaja-Stithi.

This is why Lord Shiva himself, as Bhagawan, incarnated upon the earth. I am privileged to write a compendium of his teachings as experienced by me first-hand. I thank Swami Rajeshwarananda for having created for me this opportunity to bring out Bhagawan's words to the world of his devotees. On myself, I was born in Tiruppathur, near Trichinopoly. At 15 I lost my parents. I was taken to my father's sister's house in Trichinopoly, near the Rockfort. I was given a good education and made to enroll in St. Joseph's college, in the B.Sc. Chemistry program. However I soon fell into undesirable habits owing to evil vasanas dormant in me, as I now realize with the benefit of hindsight. As the days passed I grew worse. One day I collapsed from what I thought was stomach pain. The professional diagnosis was partial cirrhosis of the liver accompanied by intestinal bleeding. I had hid my vile habits from my conservative family, but through the doctor they came to know of it. They were deeply shocked and asked me what fault it was in their upbringing that had caused me to go astray. I had no reply and hung down my head in shame. I became depressed and decided that I wanted to die. To that effect, I threw away the doctor's medicines but pretended that I was taking them to keep my

family happy. I grew sick and weak and I was convinced every night that I would never wake up to see the light of day again. One day by Bhagawan's miracle, the illness abated; the same mysterious miracle found me, a complete non-believer, at Sri Ramanasramam begging for Bhagawan's Diksha, on the evening of 5.Jul.1936. I was told there was no Order there, although I observed several swamis wearing saffron robes present at the place. I wanted to stay there permanently. My family permitted me to stay for 6 months and left after finalising some inexpensive lodging for me in the town, some distance away from the Thirumanjana Gopuram of the Arunachaleshwara Temple. They knew I did not mind walking long distances but enjoyed long walks. These 6 months and thereafter I performed only one sadhana: Love for the Master, which is the same as Total Relinquishment of my will so as to facilitate His to take over. His eyes have arrested the activities of my soul. I became as a snake facing the மஞ்சள், unable to think of my personal self [including education, career, employment, possible future and the like]. Love for him flooded my soul and I had no idea why. The sum-total of the mind and mental faculties became only this love, and everything else seemed ridiculously trivial, unsubstantial, unimportant and dream-like. He did not display any siddhis except this one- he made me fall in love with him. I must explain that this love was an experience in that it was not anything I did but rather something I felt. It was and is utterly Ecstatic in nature. Sometimes sitting in the Hall looking at the figure on the sofa tears would begin to well up in my eyes and I would hastily wipe them away. Why tears? If I knew, reader, I would not hesitate to tell you. I was evidently not alone in this strange experience, for I observed the same thing was happening to a man sitting at the Master's feet, who would keep watching the Maharshi's face intently, and then allow silent tears to fall on his lap, moistening his white vaetti. [I later learnt that this simple looking man was the celebrated master-poet Muruganar, who had written many poems about the Master in chaste, sangathamil.] The love I have for the Master is not sustained by an effort of the will; I have no conscious role in it. When people mean they love someone, they think they like him or her. This is love motivated and sustained at the level of the intellect, through thoughts about the object loved. I am not talking about this kind of love at all. Here, there are no thoughts, only effortless awareness of being, which surges up to swallow the thought-making faculty whole as soon as it is invoked and thereafter remains by itself shining as Blissful Love. This is only a prelude to Brahmajnana, the state Bhagawan was in, however... Was this love not towards Bhagawan, then? I thought so in the beginning, but later on came to realize that it was Bhagawan himself. 'The Love that shines in the cavity of the Heart as I-I when the turbulent mind is stilled in its source is known as the vision of the Nija-swaroopam of the Guru.' I would read later amongst one of the poems shown to me by an Englishman I met in the ashram later, a Major Allen Chadwick. This towering, booming caucasian had served in His Majesty's army during the Great War. Reading Paul Brunton's A Search in Secret India had convinced him that Bhagawan was his Guru, and straightaway he had sailed over, remaining in the ashram grounds ever since. Remarkably, he told me one day, "Bhagawan himself has acknowledged explicitly that the connection existing between him and myself is ancient, that it has carried over across several scores of previous births..." I pointed out to him not to repeat such statements in the future, atleast whilst I was in the vicinity, as I did not wish to hear anything derogatory about Bhagawan. "Why, what is derogatory about it, young man?" he asked in some surprise. I responded, "The Avatar has no bondage, not in the present,

past or future. He comes only for the salvation of humanity, in this one Birth expressly graciously assumed for the purpose. Suggesting that he was born in the past means implying that our Bhagawan was in bondage in the past. Such a view is not only blasphemous, but also absurd." He did not seem pleased by the remark, saying, "It was the Master himself who said so; I am not saying it..." In general, however, interaction with people in the ashram was exceedingly rare; I preferred then as ever to keep myself to myself, or rather myself to Bhagawan. The Love I felt for him had no physical or psychic token that one could observe from outside. I did not, for instance, try to touch his feet or plant my head on his feet, as I have observed people doing. I have also not had any trance-like experiences or visions. I cannot say that I tried to cultivate love for him, but rather say that coming into his presence Love recognised itself to be Love. This experience of True Love was its own reciprocation and did not crave recognition from an outside source. Yet Bhagawan's eyes shone at me whenever he looked at me. One might wonder coming into a Brahmajnani's presence why the pupil should not try practising Jnana-yoga to obtain liberation, instead of adopting the sentimental Bhakthi path. However, where was the volition in me to commence any sadhana? Sadhana wants to achieve something, progress toward some goal. The more time I spent in Bhagawan's presence, in fact, the more incapable I grew of performing any form of Sadhana. I could palpably feel my individual sense of volition waning and waning, till the point was reached when I no longer thought about when how and in what manner I could attain Brahmajnana- my supreme priority on the day I first set eyes upon him and was trying to persuade him into giving me Diksha. Compared to this nectar-like experience of ambrosial Love that has descended on me like the primordial deluge and destroyed the tendency of my mind to seek out happiness from objects of sense-pleasure, the question of even my soul's salvation, that is, the merging of the jivatman with the paramatman, or Athmasakshatkaram, seemed to have faded into the abyss of total non-importance and irrelevance. I no longer felt responsible for anything, because I had stopped perceiving needs. The dream body fulfilled its dream requirements by making use of dream objects, that was all. Bhagawan's gracious Love was the only thing that seemed Real. Three or four days after my arrival here I was gripped by a meaningless desire to record the conversations going on in the Hall. I tried to drive the desire away, but soon had to oblige, because if I obliged I was peacefully immersed in the Love-current I have mentioned, whereas if I resisted awareness of the current became dim and I was plunged headlong into misery. Therefore I purchased 6 red-rexine bound ruled notebooks from a stationer in town, one for each month I was going to spend in the ashram. I spent nearly all the money I had for the purpose, because I did not want to deploy loose sheets and run the risk of losing them. Anyone taking notes in the Hall itself would likely be thrown out of the ashram permanently, for I knew well that was the rule here; on the very second day of my arrival here there was a terrible row on that account, and it happened like this: someone in the Hall was bent over rigorously writing something on sheets of paper he had brought with him; he was sitting near the interpreter. When the interpreter or B. spoke, his hand also moved. People writing in the Hall was not unusual, but this sort of obvious behaviour gave it away. If one wanted to write anything in the Hall he was liable to have his writings subject to surprise checks anytime, for the management was anxious that the Master's words not be recorded except via authorised publications brought out by them. When someone from the office walked in and noticed someone writing

something he as usual asked the man to submit his sheets to scrutiny; the young chap refused with the excellent english words, "It is a gross violation of my privacy.". Next the sarvadhikari was called. "Look!", he said, suddenly, pointing towards the window. All except B. turned in that direction. That one moment was enough for the adroit sarvadhikari. He snatched the papers, tore them into tiny peices in front of the shocked eyes of the youth, and deposited the shreds into the young man's shirt pocket, saying, "பத்திரமாக வைத்துக்கொள் என்ன?". B. was looking as detached and serene as ever. [Nothing on our world really affects him; if he appears to act with concern toward a devotee, it is for the devotee's benefit; he has nothing to gain or lose, and has no needs or wants. I heard that during the earlier days of his stay on the Hill, he would not even be wearing a koupeenam.] The boy became extemely indignant and complained that he had been ill-treated. "I am a journalist and associated with many tabloid houses. If this man does not fall at my feet and ask for forgiveness, not only will I file a complaint with the police station, but also publish such derogatory articles about your ashram that nobody will visit it ever again." The sarvadhikari merely laughed at him and exited the Hall. The boy turned and said the same thing to Bhagawan. B. said, "Yes, you may please carry out your threats, I shall be most indebted to you..." The boy turned on his heel and stomped angrily out of the Hall, his face set and determined. I never saw him again, but the incident left a nasty impression on me. So, when I felt the urge to write, it had to be done in the clandestine manner, in my room, during the night. Thus, I spent the night in my little room busily scratching away with a pencil [I did not have any money left to buy a proper pen, and was too impatient to employ the common metal-pen variety, with its cumbersome paraphernalia of ink-pot and blotting paper.] by the light of a sooty kerosene lamp. My memory, otherwise lousy, now functioned like a smooth, well-oiled machine, feeding my hand continuously with Bhagawan's sweet sentences to write.

It may be asked if the Master was himself averse to notes being made. I do not think so. When he finally did see my notebooks he even had a kind word to throw in about it. These rules were framed by the management and he had nothing to say about it- of course he had a say in it, but he said nothing. He was really supremely aloof from everything. It was not that he bore a flippant or frivolous attitude towards the world; indeed he was careful never to hurt but always to help; it was merely that there was no world available to him to see. The world as the world had for him vanished long ago and now no matter what was seen it was only the Seer who was seeing Himself. Left to his own way, he would live in the forests and happily thrive on leaves and roots. This post of 'Bhagawan' was irksome to him, and the Sofa he considered a cage. This impression one was able to arrive at when one studied his behaviour closely.

As I walked to the ashram in the morning from the temple, I would be filled with the joyous anticipation of seeing his blessed face, and as I walked back late into the night, with that of recounting the words he had uttered that day on paper. I slept on an average only 2 hours per day, but mysteriosly it had no adverse impact on my health, for my Master saw to that...

Thus when I bid a tearful farewell to Bhagawan on 21.Dec.1936, my notebooks accompanied me away from Ramanasramam, as a secret token of His Grace, for of couse at the time I told him nothing of them, fearing fierce chastisement. They continue to give me great solace upto this day, reader!



I tried to get rid of them on one occasion when I doubted the moral propriety of their creation. Swami Rajeshwarananda dissuaded me, however, and today they are my most prized possession [although I parted with one recently, not without reluctance, for reasons connected with seeing this book in print]. I hope this book, forged out of its contents, gives you the same solace! My life contains nothing very eventful after I left the ashram. Exposure to Bhagawan's presence is the only fragrant portion of my life; everything else is mere obnoxious, mephitic, fetid garbage unworthy of mention. In Dec. 1936 I received a letter from my family stating that I was to get married to a close relative in Feb. 1937. My consent or otherwise mattered nothing. The letter was unequivocally clear that I must comply; to this end it made use of emotional duress: "நீ ஒருவேளை விவரம் தெரியாத இந்த வாலிப பருவத்தில் முட்டாள்தனமாக சந்நியாசம் வாங்கிக்கொண்டால் உன் தாய் தந்தையினர் ஆன்மா எங்களை ஒருபோதும் மன்னிக்காது சாந்தியும் அடையாது..."

I showed him the letter and asked B. whether to consider seriously running away from home to avoid marriage. His remarks in reply seemed to indicate that that would worsen my trouble, and that the best course in such vexatious situations was to surrender one's life heart and soul to the Higher Power and leave IT to take care of everything. So, I was forced to sit through the marriage. Thereafter I attended and passed out of Madras Law College, and then enlisted in the civil services. I was posted all the way to the other end of the world, at Belize town, capital of the Honduras. There I stayed while Hitler's Germany waged its maniacal 'War of Annihilation for the dominion over the world of the Gothic Nordo-teutonic Pruehnic Master Aryan Race'. There I stayed whilst India was torn into two, sectarianists massacred and decimated thousands of lives and livelihoods, mass migrations were taking place at the newly created border, and Gandhi was being blamed everywhere for the Partition. Of course all this news was unpleasant, but I was fortunate in that the Master's words gave me solace whenever my attitude of mind tended toward despondence or gloom, for I had the 6 notebooks with me all the time, shimmering with memories as to what happened in the Hall during my stay there; in addition I had also taken a copy of the Nool Thirattu physically touched and blessed by Bhagawan. In the weeks preceding Independence, I submitted my resignation. I was relieved in Nov. 1947 and reached my home in Trichinopoly the day before Gandhi was assassinated. I was aching to see Bhagawan. However, circumstances were ripe at that point of time to establish a practise at Madras; a vacancy was advertised in an English daily to the effect that a firm required an urgent substitute for an outgoing junior and applications were invited from law graduates. I knew that appearing in person stood me a better chance of selection. I therefore went to Madras; evidently impressed with my overseas experience as a civil servant, I was given the job and immediately dispatched to Calcutta on some urgent case. I could not naysay the very first assignment in a new work environment, or request its postponement, for that would at the outset create a poor impression about me; thus, darshan of Bhagawan had to wait. I returned to Trichinopoly only several months later and promptly fell ill with Malarial fever. After recovering, shifting the household to Madras became an urgent priority, because one of the roof-beams of our house had been cracked by lightning and was gaping open, and I was sleeping in the thinnai every night whilst the ladies slept in the courtyard, for the fear that the roof should collapse over our heads. In weeks the rainy season would arrive and we would not know what to do. Looking for a temporary residence in the locality was pointless because

moving to Madras had become inevitable. There were other complications. The demolisher refused to accept the chore of disposing the many old, bulky useless items in the house; he wanted the house to be handed over to him in an empty condition. This being an Agraharam house, many old, huge and useless items, over a 100 years old, were occupying various corners like ferocious dwarabalakas. There were instruments- all to be operated by hand- for grinding flour, squeezing out oil from sesame seeds and dried coconut kernels, threshing paddy, and so on and so forth. This place had once been a fortified collection of villages. My Aththimbaer's ancestors had been the zamindar for this particular village and a neighboring one; all the harvested grain came straight here, was measured, and deposited in the granary behind the house. I have seen only the ruins of this granary; my aunt told me that it had been demolished while I was still a young boy living with my parents in Tiruppathur, for, neglected and disused, it had begun to house huge cobras. If even a muscular, professional bodybuilder of the current generation were to try to operate these machines for more than 20 minutes continuously, he would fall down in a faint- I am confident of it. Yet three quarters of a century ago, atleast thrice every week, the women in this same house would operate them ALL, by turn, throughout the day. Huge, heavy and ominous-looking, they resemble in appearance the sophisticated torture devices used in medieval Europe, in castles, to force political prisoners into making unwarranted confessions. What to do with them? I asked several people if they were interested in buying them. Everyone came to the conclusion that being in the service of the British had instilled in me a fine sense of humour. One man said, "What! But has the Sotheby's offer been dissatisfactory to you?" In spite of all my troubles I had to laugh. I finally asked a local timber company to break them all into peices and cart them away from my sight. For this I was demanded 250 rupees! Imagine, reader! 250 rupees! Since shifting expenses were imminent, I had not this kind of money to spare, and refused the ridiculous offer. But this was only the beginning of my troubles. The title deeds of the house were locked away in an old Iron safe. At the starting point in its eventful career it must have looked bright green, for peices of the paint had still managed to cling on. I asked my aunt for the key. She had been storing it on the top-most kitchen shelf, thinking the location kept it safe from would-be robbers. No robber had managed to find it alright, but water and wind had. Seepage from the roof had damaged the key; in those days keys were made of pure iron. I gingerly inserted the key, hoping I could manage to get the safe open, and turned; the key broke off in my hand; worse, duplicate keys available with locksmiths could now not be tried, because the other broken portion was lodged adamantly in the keyhole. I admonished my aunt for having kept the key there, rather too severely, perhaps; the next day she was down with fever and refused to eat a thing. To top it all, my wife slipped near the well while drawing water, and now could not walk without leaning on me. Her ankle was swollen to the size of a small pumpkin. I had not the resources to take care of them both here, and so sent them to Madras, to my wife's brother's house, fully knowing that my aunt would never feel at home there. Even at the time of departing she was saying, "உன்னை எடுத்து வளர்த்ததற்கு பேசாது ஒரு பெரிய அம்மி குழவியாக பார்த்து எடுத்துக்கொண்டு வந்து வளர்த்து இருக்கலாம்..." I knew she would forget her own words in a few days, and that only physical incapacity had flared her up and not any grudge against me, but still felt stung. After they both left I sat down and wept for some time. I thought to myself, "Can it get worse than this?". That moment,

someone knocked, and I found it was the postman. The prospective buyer of the property, whom I had found after herculean effort, had written to say that within three weeks I had to clear out the place and within this week the title-deeds would have to be sent to him for examination, failing either of which he would not be interested in buying anymore, and that I could take this communication to be his last words on the matter pending further action from my side. I simply sank down low on the floor and wondered why Bhagawan had let me down like this. Perhaps he was angry I could not visit him directly on returning to India. The next day I wrote to him saying, "If your divine intervention is not vouchsafed to me immediately, I shall don the Ochre and wander around from place to place as a begging-bowl Sannyasi..." I also explained my troubles. Whilst I was returning from the post office, someone called my name. It was the gentleman who had made the joke about Sotheby's. He was grinning from ear to ear. "Some lunatic wants to purchase your stuff..." I eagerly noted down the contact address, but when I arrived at home I found a Caucasian man standing outside, three-piece suit, cufflinks, pocket-watch-chain and all. He looked as though three minutes ago, he had just stepped straight out of the pages of the Dickensian novel Pickwick Papers. An Indian attendant was holding an umbrella over him [the royal kind of umbrella, gilded handle]. The gentleman was relieved to know that I spoke English. I had worked on the service, I was saying? Oh! Positively grand! "Now- about those Instruments-" he began. I cut him short with, "Yes, you see my plight, what can I do?"

He: "Don't worry about it, kind sir, I am not the parsimonious variety of human being!"

Me: [puzzled] Yes, so I discerned from the bedizenment... Now, I have not much money to fritter... Going to have to incur expenses to shift this household to Madras... So if you will state a reasonable sum...

He: How about 35 pounds, kind sir?

I reeled in shock. What was this madness? The timber-cutter was better any day. "It is utterly unconscionable, sir!" I cried.

He: I am sorry. I should have been fairer, I know. How about 50 pounds?

I: I relish, no doubt, your unique and unrivalled spirit of jocundity, but good Sir, I am in no mood to play games today. I am in a situation of deep distress, you see... So, I wish you a good day...

He: Wait! Make not haste! 75 pounds will be my final offer of purchase for all antique agricultural utilities and other antiquarian artefacts contained in this ancient Hindu home! It was then that the horror of the situation dawned upon me. He was trying to pay ME to BUY these items!

I smiled in sweet astonishment. "Its a deal clinched well." he said, shaking my hand. He whispered to the attendant, and that man handed over a briefcase to him. He balanced it on a raised knee, opened it, rummaged, and finally handed to me a thick wad of currency notes. I was only gaping at him open-mouthed, all the while, feeling a strange sense of pity for the other wash over me... "I know money can never compensate fully for the pain of having to part with these priceless family heirlooms. I sympathise with your feelings..." he said. My feelings of commiseration brought tears to my eyes. Pain? Priceless heirloom? When I finally found my voice, a few more notes were thrust into my hand. "I am not a hard-hearted man, Sir... Please do not shed tears... I will leave these cherished objects with you for a week from now, so that you can have a- a last communion with them..." Alarmed, I shouted, "No, no; take them away as soon as possible..." He was now

dabbing at his eyes. "Sir, sir, you are the noblest man, if I may say so, amongst those I have met of your ancient race... Your spirit of fair-play overwhelms me... nevertheless, I must not squeeze the fact to my advantage... I shall collect the items the day after tomorrow..." Saying so, he embraced me tightly, swept through the door in an emotionally agitated state, saying to himself, "Ah! What a race we thought to civilize!", and that was that. I thought there would be a brougham and horses waiting outside, but he climbed into [what I guessed to be] a Jaguar SS1 [the **coupé** variety] and drove away with his attendant seated next to him, one hand on the steering wheel and another holding a kerchief to his nose and mouth. I was about to shut the door when someone called out. It was the postman, with 2 telegrams. I feared the worst for my aunt, but read- "PROSPECTIVE HOUSE FOR YOU FOUND IN MADRAS. ATHAI AND VAIDEHI WELL. NO REASON TO WORRY. NO INCONVINIENCE FOR ME TO TAKE CARE. MY DUTY RATHER. REGARDS SOMASUNDARA AIYYER." and "IMPRESSED BY YOUR WORK AT CALCUTTA. REGRET YOUR MALARIA. FEEL NO OBLIGATION TO RETURN BEFORE COMPLETELY WELL. SINCERELY RAMASAMI IYYENGAR, N.B.&CO." Feeling somewhat dazed and dizzy, I went inside and caught hold of something, the nearest thing I could find, for support. My hand skidded automatically downward- the iron door of the old safe swung open! In it, the title deeds, aged with time but undamaged. I burst into tears and fell flat before a photo of Bhagawan that I had in my House. Tearfully, I wrote to Bhagawan. "O Divine Master of Shiva's Highmost abode! Hereafter I am not. Only you are! You have completely destroyed me by your loving arrow of Grace! Only let me be the votary of the votaries who hear your name with love, Oh! Lord! Let me be your slave forever. Show me only this mercy and it will suffice..." Since I have no poetical skills, I stole one of Bhagawan's own lines and presented it back to him! I rushed to post the letter so that it could go to Ramanasramam on the same day's mail. I wonder which letter Bhagawan will read first!

Although I have opined that B. should not be judged based on such apparent 'miraculous phenomena', or the humanitarian activities carried out by him, I merely place these instances on record, only in the Introduction section, to tell the reader that, in my experience, one who has blind love for Bhagawan will ultimately be saved and not be allowed to come to any harm.

The next day Swami Rajeshwarananda arrived. Since I was planning to visit Ramanasramam the next month and come clean on the fact that I had maintained a diary or record without seeking Bhagawan's permission or blessings, I wanted beforehand to atone for my crime by burning the notebooks. To this end I had placed them amongst other papers to be burned. However, it somehow caught the Swami's eagle-sharp attention. He would not let me burn them. Finally he convinced me to take them to Ramanasramam and show them to Bhagawan himself. So, Christmas Day, 1948 found me standing in front of Bhagawan in the 'Jubilee Hall'. I was meeting him after 12 long years, and became emotional to see the condition his body was in. As soon as he saw me, he said: "I read your letters.", and smiled. I asked in a choked voice, "Bhagawan seems to have become weak?" B.: You have been told not to identify Bhagawan with this body. Bhagawan is THAT-WHICH-IS. THAT-WHICH-IS, is Bhagawan.

I.: Can something not be done to bring about the betterment of the body's condition?

B.: Yes.

I.: Shall I send Ayurvedic medicines to the Ashram? Will B. permit it? The allopaths should not be trusted; in the end they always throw up their hands and say, "God's Will" as if they have suddenly discovered the fact...

B.: For the betterment of the body's condition, one must completely ignore the body and remain as the actual Self. Then the body will aright itself.

I.: But Bhagawan always abides as the true Self!

B.: Therefore, so far as Bhagawan is concerned, the body is always alright, for it is not apart from the Self!

I.: If I may be pardoned for making these observations, B.'s walk has become slower and he stoops slightly; also the limbs have become emaciated and stick-like.

B.: That is also perfection, for that is also only the Self. You compare this body with other bodies and then moan that it is not as healthy as those other bodies. That is your view. So far as I am concerned there is no meaning in localising me to this body; I am equally present in all bodies; thus, some of my bodies are weak and some strong. What of it? But in truth I have no body...

To this advaitic answer I could not say anything, and kept quiet.

Some mischeivous person wondered aloud [this always happened, even during my stay here 12 years ago; many come and sit near Bhagawan but are afraid to address him directly, or over-awed; thus they talk to the air], "Is Bhagawan present in cremated and buried bodies also?"

B.: *அதில் என்ன சந்தேகம்?* He laughed as he said it.

Meanwhile Swami Rajeshwarananda entered the Hall and looked at me meaningfully.

The notebooks were shown to Bhagawan. "How sweetly the child has recorded everything!" he said. I felt happy about the remark, but wanted to know if it was proper to show it to others. B.: People may have the same questions [that find mention in the chronicler's writings].

I.: B. has his own intimate way of dealing with people. How can words convey the same Grace? Moreover, depending upon each individual person's mental composition B.'s answers varies, though the question might be the same.

B.: If the reply is felt to be unsuitable, the search carries him on of itself! The sincere Sadhaka does not make himself propitiated with what he feels is an inadequate or inappropriate answer.... An intellect made subtler and subtler by repeated and prolonged submergence in Pure Consciousness, will automatically abhor any instruction that directs its focus away from the Heart... Practising unwavering Atmanishta strengthens the intellect to the extent that it invites repeatedly only those forms of Sadhana that redirect its course toward the Self. This vivegam is not [or does not come about as a result of] any vritti of the ahamkara; rather, it is automatic and comes by God's Grace to the seeker who has completely surrendered the ego-self to Ishwara or the Guru... Why are you asking these questions? There is a destiny guiding the course of events... One need not worry about anything, imagining one is personally responsible for it..."

Therefore, I got the impression that B. did not discourage private instructions from being published; indeed, Paul Brunton's Secret India contains many private instructions that B. gave to that gentleman, but B. has had nothing to comment adversely upon it, as far as I know. However his primer to those asking for Bhagawan for Brahmajnana is only the essay Naanaar?. Thus, when the Swami suggested that I should compile the notebooks into "one handy reference-manual on B.'s teachings", which could be published, I was

willing to comply with the idea of summarising the contents of the notebooks and edit them for lucidity of style, but unwilling to go further. Who am I to present books on His teachings? B.'s own "one handy reference-manual on B.'s teachings" is the Nool Thirattu; what further is needed? No other books are actually needed; still, that the matter I wrote down may reach B.'s devotees instead of perishing with me, I agree to compile this book; the book only presents what I experienced at the Ashram of B's spiritual advice to seekers of Brahmajnana.

I was faced with the prospect of condensing 6 notebooks into a single book. I did not wish to tamper with B.'s words. So the several fascinating experiences I had in Tiruvannamalai, recorded in my notebooks, do not form part of this manuscript. By performing such elimination, I have been able to keep this manuscript's lengths with tolerable limits; some will undoubtedly feel that even this manuscript is unweildily large and bulky, that B.'s words must be subject to an exercise in precis writing before publication; I cannot disagree more. The words of a Brahmajnani should not be meddled with by mortals. I took down elobrate descriptions of the visitors to the Hall, the questioners, the meditators and the idlers alike- from their intellectual backrounds to their physical appearences. I took down my impressions of the ashram, its people and its environment. All this has been discarded to keep the manuscript within a manageable limit of size. My own conversations with the Master have found inclusion, where I thought it might serve the reader some purpose. My first and later impressions of the master and my opinions of how rapidly I was progressing in Sadhana from time to time under his watchful eye- these I left behind in the notebooks, for this book is not about my petty self; it is about the master. What I thought about the master, about my spiritual progress, or about anything at all should be of no concern to the genuine spiritual aspirant. He must concentrate on discovering his True Self by using the Master's words as a compass, and not side-track himself into bylanes that lead nowhere. I am taking the pains to explain all this because people who liked Brunton's Secret India may pick up this book anticipating similitudes. Gentle reader, there are none. Brunton's book is infact about his experiences, his personal self, cover to cover- that same personal self which B. says must be abandoned or annihilated if the true Self is to be realised. Brunton assumes there exists in him something called his individual I and says that he is going to transform it into the "Overself", by performing or rather subjecting himself to Mystical practices. Nothing could be further from B.'s actual teachings. B. has reiterated time and again that there is no such thing as I, and that it was necessary to discover this fact by direct experience rather than by believing in or passively accepting it. Brunton's book is about Brunton. This book is not about me; it is about Bhagawan, his transcendental wisdom.

The following abbreviations have been used in the text-

B.- Bhagawan

Q.- Questioner

G.- Myself being the questioner.

In order to avoid the inconvenience of everytime saying, "This questioner completed his turn to question Bhagawan. Now the next questioner steps into his place.", the abbreviation S.M. has been used, standing for Statim Mutare. Its usage indicates that the questions coming after the S.M. mark, and the ones before, have emanated from different persons.

If a date is missing it could mean that either I was not present in the Hall that day [on a few days I felt too ill to go], or that B. did not say anything on that day which I opine would do well to form part of the present manuscript, given its scope.

When B. felt the need to communicate in European languages, an interpreter would take up the task of translating. B. generally needed no translations; the interpreter's role was to convey B.'s Tamil or Telengu in a language the other could comprehend. Whenever I felt the interpreter used words- for the sake of additional clarity- that found no vernacular equivalent in Bhagawan's actual speech, and whenever I felt I had done the same thing in my diary, those words have been enclosed in parenthesis. I also find myself obliged to admit that whenever B. spoke in Telengu- it would sometimes happen that the particular interpreter knew not much Tamil- I would be utterly clueless; in these numerous cases, whatever the interpreter said was written down, more or less exactly. Since B. has many European devotees, [the most famous being Brunton,] overall, I have, keeping in mind the fact that Europeans may also like to find this work to be of interest to themselves, painstakingly taken the effort to ensure that the English used in the text is of a decent quality; only too often an interpreter would express B.'s lofty ideas in rudimentary words spun into broken sentences. As regards my own translation abilities, aspersions need be cast not, for the following reasons- that is to say, one, B.'s teachings, although in complete agreement with traditional Ajata-advaita as expounded by Sri Gaudapada, Sri Sankara and others, are based on direct experience of the divine Self within each of us; thus, the fact that I lack a background in vedantic learning, need not debar me from journalising the master's teachings to the extent my limited faculties of linguistic and intellectual competencies would permit, inasmuch as that same Self is available to me also to be experienced, and as a matter of actual fact experienced by me, always; and two, I am a Barrister-at-law possessing a reasonable quantity of experience in 'statutory-drafting', both under the Service of Her Majesty's Imperial Administration and in independent capacity. Thus, the reader need not fear that the translation might not be supported by adequate authorisation or authenticity. He may rest assured that Sri Bhagawan's words, safe in my hands, have, to the uttermost, been dealt with in the light of every feasible meaningful technicality. I am not being boastful; I consider it my rare privilege to be able to bring out this work for the perusal of the master's devotees; so much reassurance is being given only to soothe the mind of any over-anxious reader. Whenever I found Sri Bhagawan's Tamil original too beautiful or unique for my exiguous ability at translation to possibly be able to stomach, I have left it as it is, for I do not wish to be haunted by culpability for flagrant perpetration of blatant injustice.

Sometimes I felt the need or urge to express certain opinions or facts pertaining to just how immeasurably wise the Master was, as I can see now with the benefit of hindsight. Where the paragraph did not occur in the original notebooks but has been later added by me to the manuscript during the editing process I undertook, the fact has been indicated by "P.S." occurring at the beginning of the paragraph, standing for Post Scriptum.

I cannot guarantee the total accuracy of the dates, because on some days I fell asleep after coming back from the ashram and made notes together thereafter for several days' conversations at a stretch. Since his words are timeless, it is difficult to remember when he said what, although the words themselves stand out like blazing beacon lights; thus on occasion I may have inadvertantly interchanged the dates. The month, however, is accurate.

Apart from conversations many interesting incidents have taken place in the Hall. These have been included wherever, and to the extent that, I have felt that the happening stands out to explain a point of spiritual significance within the exact context of the Master's teaching.

Technical terms used by the Master have not been translated.

Sometimes the Maharshi does not discuss Advaita but wanders into the realm of storytelling. Sometimes he narrates his experiences pertaining to the time whilst he was on the Hill. Some of these are very long and many very trivial. Such categories have been excluded, again for reasons of the manuscript's brevity. If this manuscript finds successful publication and eager acceptance, I shall not mind plodding through my voluminous 300 page notebooks again, so that this category of the Master's sayings may be separately published for consumption by those interested.

I have avoided giving even a brief character sketch of the Maharshi, which absence may cause befuddlement. I have to explain that the master being a Brahmajnani has no nativistic personality which can be framed and put up for exhibit. As one's mental temperament and habituation was, so was the guidance received. He played no role in deciding who should obtain how much Grace. 'Grace of the Guru is like an ocean. If the disciple comes with a cup he will only get a cupful. It is no use complaining of the niggardliness of the ocean; the bigger the vessel the more he will be able to carry. It is entirely up to him.' he seems to have told Chadwick.

Thus, even good-natured statements like, "He was kindness personified to all living beings." actually make no sense, because there is no one there on whom the attribute of kindness could be foisted. Abiding in Brahman one would not know anything apart; if one sees others to whom unto do good deeds, he is not a Brahmajnani at all; but of course the kind habit of helping and showing compassion to others comes naturally to the Brahmajnani- only not from his point of view, which for him, would be the only point of view.

That is why I do not highlight on his many, many positive qualities in this book- else people would think, "He is doing so many good deeds; he must be a great Saint." B.'s greatness is transcendental. Anyone wishing to truly discover his greatness must do so only in the Absolute True Self. I do not want B.'s greatness to be judged from the perspective of such banal standards, for it would actually amount to insulting him, and I do not wish to become the reason why my Master is insulted. Anyone can feed beggars and nurse sick stray dogs back to health who is a generous-minded philanthropist. Brahmajanana, speaking from the objective perspective, is rather rare. This book therefore deals mostly with the realm of Spirit only, B.'s high teaching and his only one. That said, let me not mislead: I am in no way qualified to prepare a textbook on the Master's teachings. That is totally beyond the scope of this humble creature. Any such attempt would be Total Blasphemy, Sacrilege, an utter betrayal of the Master's Glorious Legacy. For all the wealth in the 3 worlds one must not ever risk the sin of Guru-nindhana, which is the only sin even God is powerless to pardon. Therefore I state the scope of this work clearly- it is, I repeat, a chronological account of conversations that do not camouflage or present themselves to be the Maharshi's canonical body of teachings; for this reason, the conversations are arranged date-wise in the book and not topic-wise. If anyone is interested in the teachings of the Sage Nool Thirattu is the book to be picked up and read.



Of my own life nothing much remains further to be stated; I stayed at the ashram for a few more days in 1948 and then left. I again returned for the Mahakumbabishekam and then took final leave of his body.

In 1948 I had only one conversation with him, apart from the one I have already mentioned above, as having taken place on the day of my visit on Christmas- in fact this was a monologue. "I have not attempted for issue. Before coming to you I was a filthy, licentious libertine. I do not wish to break my celibacy after once being seen by your eyes. My question to you is, should I adopt a child? My childless Aththai- Aththimbaer adopted me when my parents died. Likewise can I adopt an orphaned brahmin child who can perform my last rites? I fear to think what will happen to me in old age, and who will take care of me, and who will perform my last rites?" On occasions like these he usually said either "Engage yourself in the living present." or "Surrender to Him unconditionally and He will take care of everything." or "Discover who it is to whom these questions present themselves and abide at peace." Now, however, his eyes flashed a sudden pity that made me, for the moment atleast, vaguely uneasy. I tried to bluff him into giving a reply by framing the question in different words. No avail. Utter silence. And then, without warning, as he was looking steadily at me, his eyes became watery and he turned his head away. I started crying in right earnest, and those in the hall tried to pacify me. But I was now feeling afraid- had I committed some offence that B. was unwilling to forgive? Was Self-Realisation not for me in this life-time? Worse, would I be reborn in a world that would be empty of Him? My mind had now- for long- been used to remaining in the thought-free state of the divine current of ecstatic Love. Now when these unpleasant thoughts crashed through the field of my consciousness, I stumbled and fell to the floor in shock, weeping like a child and utterly shaken. I did not even hear what those in the hall were trying to tell me. To me, Bhagawan alone is. At length he turned to me- his eyes still glistening- and said, "அழாதே, விடு. எது எது எப்பேப்படி நடக்க வேண்டும் என்று இருக்கிறதோ அது அது அப்பப்படி தான் நடக்கும்." This heightened my insecurity further. PERHAPS SOMETHING WAS GOING TO HAPPEN- NOT TO ME- BUT TO HIM?!

I said childishly- I hope Bhagawan is not suffering from any serious ailment?

He would not reply or look in my direction again that day.

Today I recollect the incident and understand the significance, and the memory still makes me sob. I have known no affection more intimate, no bond more thrillfully joyous, than the one I shared with this towering Giant of Advaita, and once I became attached to him I could not become attached to anything else. To be in bondage to him is Liberation. On the 31.Dec.1948 I had to leave to Madras; I had over-extended my leave. What happened that day was so momentous that I have not the emotional strength to relate it here. Instead I attach the diary entry in the Prolegomenon- fortunately I wrote a diary entry that day, a practice I had long since discontinued.

The Swami suggests that this book be published first by an Indian publisher, preferably Gita press. I have no objection. My own views are that B.'s teachings are for Mankind. Who picks up the book in which corner of the globe for publication, is not very relevant; these precious teachings should survive the test of time, that is my only agenda. I was asked to suggest a title for the work. I have chosen, "Aham Sphurana", because Bhagawan taught us that this state of consciousness is the doorway leading to final Realisation. I am confident that there is going to be no difficulty in finding a publisher for

this work, for B.'s words are nectar-like and bring peace to the reader immediately, in the long-run turning his mind towards its source, Parabrahman. Many classic texts on Advaita exist. They describe elaborately the state of the Sahaja-jnani or Stitha-prajna. It is not of much use to the Sadhaka, in my opinion, because he craves for practical instructions he can follow, not descriptions of what remains after the final goal has been reached. No one who has reached the final goal would be interested in reading about it because they would BE it. So, both ways, these books are purposeless. Maybe they kindle people's curiosity about this state, thus starting them on the path to sadhana, with the thought, 'Does such a state really exist behind and beyond the waking, dream and deep-sleep states? Can I also not reach this state?' As far as my limited intellect sees this can be their only utility. B.'s words, on the other hand, are uniquely beautiful and pure sadhana- even reading or listening to them qualifies to be regarded as a form of sadhana, leave alone putting them into practise- because they lay bare the means to the One Perfect Reality, without the scum of conceptual or intellectual knowledge having to be surmounted first. There is no theory, only practice. There is no intellection, only experience. There is no misery, only ecstasy. There is no mental activity, only awareness. There is nothing, only Bhagawan, whom I regard as the loftiest attainable pinnacle of Divine Love. Some might ask, going to a Jnani why did not this man follow the path of Jnana-vichara he advocates, but instead chose to worship the Maharshi as a personal god or deity? I have no answer. I was swept away in his deluge of Love the moment his eyes fell on me, and thereafter no one remained to have the desire to engage in vichara or other forms of sadhana.

I would like here to place on record my undying gratitude for Swami Rajeshwarananda, through the unselfish efforts of whom and by reason of whom this book has come into existence.

Gajapathi Aiyer, B. Sc., L.L.B.,  
Madras  
Dec. 1950

### **Prolegomenon**

I imagine that the reader will be interested to have adduced in front of him the circumstances in concatenation to, and the state of mind in, which the writing of this work came to be commenced; and therefore germane to such objective I faithfully place before him the following diary entries:

31 Dec. 1948

Yesterday the Maharshi has said something that upset my composure completely. It was his usual remark on the inevitability of destiny, but for the first time I heard it from him in an unusually personal sense. Usually he would endorse the prarabdha doctrine when asked, but yesterday it was not a doctrine which was uttered. It reflects ominously in my mind, but he will not explain further. Perhaps I must steel myself for some shock that I shall receive in the near future. Perhaps someone known to me for many years may die- a family member, a friend. Or perhaps something may happen to me. However, when I run these possibilities against my mind they do not ruffle it. My own death even is only an eventual certainty for a mortal body, and in relation thereto I feel not the slightest unease. Only one horrific, monstrous possibility produces fear in my heart and reduces

me into a whimpering, defenceless puppy- loss of my Love. True death is not destruction of the body, but a so-called life which has not experienced this Love, which is not life at all, but death imagining itself to be life. Who is my Love? This puny man, wearing only underwear and in appearance an impoverished peasant, is infact the wielder of the most powerful weapon on Earth- that of Divine Love. This Divine Love is the primordial essence out of which everything is- in fact- made, from God to Satan. This Divine Love bears one name only- Bhagawan Ramana.

Today afternoon I must go back to Madras. In the morning I seek Maharshi's leave. He does something unexpected- asks the attendant to pick up a sheet of paper and pencil and hand it to him, neatly folds with the finger-nail of his thumb and tears off a breath-wise strip, scribbles something on the little paper-peice and hands it to me. Two words- மதியம் வா.

Nowadays the ashram has the practice that for sometime after the noon-meal, B. must rest. No one is permitted to go inside then. Sri Bhagawan was giving me the warrant to enter at this time. Overjoyed, the uncertainties of the previous day forgotten, I bow low and take a seat in the Hall, happily watching His face.

At noon I enter the Jubilee Hall. The attendant seems to be expecting me. Someone else tries to follow me inside but he is promptly stopped. Sri Bhagawan looks at me with a tenderness that I can never describe. என்ன? he asks. I look at Him with a pain I do not understand.

I said to him: "I feel nervous after what Bhagawan told me yesterday..."

B.: What is it that you mean by Bhagawan?

I.: Pardon- but YOU !

He sighs and motions for the attendant to leave the room. The attendant- who also seems moved for some perplexing reason- bows and makes his exit.

B.: That attitude must go. I cannot be lost.

I.: I do not understand.

B.: The discarding of this body- striking himself on the right-hand side of the chest- is inevitable. The Real Bhagawan-

But what his next words were I never managed to find out.

The next thing I remember was B. waving his palm in a dismissive gesture towards the door, B.'s voice saying, ஒன்றும் இல்லை, ஒன்றும் இல்லை, the disappearance of a few heads that were framed between door and doorway, and shutting of the door. I imagine I must have screamed or struck the wall with my fist or banged my head against the floor or some such thing. I do not remember what I did. My bare body and dhoti were covered in a miasmatic mass of vomit. I could not lift my head off the floor. My body was paralyzed and benumbed. B.'s voice was gently saying something. The ears heard but the brain did not process the signals. Minutes later the Sage's compassionate face loomed over mine. He was squatting on the floor, and cleaning my body with a white rag and water from an earthen pitcher. I was horrified to have him attend upon me, but I could not move. Minutes later, he pressed his head down on my chest, and the body became relaxed, the hard breathing ceased. I sat up and said "Had a dream in which Bhagawan was saying- but the same room- surely- ?" He motioned for me to stop talking. "You have been wanting to ask me something. You may ask."

I was eye level with him, both of us seated cross legged on the floor; I could not help observing that despite the condition of his legs he had somehow achieved this posture...

He repeated what he had said.

I hesitated.

He said the same thing for the third time...

Tears steadily trickling down my cheeks, face contorted with uncontrollable emotion, I managed to, unintelligibly, I thought, say the words at last: "தங்களை ஒரு முறை 'அப்பா' என்று அழைக்கலாமா?"

My body was racked with sobs, twitching like a fish taken out of water.

He stood up, and said, வெறும் ஒரு முறை மாத்திரம் அழைத்துவிட்டு திருப்தி ஆகி விடப்போகிறாயா என்ன ?

I fall headlong at his feet, wash his feet with my tears, clutch tightly with my hands tied around his feet, press my cheek firmly against his feet, and shout, "அப்பா, அப்பா, அப்பா, அப்பா, அப்பா, அப்பா, அப்பா....."

Then, again, I remember no more...

I wake up at the Tiruvannamalai Railway Station. Five persons from the ashram are supporting me on all sides, standing around me. The sarvadhikari counts among their number! I am cautiously entrained. A basket of food is thrust at me through the window of the bogie. The train starts and I pass into a blissful slumber...

17 March 1949

Arrived here before break of dawn today morning for a flying-visit; was able to obtain darshan of my beloved master from afar. No chance of approaching him now. Masses of humanity have congregated everywhere. He does not observe me, he is too weak to keep his head erect for continuous lengths of time, it keeps plopping over backward in a most unpleasant, grotesque manner, yet somnolence is not the reason, the next moment he juts it forward again. The eyes are as distant, aloof and bright as ever. He has prepared me well at the end of last year; I no longer [am able to] feel alarm or disquiet at his palpably deteriorating physical condition. The ceremony over, I must leave; my presence needed at the firm, a partner died unexpectedly last month... I do not try to bow, or otherwise try to establish contact; there is no need. Will I see him in the flesh again? Hopefully, but really it does not matter. For Him there is no death- for Love is Immortal.

15 April 1950

Yesterday a little past 8 PM, a great light which shone upon the world uninterruptedly for over half a century has been snatched from our watchful midst by the cruel arm of fate. The world knows his compassionate form by the name of Bhagawan Sri Ramana, but for me he will always be the கதிரவர் of the Cosmos, my father, mother, protector, saviour, friend and Gurunaadhar, the only source from which I can expect Mercy to rain down upon me even without necessity for the slightest solicitation from my side. Lord Siva danced his silent dance of bestowal of blissful transcendental grace for more than half-a-century at Tiruvannamalai; now, his work accomplished, he has withdrawn himself to his heavenly abode. That very news that I was dreading for weeks on end, was finally announced by this radio-set I am sitting by the side of now; occasionally I look at it in a resentful manner, as if blaming it for bringing such ill tidings, as if were it not for this timorous, squaky contraption my master would have continued in his body... I catch myself frequently wondering sadly why the world should continue after He is gone-

particularly why I should continue. Bemusedly I recollect the Master, in his usual animated style, relating a story from the old advaita classic, Vidyanaraya's Panchadasi- Two men went for employment to North India. One of them died. They met a wayfarer who happened to be from their village, and conveyed the news to him, to be delivered at their place. This man inadvertently interchanged the names of the two youth, with the result that the dead man's parents were rejoicing and the remaining one's parents were writhing in grief.

I look at the radio and tell myself with a sigh, Perhaps if I had never known, I could forever assume that that angelic form was still shining, as ever with the radiance of a thousand million suns, in the hermitage at the foot of the holy Arunachala hill... My eyes then fall on the newspaper:

'The passing away of the Maharishi removes from the midst of his fellowmen a figure of the first magnitude in the sphere of Hindu religion and spirituality.'

How long can one hide from the truth? Sooner or later one has to come to terms with it... The Buddha has said, accept the pain. It is not easy, and that is why you and I do not become Buddhas. The past few days were a severe ordeal for me, morning and evening. In the morning I would gaze at the newspaper, heart in mouth, hoping against hope that nothing untoward had happened since the evening or night broadcast of the previous day. [At the bar with colleagues I am safe because they have not the least interest in such matters, and have not the slightest clue that I am interested; if they were to come to know that I spent 6 months of my late twenties in a "jungle hermitage" in the close proximity of a man who wore nothing but a loin-cloth, which man I always revere as my living God, they would incessantly make fun of me; they are disdainful of all Swamis and Mystics, and according to them Ashrams exist only to serve as safe havens for expression of profligate, unbridled licentiousness and promiscuity.] In the evening I would find myself dialing the knobs of the radio-set, with the same sense of panicked urgency, wanting the broadcast to end as quickly as possible, so that I might confirm- as soon as I could- that the ominous peice of news that I so deeply dreaded did not find place in it... The inner struggle was always going on; I tried my best to keep away from the newspaper and radio so that I would not know, but was invariably successfully tempted everytime by an overwhelming sense of thrilled horror at the thought of the Master's death. Somehow, to imagine that divine anthropomorphic form as a corpse revolted and repulsed my brain. When I accessed the news I was doing so as a result of craving for reassurance- surely there would be no such thing, surely the Master would cure himself [for the sake of us his children, of course], surely it was inconceivable that HE should die- yet it should have been obvious, for from the very beginning of his reign of grace at Tiruvannamalai he had discouraged interest in the miraculous phenomena, and had upheld the doctrine of fatalism, as evinced by the note he had written out for his mother when she pleaded with him to return to Madurai. Even so, I did not want to take seriously the possibility of his physical departure- this inspite of the fact that he has called me privately and told me it would be inevitable. I had upon my last-but-one visit to the Ashram, the last in which I believe his attention was drawn to my presence, on Christmas Day 1948- it was a long time since I had seen him in the flesh, and I was aghast and pained at his almost deformed physical appearance- asked my friends staying there NOT to write to me about the Master's physical condition, for it was only around that SUN that my life was revolving, and my mind wanted to close itself to the possibility that that SUN could ever

give out and fade away. I did not want to consider the idea that there would or could be a world without a living Ramana Maharshi. I know his entire teaching lay around the idea that the body is not one's true Self, but I could not help loving the form. I childishly thought that by keeping away from facts I could escape from them- but to no avail. Of course I pounced upon the newspapers as soon as they were delivered every morning, of course I tuned in every evening and- as the days went by- every night as well. It is my experience as a votary of the Master that he will only bestow upon the devotee what is spiritually beneficial to the latter's progress toward Self-realisation, and not what seems apparently the correct course of events that should unfold according to the devotee's opinion or common custom. A Saint's blessings cannot increase mental impurity, he once said, illustrating this point also with a story. Therefore, although as an inevitable corollary of my foolish ideas I succeeded in causing myself needless misery, Bhagawan's Grace saw me through in the end. Strangely, when at 11 PM yesterday the news was announced on the Radio, I felt relief- I chided myself for not feeling sorrow instead, but soon realised that Bhagawan was still incharge here, and if he wanted me to feel relief I had no business feeling anything else. Thus my agony of the last few days is at an end.

25 December 1950

I am engrossed in thoughts of the Maharshi, while at home or work. For all I know, he is still at the Ashram, majestically seated upon the sofa in his usual hall [the special hall with a stone-sofa that was constructed for him adjacent to the Mathrubutheshwara shrine seems to be uncharacteristically grand of him; indeed I have learnt that he moved into it not without extreme reluctance]. Such is my imagination. That is why I do not wish to return to Tiruvannamalai... Entering the Ashram but seeing only his grave would be too much for this frail heart to bear...

Today I sent the promised parcel to Swami Rajeshwarananda; it contains the edited transcript of my experiences with the master personally, and also conversations he had with devotees in the Hall; these were drawn from my notebooks that I and he showed to Bhagawan on this very date, 2 years ago! Since circumstances forced me shortly after leaving the Ashram in Dec. 1936 to depart for Madras to pursue legal education, and thereafter remain outside India for a considerable length of time on His Majesty's service, I was obtaining the good fortune of setting eyes upon the Master again only now. I became filled with grief to see the pathetic condition of his body, but the grief was on the level of the mind only. His rigorous training had taught me not to identify with body or mind, but to transcend them and abide as the pure consciousness of Self.

The master was shown the notebooks I had filled up during my previous visit to the ashram, wherein it had fallen to my most exalted privilege to remain in his sacred presence for 6 continuous months in the latter half of 1936.

The master did not seem particularly averse to the fact that such documents had been created without obtaining his prior sanction. As to the question of showing them to others, the master did not expressly authorise them for publication, but seemed to be of the opinion that it would be of no harm to show them to others. Thus I have picked up the courage to expose them to all of Bhagawan's devotees.

I must add here that he allows everything to be carried on on the basis of implication; giving explicit instructions is not his style. One had to take one's own decisions in life. He would offer no assistance. One could not push the responsibility to him. If the outcome of

the decision went totally wrong or resulted in utter catastrophe, the decision-maker alone would be held responsible- he would have himself alone to hold responsible or accountable. If one informed him of his decision and asked if it was right, he would not step into the trap at all, but remain silently staring into the vacant space before him. Only on exceptional occasions he would smile, nod and approve. At the end of 1936 my family had finalised Vaidehi to be my wife; she was a close relative and known to me. A letter arrived at the asramam addressed to me and I was informed of their decision. My Aththai had decided that if I were not got married at the end of my stay at Ramanasramam, I would become a Sannyasi, which idea was abhorrent to her. So she had written to me saying that in the coming month, in February 1937, I was to get married. It was not a question of asking my opinion; they had already finalised it and I was merely to fall in line. I showed the letter to Bhagawan. He read it slowly and with great attentiveness. Then he folded it and handed it back, extending it towards me, the peice of paper held out between his right index and middle fingers, saying, வைத்துக்கொள். I took it back and anxiously asked: Should I run away from home to avoid it?

B.: Only cowards run away.

I.: Hoping that pardon for this apparent effrontery will be available: B. himself ran away!

B.: I did not think 'I am running away.' That is the crucial difference.

I.: So, if I do not think "I am running away", I can run away?

B.: One who does not think, does not think, "If I do not think, can I do as I please?" One who does not think has surrendered to the High-most power. He is not responsible for what goes on. Some power takes hold of his body and makes him do things. He is not involved.

I.: If I surrender to the higher power, can I avoid this impending marriage?

B.: One who has surrendered with an ulterior motive has not surrendered at all. Can you cheat God?

I.: If I marry sexual activities will become unavoidable. Therefore Self-Realisation will become impossible.

B.: That is your opinion.

I.: So running away from home is no good?

B.: You may take it from me that it will make your situation much, much more worse.

I.: What is the recourse left for me then?

B.: Ananya Sharanagathi.

I.: If, after that Sharanagathi, I get married, entangled in the horrific woes of Samsara and therefore fail to realise the Self?

B.: No one remains after Sharanagathi to complain 'I have not realised the Self.' or ask 'Even after Sharanagathi, why am I yet to Realise?' or to raise any other doubt or complaint. It is a state of perfect mouna-tapas. First learn what Sharanagathi is. It is to merge in the source of the Ego.

I.: So it seems that I am to surrender once and for all, and not care about what happens afterwards?

B.: Yes. Yes, that is it.

Therefore I had to get married and there was nothing I could do about it. I initially thought why I had to go through such Hell, while others in the ashram were happily settled there forever at Bhagawan's feet. Then I decided Bhagawan's will was in operation, that whatever happened happened with his knowledge only, and therefore there was no

reason to feel upset. Obedience to His will is my only priority now- my own personal salvation or deliverance from the wheel of births and deaths does not count anymore. This conviction is the fruit of my intense spiritual training under his watchful eye; the only sadhana was Love, and that meant the same as surrender- disappearance of the faculty of personal will, and meek, unquestioning obedience to the master's will or God's will. I am hoping to lay the published book, based on the file I have sent to the Swami, at Bhagawan's Samadhi soon, though making up my mind to go to Ramanasramam again will not be easy. To travel down that road in Tiruvannamalai knowing that the Ashram's Hall was going to be empty- that is hard to stomach.

I only hope the book does not somehow reach the bar. Even if it does, I shall deny my involvement and say, "There are any number of Gajapathis- how do you know it is me?" By a lucky stroke of genius on my part- no, by reason of Bhagawan's Compassionate Grace- I omitted my surname even at the time of enrolling, because it betrayed my caste, and persecution of Brahmins and vendetta against them continues unabated even after Independence. Since I associated with all sorts of fellows in college and beyond, I can easily speak a variety of the Tamil language that does not betray me. I am also careful not to reveal the proficiency that I possess in written English, for that too invokes suspicion. Had I chosen a home in Triplicane or Mylapour, I would have been lost, for those locations are a giveaway; thus when I moved here in 1948 I wisely chose Lloyds Road in Azhwarpettai. These pragmatic considerations always dawn upon me because I always meditate upon Sri Ramana in the Heart; thus, remaining within, he graciously protects me.

The Swami also asked for one of the notebooks to be sent, so that it can be shown to the publisher as proof of authenticity; this also I have complied with, and the notebook wherein I recorded Bhagawan's description of his own enlightenment [...my mind, or what infinitesimal remnant of it was there, involuntarily asked the question, "Who is the seer of THIS, The Undisputed Emperor of the Gods?"] also sits in the parcel dispatched; I hope Bhagawan is pleased with me and showers his blessings upon me from the Heavenly Realm of the Heart.

### **The Text of the Journal**

Herein is the commencement of a punctilious record of Bhagawan's Gracious Conversations with devotees during a portion of the year 1936, as Witnessed by Sri Gajapathi Aiyer, being documentation which was heretofore unpublished:

5.Jul.1936

Q.: How to prevent falling asleep in meditation?

B.: If you think "I must not fall asleep; I am meditating now. Falling asleep would spoil my meditation.", your meditation will be spoilt, for thinking is the anti-thesis of meditation. If you try to consciously prevent sleep, therefore, it will lead to emergence of thought. However, if you slip into sleep while meditating, the meditation will continue even during and just after sleep. Since thoughts about sleep are also distracting thoughts, such thoughts must also



be got rid of, for the native thought-free state has to be obtained consciously in jagrat. The resultant state of thought-free subjective consciousness sustained effortlessly and volitionlessly is known as jagrat-sushupthi, and it is the same as samadhi. Never forget that dreaming, apparent wakefulness and sleeping are mere pictures upon the screen of the inherent, effortless thought-free state. Let them pass unnoticed. You focus on Being the abiding Reality that serves as the permanent substratum underlying the 3 states, and let the 3 states, and what transpires in them, take care of themselves. Never worry about them. The state of absence of thought and the state in which there are no ideas present is the primordial, natural state of mind for all; this is the original state of peace, which we subsequently spoil by bringing in thoughts.

S>M>

Q.: What is the meaning of Romans 12:9 ? Leadbeater seems to have remarked that it carries a mystical import?

B.: The meaning is clear: The only unfeigned or genuine devotion or love for God, is to relinquish the ego-self and hold on to the true Self.

Q.: Which sloka in the Gita best represents B.'s teachings?

B.: 2:16

S>M>

Q.: I had a conversation with Kunju yesterday afternoon. He recollects that once at Skandashram, Sri Bhagawan used the term ஆத்மதிகழ்ச்சி or ஆத்மதிகழ்வு whilst explaining to somebody how the jiva subsides into the Heart immediately prior to the moment of attainment of final Realisation. Bhagawan, I request that the meaning of this term should be made clear to me.

B.: The experience of ஆத்மதிகழ்வு signifies that the jiva or mind has been rendered divested of all the content of its consciousness. However, the final merger of the bimbithachittam (the reflected consciousness which alone actually constitutes the jivatman, and in which modifications appear as thoughts) into the Paramatman is yet to take place. In Sanskrit the same term is known as spandabhrâjasamâdhi or ahamsphoorthi. In English we call it "I-scintillation".

Q.: What is the significance of this experience?

B.: It is a sign of progress made in relation to the task of eradicating the vasanas.

Q.: Having attained this state, is it possible to fall back from the same into ignorance?

B.: Yes: certainly. The aspirant should be alert to ensure that vasanas do not enter the mind again. At the same time, the ahamsphoorthi state should be steadily inherred in and not abandoned.

Q.: How to make the decisive jump from ahamsphoorthi to the final state wherein the mind irrevocably dies in the Heart?

B.: No effort can lead to manonasa. The ahamsphoorthi is as far as it is possible to go on your own. Thereafter the Higher Power will take care of Itself.

Q.: I have heard that Bhagawan has said that there are two types of vasanas: bandhavasanas and bhogavasanas. It is said that the former kind hinders Realisation whereas the latter helps to cultivate the good qualities necessary for gaining Realisation.

B.: No. The ajnani's vasanas are bandhavasanas whereas the jnani's vasanas are bhogavasanas.

Q.: Then it is possible for the jnani to have vasanas?

B.: But his vasanas are not the result of his own volition. They are parechha.

Q.: I will phrase my question in a slightly different way: should all vasanas be eradicated before attainment of Realisation? Or, can a person still having vasanas attain manonasa (extinction of mind)?

B.: It all depends on the vairagya (renunciation of passions) of the aspirant. Vairagya does not mean fasting for long periods, abstaining from the companionship of family members, not talking, etc.; it really means not desiring anything, not even the state of Parabrahman or Realisation in which the mind has ceased to exist. If one's vairagya is absolute he is the Self. All vasanas are washed away in the scorching fire of perfect vairagya, just as when a dam breaks its banks, the grazing cattle are washed away and become lifeless.

Q.: How can I cultivate such vairagya?

B.: Sravana-manana-nididhyasana is the means for it.

Q.: Is the jnani's guiding physical presence required for bringing about manonasa or final Realisation in an aspirant?

B.: The jnani's presence is not physical.

Q.: But what is the answer to the question?

B.: It depends on the pakkuvam of the aspirant.

Q.: How long will it take me to Realise the Self?

B.: As long as it takes to remain continuously effortlessly and volitionlessly thought-free.

Q.: How to destroy the vasanas?

B.: Again only by remaining continuously effortlessly and volitionlessly thought-free.

Q.: But that is the whole difficulty. How to remain without thinking?

B.: 'I should remain without thinking thoughts.' is also a thought.

Q.: When I try to suppress thoughts that is when they occur all the more forcibly or ferociously.

B.: Who asked you to forcibly restrain thought? Gently coax the mind back into its source whenever you become aware that it has strayed. That is enough.

Q.: It seems Bhagawan has told somebody, "Realisation consists only of not thinking that you are not Realised.". I find that statement impossible to understand.

B.: It only means that the thought 'I am an ajnani.' should also be avoided. So long as you take yourself to be this or that, what you actually are remains in obnubilation. Every mental modification should be cleansed off. Only then does the Self reveal Himself.

Q.: Kunju told me that whilst Bhagawan was at Skandashram, his mother saw his body disintegrating into its constituent elements and subsequently reassembling together. Did it really happen or was it only Bhagawan's mother's vision or hallucination?

B.: Each person sees something according to his mental state. What are we to say of it?

Q.: Are psychic phenomena, such as telepathy or telekinesis, real?

B.: (Any) phenomena can never be real. Phenomena require somebody to see them. Who is that one? As long as he is there, there is no jnana. Only the ever-present noumenon is real.

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that Bhagawan has said, 'You are in your natural state whether you make abhyasa or not.'?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then what is the point of making efforts to Realise the Self?

B.: Because I have cough, I am taking this medicine (pointing to the Nux Vomica 200C bottle by his side). Likewise, the absence of peace of mind prompts a man to undertake the quest for Reality.

Q.: But if everybody is already a jnani, where does the quest for jnana arise forth into relevance?

B.: Pulling back the clouds does not create the sky. But if you want to see the sky, the clouds must go. It is true that all are potential jnanis. Only a small number, however, manage to generate sufficient force of introversion of mind to result in its destruction.

Q.: Does the jnani have the power to make his body transparent or invisible at will?

B.: Where does the jnani have a body at all? Still less a will?

Q.: Does Rama Nama Japam bring about destruction of mind?

B.: Provided you have unconditionally surrendered to Rama.

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that for complete beginners, meditation on an object is easier than attempting to practise vichara?

B.: Yes. As the aspirant gains one-pointedness (ekagrata) of mind, then he can commence with vichara.

Q.: Should sadhakas then be discouraged from taking up vichara whilst yet being neophytes?

B.: Leave each one to take up that method or path which appeals the most to him. All other methods, if persevered with long enough, eventually lead up to vichara only. Vichara begins to have significant effect after the aspirant is able to plainly distinguish between the inward-turned and outward-turned mind, and hastens to avoid the latter and inhere in the former as soon as he observes that his mind is wandering.

Q.: How shall I get vairagya?

B.: A correct understanding of the actual nature of happiness will lead you to it. Now you seek happiness but think that happiness flows into you from the outside world, or that your mind absorbs happiness from the external, objective world. But what is the truth? Far from causing happiness, the appearance of manifestation is the cause for all our wretchedness. The pleasure that is got by interaction of the mind with objects of sensory perception also has the obverse side of pain. The desire for happiness is right but you have been deluded (by avidya maya) into imagining pain-associated and transient pleasures to be real happinesses. Sensory perceptions yield short-lived pleasure which moreover causes pain in its wake. Pain and pleasure alternate with one another in the world. To ascertain the difference between fleeting, momentary, and pain-associated happinesses with the Supreme Happiness of the Self and confine oneself wisely to exclusively the latter is known as vairagya. Knowing that pursuit of sensory fascinations leads only to pain, why do you go in that direction? It is owing to the pull of the old habits of the mind. After these habits (vasanas) wear off, you will have abiding peace. The habits cannot suddenly be shaken off one day. They will go only by prolonged abhyasa and steady vairagya.

Q.: What is the role of the Guru in making the mind steady?

B.: The Guru will only suggest that you surrender yourself unconditionally. He will not give you anything new which you have not got already.

Q.: The mind is peaceful for a while, but after some time, again the old mischievous tendencies assume control over the mind and lead it astray. I don't know what to do.

B.: By continuous practise you will succeed in retaining the mind in its source. The state of submergence of mind in its source is its natural state. If you want

to regain the natural state, a tremendous fight is inevitable.

Q.: What is the one thing which I should know properly so as to gain the upper hand in this fight?

B.: That you should never trust anything revealed into the field of your consciousness that may pull you away from the path leading into further and further introversion of mind.

Q.: So visions are not necessarily a sign of spiritual progress?

B.: Do not be deceived by visions. Even if I appear before you, do not believe it. Only uninterruptedly attend to the task of keeping the mind incessantly submerged in the Heart. This is the only thing you need to do: Remain permanently submerged in the Heart.

Q.: Guru's Grace or God's Grace is required for it. Please bless me with your Grace.

B.: Introversion of mind and Grace are the same thing. ஆன்மாவின் சஹஜஸ்வயம்ப்ரகாசமே இறைவனது அல்லது குருநாதரோடிய திருவருள். Why go searching outside for Grace? Is it not fruitless to do so? Is there anything outside you?

Q.: So Grace is something I can win by my own efforts?

B.: Certainly. Grace is the same as the Self.

Q.: I am not able to come here as often as I would like to. My work commitments prevent it.

B.: You regard the physical body as real and hence all your troubles. Whereas there are no limitations in the Self. Time and space are operative on the physical plane. Since we think that we are physical, we are enslaved by time and space. Realisation means not imagining that you are this and that, not thinking that you are conditioned by so-and-so circumstances. Are you in the world or is the world in you? In deep sleep did the world come and announce itself to you? Nevertheless, did you not exist in deep sleep? Are you different from the one that existed in deep sleep? Why then bother about time and space, which are merely concepts conjured up by the effervescent mind? Know that what you are in sleep is your true nature. That sleep continues even now; hold on to the state of sleepless sleep and see if these questions arise.

Q.: How to sleep without sleeping?

B.: By always retaining the mind in its source and never allowing it to stray outwards. By practise, the state will gradually become spontaneous. That perfectly spontaneous state of continuous, volitionless and effortless thoughtlessness is the coveted state of sleepless sleep. That is the object of our efforts. It will come only by long practice.

Q.: How to remind myself that I am not the body?

B.: Compare the present state with deep sleep. Were you with a body in sleep? Did you not exist all the same? The same 'I' which slept is now also present. Hold on to Him. The experience of bodilessness that was in deep sleep is also now. Even now you are bodiless. Only rein in the malefic force that asserts contrariwise: thought.

Q.: How shall I get nirvikalpa samadhi?

B.: What is nirvikalpa samadhi? It is to remain permanently submerged in the Heart. In sleep, swoon, death and so on we merge into the Heart unconsciously. In samadhi we merge into the Heart consciously. Why remain apart from the source? Who is that one who wishes to remain apart from his source? Is his existence not mere pretension? The idea of your existence as an individual being is called moola avarana. The idea is false, because as soon as he is steadily called upon to investigate himself and announce his existence the ego flies away. Then only Reality is left. This process is known as Realising the Self. But there is nothing to be newly gained. The one who dissipates the clouds does not create sky.

S>M>

G.: Will B. give me Diksha? B. is my only hope.

B. makes no response. Someone in the Hall said, "Maharshi does not give Hasta Diksha; rather he gives secret Diksha through his eyes. He does not do so openly. If you want it you should look into his eyes steadily." I look into the Maharshi's eyes and His Reign of Love Eternal over me silently begins...

S>M>

Q.: Can I please know the meaning of the saying, Sivan Soththu Kula Naasam? The conventional understanding is one must not steal from a Siva Temple. But it seems a few days back B. was explaining it from the philosophical angle, whilst I was not in the Hall... Will B. kindly repeat for me?

B.: Sivan Soththu is the Pure Consciousness of the Self. It does not say I and it does not think thoughts. Some spurious element appropriates to itself the I sense by using this Pure Consciousness as a substrate, and styles itself I. This spurious element is called avidya maya. Therefore illegitimately existing in this way, the mind is said to be stolen property because it belongs to Siva, pure consciousness, and has no existence apart from him even when apparently separate. The punishment for theft is kula naasam- all vrittis or offspring [kulam] of the mind cause misery, [which misery is the same as] destruction [naasam] of one's inherent happiness.

Q.: How to see God?

B.: God's realm is that of subjective experience; he cannot be objectified except within the confines of one's own imagination.

Q.: Sri Krishna showed Arjuna the Viswaroopa Darisanam.

B.: Arjuna saw what he wanted to see.

Q.: May I ask what is the Nija-swaroopam of Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi?

B.: First discover your own Nija-swaroopam; then that of Sri Ramana Maharshi will be clear to you.

Q.: If I want Self-Realisation, should the belief, "The world is an objectively real entity." be removed?

B.: If you want Self-Realisation, all beliefs should be removed.

Q.: I see. What will remain then?

B.: Being.

Q.: Being what?

B.: Should you always be something? Cannot you BE? Already not you ARE?

Q.: I am flummoxed.

B.: It means remaining without thinking, including remaining without thinking the thought 'I am remaining without thinking.' Only absolute destruction of the thought waves will reveal Truth.

Q.: It seems difficult.

B.: The only difficulty is the idea of difficulty. Get rid of that also.

Q.: If everything is a dream, is it only in my dream that I am now meeting Sri Bhagawan and asking him this question?

B.: What is the doubt in it?

Q.: But B. is pallelly able to corrobate my experience! Does he not affirm the appearence of whatever appears to me in this Hall at the present moment? So, why do I and B. have the same corresponding dream?! I dream of talking with B.; B. dreams of talking with me! Why should it be so?

B.: There is no B. outside your imagination. Therefore the question of multiplicity posed by you never arises. The Real Bhagawan can never be seen; he is just the Self of the seer- the formless, fathomless Self.

Q.: Therefore, my own dream is giving me all this explanation, then?

B.: Yes, so that you may wake up into Reality. You are now sound asleep. Wake up!

Q.: How did this somnolence or ignorance come over me?

B.: Whom has it come over?

Q.: So there is no B. independant of my perception of Him?

B.: There is nothing apart from you. Apparent perception causes apparent creation. Look for the perceiver in earnest. Immortality is left over.

S>M>

Chadwick was clarifying to someone, "The MBE medal can be awarded to civillians also, including private individuals not in the Services, for contribution to the arts and the sciences..."

B.: [not addressing anyone] The P.I.H. medal is the most coveted by the wise...

Chadwick: I am not regular with the newspapers... Is it a newly instituted decoration?

B.: [Laughing] P.I.H. means permanent indweller of the heart-cave... The decoration is posthumous only...

Chadwick: B. means only when the ego is gone, permanent inherence in the Self would be possible...

B. smiled but did not say anything in reply.

C.: I have been meaning to ask B., is it not an improper act if one goes around begging when one is fit enough in body and mind to earn a livelihood to support oneself?

B.: [laughing] I remember an incident during my early days in this place. Once I went and clapped before a house near the Pai Gopuram. A lady appeared. She saw my emaciated appearance. She asked me to wait and went inside. Soon angry voices broke out inside the house. A man and woman seemed to be arguing viciously about something. Soon the door opened again. I thought I was going to get something to eat. A man appeared at the door. He handed me a piece of paper, went inside and shut the door loudly. I read what was in the paper. Then it took me 10 minutes to move away from that place. ஏன் தெரியுமா? Standing rooted to the spot, I was laughing so hard! [laughs happily]

C.: What was on the paper?

B.: Verses 1061, 1063 and 1064 of the Kural!

[Many eyes in the Hall became moist now.]

C.: Will B. kindly answer my original question?

B.: Begging becomes a morally insalubrious act only when refusal is treated as effrontery. Also, one must never beg for money.

S>M>

Q.: I have listened to lectures on Advaita and read much Advaitic Scriptures. Yet no Realisation for me.

B: A man devoured an entire library's worth of books on swimming, but was afraid to even scratch the surface of the water with his toe. Yet he wanted to win an Olympic gold-medal at the swimming event next month.

Q.: Now it is clear.

S>M>

Q.: I want to learn the skills of Telepathy and Astral travel. Will B. please teach me?

B.: There are other places for it [where such skills might be taught].



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Q.: Who is a Jnani? What does he do? What does he see that others do not?

B.: One who does not know anything is called a Jnani. He does not do anything and he does not see anything.

Q.: What is the secret of Self-Realisation?

B.: Self-surrender.

Q.: Is it not Jnana-vichara?

B.: The variation is in nomenclature only.

Q.: Does Jnana-vichara require a Guru?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Guru's assistance is said to be a Sine Qua Non for achieving Realisation. Is it so in all the margas?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is free-will only a myth?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What does B. think about abolition of the caste system and removal of caste differences? Are not all of God's children created equally? Is not all creation equal before the eye of God?

B.: His eye sees no creation.

Q.: If advaita is the only truth, then why did madvacharya talk about dvaita?

B.: Ask him.

Q.: But he is dead!

B.: So am I.

Q.: What is the significance of going around the Arunachala Hill?

B.: The noose of Grace tightens and tightens and tightens around the neck of the Ego until it snaps.

Q.: Will it alone do in the absence of any other Sadhana, to reach B.'s Highmost State?

B. Yes.

Q.: How many times should I go around the Hill to reach Final Liberation?

B.: Until you are no longer able to stop [going around].

Q.: The Aghori swamis of Benares, I hear, are cannibalistic. Is it not disgusting and abhorrent? Are there not plenty of other, good things to eat? Why eat human flesh and ordure?

B.: The purpose is to root out the idea, 'I am this body made of flesh and blood.'. One who is content with his apparent bodily existence never realises the Self.

Q.: Would B. have me turn into a cannibal, then?

B.: You practise your method and let others practise theirs. The world would be a very sorry place indeed if only what you thought was right was allowed to

be done. Each one wants to foist and impose his ideas of moral propriety on the world. Live and let live- that should be the attitude.

S>M>

A Tamil pandit asked-

Q.: Your Self-Realisation experience in a few words?

B.: I came. I saw. I was conquered.

Q.: The summit of all knowledge?

B.: Absence of all [objective] knowledge.

Q.: The king of all virtues?

B.: Compassion.

Q.: The summit of all compassion?

B.: [does not say anything]

Q.: Is it Silence?

B.: Yes.

Q.: The indestructible wealth?

B.: Penury.

Q.: The permanent happiness?

B.: [The true import of] !!

Q.: The eternal misery?

B.: Want.

Q.: The truly inseparable couple?

B.: Meipporulum Prakirrtiyum.

Q.: The eternally mutually antagonistic couple?

B.: Arivum Urakkamum.

Q.: The eternal secret?

B.: Arunachala !

Q.: That which eternally remains incapable of utterance?

B.: Sadhvasthu.

Q.: The sweetest raagam?

B.: Thannunarvu.

Q.: The loftiest Siddhi?

B.: Self-abidance.

Q.: The true nature of God?

B.: Love.

The poet Muruganar was sitting in the Hall. At the end of the dialogue, he was sobbing in emotion.

S>M>

Q.: How does B. answer himself the question Who am I? to himself?

B.: Is that your doubt? Let us not worry about others. You find your answer.

Others can take care of themselves. It is indeed a great thing if we can take

care of ourselves.

S>M>

Q.: Some say Hitler's true agenda is the eusocialisation of the human race. Allegedly he wants to make a giant colony of human beings with the Germans as the Master-race, leading to complete enslavement of all other peoples. He wants to make a giant bee-hive or termite-mound of the earth, they say, with the Germans as the Queen Bees. Those who resist are to be shot. Will Hitler eventually invade India? What will happen suppose we are to be enslaved? What is Bhagawan's opinion?

B.: First escape the enslavement of the ego-body-mind complex. Then these unnecessary worries will not arise.

Q.: What is B.'s opinion about Hitler's claim that 'National Socialism is the organic result of the natural spiritual evolution of the Germanic peoples, who represent the best possible stock of mankind.'? Is the spiritual evolution of man destined to reach its pinnacle only in such tyrannous hands? Already he has murdered his country's previous chancellor, and several members of his own organisation's paramilitary forces. There are reports that gun-men have been secretly dispatched into Holland, to discreetly execute the German Emperor-in-exile. Such is the man who claims to be the new messiah of Europe and all the world. What does B. have to say about this dark state of affairs?

B.: இங்கு பகவான் சொல்வதற்க்கு ஒன்றும் இல்லை. [I do not wish to make any comment.]

Q.: I wonder: suppose B. encounters Hitler face to face, how would he greet the Austrian lunatic?

B.: [laughing, satirically stiffening his body like a soldier and sardonically stretching out his right hand to salute in the German way, assuming a mock truculent-and-pugnacious-like poise of the face and in a made-up guttural voice] Heil! Sieg Heil! [then reflectively, on a softer note, almost to himself] Ja, wahrlich, so ist es... folglich kann es sein dass... Heil Stille Des Herzens!

S>M>

Q.: Did the landmass known as kumarikandam really exist? Some Tamil people believe in it to glorify their own culture, it seems.

B.: Geologists seem to have found corroboration... but why ask these questions? You do not talk of kumarikandam or anything else in your sleep. Yet you admit you existed in sleep. Now you say you are awake and see a world and ask me whether kumarikandam was part of it or not- the same you who slept. So, the continuity of 'you' is a constant, but the world comes and goes.

Q.: What is this absurdity? I am a fleeting, ephemeral appearance on this world, which is permanent and has been existing for millions of years- since time immemorial. The other view is purely idealism or solipsism. I shall not subscribe to it.

B.: Alright.

S>M>

Q.: நான் யதார்த்தத்தை தேடும் ஒரு சாதாரணமான சாமான்யன்; பெரும் ஏக்கத்தில் கேட்கிறேன்: சுவாமி, எளிமையாகவும் மற்றும் விரைவாகவும் முக்தி அடைவதற்கு ஏதேனும் வழியை அடியேனுக்கு கற்பிப்பீரா?

B.: இருக்கையாகயிருத்தல்

S>M>

Q.: Your teachings, in a single word?

B.: இருக்கையாகயிருத்தல்

S>M>

B. was reading an English summary Chadwick had prepared from B.'s essay 'Who am I?'. He then asked Chadwick to read it out aloud to the Hall: Since attainment of Salvation is our duty, in order so as to unambiguously reach Salvation, the remembrance Who am I? should be held on to all the time; the means to so hold on is, when other [distracting] thoughts arise, one is not to pursue them, but ought to inquire as to whom they have arisen. No matter how many thoughts arise, with conscientiousness, each of them, even as they arise, if confronted with the question, to whom has this thought arisen, will lead to the answer, to me. If one enquires Who am I?, the mind goes back to its source and the thought [in concatenation to which such inquiry was taken up] also subsides. As one continuously practices on the above lines, the power of the mind to stay in its source is intensified. When, in this manner, the mind stays in the Heart, the thought that serves as the foundation for or underlying substance of all thought, the I-thought, is discovered to be false [or incapable of existence and thus non-existent or mythical], and THAT which always is alone shines forth. So long as [the discerning eye that is] the mind beholds impressions of objects, up-till that time the afore-elucidated practice of Self-enquiry is necessary of being employed. As many thoughts there do that arise in [or gush forth with rapidity from] the mind, all, each and every one of them, without even a single one being spared, as and when they arise, then and there, at their very source, through the dint of Self-enquiry, should be comprehensively annihilated. If one were to permanently inhere in the Awareness of one's immediate sense of

True Self-hood, the sensation of I-I, that alone would do [so as to have reached the state of freedom from the illusionary appearance of being ensnared in the cycle of birth and death and of separateness, described as True Immortality, which is simply abidance as pure and undifferentiated consciousness of Being, or Being One with the One Reality].

[The above content not reproduced from memory; I copied it out from Chadwick on a scrap of paper, and am now rewriting it in this notebook.]

B. said, handing the paper back to C., "It is good. Have you prepared this synopsis so that you can memorise it?"

Chadwick responded in the affirmative.

B.: There is no harm in it if you felt the necessity, but actual practice alone will lead the way to Illumination.

C.: Practice means encountering every thought with the counter-thought, "To whom has this thought arisen?". Am I correct?

B.: Asking 'Who am I?' should return the mind to its primordial nature of Naked Beingness. That is its purpose and goal.

C.: 'Beingness' or subjective awareness uncontaminated by thought is also a component of mind. It remains after asking 'Who am I?'. Thus, when B. propounds that asking the question leads to destruction of mind, I am puzzled by the statement.

B.: Beingness is not a component of the mind; it is its substratum. When that uncontaminated awareness remains so permanently, it is also destroyed, but you have no role in that final destruction, nor do you have any power to bring it about. It is left entirely to the Beyond.

C.: After that final destruction, what is left?

B.: The Beyond. It is known as Parabrahman. It cannot be described. The mind cannot imagine it. Yet it is man's true Self.

C.: So, our final aim is only this 'Parabrahman'. Attaining it is called Self-Realisation. Am I correct?

B.: There is no attaining it. If the reflecting consciousness is cleared away, only the original consciousness remains. Destruction of the reflecting phenomenon, namely the delusive ego-mind, is the goal, or rather reveals the Goal. That is Self-Realisation.

C.: Once attained, can Self-Realisation be lost?

B.: The nomenclature used should be clear. Even a glimpse of Brahman by the mind in the realm of subjective awareness, can be called Self-Realization. Does it lead to freedom from rebirth or embodiment? No. A man cannot become a high officer merely by visiting one and observing his educational qualifications, attire, office premises, etc.. The exceedingly rare state of

Sahaja-jnana-stithi is available only to one who has no vrittis left in the mind. Desires, attachments, opinions, preferences, traits of personality, etc., etc., are all examples of vrittis. They cause pure consciousness to spill over into the deceptive realm of thought, and trap one in the vicious cycle of births and deaths. In those whose bondage is strong, vrittis are found to have impregnated themselves so strongly and deeply that they manifest as vishayavasanas. Vishayavasanas are difficult to eradicate because they carry a pretentious, duplicitous sense of legitimacy about them. For instance if a man is starving, try to go and tell him, "It is all in the imagination." You will likely be placing yourself at the receiving end of a few well-aimed blows...

C.: [laughs] But then surely... the basic requirements of bodily-sustenance-food, water, clothes, a modest roof over one's head... surely these can be considered reasonable?

B.: Do not think that they are your requirements. They are the body's.

C.: I am not the body, yet it is my duty to take reasonable care of the body. Am I correct? Not all have the herculean spiritual strength to throw themselves into an abandoned underground cellar and focus on the Self only!

B.: There is no need to fall into any cellar. If the 'body-am-I' idea is given up, and one surrenders oneself unconditionally to the mercy of the Higher Power, then responsibility for the body's maintenance is automatically thrown on the Higher Power and He carries on from there. You should not think, 'I have the duty of taking care of the body.'. You have entrusted yourself to him; leave everything including the body to him. He manages everything supremely well. His ways are mysterious but in the end the job is done.

C.: I have heard B. saying that the total destruction of all vasanas is possible only in the final Sahaja-stithi state; I have also heard him say that without such destruction being effected the said state cannot be gained. It sounds paradoxical.

B.: It is paradoxical on the spurious, apparently-real level of the ego only; the ego is a self-contained illusion; when it goes away you find that it never existed.

C.: I do not understand.

B.: If Zeno's paradox of the race course were to be true we should find it impossible to move from one place to another. Yet so far as the paradox is concerned, it appears sincerely true when studied or considered in isolated intellectual light. Is our day-to-day life experience compatible with the inference that is to be drawn from the paradox? Do we not find motion possible? Likewise, when pondered over using the intellect the question of Self-Realisation is a vexatious paradox; if the intellect is bypassed or

transcended only the realm of Being remains. Therein no questions arise and only Silence reigns.

C.: Vasanas are a decisive obstacle to Self-Realisation; yet repeated and continuous practice of vichara roots out the vasanas and Liberation is ultimately gained; so far it is clear. Can B. please tell me how the vasanas arose out of what was originally pure consciousness?

B.: This is an incorrect understanding. Vasanas direct consciousness along the narrow, finite channel known as the intellect. Vasanas are atom-like, insentient, imaginary accretions that appear to have gathered atop the fathomless Self and prevent it from shining. They are not real at all. Only Being is Real.

C.: The Self is the Almighty; such tiny vasanas are able to obscure it!

B.: The obscuration is self-notional only. There is no ignorance in fact. Yet whilst vasanas remain the final state will never be gained. The Master read out from Kaivalya Navaneetham-

**☞ This foul thing called vasana, the never ending temptation to indulge in enjoyment of sensual and sensuous worldly objects, is the bright indicator of the existence of the Ignorance, which is the root cause of the so-called cycles of sorrowful births and deaths, samsara; whereas, the bright indicator of TRUE KNOWLEDGE is desirelessness.**

**☞ Ignorance means identifying one's Self with non-Self. By this means, the ego is caused to be developed; so also the doer and the enjoyer, the jiva, the individual self. Thus the only obstacle that blocks Realisation of the true Self is this foul thing called vasana, which blocks It like how dark clouds in a rainy season block the brightest Sun.**

**☞ The ego or aham-vritti produces the enjoyment-thought-patterns called sankalpas. Sankalpas, when they are fully fattened, themselves become the bundles of desire stored in the form of vasanas, the evil store-houses of desire, in the memory location of the jiva. When relevant or appropriate place and time come, these mephitic vasanas, one by one, tempt the jiva to jump into the noxious ocean of never-ending, ever-painful actions**

and reactions and make him reap the results thereof, the sorrows and perturbations, the births and deaths, of samsara.

☞ **Vasana prakshyo moekshaha-** The complete eradication or destruction of vasana or the memory-pattern of desires is called Emancipation.

☞ **Due to the gigantic size and immense viscosity of the heap of vasanas accumulated in the memory of the jiva, the negative potency of mental impressions accumulated over countless hundreds of thousands of past incarnations, forcibly pull the aspirant outwardly towards the enjoyments of sensuous and sensual objects. So, it becomes natural to the mind to run outwardly, to fall into the fathomless ditch of sensuous and sensual enjoyments.**

☞ **With the mighty power of viveka and vairagya, the extroverted mind is halted, introverted, subjugated and made to stay relentlessly, persistently, ever on the Self, the Witness. This is true sadhana.**

Chadwick seemed overjoyed with the detailed explanation furnished by the Master. He bowed his imposing frame low before the Master, thanked the interpreter, and left the Hall.

S>M>

Q.: [scrupulously juxtapositioning himself close to the Sofa and, perched there, speaking in a small, subdued tone] Why is everyone calling you Maharshi and Bhagawan, and giving you special treatment? Have you grown a horn like a Rhinoceros on your head?

B.: [bursting out laughing] I am as clueless as you are!

Q.: Can I also become a Maharshi?

B.: Yes, surely!

S>M>

Q.: I have heard B. saying that vairagyam is necessary for the sadhsishya. What is vairagyam? Is it the attitude of non-attachment or dispassion towards worldly cares?

B.: What is merely an attitude of mind cannot be true vairagyam. What is true vairagyam? It is mental derailment.

Q.: What?! Should we all become mad persons to attain Self-Realisation?



B.: Mental derailment is the total loss of belief in the objective reality of the world.

Q.: One who is incapable, even at the intellectual level, of understanding or appreciating the impersonal Absolute or Brahman, but steadfastly worships and loves a personal God- will he be able to realise the Self?

B.: God will appear to Him in the form of a Sadhguru and lead him to the Truth.

Q.: How shall I obtain peace of mind?

B.: The term 'peace-of-mind' is an oxymoron. It is the mind that obstructs your natural state of peace. While there is yet a mind, real peace is not to be had.

Q.: In that case, how to get rid of the mind?

B.: Only by tracing thought to its source and discovering that there is no mind to be got rid of.

S>M>

Q.: Is Self-Realisation for all or only for those whose prarabdha karma will allow it?

B.: Realisation is with the mind. Karma is for the body only.

Q.: What is the cause of my birth? Is it karma? How does one get rid of karma?

B.: What is birth?

Q.: When the body comes into existence I call it birth.

B.: Nothing comes into existence or goes out of existence. Existence was never created; it can never be destroyed. True Birth is not the commencement of existence but assumption of limitations. True death is not dissolution or destruction of the body but revelation of the Real Self.

Q.: How to transcend the limitations?

B.: See to whom they have arisen.

Q.: Again I feel like asking- Why was I born? I want to know the actual reason.

B.: Who was born? If you were really born, should the question not arise in deep slumber also? Why does it not arise then?

Q.: The mind is inactive in deep slumber.

B.: Exactly! Thus, we discover that birth and death are in the mind only: they are only mental conceptions.

Q.: Trailanga swami of Benares was three times the size of the average man's girth; yet I have heard that he had the ability to fly up high in the air. Also, his age at the time of death was estimated to be 450 years. How are these supernatural phenomena to be explained?

B.: Supernatural phenomena have been termed so because they can never be explained to the satisfaction of the intellect.

Q.: Will B. not impress us by displaying any fantastic siddhis which defy the known laws of physics?

B.: Loss of the personal 'I' is the Supreme Siddhi.

Q.: Is hatha yoga of any benefit to the aspirant?

B.: In the early stages of Sadhana. It is not indispensable.

Q.: What is Sri B.'s opinion on the theory of re-incarnation? Is there rebirth?

B.: Are you born now?

Q.: Yes, I am aware of my existence in this body.

B.: Does the awareness of the body remain in deep slumber?

Q.: The mind was inactive in sleep; so it could not be aware of the body- but the next morning again there is the same body. Is it mere illusion?

B.: Yes.

Q.: If everything is an illusion, then how did the illusion arise? How did I get trapped in it?

B.: Ask yourself to whom the illusion arose and you will discover there never was any illusion.

Q.: So it is 'illusory illusion'?

B.: Exactly.

Q.: But why did the Self fall from his natural state and become the ego?

B.: The Self remains always in His natural state. It is you who are running away from Him!

Q.: Who am I, apart from Him?

B.: That is it- find out!

Q.: If I surrender my apparent individuality to the Self, will Self-Realisation be the consequence?

B.: Unconditional surrender is the Goal itself.

As B. finished speaking a peice of Railway Track was heard rambunctiously banging against stone. It was lunch time at the Sage's hermitage. 'Oh! Already!' exclaimed the Maharshi sweetly. Then he rose and left the Hall.

S>M>

In the evening, an old man wearing traditional caste marks, came and stood near B. and addressed him thus-

Q.: I have read the advaita philosophy, but it has no appeal to me. I am not interested in taking up B.'s Atma-vichara method. All I want is to see Rama. I want to be with Rama all the time. Even thinking of Rama fills me with Bliss. I want to go to Rama. Will B. tell me the route to him or not? I care nothing for the impersonal Brahman. All I want is Rama. Where is Rama? Please tell me, Bhagawan. I want to go to Rama. Will B. please show me the way to Rama? Rama! Rama! Rama! Where is Rama?

[Everytime the visitor said 'Rama' his face lit up in ecstasy. He seemed to be moved to tears at the mere thought of Rama.]

B.: [cryptically but emphatically] Soon Rama will recall you to His Kingdom. This terse assurance seemed to satisfy the old man. He prostrated and left.

S>M>

Q.: I meditate continuously on the pranava or omkara sound. Is it sufficient for Self-Realisation or is vichara also needed?

B.: [makes no response]

Q.: [after some time, as if struck by an epiphany] Yes, now I understand.

S>M>

Q.: If I uninterruptedly stay in B.'s physical presence or proximity for 12 continuous years, commencing with today, will I be able to realise the Self automatically? It is said that Satsangam is necessary and sufficient to Realize.

B.: No such guarentee can be given.

Q.: Many gurus claim that their mere physical presence enlightens their pupils.

B.: Then why come here and waste your time, instead of going to those gurus?

Q.: I want to know what B. thinks about it- if B. thinks their claims are genuine or otherwise.

B.: B. does not think about it.

Q.: How to tell if a Guru is genuine or not?

B.: [Makes no response]

7.Jul.1936

Today a German gentleman, a former missionary school-teacher who had been serving in East Africa [known as Tanganyika since the Great War], in the town of "Bwaga Moyo", has come to the ashram for a day's visit. How people in such remote places got to hear of Bhagawan, I could not begin to guess, but he soon revealed- as usual with most westerners- that Brunton's Secret India had piqued his curiosity to see the Sage personally. He was now staying in Ponicherry at Aurobindo's ashram and could not resist taking a peek at Bhagawan. He already seemed to know something of the line of B.'s teachings, saying he had discussed it with friends at Aurobindo's Ashram. He was a multilingual autodidact and polymath, and was familiar with German, English, Arabic and Sanskrit. He had studied Sanskrit literature and Advaitic works. Chadwick had shown him B.'s Arunachala Pancharatnam, a five-line sanskrit poem that B. had composed in the Arya Metre while he had been living on the Hill, at the request of a Sanskrit pandit. He found it excellent. He

was regularly practising meditation on the Ajna chakra and now wanted to know if it was possible to go further towards Realisation without joining any monastic order.

B.: Outer ceremonies are prescribed for those who are prone to the error of placing form over substance; substance alone is material and that alone is real.

Q.: Since the Jnani's omniscience is beyond question, will B. please tell me whether the extrajudicial extermination of the preceding chancellor, the leader of the brownshirts, and many others as part of a 'blood-purge' ordered by the present chancellor, with the purported objective of bringing about some form of national palingenesis, is not morally abhorrent? After authorising the executions the chancellor has justified the same by referring to himself as the "yardstick of justice by which to judge the German people" in a speech to the Reichstag. I am crestfallen with the developments going on in my country... After the Kaiser's abdication I thought that the time was ripe for the ideas of Marx-Engels to take shape in the German soil; but that was not to be. Will B. not agree that their philosophy is the one best suited to serving as a decisive panacea to society's ills?

B.: Your own ills overwhelm you; yet, you have moved to the sphere of societal ills already! First be at permanent peace with yourself; once that stands achieved, we can talk about how to bring peace to the chancellor.

Q.: I am aware that B. is a solipsist. However, to dismiss all human problems as being imaginary requires a giant leap of faith towards the Idealism end of the spectrum.

B.: It merely needs disillusionment with materialism.

Q.: According to Sri Aurobindo's claims, he has probed beyond the experience of the Vedic Rishis. What is Sri B.'s opinion? Is it authentic or not?

B.: Aurobindo's talk of bringing down divine consciousness from above overlooks the same being already Self-effulgent in the Heart. Reality simply IS. Where arises the question of moving it from place to place, etc.? People keep asking me about Sri Aurobindo's yoga system; and if I give my reply according to my capacity, they go away disgruntled saying, "These Jnanis are always contradicting each other." What can I do?

Q.: What about Sri Aurobindo's claim that one must commence from Self-Realisation and then proceed to bring down the Divine to the Earth?

B.: Let us first Realize and then discuss, if need be; not now.

Q.: What is the ultimate purpose of a man's life?

B.: To find an answer to the question of "Why am I, apparently, limited to, and therefore by, a body? Am I nothing more?". This question finally resolves itself into the question of "Who am I, who am apparently bound by this limitation of

being or carrying a body?". This much is certain: one who foolishly takes his bodily existence for granted, who thinks that it is an inevitable finality that he is, in fact, born, will never succeed in the Quest no matter what austerities or penance he might perform. Only the Unborn can know the Unborn. The Unborn knows itself only- that is, it knows no birth or death. The intellectual understanding that the bodily existence is futile, undesirable, useless and delusory is the very first step towards Realisation. If you accept the existence of limitations, any Sadhana performed will have precisely only one result- it will make the Ego grow stronger and stronger and stronger. One who wants to transcend limitation should cease to imagine himself to be limited- that will do; yes, it indeed is as simple as that. Instead of simply giving up the unreal, people want to do Sadhana to eradicate it! Is it not funny?!

Q.: Is Sadhana not useful?

B.: Only if it is done without assuming the existence of limitations. The only useful Sadhana is the investigation "Who am I?". Everything else is just "release-of-concept-gas"[movement of mental ideas or churning of vrittis within the mind], because existence of limitations is implicitly assumed and accepted. If non-existent limitations are accepted to exist, how can any Sadhana performed on the basis of that wrong acceptance have any use, and how can such spurious Sadhana help you transcend those very limitations?

Q.: The logic seems to suggest that the Self can be discovered by the mind.

B.: The dead mind becomes the Self or discovers itself to be the Self.

Q.: I understand Nietzsche talks about the concept of Eternal Recurrence of the same in Also sprach Zarathustra. Does B. agree with it? Each time the universe is recreated after the cosmic dissolution, does it exactly repeat itself? If that were to be true, both free-will and Self-Realisation would be impossible. If everything is going to unfold now exactly as it did previously, my incumbent free will is obviously just a myth. If everything is going to unfold in exactly the same manner in the future as now, I am never going to escape from the cycle of births and deaths!

B.: All these are only mental concepts. Even now you are not born. Realize it.

Q.: The body was born.

B.: Are you it?

Q.: It is part of me- B.'s teachings tell me that I am Brahman and therefore immanent everywhere.

B.: Leave Brahman alone. Talk about yourself first. Who are you?

Q.: I really don't know... I am Pure Consciousness, is it not?

B.: Is Pure Consciousness now conversing with me? Is it saying, "I am Brahman.", etc.?

Q.: Then what is the answer?

B.: The effortless thought-free state is the answer.

Q.: How to attain it?

B.: There is no question of attaining anything. BE- don't ask how to be. It is your very nature.

Q.: I am unable to realize it.

B.: This is also only a thought. Get rid of it and all will be well.

Q. I have heard of the Jnana-vichara technique expounded by Sri Bhagawan. How could asking oneself the question 'Who am I?' lead to transcendence of mind, when asking the question itself is only an activity initiated and sustained on the level of the mind?

B.: The vichara begins with the mind and ends in the Self. Mind turned fully inward discovers itself to be the Self.

Chadwick was asked by B. to give the man B.'s 'Who am I?' to read. He read it and then asked-

Q.: I find it shocking to consider seriously Advaita's proclamation that the Jagrat state is nothing better than a dream. It amounts to saying that I am now dreaming whereas I believe to the contrary, that whatever I am experiencing through the senses exist independantly of my perception thereof... How is it that the numerous disciples of yours- or followers or devotees or worshippers or aficionados or whatever it is that one would be justified in calling them- take gladly to the idea that the world- the same world they experience everyday- is a dream?

B.: You say it is the same world you saw yesterday that you are seeing today. How do you know that? Through memory. Memories are also illusory. They create a deceptive fabric of intellectual continuity where in fact none exists. What actually exists is only Beingness or Self. Even in dreams you have memories, go to familiar places, etc. How is it? Jagrat or Swapna, the same mind draws the poisonous veil of objectification or differentiation over the pure Self, hiding it. This veil is called the screen of avidya maya. Don't ask, who cast this veil? Instead, ask, Who sees the veil? Then you will see there was never any veil. This is called Self-Realisation. The desire to do sadhana to attain it is itself meaningless because it presupposes the existence of someone apart from the Self who is doing Sadhana to reach the Self.

Q.: Is it the realisation you speak of as Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi? Should I not do any Sadhana? Is Sadhana useless then?

B.: Yes, it is the same realisation. Sadhana is the means to gain the Self. Only the idea "I am doing Sadhana." renders the Sadhana totally pointless and useless. Sadhana becomes natural if attraction to worldly pleasures stands removed. Desire for worldly pleasures take to their heels when you realise the world is only a dream.

Q.: I still find it impossible to believe this solid world could only be a mere dream.

B.: [smiling] Two different categories of spiritual aspirants or sadhakas exist. One is the Spülauftrag [Kritopasaka] and the other is the Wischauftrag[Akritopasaka]. [B. sometimes used words in the questioner's native tongue to drive the impact home, or where technical terms were involved.] The former is born with the intellectual conviction, born of aeons of serious and steadfast spiritual practice directed along the correct channel [that of making the mind turn Selfwards or Sourcewards], that the cosmos he sees around him is the merest of illusions, and that expending one's mental faculties upon it would be the ruin of one's inherent nature of abiding peace and unshakeable happiness; whereas the latter is shocked and unsettled when informed that there is no difference- for all practical purposes- between the Jagrat and swapna states. The firm intellectual conviction that the perceived cosmos is seen, owing to delusion, as being constituted by multiple disparate entities while the truth is that it is vested in the same Substratum, Adhishtanum, or Sadhvasthu as the Seer, is born only as a result of arduous spiritual practice which is possible only if the Sadhguru's abundant Grace is available as a catalyst, which Grace descends unto him alone who perpetually bathes his heart in the effulgent glow of unselfish and non-reciprocation-expecting love of God, Humanity or any other single-minded ideal of pure, ecstatic devotion or parabhakti, and this intellectual conviction [as to the world's objective unreality] is the seed of Jnana that grows into the tree that chokes the poisonous weed of Egotism or Ahankara at its root, destroying it once and for all, such seed having been planted long ago in the fathomless, dark misty depths of the mind by way of the Supremely merciful glance of Grace of the infinitely compassionate Sadhguru.

Q.: So, the widely held perception that without a Guru, even Atmajigyasa, leave alone Atmasakshatkara, is totally impossible, is-?

[he left his words trailing in the air, for the Sage to rhythmically conclude,]

B.: Unequivocally and absolutely correct.

Q.: What about the fate of one who never comes across this- this, sort of- 'Guru Personage' in his lifetime? One of such immense Spiritual eminence as Sri Bhagawan, is after all, hardly possible to be found or encountered against in, say, the busy streets of London, Lahnstein, Linz, or Leningrad... they seem to be a great rarity, but yet they are asserted to be altogether indispensable if one wants to achieve victory on the spiritual path... God seems to have conspired specifically and heavily against those who aspire to His state, for- leave alone the effort required to be made- even the Teacher whose help is

anything but avoidable, seems to be greatly difficult to locate- or, perhaps, spot...

The Maharshi remained silent; someone in the Hall remarked, 'To precisely sort out this difficulty, Sri Bhagawan, the Avatar of the Age, has been sent down to us by God, so that, yet living amongst us, he may illumine our way to the divine Supreme Truth.' Someone else chimed in, "Sri B. is a Jnana-Siddha, the Impersonal Absolute, not a mere Avatar. An Avatar is a manifestation of one of God's excellencies; the Jnani is God himself. Sri B. has himself reminded us of this on many occasions- is that not so, Bhagawan?" he asked. B. only remained silent and serene. If he had heard- no doubt he had- he betrayed no indication of it. The original questioner seemed slightly deflated at B.'s silence; not to be discouraged, he began again-

Q.: Yes, some say Aurobindo is the Avatar of the age, while others say it is Meher Baba; still others say it was the late Sai Baba. Yet others maintain that Sri Krishna was the last Avatar in the Anthropomorphic form, before Kalki Avatar arrives at the time of Cosmic Dissolution. For others it is Buddha, Ramakrishna or Confucius. Will B. tell us in what way His experience of consciousness is superior to that of these, since, allegedly, they seem to be mere Avatars, and not Jnanis? And really who is the Avatar corresponding to this Era in Mankind's history, a particularly tumultuous one- Germany has announced her intention to rearm herself, an indication of the belligerent attitude of the National Socialist Government? Surely an Avatar is necessary from age to age to look after the world to ensure that mankind's evil-doing collectively remains lesser than his acts of benignness? Jnanis do not act in the world, except to ensure the merest existence of the physical body, is that not so? So, where is the Avatar who is going to look after our poor mortal selves- and also the world?

B.: Experience of Consciousness, if genuine, naturally precludes 'others'; thus there is nothing superior or inferior, because there is no second, no other, nothing foreign or alien to or apart from the One Immutable Absolute Self- so the question of comparison is, simply, nullity. All True Masters are ONE, not because they identify themselves with something in common, but because commonly the faculty of identification [of one thing with another] does not exist in any of them. As for Avatars, each one sees an Avatarapurusha according to his own mental convictions and predispositions- to establish the finality of one's own viewpoint amidst others will result only in fruitless skirmishes. You may continue to believe in whatever pleases your own fancy, but expecting corroboration from others for your weltanschauung of the universe will serve only to increase your sense of mental unrest and agitate the mind further.



Q.: So the idea of the Avatarapurusha, God-manifest/God-incarnate, who comes down from age to age, is just... a fallacy, only as good as a fairy-tale? Do not the Holy books of the various faiths speak of these blessed beings, whom we might worship- since manifestation makes available a form to worship- so that we might elevate ourselves to the zenith of spiritual perfection and purity, puissance and divinity? Jesus, Mahomet, Zoraster, Buddha- what about them? Specifically does not Krishna say, parithranaya sadhunam... etc.? How can these considerations be ignored?

B.: Your mental predilections and proclivities foist upon you the erroneous idea that there is a God outside your Self, and that He sends down messengers to guide you and show you the way to reach Him. If you keep on journeying, you will never reach. Therefore, I say, enough searching- call off the search and be yourself, nothing more. The great masters- each in his own tongue, but each from the same Heart- yearned to give you this message only- BE YOUR SELF. The Masters you mentioned, and others, each doubtless had- and has and continues to have always- his specific, special or unique role in man's spiritual evolution, but the zenith spoken of by you will certainly not be reached by discussing the question, 'How can all of these Mahanubhavs be right? On what points do they contradict themselves? Is it not our imminent task-on-hand to clear up these apparent contradictions and seeming mutual inconsistencies? Will that not endow us with special spiritual merit?' Men waste entire lifetimes- fruitlessly- like this. This effort, if harnessed fully to keeping one's Latchiyam fixed entirely on Self or Reality, would have resulted in Mukthi long ago. Instead, countless lives have been frittered away on account of these wrong and foolish ideas about reaching Truth by using the Bhuddthi or the reasoning faculty, when, in fact, precisely subsidence of that faculty results in revelation of Self or Reality. What a pity.

Q.: It is still not clear. The Avatara Purusha- is he just a mental concept like the gandharvas, rakshasas, bhutas, etc.? Has not this tangible world witnessed the advent of many such great men, B. himself not excluded?

B.: The trouble arises when we use their teachings to satisfy our intellectual palate and appetite. To the unwise, it does not occur to try and practise, instead of using it as a subject of discussion at gatherings of philosophers and metaphycists. Therefore I say- Do not try to write essays on it. Do not try to present articles of great erudition on it. Do not try to gain followers for your newly discovered maxim or device-of-apotheosis or precept-of-ancient-wisdom. Do not conceptualise it mentally and then, getting trapped in those very concepts, moan and complain that you 'see no progress'. Do not go on discussing or talking about it. Do not tell yourself, 'First I shall obtain intellectual mastery over the technique and subseuently shall begin the

application thereof.' Instead- plunge into the practice HERE and NOW; stick to the teachings of any one Mahanubhavar, and all will come right in the end. Masters are there only to show you the way- man fogs the fulfilment of their purpose by merely theorising or intellectualising about their respective lives, advents and teachings, such as asking- Is this one or that one a Siddha-purusha, Muktha-purusha or an Avatara-purusha? Of course these are your mental concepts only. In fact, the Master, being not at all different from the formless Absolute seated in the tabernacle of the Sacred Heart of Man, is really synonymous with your own True Self- Why seek him anywhere else? Q.: For myself I am now convinced, but I am worried about the hopeless spiritual condition of the world, which seems to be enveloped in profuse darkness. When will all the people of the world wake up to the fact that they are living in the ghastly darkness of ignorance, and understand that the world around them is a dream, so that they can obtain genuine illumination? What about those unfortunate ignorant millions of the world, who have never met a genuine Sadhguru in their life? Supposing their prarabdha-karma dictates that they spend the entirety of their lives being relentlessly tossed around in the evil sea of avidya maya, as a result of the Guru's acquaintance never coming to transpire- what then? For how many lifetimes more will their ordeal of ignorance have to last, and when at last would such unfortunate ones meet their Guru- so that through Him their redemption could be vouchsafed for certain? Such unfortunate persons, never having had the extreme good fortune of meeting B. during his blessed sojourn on this Earth, which, owing to his stay here has become itself a sanctified land, must needs count themselves exceedingly unlucky- what, therefore, would B. have them do? What can they do? What will be their fate?

B.: The fate of each one depends upon his merit. Take care of yourself and others can take care of themselves.

This answer was evidently not to the questioner's liking. He seemed to toy with the idea of placing forth additional arguments before B. as to why mercy ought not to be showered in profusion upon the 'ignorant' masses of the world, until Chadwick pacified him with the following words:-

"Bhagawan has said that when longing for God or intensity of meditation has reached a feverish intensity/pitch, the Guru automatically manifests before the devotee."

Even then, the man seemed about to say something, when the Hall's attention was riveted by B.'s voice suddenly reading from Scripture the words of a Jewish Carpenter no less a genius in the realm of Spirit, the heartthrob of many a lonely, man-forsaken soul yearning for Divine acceptance-

"Ask, ye shall receive; Seek, ye shall find; Knock, it shall be opened unto thee."

When B. said "it shall be opened", the man was thrown into a sort of paroxysmic joy and he was unable to contain himself- he rushed forward toward B., screaming, 'Saviour! Thou hast handed me the key to the Kingdom of Heaven- the Nirvana I have been seeking always! Nirvana! Saviour! Saviour! Mountain Saviour! Jesus Mountain! Here! Fancy!' His further blathering words were arrested by a catatonic fit which suddenly seized him. B.'s attendants slowly eased their grip on his shoulders and shirt-collar- afraid he might attack the sage, they had spontaneously come forward and caught hold of him, to prevent his advance toward the Master, whom they revered and adored as their living God. Slowly he sank low on the ground and sat with his hands clasped around his knees like a small, morose, lugubrious child. Presently he would murmur a few inaudible words, and then relapse into silence. Someone fetched him water, which he ravishingly gulped down and then said something incomprehensible.

An hour or so later he seemed to have regained normalcy, though the attendants' uneasy, nervous eyes were still riveted on him. He made to move toward B., and the attendants immediately jerked forward. B. said to them, 'Varattum Vidu'; yet, like djinns that zealously and jealously guard treasure, they stood, alert, about him, lest the master should have to suffer some untoward bodily ill on account of some freakish mishap. The man now looked eager to communicate his gratitude, that was writ so largely and openly upon his sensitive face. In a low tone he said something to the Master, leaning over. B. smiled, showed the other his palm in benediction, and the latter bent low in reverential farewell, departing the next instant from the Hall. This is how a chance encounter with Bhagawan brought drastic transformations in one life. The encounter may last only a few hours, but the transformations might last for life. That was the last I saw of the German from the town of "Bwaga Moyo". Now people in the Hall wanted to discuss him. Someone mentioned that a man, having this same name, had written an essay, on the teachings of Keshab Chandra Sen, which he had encountered in some magazine; he wondered if it could be the same man; then, turning to B., he asked-  
Q.: This fortunate man who left now- did B. just give him an experience of the Sahaja Stiti?

B.: His mind began to subside in the Heart, and the bliss was objectified as the object of his long-contemplation or meditation, manifesting externally as a stupefying vision of mesmerising charm. If the bliss is understood to be not apart from one's Self, one will stop attempting meditation and simply remain as THAT-WHICH-IS.

Q.: All I want to know is whether what he experienced- can it be called the Sahaja Samadhi of the Jnani, which He is always immersed in?

B.: No. While ideas still remain in latent form, Mukthi is totally impossible. However, a mind that has once tasted the nectar of bliss of the Athmaswarupa will repeatedly try- even involuntarily- to regain it; such efforts will become more frantic and intense as the individual's desire for his beloved chosen Master waxes more and more in his Heart due to the operation of God's compassionate divine Grace; eventually the love reaches such a level of crazed longing that the jivatman, recognising its total helplessness to reach the state of supreme Union aspired for, surrenders totally to the Higher Power, saying with outright candidness, "I do not count anymore. I do not want to be, nay, already I am not. Only you are. Only you Matter, because- only you exist." When this stage is reached God effortlessly absorbs the devotee in Himself. The fact remains, however, that there is nothing to be gained or attained- even now you are in Sahaja Samadhi; only you think otherwise. Get rid of thought and all will be well. Thinking 'I am the Self' is a meaningless diversion of mental energy, because when the option of forever remaining as the Self is always available, which fool would instead prefer to think that he is the Self? It is like the story of the king who forgot all about his Royal Throne, and started wandering all over the streets of his own empire, screaming at the top of his voice, I am King! I am King! I am King!, like a madcap, instead of calmly walking over to his palace, entering it, and occupying his rightful throne. When he thus roams around on the streets, does he obtain any respect or affectionate treatment? No. People throw stones at him in contempt, saying, 'Admit you are a penniless pauper and we will give you tasty food, decent clothes, and other help. Stop pretending to be the king. It annoys us, for we bear much affection toward our most high Royal Excellency. If you were really the king, and have indeed actually lost your way to your Natural Residence, would you not simply proceed to your throne and occupy it, instead of wasting your energy on the roadside meaninglessly shouting "I am King."? Would our King, the veritable embodiment of dignity and decency, ever behave like this? Stop your nefarious activities immediately. Shaming the King's name is a serious offence.' This of-course only enrages the deranged king further, and he gets into fist fights with his own beloved citizens. Eventually he is arrested for misbehaviour and public rioting, and brought to the Royal Court for Trial. Meanwhile everyone is puzzled upon seeing the throne empty. They wonder where His Majesty might be, for his punctuality was the stuff of legend [as were his numerous other good qualities]. They say to themselves, "A madcap who has tried to insult the King on the streets must needs be urgently executed, and at this crucial

moment, where has His majesty gone- how can the judgement be delivered in His absence?" When the king sees his familiar court-room, his mental faculties are restored to their normal state and through gentle explanation he makes the Royal Court understand the actual situation. They are horror struck once their disbelief has subsided; they at once beg his pardon for having bound him in chains; he in turn begs them to forgive him for having let them down by having permitted his mental faculties to become so deranged and distorted as to reduce him to a wandering lunatic on the streets, a disturbing contrast to his usual radiant figure on the throne. Then he moves over to occupy his usual seat at the head of the Royal Diet; no sooner than he touches the throne does he awake into [relative] reality; the whole incident of him wandering on the streets as a madcap never happened; he had simply fallen asleep on a busy day at the Throne, and had been dreaming of this entire unpleasant sequence of events. The truth was that he has never stirred from his throne, but had been sitting on it all along whilst the dream had been playing on his mind.

Everyone was moved by B.'s narration, because he had personally acted out each of the parts. One could see the pain and indignation on his face- his own citizens were laughing at him for laying the claim, his rightful claim of entitlement- to kingship. One could see the joy- he was restored to his palace at last and none of this ridiculous madcap business would cause him any trouble in the future. One could see the incredulous wonder and astonishment, as he awoke from the dream and opened his eyes to the real world [real in the relativistic sense]- there never had been any madcap business; he had never moved from the throne, from the time he had occupied it on the morning of that day!

Q.: The illustration fails to address the question of why the dream should have taken place at all.

I wondered how B. was going to tackle the question. Dreams generally happened afterward if some difficult-to-digest exotic delicacy was served at dinner- but somehow it seemed unlikely that the Sage would furnish that particular response... He did not.

B.: On account of attachments, desires and other vrittis prevailing in the mind the world seems real as an objective entity. In fact if the world appears it is just the Self. It requires something apart from the dream, the perceiving subject, that is, to tell that a dream, or anything at all, is being experienced; on enquiring if such a subject exists, we find that it does not, but that what exists is only the substratum in which the apparent subject and apparent object seemed hitherto to be vested; now there is no subject and object but only the Adhishtanum of the Heart, as in fact, was always the case- only all this long

we were not paying attention to the Truth. If you try to find ignorance, you will not succeed, because no such thing exists; it is a non-existent thing that is giving us so much trouble. All eventually return to the palace of the Self- only when the Simhasanam is touched can the King wake up from his terrifying dream, not otherwise- some roam around for years in the streets as madcaps before they permit themselves to be captured and returned to the palace, whereas some- a few- mentally succumb to the first blow received from an upset citizen, and think, 'It seems that it might be difficult to continue to cope here with blows raining left and right; it would be better to surrender to the authorities and be done with it, no matter what the consequence.', immediately acting accordingly. It has to be noted that without the trouble-maker's consent, he cannot be marched to the Royal Palace; for raining down any number of blows no consent need be obtained; that is how this dream universe works. Also note- in one instance, a 2 minute dream of the King may run for even 60 years in the dream world, whereas in another a 6 hour dream of his may run for 1/144th of a second in the dream world. Time is a function of the faculty of the imagination. It cannot possess the property of Being, which is Absolute in nature. Consider the story of King Lavana which occurs in the Yoga vasishta-

Once a Sage visited the court of King Lavana. The visitor proclaimed himself to be a sorcerer and boasted about his magical abilities and his power to create illusions of unimaginably enormous proportions. Lavana's face was expressionless. He smiled within himself. He thought, 'I, the terror of the enemy kings, the mighty Lavana- as if I could be deceived by the illusory power of this weird looking man!' Lavana, the emperor of the Uttara-Pandava kingdom was well known for his courage and valor all over the earth. As much as he was a terror unto the wicked wretches defiling the Earth, he was compassionate to the needy and poor. People had nothing to fear under the shelter of his mighty arms. He had mastered all the scriptures under the guidance of Sage Vasishta and even practiced the method of Atma-vichara with the objective of reaching Self-Realisation. His character was blemishless; his actions were perfect; his thoughts were noble! On the whole there was nothing in the world that could destabilize his calm disposition or disturb his tranquil state. He had nothing to fear from any illusory power of any creature from heaven or hell. Lavana looked at the faces of the people seated in his court. His ministers also had the same skeptical look in their eyes. However, others seated in the court reacted in different ways to the sorcerer's presence. Some trembled and recited the names of their favorite deities; some laughed to hide their fears; some closed their eyes; some looked at the king for support. The king looked at the weird looking man with scorn. The sorcerer

had requested permission to present his talent before the king. He wore a turban made of colorful feathers. His face was painted red as if to hide his identity. A huge black moustache covered his mouth. The eyes were red and glared with abnormal brightness. His whole body from the neck to the toes was covered by a long skirt woven with many colored feathers. A talking parrot of fine colors sat on his shoulder and repeated the last word of whatever sentence he uttered in a screeching voice, adding more abnormality to the scene. The sorcerer held a bunch of peacock feathers tightly in both his hands as if afraid that slightest movement of those feathers could be dangerous to one and all. King Lavana at last broke his silence and addressed the sorcerer. "So you think I can be deceived by you through some illusion...?" A scornful smile peeped from the corner of his mouth as if challenging the man and his bunch of peacock feathers. The sorcerer seemed unaffected by the critical look of the king. He smiled at the king with careless disdain and said, "Would you dare give me permission...?" The king looked at his ministers as if asking for their opinion. They also showed disbelief in the words of the sorcerer and flashed knowing smiles at the king. The king decided to amuse the common populace seated in his court. Any entertainment like this from a roadside vagabond would not harm anybody, he decided and nodded his agreement to the magical show that the weird man promised to present. The sorcerer saluted the king with a great show of pretentious humbleness. Then he walked forward a few steps and stood close to the steps which led towards the throne placed on a high pedestal. The king was comfortably seated on a huge golden throne decorated with the choicest gems available in the world. The sorcerer fixed his eyes on the king's face for a few moments. The king also returned the stare without batting an eye lid. He had decided to humor the poor creature playing with the bunch of peacock feathers. The people in the court watched every action of the sorcerer carefully so as not to miss any amazing magical feat that he might produce. The court was silent. Only the humming noise from the sorcerer's mouth filled the quarters. There was an eerie atmosphere all around. Some with weak hearts trembled as if expecting the entire world to vanish the next second. The sorcerer was uttering some strange sounds in a very low voice. The pretty maidens who waved the chowries on both sides of the king shivered a little as if some cold wind had passed over them. They closed their eyes in some unknown fear. The sorcerer suddenly lifted the bunch of peacock feathers and waved it violently in front of the king. Immediately the whole place was filled with colorful sparks of light all over. Nothing could be seen except the colored light drops floating everywhere. A few silent apprehensive minutes passed. The sparks vanished all at once suddenly bringing a normal

vision to all the courtiers. The sorcerer was nowhere to be seen. The people sighed with relief. Nothing notable had happened really. Only a spectacular sight of colorful lights! That was all! For this, the sorcerer had been acting as if he had the entire world under his control. A smile lit up all the faces in the court, but these smiles did not last long. They were all shocked at what had happened to their dear king. The king had become frozen like a statue. His eyes were open and staring at some invisible thing in front of him. He did not even blink. The eyes were fixed like the eyes of a portrait. An old minister who had known the king from when he was a child ran up the throne and touched him with alarm. The king was alive. The heart beats had not stopped; the breathing was deep and slow; the body, however, did not move even slightly. The minister shook the king hard and called out his name many times. The king did not respond in any way. He looked as if he was lost in a deep samadhi. The minister came down the steps of the throne slowly, unable to fathom the events of the day. He lifted his hands and gestured the common populace to keep quiet, and they fell silent, intently watching the king. The ministers discussed something in low voices and sat on their chairs helpless to do anything. All of them waited anxiously. Some two hours passed this way. Suddenly the king moved and his whole body shivered a little. It was as if he was trying to get up and jump into something. His unconscious body was falling out of the throne. The body guards who had been watching the king with alertness jumped forward and held the king in their strong arms. They slowly seated the king on his throne. The king gradually regained consciousness. His eyes looked all around as if searching for something. He did not seem to recognize anyone in his immediate environment. His face was creased with worry. He looked confused and bewildered. He was sweating profusely. All the ministers stood around him anxious about the king's well-being. Some courtiers were busily engaged in preparations to hunt down the evil sorcerer and slice him into pieces. The King started mumbling a few incoherent words. He seemed frightened of all the people surrounding him. The old minister understood the confusion in the king's mind and sent away all but two or three very close friends of the king. The king asked the kind old minister- "Who are you all? Where am I? Whose court this is? Where are my wife and children? What have you people done to them?" The minister reassured him with kind words. He got the maid to bring a mirror to the court. He made the king see his face in the mirror. The king at first was shocked by the handsome face that stared at him from the mirror, but suddenly his eyes shone with understanding and he started laughing uncontrollably. The king was escorted to his own private chambers. He had taken some refreshments and felt at ease now. His close friends and ministers were seated at their



respective places. They were eagerly looking at the face of the king waiting for an account of his experiences. The sorcerer was sitting in a special golden chair provided for him as a respectful gesture from the king. He had appeared in the court room as soon as the king had woken up fully. Now he was sitting silently and was observing the king with profound amusement. His red eyes smiled with hidden mischief. The king addressed him thus- "Well done, my dear friend! I do appreciate your power of delusion. You are not less than Lord Narayana himself in weaving the web of delusion to entrap the unsuspecting. Your magic is indeed great." He signaled his minister with a slight nod of his head. Next moment, a hundred maids came into that room with huge golden plates filled with precious gems and diamonds. They placed all the plates in front of the sorcerer and retired to the corner of the room. The king addressed the sorcerer again- "Sir, your act deserves more than these gifts. Please accept them as my humble offerings. Ask me for anything that you desire for. I will try my best to fulfill your wish." The sorcerer stood up. He saluted the king and said- "My Lord, I do not need all these things. I have merely performed my duty. Now please permit me to take leave of you." So saying, he waved his bunch of peacock feathers once more. A blazing flash of light arose where he stood and he was gone. The minister seated next to the king asked- "My Lord, what is all this? What happened to you? Please be kind and tell us everything." The king, who was staring at the place where the sorcerer stood with surprise, turned his face towards the anxious friends. He closed his eyes for a few moments as if trying to remember everything that had happened at the time of his swoon. Then he opened his eyes and said- "You all must have seen the sorcerer waving his bunch of peacock feathers and the colorful sparks filling the court room. After the mist of colorful light-drops cleared, I saw myself standing next to a very beautiful horse. It had all the qualities that Indra's horse 'Uchchishravas' is said to have. It appeared so tempting that I decided to ride the horse for some distance and come back. I had no other thought in my mind. The court room, sorcerer, country, and everything else was forgotten. I just wanted to ride that magnificent horse. The moment I sat on it, I understood that I had made a mistake in trusting that horse. It immediately sped with the speed of lightning and I had to hang on to it for life. I could not control it in any way. I do not know where it went or how much time elapsed. I was feeling tired and hungry. But the horse kept on running as if set on fire. I could not even know which cities or villages I was passing through. Only when the heat of the Sun scorched me and hot sand hit my face, I understood that I was in a huge desert land. It had no end or beginning. I felt I was riding the fiery Sun across the sky and felt scorched by the heat of the land. After eternities passed, I felt suddenly very cold. I understood that I was

in a wild forest region filled with giant trees and countless shrubberies. 'It is now or never.' I thought and jumped on to a branch under which the horse went through. As I hung with both my hands to a creeper covering the huge branch, the horse disappeared into the dark interiors of the forest. It was already becoming dark. I could not even see my own hands in the enveloping darkness. I somehow managed to climb on to the upper side of the branch and held on to the creeper tightly for fear of falling down. I heard some hissing sound and felt something cold as some rope like thing moved close to me. I even stopped breathing to avoid the danger and remained like a statue for the rest of the night. It was the longest night I had ever lived. Each 1/192th of a second was equal to a Brahma's lifetime. The cold wind froze my limbs, by then already frozen in fear. I had completely forgotten who I was. My head was blank. I was filled with fear like a deer lost in a lion's dominion. My teeth were chattering in the cold wind. Various varieties of insects were biting into and traversing through all the orifices of my body. I was hungry, tired and exhausted. My mouth had dried up. All I needed was some food and water. I would have done anything for a tiny morsel of food. Forgotten was all my hard-earned knowledge; forgotten were my warring abilities. I did not even remember my name or family or country. I was like a human animal only wanting to survive. After the never ending night vanished at the sight of the Sun, I could see where I was. The ground was very near and the tree was a huge Jambu tree spreading its branches all over that area like a spider spreading out its legs. I saw also many huge snakes sheltering in the hollows of the tree. I quickly jumped out of the tree. My clothes were in rags; I somehow managed to cover my lower part of the body properly; the sense of decency was still alive somewhere in my heart. I had scratches all over my body; some parts were bleeding; some parts were swollen. One of my eyes was closed and swollen. Some passing branch might have poked the eye, I thought. I slowly got up and started walking! Where to go? There were only thorny bushes and giant prickly trees everywhere. Somewhere far above I heard some birds chirping. Insects hovered around my wounds trying to suck blood out of me. I took a thorny branch and waved them away as I walked. I had only one thought in my mind- 'food'. I tried eating some leaves and found them horribly bitter and irritating to the mouth. My tongue got swollen by their poisonous juice. I had no tears left to cry. Thorns pricked my feet; creepers got in my way; snakes rustled past me. Yet I walked and walked. I would often fall down exhausted and swoon. Then I would be frightened that some wild animal may eat me alive and I would get up and walk again. How long I went through the forest, I have no idea. I decided to walk till death. There was no goal other than death now. Food was an impossibility in that forest. I did not

even pray to the gods; I had no idea of the gods or heavens then. I was just an animal in human shape. At some point I think I sat down under a huge tree and fell into a swoon like sleep. Some noise nearby woke me up. I peeped through the bushes. Wonder of wonders! I saw a girl walking on a forest path. I did not see her dark, black skin. I did not see her short fat body. I did not smell the horrifying stink coming out of her body. I did not see that the pupils of her eyes were continuously moving making her look more grotesque. I saw only the basket in her hand and inhaled the smell of food coming from it. I pounced like an animal and stood in front of her. Shocked by my sudden appearance she let out a scream. I gestured to the food and begged her like a dog pleading at the master. She scrutinized me from top to bottom. She even pinched and squeezed my genitalia hard to see whether I was real or not; I screamed in pain and yet went on begging for food, touching her feet which were covered in excreta. She just laughed, spat in my face, kicked me in the groin and started walking away. I followed her like her shadow and begged for food wherever she stopped. She now eyed me differently. Her face was an unpleasant shade of orange and made her look devilish. She turned towards me and said that she was taking the food for her father working in the fields. She could not dare give it to anyone else. I don't know how, but I understood all her words as if I belonged to the same village where she was born and brought up. I showed her my shrunken stomach and begged her again. She looked at me now with pity and said- "Look! I can share this food only with my husband! Will you be the father for my future children? It is my impression that your testicles seem healthy enough." I hesitated a little. She again said- "My father is the chief of the Chaandaala village I belong to. If you marry me, you can have, three times a day, as much food as you can eat. You will live like a prince with me." The talk of so much food made my mouth wet again. I felt I was reborn. I wanted at that time only 'food'. I did not care about anything else then. I nodded my head in agreement. She took a tiny peice of raw beef, almost entirely rotten, from her basket and fed me like she was feeding a pet dog. I gulped the foul-smelling flesh in one mouthful, not minding the tiny worms that were crawling in it, and looked at her for more expectantly. She laughed and dragged me with her fat hand like a prize catch towards the field where her father was ploughing the field. She now and then threw a piece of meat towards me as if playing a game. I caught it instantly and swallowed it like a delicacy from heaven, though worms were now moving around in the inside of my mouth and throat. I followed her obediently only intent on eating food from her hand. The father who was like the devil himself risen from hell saw me; he approved of the fair-hued human animal; he patted my back; I was given more food; we three went to the village at the base of the

mountain; the whole village was stinking; meat pieces were strewn everywhere; sliced flesh parts of pigs, crows, dogs, horses, monkeys were spread out on the ground for drying in front of the huts; dirt-covered children with devilish faces were sucking blood from freshly cut meat pieces and oozing blood from their mouths; all the black hued villagers looked at the fair hued catch that followed their chieftain's daughter obediently like a dog; many young maidens were envious of her good fortune; some stroked me like petting an animal and laughed at my uncomfortable gait; my future wife saved me from all those ugly maidens and took me inside a house; I was given more food; I was placed in the special hut of the chieftain; I was introduced to my future mother-in-law who was squint-eyed; she also gave me some food, saying it was a delicacy. I innocently ate it, and then asked her what it was, for it had been pungent but tasty. I was given the reply that it was the excreta of a pig, pickled in juice extracted from the brains of frogs. Next day I was married to the chieftain's daughter in all grandeur; wine and meat were abundantly consumed; I was now the official husband of a Chaandaala girl; I was pampered with lot of food; I ate and ate and became a fat fair hued Chaandaala in no time; within five years I was the father of a girl and two sons. I learnt to hunt animals; I learnt to cut the fleshy limbs of the animals and pickle them in human-urine; I learnt to take care of goats and sheep; I learnt to be dirty and stinking like all others; I learnt to drink intoxicating drinks and shout; I learnt to fight for the smallest piece of flesh or land; I learnt to scream at my family; I learnt to walk out in anger and live far from my family; I learnt to return and apologize; I learnt to lust for the company of my wife; I learnt to love her ugly looks; I learnt to treasure my children like my lives; I learnt to get frozen in winter; I learnt to get drenched in rains; I learnt to get scorched in the hot sun; I learnt to eat live-snakes; I learnt to suffer mosquito bites; in short I was a perfect Chaandaala. The 'Wheel of the Time' moved on. I grew old; I was nearing my sixties; white beard covered my dried up chin; my face became creased with worries and anxieties; I was irritated with everyone; I fought with everyone; I was beaten up and wounded; I beat others and wounded them. Life went on. Then one sudden day a famine struck; all animals died; all plants dried up; a forest fire destroyed the forest region in its entirety; the ground became hot like embers; there was no food anywhere; there was no water anywhere; many died; many committed suicide by jumping into fires; many left the village and died elsewhere; I too left my old parents-in-law and went away from that village accompanied by wife and three children. We walked and walked; I carried my younger sons on my shoulders. There was only dry land everywhere. At last at the end of the day we reached the borders of the mountain region and found a few Palmyra

trees. My wife and daughter fell down there exhausted. I perceived that my daughter was about to die from exhaustion and bereftitude of nutrition. Left without an alternative, I fed her with my semen until my testicles became distended with pain from excessive exertion. I dropped my sons down and sat down to rest. I did not know what to do or where to go; I knew death was the final destination waiting for us; already my wife was struggling for breath, and had fallen into a painful swoon, just after consuming her own feces out of intolerable hunger; my daughter was sleeping like a dried creeper fallen on the ground; my eldest son lied down next to me hugging my legs; his eyes were dry and unseeing; my youngest son somehow crawled towards me and pleaded "Give me meat! Give me meat. I want blood to drink.". I consoled him; I reasoned with him; he would not stop his crying; I got wild and told him to eat my flesh and drink my blood; he said "Give it now, I am hungry". I decided to die and give them my fried body as food; I lighted a fire with the dried leaves fallen there; and as the fire blazed high, I jumped into it...." The king paused for a second. Deathly silence filled the room. "... then I fell here out of the throne." Then the king laughed aloud and walked out of that room still laughing. The ministers and friends of the king who were listening to the story intently were sitting like statues. They could hear the king's loud laughter from afar. They got up slowly and walked out of the room. They did not feel like discussing anything. The next day the king announced that he was going to the Vindhya Mountains. He wanted to visit the Chaandaala colony- if it ever existed. Why would not it exist? He had experienced the life in those mountains second by second, minute by minute. He knew every stone that stood there; he knew every particle of sand that rolled there. He dismissed the advice of his ministers who tried to convince him that he had dreamt the whole thing and it could not have happened in reality. He had only asked permission from his Guru Vasishta. The wise Sage had nodded his agreement. 'No harm in searching for Truth; no attempt goes waste that is made to discover Reality.' he said. Now the king was on his way to the Vindhya Mountains with his retinue. He searched far and wide in that wilderness, till he reached a place he recognized as having been burnt by the forest fire. He saw some old women rolling on those ashes. One very old woman was crying and weeping loudly. She was lamenting for her fair-hued son-in law and her dark hued daughter; she was calling for her grandsons and grand daughter. The king got down from his horse and approached her. He enquired her about her family. Amidst her weeping and crying sessions she managed to tell the whole story of the fat Chaandaala son-in-law. The king was amazed; he arranged for their comfortable living, loaded them with costly presents and gems, and announced the creation of a subsistence fund for

them that would take care of them till their last days. He wandered for some more time visiting all the places he had seen as a Chaandaala in his illusory experience. Thinking deeply about all that had happened he returned home with many questions burning his mind. A few days later the king was found seated on the ground on a deer skin spread for him, a pair of white cotton garments covering his handsome body; he was now in the hermitage of Sage Vasishtha. His Master Vasishtha was seated on a wooden seat in front of the king. His eyes were closed in blissful contemplation. He was thinking about the questions asked by his royal disciple. "Who was that sorcerer? Why did he create this illusion? Why I had to suffer like this even in a dream, when I have not performed any wrong action in thought, word or deed? How did the illusion in my mind become a reality? How could my experience of two hours be equal to many years of life in a Chaandaala colony?" The king was waiting like a chaataka bird to get answers to his questions. He knew only Vasishtha the son of the Creator could have answers to all these paradoxes. He did not wait long. The Sage broke the silence, to silence the mind of his dear disciple. "My dear Lavana! Do you remember the Raajasooya-yajna performed by you in your mind a long while ago?" Lavana thought back. Yes, he did remember.. He had heard that his ancestor Yudhishtira had performed the Raajasooya Sacrifice [a sacrifice performed by a monarch as a definitive indication of his having subjugated all other kings of the land] and attained to heaven. He also decided to do the same; but he did it in the arena of his mind. He had the power to concentrate his mind on sequences of visualised occurrences for remarkably long stretches of time. So had he sat in his meditation-chamber and performed the Sacrifice in his own mind. Without forgetting the slightest detail he had enacted the Sacrifice mentally. He had collected all the materials in his mind; invited the Sages and Brahmins in his mind; had offered a lot of charity in his mind. By the time the Sun set, he had gone through a year's experience. After getting up he had forgotten all about it thinking it to be an amusement enjoyed. He answered politely, "Yes, my Lord! I have done so!" The Sage smiled and said- "Don't you know that one who performs the Sacrifice undergoes a lot of suffering in his mortal life? Since you had performed the Sacrifice only in the realm of mind, you experienced the corresponding suffering due adversely unto you within your mind alone. Indra the ruler of the heavenly realms may have sent his messenger down here in the guise of a sorcerer to impart the suffering [destined to be undergone by you consequent to your exercise of having performed the Raajasooya-yajna mentally] unto you within your own mental environs." Lavana smiled like a child. The Sage continued his explanation. "You also seem to harbour a doubt about the 'time-factor'! My child, reflect earnestly- what is this thing called

'time' after all? There is no absolute 'Time' or 'Space' in the world, inside which events may occur. Every event has its own spatial and temporal boundaries. Long and short spans of 'Time' are just arbitrary measures concocted up by the mind according to the ravings of its own whims and fancies. Everybody lives in his own spatial and temporal arena in this world; when apparently fused together the ideas of our different minds are exchanged and an illusion of an 'Absolute Time' which is similar to one and all, is falsely ascertained as fact. In the courtroom the courtiers watched you frozen on your throne for two hours, or so they say, but each person who watched you would have experienced this 'Time-span' differently. For those who loved you the most dearly, each second would have been like a year. They would have suffered a lot in their minds, worried about your safety. If a child had been there which was engaged in some game, two hours would be just two minutes for it. All is in the mind, Lavana! What the mind decides, that alone becomes the experienced 'Time-span'. The measures we use for calculating 'Time' and deciding the hours are just for the sake of conducting our daily affairs in a united way. It is simply a practical solution to avoid confusions. In Reality there is nothing called 'Time'. The experience of Parabrahman alone is real. The mind itself stretches 'Time' or contracts it based on the quality of the experience. The Chaandaala Lavana's experience was a period of extreme suffering and your mind measured it as many years. King Lavana's experience was just an amusement concocted by the sorcerer. The 'Time' in the court was decided by those assembled there as being two hours. But in truth, years, months, days and so forth are all merely demarcations invented by society for conducting man's temporal affairs. 'Time' as such is an illusion and is not real!" Lavana was absorbing the words of his Guru attentively. Vasishta continued: "And before analyzing the amazing incident of the illusion experienced by you in the court really having occurred in the Chaandaala village, first tell me what is real and what is not real? When you dream, you experience so many events within a span of few seconds, but still if questioned, you will give a very detailed account of the events in the dream as if it had happened for years. This is because the mind is capable of concocting stories as per its whim. It can remember what has not happened as happened, or it can remember what has happened as not happened. Its malvolent job is to present a coherent story to you so that you will feel comfortable with your apparent bodily experience of existence and feel certain that your life is an occurrence in 'Absolute Time and Space'. All this is because of the Ahankara, which tries to take responsibility for God's actions. If you attain Athmasakshatkara like me, you will dismiss any life narrative as unreal. Had you been Self-realised at the time the spell was cast on you, you

would have looked at both Lavana's kingly experiences and the Chaandaala experiences as just concoctions of the mind and dismissed them away. Your subconscious mind wanted the Chaandaala world to be true in the waking world also. Your own mind fulfilled that wish by presenting to you the village of Chaandaalas where you are supposed to have lived. Or, if this answer does not satisfy you, then it is reasonable to say that when you went to the Vindhya mountain, your own thoughts reflected in the minds of the Chaandaalas and they all felt that a king had lived in their midst as one of them. Or, such a story could have actually happened at that location in the Vindhyas with some other king who had gone through those experiences and your mind reflected that story in your mind with you as that king. Or, the sorcerer could have equally affected both you and those Chaandaala people by his illusory powers and their minds and your mind both experienced the same thing. One way or the other the question is not worthy of much consideration. After throwing a salt-doll in the sea, do you worry as to whether its legs dissolved first, or the hands, or the face? My dear Lavana, know that as long as you do not realize your true identity as the Self Supreme, you will be affected by the environmental patterns around you. You as king Lavana may be imagining yourself to be a distinct person. Your 'Atman or essence' as Lavana includes your body, your family, your friends, your country, your palace and so many countless things. You are a totality of all that. Even if one environmental pattern is slightly altered you will feel lost and troubled in mind. But look at the illusion you experienced. You as Lavana lost all your environmental patterns in an instant and lost your sense of personal identity completely. You became a different person and lived as a Chaandaala. You never ever thought of your other lost identity because in the mountain village, your obese wife and children became your identity. When you woke up again as a king you were not happy to be king Lavana; you were again confused. As long as you identify yourself as a 'pattern' bound by 'other patterns', you will be fooled by the events of the world. Therefore I say- once and for all, detach yourself from the surrounding patterns of body, family, house, country, etc., and realize your true nature as Brahman. Permanently abandon the idea that you are capable of possessing an individual will of your own. Relinquish the personal self totally. Then delusory power will never make a fool out of you. The Supreme Brahman alone exists as the individual self and suffers, like you the king Lavana suffered as a Chaandaala. Like the Chaandaala who forgot his true identity of King Lavana, the individual self has forgotten its true identity of Brahman. This worldly existence is the village of Chaandaalas. Every unenlightened creature is a fat, rotten-meat-eating Chaandaala here who has forgotten his royal status. Lavana! Even your identity as Lavana is false. This



very royal life you are living also is an illusion. Here the sorcerer is not Indra's messenger but the delusory power of avidya maya. The horse that took you far away is nothing but the vishayavasanas which blindly takes us away from the Brahman, the sole Truth, and throws us into illusory life experiences. One who understands the illusory power of the mind will never again be content with sense-pleasures; he will long for the Supreme Bliss of the Self. Come on, wake up, Lavana!" King Lavana saluted the Sage with reverence and returned to his palace. He pondered well over the facts mentioned by his Guru and soon realized the Supreme state of Brahman through the method of Atma-vichara.

At Sri Ramanasramam, the incomparable Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi crashed into the sofa, sweating. The Hall was spellbound. The sage had, true to his habit, play-acted the performances of every one of the story's characters. For some moments the Hall remained in stunned silence. Having popped in for some purpose and seeing B. narrate a story, even the sarvadhikari had remained glued to the floor. Then a volley of questions exploded like gun-fire. It was I who took the lead.

G.: I am of the opinion that the true identity of the socerer is that it was Vasishtha himself, who gave Lavana that experience to enlighten him... What does B. say to this?

B.: [laughing] I am also of the same opinion...

G.: I would like B. to give me the same experience. I shall not be frightened. I am prepared to do anything to obtain Brahmajnana.

B.: Desire for Reality, not illusion.

S>M>

Q.: If I want to acquire the power to cast spells like this, what should I do?

B.: Vasishtha created an entirely new world for Lavana to live in as a Chandala. This is an advanced siddhi or technique of thaumaturgy that practitioners of the occult crave, but generally fail, to get. It is weilded by God or the Sahaja-jnani alone, and that too, only to make an advanced aspirant reach this state.

S>M>

G.: That is why I am begging B. to give me the experience.

B.: People foolishly want all sorts of experiences without pausing to consider whether they can withstand it or whether they are ready for it. A normal person given such an experience would simply die, without reaping the corresponding spiritual benefit. Lavana was no ordinary man. He was like a cotton fruit about to burst, such was his ripeness for Jnana.

S>M>

Q.: If I become a Sahaja-jnani, will I acquire the powers to cast such spells? It seems to be a talent worth dying for- we will be able to exert control on

anyone we like...

B.: One who wants this or that cannot reach the state of egolessness that is Jnana.

S>M>

Chadwick: Why does the story show dark-skinned people, and those belonging to the Chandala caste in particular, in poor light? Is it not racial prejudice on the part of the author?

B.: Ask Valmiki.

C.: If I knew his address, I would write to him. I cannot contact one whose whereabouts are unknown. Therefore I am asking Bhagawan. After all, what is the difference between valmiki and Bhagawan? Bhagawan's body was preyed upon by maggots at the bottom of a cellar in the Trinomalee Temple; Valmiki's body became a prey to ants which built a hill of mud over him; both managed to escape the ordeal alive, for which the world of enlightenment-seekers must thank its lucky stars... Both have realised the same Unity. Will B. therefore kindly consent to reply to my question?

B.: Do not try to judge everything in the light of the tiny quantity of information that you find lodged in your brain. This is the problem. We ourselves are far from Perfection, but we want to pass judgements over right and wrong.

S>M>

Q.: But the narrative depicts the Chandala caste as people who eat rotting flesh, excreta, urine, etc.. Is that justifiable? Are they also not citizens of tomorrow's Free India? Should they not be regarded equally, on a par with Brahmins? Is this the purpose why you are running an Ashram? In the name of spreading spirituality, you are promoting hatred between various communities, and teaching people to look with contempt upon those down-trodden in the name of caste! It is an entirely unacceptable acrimony, sir! I excoriate it in the most polemical manner, this attempt of yours to deprecate, execrate and revile Indian communities that find place in the lower-rung of the caste system! It is a cognisable offence under Sec. 505 of the Penal Code! I state without the least hesitation that you deserve to find a place in prison! {Some came into Sri Bhagawan's presence only for the chance to participate in a debate or heated argument, or to put forth their views upon various matters, with no genuine interest in Self-Realisation. Such activities apparently gave them immense enjoyment. B. never orders anyone out of the Hall, irrespective of exhibition of such behaviour, even routinely, on their part. In the present case, this man seemed to speak with a kind of barely controlled truculence; it seems he had been quite piqued by the story, which he seemed to view as B.'s mockery of the lower castes in Hindu Society. I myself am inclined to believe that B. was innocent of such pernicious motives. The man

kept working himself up with greater and greater fury as he progressed in his talk. He spoke excellent English. Later I found out he was a member of the Justice Party.}

Everyone in the Hall was shocked.

B.'s own face was impassive and motionless.

Chadwick: [shouting and waving fists] How dare you come here and talk like that, you- you revolting scum!

Now the man turned on Chadwick and roared [in choice 'Received Standard' way of speaking, nothing less!]: Just because you have subjugated this country with your clever divide-and-rule policies does not mean you can make me cow before you, you inglorious lily-livered low-life! Look at you! Are you not ashamed to call yourself an Englishman, bowing before this nude, uncivilized monkey on the sofa?

That really sent Chadwick up through the roof [or rather, the rafters], and he advanced screaming towards the other.

It is my guess that on that day there would have been atleast one murder in the ashram, had B. not intervened.

"நிறுத்து."

It was spoken softly, quietly, in stark contrast to the raised voices shaking the Hall. Yet when he said it, I involuntarily shuddered. The face was as calm and inscrutable as ever. There was no anger in the word, but a sort of... finality or incontrovertibility. Both the Englishman and the Justician stopped dead.

B.: I did not narrate the story with any of the motives recently mentioned. [It]...forms part of the yoga vasishta. I thought it might be shared with those in the Hall, since it has an advaitic message. I did not invent the contents of the story. It is there in the text and I have narrated it as it is. The motive was not to insult anyone. However, in your view, evidently, I have erred. You may punish me in whatever way you deem fit. Hang me. If you so desire, you can hang me from the ceiling, so that my neck breaks or I suffocate to death. I will not think, 'Alas! They are doing this to me.'. However, please don't hurt anyone else in this Hall.

There was a pin-drop, shell-shocked silence in the Hall. A strand of hair falling on the floor would be audible. A middle-aged man sitting at the back burst into tears. A woman began wailing and beating her breasts with her hands, crying, as if she had been immolated, "Aiyyo! Aiyaiyyo! Aiyaiyaiyaiooooo...." The usually bellicose sarvadhikari seemed to have gone into nirvikalpa samadhi. Yet B.'s words had been soft and tender.

Eventually someone got up from the back and said, "Catch hold of the fellow. I am going to call the police."

B. gestured for him to sit down and the man sank down at once.

The Justician glared at B. and then bluffed- "I do not want to spend any more time in such a worthless place." He exited. Some made to go after him but B. stopped them by waving them back inside.

For the next 20 minutes the only sounds in the Hall were whimpers and moans from those who were crying. B. took no notice.

Then Chadwick cut across the ice-like silence-

"Did I do anything wrong, Bhagawan? It was when he called B. names-"

B.: [interrupting, which one normally never saw him do] Don't use me to justify anything. Learn to control your temper.

C.: I am sorry. So sorry. I will behave better in the future. I won't ever let B. down again!

B.: [in English] [smiling] Good boy!

S>M>

Q.: It was a fascinating story, but will Sri B. please tell me what is the moral of the story?

B.: [laughing] Stories are all very well, but hereafter I had better be careful before opening my mouth to tell a story! As for the moral, the apparent manifested cosmos is the merest of illusions. The only way to get rid of this illusory ignorance of separateness from the REAL is to discover that it never existed, that it must needs be utterly incapable of existence altogether; one who looks at the Sun never is able to find darkness- likewise, to escape from this non-existent illusion or delusion, simply turn the mind Selfward and keep it fixed at its source, the ever-radiant Heart, the Self-resplendant Truth of Reality that shines always as the unparelled beauty of the perpetual thought-free state. Thus Bhakti and surrender and vichara meet at the same Summit [Apex]- the complete relinquishment of the assertion-manufacturing or thought-making faculty of Egotism.

Q.: Theoretically I understand Advaita, and B.'s philosophy in particular, quite well. Yet it does not translate into Realisation for me. Where am I going wrong?

B.: When boiled and cooked in the flame of Ecstatic Divine Love for God or Guru, the Advaita Vedanta teaching matures or blooms into Realisation.

Q.: Is Bhakti indispensable? Will vichara not suffice?

B.: Yes, but it must be actually practised, not merely read about or theorised.

S>M>

At night that day, a policeman arrived. He had heard about some commotion that had taken place in the ashram that day. The sarvadhikari was eager to get a statement out of B. so that the insolent youth could be prosecuted. B. did not even look at the policeman.

9 July 1936

A learned-looking man from Combaconum with a comical-looking tuft that seemed as big as his head, arrived at the ashram today morning on a 3-day visit. Standing reverentially before B. with folded palms touching his chin and upper torso bent over towards the Master, in a gesture of humility and submissiveness, he spoke thus-

Q.: Will B. be gracious enough to permit that I ask a question?

He was asked what he wanted to know.

Q.: I have heard that B. says that asking oneself the question Who am I? is a direct and easy method of Realisation.

B.: [encouragingly] Yes?

Q.: I ask myself the question in all seriousness, yet I am not rewarded with the fruit of success. I tell myself in reply to the question, I am not the body because the body is present only in 1 out of the 3 avasthas. I am not the mind or the intellect because these are not present when I am asleep, whereas my real nature, according to the Advaitic literature, is that I am enduring and always present, and thus I cannot be this ephemeral mind which is not to be seen in the deep slumber state. I am not the 5 koshas because these seem to be upadhis of the mind and seem to not be able to exist when mind itself is absconding. So what is left over at the conclusion of this analysis is only the same question again- If I am none of these, then who am I? I am requesting B.'s guidance in solving this apparently vexatious problem.

B. smiled and said something to the attendant standing nearby, who then thoughtfully scanned the bookshelf in the Hall, met B.'s gaze, and hurried out of the Hall. Presently he returned and held out a copy of the pamphlet Naan Yaar to B.

B.: என்னிடம் ஏன் இதை கொடுக்கிறாய்? என் கதை தான் என்றைக்கோ முடிந்து போன கதை ஆயிற்றே! இங்கு பார், ஒருவர் ஆன்மஞானம் எப்பொழுது கிட்டப்போகிறது, ராமணரைப் போல் நாமும் எப்பொழுது ஞானியர் ஆகப் போகிறோம் என்று நினைத்து ஏக்கத்தில் தத்தளித்துக் கொண்டு இருக்கிறார். அவரிடம் கொடு...

The attendant, looking abashed, meekly gave the pamphlet to the tufted gentleman, who looked slightly unnerved now at B.'s uncanny telepathic ability. He poured over it for a full 1½ hour before asking-

Q.: Sri B. has said to Sri Pillaivaal, Arivae Naan. That is the answer of a Jnanai. How can it be applicable to an Ajnani? When confronted with the question Who are you? the Jnani answers "I am awareness alone." because Thannunarvu or Arivu is his Nijaswaroopam- whereas one who is not, in fact,

a realised person would be lying were he to issue such a reply. So, if one were to ask, who is a Jnani, the answer may be given, 'He is one with Awareness, or Awareness Itself.', whereas in the case of an Ajnani like me who is in no way legitimately entitled to make the assertion 'I am Awareness.', how can the answer Arivae Naan or other similar statements such as Aham Brahmasmi or Brahmaivaham [for Brahman is said to be nothing but Pure Awareness] serve to function as a valid response to the question 'Who am I?'. Will B. kindly shed light upon this point for us?

B.: Our mistake is that we intellectualise the vichara method. We think that the Self can be discovered by the intellect. The intellect arises from the Self and subsides into it. The intellect is not competent to discover the Self. When the intellect subsides, the Self from which it emerged, the Self which it eclipsed, shines, and one finds that no such thing as the not-Self ever existed and that no such thing as the not-Self could ever be capable of existence. The one who makes this finding does not survive to think 'I have found this.' or 'This discovery of the Self has been made by me.'. Has he disappeared? No- he never appeared, he never existed. The ego is a fictitious foe- look for him and only Reality remains. Ignorance is synonymous with the principle of Intellection or Egotism, which makes measurement of variety possible, and as a result the fiction of name and form is superimposed or foisted upon the Self, which is only pure Bliss and not aware of any misery or want. Mind is only the false notion of its own separate existence; the ego 'I' is only an erroneous belief. However, no matter how dense the ignorance, it can never completely hide Reality, as even an ignorant man says 'I'. Thus, the Self is within the direct reach of everyone- but it requires the total relinquishment of all beliefs, ideas, prejudices, value-judgements, thoughts, opinions, and tendencies toward fulfillment of craving for sensory perceptions, inherited from countless numbers of previous lives or births- everything you collectively refer to as your 'personality' must vanish. Then Reality will be revealed. The trouble is that we try to reach something. If, abandoning that effort also, you are able to achieve perfect repose in the Heart, then everything is achieved. Being remains as itself without being disturbed by any vrittis. The Na Ithee method will sift away the not-Self, but who or what is to account for the one who believes himself to be the Sadhaka attempting to discover Reality or the true Self? For that 'Who am I?' may be considered as being necessary. Who am I? is not theorising, 'I wonder who I might be...'. Completely arresting the movement of thought-waves, which veil the direct experience of Reality shining in the Heart quietly as I-I, and silently merging the mind in the Self or Heart, is the import of the INVESTIGATION 'Who am I?'. Its purpose is not to enable one Self to discover another, for there is only one Self. Its purpose is not to enable the

Self to discover itself- nothing could be more absurd. Its purpose is to totally bespoil and weed out the poisonous, malevolent tree of ignorance leaf, branch, trunk, shoot and root, so that it perishes once and for all in the blissful light of True Knowledge, so that it is never able to cause birth again. As long as there is a single vritti left in the mind, birth is inevitable. Know that Birth verily is the cause for sorrow. Birth is not commencement of existence, as the ignorant assume it to be. It is the assumption of limitations. You, who are originally bliss itself, now find that you have duties, commitments, responsibilities, roles, worries, anxieties and what not! When people come here asking for a boon that children be born to them, I smile and keep quiet. What else can I do? The 'man on the clapham omnibus' cannot appreciate this sort of teaching. He takes his human form for granted and on the basis of that assumption frames his aspirations, ambitions and desires. If asked 'Who is the one who professes that he was born?' he is unable to make head or tail out of the question, and becomes even more dejected, thinking, "This Ramana Swami seems to be cursing me in choice vocabulary; looks as though it might be an unlucky day for me today. Yet he pours out in copious quantities his benignness on these ridiculous foreigners. They want to see God; he obliges them. I want my wife to conceive a child; he utters something I cannot make out, possibly a curse... Which request is more reasonable? Who has seen God, etc.? Why bother about God now? Better think about Him after retirement, since there will not be anything productive to do at that phase of life... Anyway, better leave the place before this Swami utters another curse..." You may hear it unequivocally from me that to those who are in genuine need of Mukthi, Mukthi is never far away. The fruit of yearningly wanting Mukthi, of intensely craving or longing for it, is that the need for Mukthi somehow mysteriously arises, and once the need arises Self-Realisation is totally inevitable. It must be admitted that in this world where people fight like madmen over land, gold, women, money and the like, extremely passionate longing for Mukthi, which quality in a person alone could possibly lead him to Deliverance, is rare, and arises only to him who has performed countless sacrifices, penances, austerities and good deeds in the past, during his previous lives... The common man cannot even admit that the bodily framework implies bondage, that one's true nature is not a gross physical form that is seen by a seer who does not know himself, but formless Chittam or Arivu. Arivu is not the exclusive fiefdom of the Jnani. It is common to all. However, there is this difference- in the case of the Jnani, there is no Chidbasa or reflected consciousness to mirror the original infathomable consciousness of the Self, because not even a single vasana remains by aid of which any reflection could be rendered possible; his belief in, and

consequently his ideas concerning, the concept of him being an individual person occupying a body limited by space and time have perished forever; in him there is no Ahamvritti, and thus no other vritti is possible; he is one and the same as the imperishable Impersonal Absolute, the parabrahman- whereas in the case of the Ajnani, he has deluded himself into believing that he is a creature of the gross flesh, that he is made up of physical matter; he foolishly accepts the futile idea that his sensory organs give him information concerning 'objects' that lie 'outside his self'; he lives in a world of interacting subject and objects; his consciousness is the true Self plus light from the Self which is reflected off the vasanas, samskaras, or vrittis. Realisation lays bare the Truth not only that there was never any illusion, but also that illusion is impossible, that no such thing could ever be- the Sun cannot know darkness. The practical measure to carry out Atmavichara does not lie in thinking 'If I am neither body nor mind nor any of the kosas, then what might I be, I wonder?' nor in thinking any other thought, but in absolutely abdicating the worthless realm of thought and thereafter pursuing the following steps:-

1. Find the source whence thought emerges.
2. Stay there once and for all- permanently.

Really the 2 steps enunciated above will suffice to bring about Jnani-siddhi- however, note that it has to be relentless. It is not something that is done a few minutes or hours per day. All of your chitta shakthi or kundalini shakthi [latent power of mental concentration or focus] should be channelised in its entirety towards making the mind stay at its source, ensuring that it does not jump out to chase after objects of sensory gratification or sense pleasure, and this is to be done all the time, and with the sum-totality of the mind, during the states of both Jagrat and Swapna. Further, the attitude fuelling the effort must not be, 'I must acquire Self-Realisation.' or 'I must merge in Brahman.' or 'I must escape from this dream and discover my true Self.' or any other attitude. When any inclination of the will or volition or attitude or motive or intention or desire drives the Sadhana, it is doomed to failure, because will is part of the mind, and the mind cannot get rid of the mind or even find the mind. Taking the mind's help to kill the mind is like soliciting the assistance of a policeman to catch a thief, who is in fact disguised under the camouflage of that very policeman. Only a power greater than the mind can absorb the mind into Itself and kill it. To invoke this power, which is none other than God, steady, continuous, unceasing and completely volitionless investigation is necessary. If that is done, some higher power takes over the worldly functions of the body and runs through them with complete effortlessness, and your interference in these worldly affairs which it is the prarabdha of the body to attend to is no longer necessary, warranted or even possible.



Everyone in the Hall had been keenly listening. The tufted gentleman was seated near the sofa, listening intently to every word, his head, and therefore the tuft, slightly slanted to one side, his mouth agape, perhaps in awe at the fountain of wisdom that had rained down upon him. He said, after a few moments of silence-

Q.: It seems I am doomed. I fail to see how an act can be performed without my wanting- or atleast vaguely intending- to do it.

B.: Wanting to do an act without or in the absence of there being the want to do it, is also a want. Our goal is not to take one want away and institute another in its place. We have no goals, because goal implies want underlying it, and since want remains the want also remains. Ours is the natural state denuded of goals and wants.

Q.: How to reach this state?

B. That is just what I have been trying to say. The state of absence of volition cannot be reached with the aid of yet another peice of volition. 'I must have NIL volition.' is also volition- do you see it or not? It is like saying, 'Don't think of monkey while taking the medicine.'- it is impossible, a vexatious, paradoxical idea.

Q.: Still it is not clear. What should I do? The 2 steps you specified- how to deploy them in the absence of volition to do so?

B.: By giving up the idea that the Sadhaka striving towards Self-Realisation exists! Again, do not make the mistake of assuming 'I must cultivate the idea or notion or opinion or belief that the Sadhaka is non-existent.' When you are asked to abandon all your ideas- that is precisely what you should do. People are so obsessed with and enamoured by mental activity that they imagine that by some special kind of mental activity, such as meditation, for instance, the Self can be duped into revealing Itself. It is not so. Only complete cessation of mental activity can reveal the Self. Giving up the personal Self or the idea of the Sadhaka's existence, should, again, be volitionless and unconditional; it should not be driven by any motive. Do not ask for a formula for this also! You abandon the personal self not because you expect or anticipate or want Self-Realisation in return [in which case you never really abandon it at all- you only absurdly think that you do], but because in that very act of such abandonment, you discover for yourself, practically, as a DIRECT INSIGHT, that no such thing as the personal self ever existed and that no such thing could ever exist. That the actual non-existence of the personal self or ego-self act as the one and only reason why that personal self or ego-self is abandoned [owing to its non-existence] is a Sine Qua Non for Self-Realisation. This discovery that the personal self does not exist is not mental or intellectual. One does not tell oneself 'The ego-self does not exist.'; one

looks for the ego-self, and empirically discovers that, together with or including the discoverer, it does not exist. This is not a matter for intellectualisation, but one for direct experience.

Q.: Can all have this wonderful experience?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Can I also have it? Is it available to foolish persons like me?

B.: Simply give up the idea that you are so-and-so, that you have these-and-these attributes; rather, remain quite effortlessly free from these ideas and all ideas, and there you are- only pure consciousness of being remains over.

Q.: Remaining free from ideas, should I trace the source of thought and try to remain there steadfastly, or is even this effort counter-productive? I am referring to the 2 step formula B. has graciously given me to reach the Stitha-prajna state. The effort made in remaining at the source of thought- does it betray the presence of a corresponding volition or idea- a subtle idea but a ruinous one nonetheless?

B.: There is no contradiction. Shaking off the shackles of thought once and for all, one abides naturally in the thought free state which involves not the least effort, for ideas or vrittis which constitute the reason for thoughts to arise, have already been relinquished. This thought free state is the state of pure being-consciousness-existence-sentience that hitherto served as the substratum for thoughts to arise from and thrive\subsist upon. It is thus the source of thought. The diversification tendency of spilling over into the realm of thought now extinct, consciousness now merely remains pure- that is, as itself and by itself. This tendency is the veil of avidya maya thrown over Reality. Once this veil is sundered, one stays not merely at the source of thought but as it, for that is the only way to reach there and stay there- BEING 'THERE'. The instruction to stay at the root of thought simply means, therefore, to not hinder consciousness staying as, remaining as, or BEING purely or merely or exclusively itself.

Q.: So, this state of consciousness steadily remaining merely as Itself, undisturbed by thought, is called the Sahaja-stithi?

B.: No. It is called Aham Sphurana.

Q.: Then what is the Sahaja-stithi?

B.: No description is possible. The reflected being-consciousness which is localised in a physical body is destroyed; after this is destroyed, that alone remains which has always been. It is the Absolute Reality. It transcends bifurcations such as being and non-being, knowledge-ignorance, light-darkness, etc., etc.,. It is THAT-WHICH-IS, that is all that can be said of it. That is what YHWH stands for in the Bible. Although He seems therein to be a

personal god, guiding the destiny of the children of Israel, the Talmudic Prophets of Old knew the transcendental aspect, as did the Christ. God told Moses, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Yahweh, I was not known to them." On the other hand, the term Yehwah occurs many times in Genesis. Is there a contradiction? No. Prophets before the time of Moses had known the personal God Yehwah, but Moses was the first to whom the transcendental, formless aspect was revealed. The earlier Prophets knew the name but not its significance. They loved God and cherished his name, but did not understand the meaning or import of the name. The name means 'I am that I am'. God revealed the meaning of the name to Moses, whereas the earlier prophets had only been given the name. The name means that one who is simply subjectively aware, without knowing any object, is transformed into God. This is not an intellectual conviction. It is the blossoming of the Heart-lotus [Hridayapundarikham] of love from within.

10 July 1936

A young man from the Arya Samaj was seated in the Hall. He remarked-  
Q.: It seems Sri B. was mentioning the Christ yesterday on an approving note. In my opinion, Christ was a weakling who allowed himself to be nailed to the cross and shamefully crucified, like a common criminal. A man of valour would have fought back against the Roman legions rather than be subject to such horrendous public humiliation. The Christians love to worship such a spineless coward for their God. I find it funny.

This comment was, expectedly, not well received by the Hall. Many people started talking at once. After the buzz subsided, Chadwick spoke quietly and with some dignity:

That the Messiah would have to die in such a way was laid down in the Talmud. To fulfill prophecy, Jesus consented to be killed in such a manner, for only if He died in the precise, prescribed, painful manner mentioned in the Old Testament would man's Salvation become possible, according to God's will.

B.: [reading] Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

[turns pages and reads further] Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Chadwick seemed delighted, but the skeptic was far from convinced-

Q.: Why make man a Sinner and then kill God's son to liberate him? What is the scheme of rationality underlying the doctrine of Original Sin? Such a revolting idea, where Man is born a sinner instead of being born free, upsets one's mind even to simply recollect. It is abhorrent. Does B. not agree with me or not? Such disturbing ideas are, thank God, not to be found in our Vedas... What does B. say?

B.: [after a few minutes of silence] That the embodied jiva has left his high state of Self and assumed mortal form implies some form of Spiritual Degeneration has taken place- although only on the level of perceived, and not Absolute, Reality, for the latter is not aware of any bondage, limitation or even liberation. The forbidden fruit tasted by the Jivatman is its assumption of limitation in the form of the idea 'I am the Body'. The first idea being erroneous and ruinous, so are the ones that derive from it. The blood that spilled from the Cross represents seeds of Jnana that point out to man the way to regain the original state-crucifixion of the false idea, 'I am the body'. Thus, consuming or ingesting the blood of the Christ is the Jnana-upadesam which bestows immortality upon the sadhaka, for it plants him firmly on the path leading toward the state of Supreme Deathlessness or Eternal Life, which is nothing but the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnanai, where one is awake to Reality and asleep to everything else.

There was a palpable fulmination of peace in the Hall as the Master concluded these words. His rock-like countenance and still presence always are soothing, and invariably draw even the habitually unsteady mind to the path expounded by him, but sometimes he becomes emotional, and it is then that you see, or catch a glimpse, of just how super-humanly human this spiritual super-human can be...

Meanwhile Tufty had returned to the Hall.

Q.: B. mentioned something known as the 'Aham-sphurana' yesterday. Having reached this Aham-sphurana, how does one proceed from there to Self-Realisation of the final Sahaja-stithi?

B.: Having reached Aham-sphurana, no further effort is possible. For one who has reached the Sphurana, this question is impossible- as is any other question. No doubts arise because the doubter has long ago given himself up to the infinite beingness that shines in His own Heart as the light of the true 'I'. One who has reached Sphurana and remains perpetually merged in it instead of vacillating would never think, 'I have reached the Aham-sphurana. Now I wonder when Realisation of the Absolute Self is going to dawn on me?'; nor would he think any other thought. The thinker gone, who is left to manufacture thoughts? The one who steadfastly remains in the Sphurana state does not crave Realisation- nor anything else, for he no more has any needs. Since a

fall from it is always theoretically possible, the *sphurana* is still classified as *Sadhana*- however, it is the loftiest stage of *Sadhana*, for it is sustained without the least trace of effort or *sankalpa* to remain in it. Continuous *sphurana* is possible only after the Ego-sense has been finally given up. Before it manifests continuously it is possible for the *Sadhaka* to experience flashes of it. Instead of permitting it to distract him, and instead of making deliberate effort to perpetuate it or voluntarily bring it about again, he should calmly enquire, 'Who has experienced this?' until the *sphurana* becomes continuous. Once the *sphurana* becomes the permanent state, it is also, in due course, extinguished, like the combustion of a block of camphor is complete when neither camphor nor flame is seen anymore, and only Reality remains- that is the *Sahaja-stithi* of the *Jnana-siddha* about which you are asking.

Q.: What are the physical symptoms of the *Sphurana*? Does it involve loss of functioning of the Sensory organs? Does it cause loss of body consciousness?

B.: There may be an involuntary spate of *kevala kumbhaka*; there may also be a throbbing or pulsating sensation on- but why are you asking this question? Dive within and SEE for yourself. The important thing is that in the state of *sphurana* there is no such thing as 'making a decision'. Everything is decided by the Higher Power... and your mind, having lost the ability to measure variety or make value-judgements, stands reduced to mere consciousness of being... Sensory organs function normally, and the alienation of body-consciousness is yet to be complete, but the events of the outer world are merely witnessed detachedly without any aversion or fascination, as one watching a cinema-picture without the slightest interest... Actions are not pre-meditated but spontaneous... The body becomes a tool in the hands of the Almighty, ecstasy floods the soul, and blinded by the spell of divine intoxication, one weeps and laughs, sings and shouts, without apparent purpose; these are only visible, external symptoms of the Deep pulling within, and may not manifest in all... I was like that in Madurai, shedding tears of longing at the Meenakshi Temple, without having the slightest clue why... even the thought, 'Why are we crying?' did not occur... Not all may obtain the experience of weeping for God, not knowing whether they are weeping in the anguish of yearning or in the ecstasy of fulfillment, and not caring... The important thing is whether inwardly the *dehatma buddhi* or *kartritva buddhi* has been sundered or not... If the I am the body idea is completely abandoned, not a trace of *Sankalpa* or volition remains... I did not decide, 'Let us go to Tiruvannamalai...' I watched this [the figure on the sofa gently touched its right shoulder with one delicate finger] come here, that is all....

Tufty seemed over-awed at his good fortune today, for he had apparently wrung autobiographical confessions out of the usually reserved Sage.

Now someone else ventured to ask-

Q.: Bhagawan said that he attained Sakshatkaram on the day of the death experience itself. Now He is saying that what He experienced in Madurai was something ulterior to the Sahaja-stithi...

[He left his words trailing in the air.]

B.: Any sort of participation from me in Sadhana was only on the occasion of that intense fear of death, when I wondered what I must do about it... After that the Divine took over me in Its hand and I had no role to play in what unfolded... Looking incredulously at yonder Hill- he jerked his right hand [with a nonchalance that yet subtly betrayed devotion inexpressibly profound] toward one of the windows in the Hall that displayed a view of the sacred Arunachala Mountain- with dumbfounded face pressing into the iron craticula-work of the train I was in, my mind- or what infinitesimal remnant of it was there- involuntarily asked the question "Who is the seer of This, The Emperor Supreme of the Gods?".

Q.: What happened next?

B.: Has anyone survived to tell the tale?

The disputant was about to ask something further, but the banging of the railway-track was heard, and Sri Bhagawan, with his usual, sweetly ridiculous, "Oh! Already! Fancy!" [மணி ஆகிவிட்டதா?! அதற்குள்ளேயேவா?! பாரேன்!] remark, rose from the sofa and exited the Hall.

In the evening the Arya-samajist began in his insouciant tenor-

Q.: What will happen to Jnanis, yourself included, at the time of cosmic dissolution? Will you be killed by it or will you remain unaffected- or would you be unconscious of its passage? If the latter, how can anything remain as a witness to the cosmic dissolution, in which everything is said to be destroyed? Would it not be in violation of the Karmic order ordained by the Almighty?

I could see from the look on the youth's face that he was glowing with pride; in his own opinion, he had trapped B. into answering some impossible question, to which there could be no solution; if B. remained silent, as he sometimes did when questions were put to him, the boy could go out and boast triumphantly to his friends, "Such is the might of my massive intellect! Even the great Bhagawan Ramana stood in stupified silence before my intelligent question! I had the poor old man up against the wall, you know..."; or so he must have thought, it seemed evident to me from the risiblish grin on his face upon posing the question. B. did remain silent for a few minutes, but just when the youth's smile was beginning to grow wider, he spoke thus-

B.: Jnanis know how to take care of themselves. You need not worry about them. If you are able to take care of yourself, it will indeed be a magnificent achievement. First Realise yourself. Why worry about Jnanis, Pralayas, etc.? It is indeed a great thing if we can take care of ourselves.

The boy remained silent for sometime; but it seemed he could not contain himself, for soon-

Q.:Sri Ramakrishna appointed Vivekananda to spread his message throughout the world. Likewise, I can be your ambassador. Together, we can propagate and popularise the Advaita philosophy throughout the 4 corners of the world. You are confined to one place- you do not wish to go anywhere. Whereas I- I am sympathetic to the suffering of humanity and wish to alleviate it. I cannot confine myself to a couch and give people advice to ignore man's problems, his sufferings. I am a kind, noble-hearted soul. The world is yet to see how it is going to profit by my altruistic spirit; soon they will know. I am prepared to give my life for mankind's upliftment. I do not mind burning myself up like a candle for the ultimate cause- the spiritual renaissance of man, which I expect will automatically solve all his other problems. I can work alone. But I wish to give you a chance- to be part of my journey to Immortal Glory. As your vassal, I will light the flame of pure love for God in every cynical heart, and fan it stronger where presently it burns dimly.... Do not doubt my competency. I am capable. I will do it. Do you know who I am? I am a B.A., graduate from the Presidency College, Madras... I won a gold medal in my final year for being an all-rounder. There, what do you say to that? In my estimate, I am well educated. As you are able to evidently see now, I speak English fluently. What more can be needed? Also, I do not demand remuneration for my services. But neither will I decline anything offered in good-faith, love and affection. What do you say? Will you accept me as your disciple?

Some violent upheaval was taking place in Chadwick's frame- he was trying very hard not to laugh, and barely succeeding. The youth turned and looked with severe annoyance upon the chortling giant.

"I had no idea mentally ill people were coming to see you..." he said to Bhagawan.

Chadwick burst out laughing, wiping tears away from his eyes, and saying in between gasps, "You know, until today, I had no idea either..."

It was a good thing that the Hall's attendants were not thoroughly conversant in English. Even to accidentally address- as a result of habit of custom prevalent in the culture, governing the act of conversing with the elderly- the Sage in the second person, even if done in the honorific manner of word-usage, invited many problems, usually requiring the offender to apologize over the subsequent few hours or the next day to none other than the Sage

himself, which he would generally gladly do so that he could obtain exoneration in relation to the alleged offence, that of 'personalising' the Impersonal Absolute, Bhagawan Ramana. Here this villainous boy, around my age, was, by his demeanour atleast, proclaiming himself to be B.'s equal. Those in the Hall who understood him were aghast. The boy's whole bearing gave the impression that he was under the notion that he had just done B. a big favour by coming here and speaking these words.

B. however was non-plussed and unperturbed as usual. He was even indulgently smiling at the boy: not a trace of anger or resentment at the boy's arrogance and impudence. Presently he spoke to the boy-

B.: I am too puerile a Guru for a personage of your grand strature. Why don't you look elsewhere?

The youth said, "Yes. You are right. I am wasting my time here foolishly."

The next second he got up and walked out of the Hall.

After he had left, B. and Chadwick laughed and laughed.

No one else in the Hall seemed to feel like laughing. Personally I myself do not see why there should be anything so funny about it. He was a rascal of a fellow. He should be condemned to the Catherine wheel for insulting B., I thought. The moment this thought crossed my head, B. flashed his eyes at me meaningfully. It was only for a fraction of a second, but I got the message. Hot coal burnt the man who was holding it more than the one whom it was aimed at. The aim may even miss. But certainly damage would be done to us. From this day onwards I resolved that the policy of returning evil for evil is certainly not advisable in an aspirant for Brahmajnana, and thus it had better be abandoned.

P>S>

I recall a speech I read recently. It had been made by a member of the Canadian parliament decades ago:

If in this present age we were to go back to the old time of 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' there would be very few hon. gentlemen in this House who would not, atleast metaphorically speaking, be blind and toothless.

The silent advice I received from B. on this occasion has saved my life many times. I would keep quiet and not retaliate. The problem would die down quietly. B. uses all sorts of occasions to our advantage, imparting silent lessons through chance circumstances. Therein lay his uniqueness- his greatness lay not in the domain of lecture-giving [he calls it 'haranguing!'], but in that of silent transmission of instruction and Grace.

11 July 1936



Tufty sadly announced today morning that he would have to leave the ashram that day. He did not know when or if he could return. He sought B.'s Grace to keep him active in Sadhana. He earnestly hoped this would be his last birth. He cringed and pleaded that he receive this boon from B., that at the moment of death he should remember B.'s face and nothing else.

B.: சரி, சரி, சரி... but what crime have other parts of my body committed? Saying so, B. laughed.

Q.: Master, I have a few more doubts: Can I please know whether the world is real or not?

B.: [laughing] So you have also started! அதுதானே என்ன இன்னும் காணவில்லையே என்று பார்த்தேன் !!!

Q.: It cannot be denied that different Mahanubhavs seem to harbour different opinions on the question. Sri Ramakrishna said, God alone is Real and all else is an illusion. Poojayaprabhu Sri Adisankarabagavatpadacharyal said, The objective world is an illusion. Others including Gaudapada say that according to the Ajata doctrine supported by them, the question of the Reality or otherwise of the Universe does not arise at all, because no such thing as the Universe was ever created. According to the Yugapat-shrishti vadham, it seems all perceptions are mental creations as in dreams. According to B. which view ought to be considered correct?

B.: Is it the world that seeks to know whether it is real or not? Did the world ask you, can you please tell me whether I am real or not? No. The doubt has arisen in your mind only. If you seek and discover the Nijaswaroopam of your own Reality, the Reality [or otherwise] of the world will become clear to you. All theoretical discussions about the nature and origin of the Universe do not lead one closer to the Self. If the Self is realised, the question will not arise.

Q.: Suppose I find the 'Who am I?' method too steep, is there anything else I could follow?

B.: Watch the thought 'I' carefully, how it emerges, how it gives rise to other thoughts and how it resolves into its source. Rising from sleep, "I" is the first thought to rise to haunt one; before going to sleep it is the last thought which resolves itself into Beingness or the Life-current before the avidya of slumber sets in. Keep watching this thought "I". Do not try to suppress or control thought. Do not make the enquiry as to who it is who is the thinker of the thought. Simply keep on observing this primary mental modification that you call "I", its activities and its rising and setting. This observation, if sufficiently intense and continuous, should, over the course of time, wax or mature into an unwavering stream of subjective self-attention which is maintained at all times steadily, and in which observer, faculty of observation, and observed

have merged imperceptibly and seamlessly. In due course of time this Life-current will of its own accord lead you to Mukthi.

Q.: To those who find even this difficult?

B.: Then paripoorna sharanagathi or ananya sharanagathi is the only way.

Q.: What is it? How to accomplish it?

B.: If one genuinely feels from the bottom of one's heart, 'Not I, but Thou, Not my will, but Thine, I am totally helpless to do anything, let the Lord do as He likes with me.', some Higher Power, name it Athmic Shakti or anything you like, takes up the man in its embrace and delivers him upto the Goal. Your will becomes completely non-existent, the Lord's will taking its place. You cannot have likes, dislikes or preferences after Shampoorna Sharanagathi. It is for you to meekly accept the will of the Divine. Such a one would not have the idea that he is the doer of the actions performed by the body. Having surrendered one does not pray for this or that, but simply takes to be God's will whatever comes to transpire. To surrender is to merge in the source of the Ego. Thus, having given up the ego-self in this manner, no one remains to ask, 'When will Self-Realisation dawn upon me?', nor any other question. Absolute surrender is the Apex of devotion.

Q.: I find the surrender method the easiest of all. I want to adopt it. However, I am a Grihasta. I have family responsibilities to fulfill. I cannot be indifferent to the outcome of events.

B.: To truly surrender is to completely cease to care. You no longer have any cares, for all your cares are now his. This is the true import of surrender and not verbally saying or mentally thinking 'I surrender.' or 'I have surrendered my life to God.' Totally remove mental constructs such as 'I am a Grihasta.', etc.. Having surrendered to God, leave it to God to fulfill your needs and responsibilities in anyway He sees fit by using you as a tool. Once the false idea, 'I am the doer.' is removed, actions will go on of themselves. There is no bar on the Householder's life. When worldly anxieties threaten to inundate your mind, tell yourself, 'These are not my problems. They are God's. He will take care of them as He sees fit, by making me an instrument for the appropriate action when the appropriate time arrives. I need not worry myself about anything.' In due course such thoughts will also become unnecessary, and worldly cares are totally erased from the mind, though the body may be engaged night and day like a madman in worldly activity arising out of the inevitable prarabdha karma. When responsibility for actions is thrown on the Higher Power, He alone carries on all activity; thus the kartritva-buddhi of the ahamkara is destroyed and thoughts become irrelevant. Gradually the mind becomes asleep to the world and awake only to the Self within- that is the Sahajastithi of the Jnani.

Q.: Will I stand more success at Self-Realisation if I take Sannyasam at an early age and retire to a lonely spot in Benares, away from all human habitation? Ekanthavaasam is said to be helpful in practising Tapas, since the mind would then not be distracted by tantalising objects of sense-temptation- does B. agree with this view?

B.: Remaining free from thoughts is the only true Ekanthavaasam which confers the rare Nivritti state of mind, that is an essential requirement for reaching the state of Sahaja-stithi. Proceeding from home to forest, one finds an even more daunting set of problems to be faced at the latter place, and thus even less scope for peace of mind. Purposeful change of environment is wholly useless. Change instead the orientation of the mind. Make it turn inwards and face the Self. As for Sannyasam, it does not mean wearing orange robes and rudraksha beads and shaving the head and smearing Thiruneer on it. Simple renunciation of the Ego is Sannyasam, and remaining as one's true Self is the best Tapas.

Tufty now seemed happy and satisfied. He thanked the Maharshi, fell flat on the floor in prostration, touched the base of the Sofa and applied his fingers to his closed eyelids, scrapped some dust off the floor of the Hall and smeared it on his forehead, got up agitatedly, tuft dangling and all, bowed low before B., and after the Sage smiled brightly in his direction, extended his hands into the air towards B. as if to fish out some invisible psychic being out of thin air, applied them to the top of his tufted head, bowed again, and finally made his ceremonious exit, comically reversewards, his eyes glued intently on B. and his posterior facing the doors; that supra-normally sized mound of flesh then tipped the doors open, and the sombre, respectful eyes and stained teeth and jiggling tuft disappeared from sight, leaving behind just the faintest trace of Javvadhu. Bhagawan's prarabdha, however, it seemed, was that his throat should have no rest that day. A man, whom I noticed almost everyday at the Hall, perhaps an American, wearing North Indian clothes and a ridiculous cap, seated at the rear of the Hall, presently rose and came and occupied Tufty's hitherto-place on the floor, and started firing his questions one after the other-

Q.: Some succeed in realising the Real; others fail, though effort might be the same in both cases. Can we say 'Prarabdha' is the reason and dismiss the matter at that?

B.: The more one turns inward, the more he succeeds in transcending the Three-fold karma, because only his body is bound by it, and he identifies himself less and less with the body as his self-absorption in Being-Consciousness becomes more and more continuous and intense. Finally any sort of bodily or other identification becomes impossible, and he quietly reposes in the Heart always, whether his body is idle or active.

Q.: So the kind answer to my question is-?

B.: No, prarabdha cannot be said to be the reason.

Q.: Then what is the reason?

B.: When a man is told he is neither the body nor the mind, he is initially puzzled, because all along his life his experience of self has been confined to these two only. When he hears the words of the Jnana-guru for the first time, he learns to his shock that these two are suddenly to be regarded as unreal, insignificant and immaterial, and Consciousness of Being alone is to be treated as Real and material. To one whose understanding of the world is sustained by conceptual knowledge and whose life is ruled by subject-object relationships, this can be too much of a shock to bear. He either laughs off the Ajata-advaita doctrine as sheer nonsense developed by mischievous minds that have nothing better to do, or takes it seriously and is shocked by the implications- everything he has ever known and cherished in his life is now suddenly revealed to be meaningless, fungible, evanescent and mutable, and thus unreal and unworthy of consideration, whereas what he had never before paid attention to is revealed as the only permanent, abiding Reality. To one who has uptill that point in time been regarding himself as a subject, finite across time and space, occupying an objective world, this revelation comes as a great emotional and mental upheaval, because he is attached to the things of the world. One whose past sadhanas have weakened all attachment takes naturally to the idea that the world is a dream- either way it is not going to matter to him because he is not interested in it. The idea that the world does not exist as a collection of independent objects, but rather depends upon perception for its apparent existence, shocks some people. The evidence of the 5 sensory organs is merely random 'information'. It does not denote that any such object is actually 'out there'; there is no 'out there'. The inlet of consciousness is only one; therefore, all perceived depends upon the perceiver only; this consciousness, turned outside, is the world and its perceiver; turned inside it finds that it is the Self. Jagrat-prama is the prama of jagrat-pramata. Apart from the perceiver there is no such thing as the perceived. The pramata believes he knows so many things about the world; he is merely accessing the contents of his own mind. All thoughts and perceptions are intra-mental modifications. The light of the Self falls on the aham-vritti and its children, the other vrittis, and a jiva is born. It is for the aspirant to destroy all the other vrittis. The Self takes care of the nude aham-vritti- that is, destroys it. Then it will remain without reflection.

Q.: This is pure solipsism- Berkeley's *Esse est percipi aut percipere*.

B.: The solipsist says the mind is real, that everything, including the world and thoughts, that proceed from it is a phantom or shadow. He does not question

the reality of the mind itself. I am asking you to go even further. I say that the mind itself is a shadow or phantom proceeding from the Self. You will discover this as a matter of direct experience- if only you will probe into the source of the mind. You ask why some do not Realize. You wonder whether prarabdha might be the reason. No. Prarabdha has no power to pull back into the world a jiva that is adamantly determined to disappear in its source forever. Then what is the reason, you ask. This is the reason- clinging fast to objective knowledge. There are learned pandits who have written rich commentaries- volume after volume- upon various advaitic texts which directly propound the Ajata-advaita doctrine- ashtavakra gita, ribhu gita, panchadasi, kaivalya navaneetam, ozhivil odukkam, etc., etc.. Go to their houses when a loved one has died, and ask how they feel. You may be met with a hostile stare. If you sit down then and there and explain all this, you may count yourself lucky if permitted thereafter to leave with your life. Where does the problem lie? All the learning has been in vain, because it has stopped at the level of the intellect. It is unable to crush the Ego, because there was no practice. The only effort made was to read more books, go on writing commentaries, and go on receiving accolades for being 'an Expert in the field of Advaita', thus making the ego grow bigger and bigger. Never was effort made to still the ceaseless waves of thought. Even some effort in that direction might have brought a reciprocal flow of Grace from the Self. But no. Read, write, receive shawls at book-launch festivals, imagine oneself to be acting in a highly intelligent manner in saying the words, "No, no, it is all God's work... I am an instrument in his hands, that is all..." there, receive applause, and inflate the ego further and further. The Sun and the Earth may one day decide to interchange their positions out of boredom, but such people, who are infatuated with the poisonous wine of love for book-learning, cannot obtain True Knowledge. Objective knowledge and book-learning are the most deadly enemies on the path to Self-Realisation, because they are expertly disguised as sweet friends, and the disguise runs deep indeed...

Q.: If I Realize one reflection is destroyed. What about the others living in the world? When will everyone wake up?

B.: You first do it and see and then raise the question afterwards if need be. After waking up from a dream, do you ponder, 'Oh! I dreamt of so many people drowning, I wonder if anyone has rescued them or whether they perished...'

Q.: So I alone am ignorant- rather, I alone am! But then I should feel hopelessly lonely...

B.: Being alone means remaining without thinking thoughts, and that includes remaining without the thought, 'I am alone.' or 'I am lonely.'

Q.: When told I am the Self why do I not rest content in that knowledge? Why do I continue to stray into the realm of thought?

B.: There is a duplicitous sense of legitimacy attached to the Aham-vritti. This is the cause of your trouble; it must go before good results can follow. This may be termed the 'weltanschauung' of the ego. It is to the aham-vritti what the brain is to the heart. Without the heart, there would be no supply of oxygen to the brain and the body's survival would not be possible; without the operation of that portion of the brain which regulates involuntary muscular activity, the heart would not find contraction and expansion possible because the neuro-electrical impulses that propel its function would not be available, likewise rendering the body's continued survival impossible. Killing the one kills the other. Killing either of them kills the body beyond the point of resuscitation. Likewise here. Killing the weltanschauung kills the aham-vritti, and vice-versa. Killing either of them destroys the ego once and for all. The bhakta who surrenders completely destroys thereby any importance "I" has for itself- thus he uproots the weltanschauung. The jnana-sadhaka keeps on trying to find "I"- thus he uproots the aham-vritti. Note that this explanation is for analytical purposes only. To explain to you the 2 parallel approaches I have created this intellectual bifurcation. Actually weltanschauung and aham-vritti are simply 2 different shades or aspects of the ego, just like how a chameleon changes colour depending upon the colour of the immediate environment, but is in fact the same chameleon. The aham-vritti is the thought "I"; the weltanschauung is the intellectual framework which legitimises the apparent, illusory, individual existence of this thought "I" by making it associate itself with equally fictitious objects or 'surroundings'. This is because the thought "I" cannot remain in the absence of such association. Thus killing the "I" causes intellection or association to end automatically, and putting an end to the habit of intellection or association kills the "I" automatically. "I" and its objectifying or associative tendency amount therefore to one and the same thing, but its destruction may be carried out either way, depending upon the individual's psychological temperament. If you are unsure[laughing]? Mount a two-pronged attack!! When Alexander the Great invaded India, King Purushottama, emperor of the Punjab, who is said to have been Alexander's most formidable foe, was defeated by him in this manner when all other tactics failed. There is no escape from betwixt the twin-jaws of a crocodile. Whenever the ego seems too boisterous and recalcitrant, and refuses to surrender itself, tackle it with vichara; whenever you feel you are too mentally beleaguered and debilitated to take up vichara, surrender! A battle of annihilation on one side, and a battle of attrition on the other- that ought to win the war! But remember- all this, whilst your body is engaged in its

worldly activities! Never use Ajata-advaita as an excuse to deliberately avoid your duties, telling yourself, 'Everything is an illusion; why should I make any effort if everything is a dream?'

Q.: Yes, that is what I was about to ask! Sri Bhagawan has read my mind with uncannily perspicacious accuracy!

B.: Giving up worldly duties will lead to more complications than you might be able to presently imagine. You will be jumping from the frying pan, straight into the fire!

Q.: Is it possible to keep the mind on the Self, and yet attend to one's work as usual?

B.: Why not?

Q.: For a spiritual Hercules like Sri Bhagawan it is doubtless child's play. What about me?

B.: Yes, what about you?

Q.: How can one remaining without thinking, which is what is meant by fixation of attention on the Self, carry on worldly duties? Suppose I have to perform an arithmetic operation involving 2 large numbers, without any access to logarithmic tables, what do I do? Does it not become necessary to employ the mind- atleast part of it?

B.: The problem is that you are so used to bodily identification that you think you are the doer of the actions your body performs. It is the Higher Power who does everything. You just appropriate credit or merit for yourself. A little practice will make you see the truth. Do you have the habit of riding bicycles?

Q.: [surprised] Why, yes! Why, does that also strengthen the ego?!

B.: [laughing genially] No, no! Listen! Do you sometimes sing as you ride?

Q.: [astonished at the Maharshi's clairvoyance] Why, yes! How does B. know all this?!

B.: I heard. Now, my point: has it been your experience or not that on familiar terrain, sometimes you are so absorbed in the delightful song that is being sung by you, that you find you have reached the destination, although the route was a complicated one, although there was heavy traffic along the way, and although the weather was far from perfect when you were travelling?

Q.: [nearly laughing in stupefied wonder] Yes! Good heavens, yes! But what has it got to do with...?

B.: Yet if anyone asks you to travel without paying attention to what you are doing, you would doubtless consider him mad?

Q.: Meaning no disrespect- certainly yes.

B.: Thus you see my point. We set too much store by our intellect. We think we make choices. We think we are in control. We think we do everything the body does. We think we make the body move, speak and behave the way it

does. It is a cleverly constructed sham! Everything happens of its own accord, including bodily movements. There is thus no such thing as 'acting on a decision'. Free-will is an illusion. The world of events and the world of thought both lie in the mind, but are not connected and are not mutually interdependent. You say that you make a decision, and then act upon it. Consider what actually happens. The action is decided by prarabdha. Whichever way you decide, the outcome of the decision will ultimately be only the destined action, and nothing else! Thus the decision does not count at all. So, no action is ever the outcome of man's decision. We delude ourselves into thinking so. Since knowledge of the future is debarred from man, he cannot possibly know whether actions follow thoughts or whether thoughts simply fall in line before forthcoming actions, like iron filings before a bar-magnet, thus creating an illusory cause-consequence relationship between thoughts and actions, whereas, in fact, it might be a consequence-cause relationship... 'Man can do what he wants, but he cannot will what he wills.' Schopenhauer has said; the same truth of what I am saying may be put this way also. In either case the inference drawn is that free-will could not possibly exist. Once you cease to believe in free will, the grip of the ego loosens automatically... [P>S>This gave me quite a turn; it is the only instance I heard him quote from a western philosopher.]

Q.: [doubtfully] It was alright in case of riding a bicycle, physical coordination was enough. But extending it to all cases of activity [shakes his head thoughtfully]...

B.: I repeat- Practice will reveal the truth of what I am saying. Practise remaining as pure consciousness of being and see whether actions go on by themselves or not.

Q.: What if the actions are not according to my liking?

B.: You aspire for Self-Realisation. Yet you want to live life on your own terms! No other aspiration can meaningfully co-exist with the aspiration for Self-Realisation. As Sadhana gains in momentum, even the aspiration for Self-Realisation must be given up. Once you are in the hands of the Higher Power, your own will or opinion is not permitted to stand in the way. You become clay in His hands. Every last notion is demolished, every learnt thing unlearned, all objective knowledge undone, bespoiled and destroyed, to reveal the pure substratum shining underneath as "I-I". Concerning the question of physical renunciation, life in the world is to be kept up as before- if it be the will of the Higher Power. If you remain in the world, you do so on His terms; if you renounce, again it is only on His terms. He decides whether you stay in the home or forest or both. To you it is altogether immaterial where the body is or what it is doing. So far as you are concerned, you gave up everything you



had, or believed yourself to have, the day you renounced your ego to the Self, and that includes the body. Your renunciation is complete then and there. The confusing assemblage of name and form that is called 'world' is revealed to be none other than sweet, lovely Self, once the ego perishes in the light of true Self-Knowledge. This is Jnana.

Later I learnt that the Shylock was neither American nor white, but a Jew. His name is Samuel Cohen. I cannot help wondering if he has family-members in Germany, and is aware of the developments there. The German Reichstag under Chancellor Hitler's leadership has passed laws prohibiting Jews from holding citizenship rights in Germany. The overall climate toward the community has become hostile in Germany, I hear, because the Chancellor seems to be of the opinion that the Jews are of a parasitic nature, taking from society far more than what they give back, and he has successfully mesmerised that nation into treating his every wish as a command, so his opinion is effectively Germany's opinion. Nothing wrong, I suppose, in having the people on your side... As long as he does not start another war in Europe... I am not generally interested in political leaders, but this man with the funny moustache interests me...because of his sheer boldness in treating the Treaty of Versailles as though it were his shoe-wiping rag! He has created a new German Air-force, stationed his troops on the Rhineland and reintroduced conscription into the Armed Forces! Sentiment of patriotic self-respect or Belligerent intent to invite aggression? Time alone will tell. At any rate, this poor Jewish mite seems harmless enough. Seems to greatly adore Bhagawan- but then, who does not?

P>S> Sadly, he did, as we all know, start another war in Europe, much more deadlier than the Great War...

S>M>

A sallow-faced gentleman, a foreigner, wearing a pencil moustache approaches Bhagawan after everyone has left the hall. I am instantly reminded of Count Orlok in Nosferatu, played so memorably by Max Schreck. He creeps near the Sofa, his long hands slightly outstretched in B.'s direction. I am glad he does not notice me, hidden away as I am in the Shadows at the back of the Hall. The attendants are asleep a yard or so away from me, and these prone bodies have also evidently escaped his attention... I want to cry out a warning to B., but I am worried for my own safety. I wait with bated breath for the anticipated lines to be spoken-

"Wollen wir nicht ein wenig beisammen bleiben, Liebwertesteu? Es ist noch gar lange bis Sonnenaufgang- und am Jage schlafe ich, mein Bester, Schlafe ich wahrhaftig den tief Sten Schlaf..."

The gas lamp outside throws preternatural, oblong shadows on the walls. B.'s face is lit in Honthorst's 'Chiaroscuro' style. The expression is as rock-like as ever...

In days bygone I have read E.A. Poe, but now I am witnessing a phenomenon similar to one of his creations... Byron's lines float into my head uninvited:

The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars

Did wander darkling in the eternal space,

Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth

Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;

The vampire has moved right next to the Sofa; any moment now it would lunge, B is not paying any attention, but staring straight out in front of him, I hear my heart trying to frantically break out of my rib-cage...

The vampire does not attack, but rather greets B. with a respectful bow and then asks-

Q.: I read about you, Sir, in Paul Brunton's book A Search in Secret India. I was in the Aurobindo's Ashram while the book fell into my hands. As soon as I finished reading it, I felt like meeting you, Sir. There are doubts which have been plaguing my mind for a long time. They do not allow any scope for my peace of mind to prevail. I must get them clarified from you. I know that you would know the answers... My questions are of a delicate nature, that is why I waited for this private audience. The matters I wish to discuss are of a deeply sensitive nature... therefore, before placing my issues before you... I must know... do I have your utmost confidence? If anyone were to come to know, I should get into serious trouble... Please... I beg of you...

Orlock's face had become a convoluted amalgam of interlaced folds of flesh. No translator could be summoned at this hour, and in any case Orlock would certainly not agree to have one called. So what is recorded here is B.'s original talk in English.

B.: Yes. Please proceed.

Orlock: In the words of Blake, some are born to sweet delight, some are born to endless night. Why?

B.: Fate.

O.: Can Fate be overcome or is it insuperable?

B.: Body's Fate certainly insurmountable. Not so you.

O.: Meaning I can escape from the body by learning the thaumaturgic power of astral travel?

B.: You agree that the body, which birth brought into existence, inherently carries the possibility of its sudden destruction.

O.: Yes.

B.: So there is no hope of preserving the body forever. Do not bother what happens to it.

O.: My existence is contingent upon the existence of the body. Am I correct?

B.: No. Even now you are bodiless. Realize it.

O.: How?

B.: Effortless awareness of being is your real nature.

O.: How did effortless awareness of being come to occupy a body?

B.: It is not effortless awareness of being that is complaining [about the body's apparent presence]. The method [of Realisation] is asking Who am I?. It is done everytime you are distracted from your real nature [effortless awareness of being]. Due to thoughts [distraction takes place]. Intellectual analysis- this is not the purpose [of asking the question Who am I?]. Do not deliberate [upon the question Who am I?]. Ask the question once. The question arrests further development [of the thought]. Then return the mind to its natural state [effortless awareness of being]. Practice to be carried on till mind ceases to move away [from the natural state aforesaid].

O.: If I carry this practice to a successful culmination, will I be able to live if the body is damaged beyond repair, or even if it is destroyed altogether?

B.: Yes.

O.: I shall try to practice in it. But there is one thing you should know. I am a sinner and a killer. I have committed sins of humongous proportions. Is expiation possible? Is it meaningful to desire for exculpation? Or am I condemned to eternal damnation in the afterlife for all my acrimonies, without possibility of exoneration? Should I describe my crimes fully to you, so that you may find it feasible to pass judgement upon me?

B.: I do not judge.

O.: What hope is then left for me?

B.: The wages of Sin is Death.

O.: You recommend suicide?

B.: Mental suicide is recommended.

O.: What is it?

B.: The method taught to you now.

O.: Does it work for sinners?

B.: Particularly well.

O.: What about killing the body?

B.: It will not bring the freedom [sought for]. When one physical vehicle is exhausted another is assumed. Killing the body does not kill the mind.

Retribution ought to be upon the culprit. What does the insentient body know? It is merely a tool in the hands of the mischeivous mind. So, award the erring

mind the death penalty. Plunge it in its source, the Heart. Let it perish there forever. How to do this? Who am I? is the way.

O.: I am now making a grave confession. When I look at handsome men, or sometimes even children or pretty-looking dogs, I feel a perverse sexual urge. Even your form I find not unattractive. What should I do? If the police comes to know in my home country they may put me in a Hospital which 'provides treatment' to the criminally insane; I live in dread all the time, lest someone should come to know and inform them. How can I cure myself of this madness?

B.: The Bible declares that to look at a woman lustfully is the same as committing adultery [with her]. So, your lustful thoughts are certainly not innocent. They bear the same repercussions [as actually committing the act in question]. [Therefore,] be rid of [such] thoughts- all thoughts.

O.: These are hyper-compulsive urges, not mere thoughts.

B.: The method to tackle, is the same- Who am I?

O.: What about the past sins committed? [In a fierce, hurried whisper, uttered as near B.'s ear as the evil homosexual vampire dared approach, though still audible to me:] I have performed coital acts with men. God rained down destruction on Sodom and Gomorrah for this reason only. What is my fate going to be?

B.: Whatever sins you may have committed, know this- when the sinning mind perishes, all blemishes perish.

O.: Again only Who am I?

B.: It is the Final Panacea.

O.: I met the English occultist Aleister Crowley once and tried to practise a few spells he gave me. It involved using the blood of small animals to draw esoteric symbols on a floor made of dolomite-rock. I tried it a few times. On the final occasion, there was a sudden, tiny stream of smoke which emerged from the 'Wedjat' symbol at the center, and it stopped as abruptly as it had begun. There is no explanation for it because no combustible substance had been placed there. Soon after, however, I was able to hear a voice talking inside my head- to my misfortune, the voice seemed to belong to a malvolent spirit, because whatever I tried to do it poured forth disparagement, vituperation and contumely into my ears all the time, without pause, night and day. The point was reached where I decided to commit suicide. I pleaded with myself to try just one last hope: last year I came to Ponicherry and begged to be granted audience with Mother Alfassa. It was done. I explained my predicament to her. She said, "Your vital-forces are in disarray; this will set it aright." and placed her hands on my head. Do you know what happened?

That very second, I was exorcised of the evil spirit! What do you think about it, Sir?

B.: I think... if the summoning is tried again, you may not find the Mother so obliging anymore...

The evil vampire laughed a shrill laugh. One of the attendants sleeping on the floor twitched. The hairs on the nape of my neck prickled and bristled owing to an unpleasant tingle that shocked my body on hearing that mephistophelean, cacodaemoniac laugh.

O.: I already have thrown out all the scales and other magicke-related paraphernalia. So no worries need be harboured on that count. Now I have this question to ask- The sexual craving, the urge to spill Semen, whether through masturbation or coitus- it has, according to you, the same effect as the act itself?

B.: The body is free from any will of its own. It is insentient. It is the mind which makes it commit all sorts of sins. The crime is in the impelling thought, not in the deed. An idea in the mind is executed on the physical plane; the mind pretends to feel satiated for the time being. After sometime the craving returns. The idea and the act are both in the mind. The body cannot be aware of its activities. Else it would say 'I am acting.'. But no. It is you who say so, you who mentally identify [yourself with the body that performs the action, and speak on behalf of the insentient body, believing yourself to be one with it]. So, ideas and actions amount to the same [thing]. They germinate from the same poisonous seed of egotism.

O.: How many years will it take for this Who am I? practice to reach Consummation?

B.: Varies on a case-by-case basis. Do not allow such questions to perturb you. Let it take as much time as is necessary.

O.: Should it be practised in holy places like Benares, Bodgeyah, here, Trinomalee, etc., in order to yield benefit?

B.: May be practised anywhere.

O.: Is your physical proximity essential for the success of the practice?

B.: It will not serve as a substitute for your effort.

O.: Is anything to be gained by staying permanently in this jungle hermitage? It does not appeal to me. I have noticed two or three Europeans here- or perhaps Americans?- who seem to be staying permanently.

B.: Place is a function of the mind. If mind assumes its proper place in the Self, this question will not arise.

O.: What do you recommend for me? Should I return to Curtici? Should I remain here at Trinomalee, in your physical presence?

B.: I cannot decide for you.

O.: Then tell me this- wherever I go can I remain assured that your benign good wishes lie with me always?

B.: Bhagawan is always with you. When you care to think of Him you notice Him. When you are engaged in thinking about other matters, you fail to notice Him. He is a constant. He is always with you. It is you who keep slipping away...

The vampire seemed moved. He suddenly seized B.'s hands[to my enormous alarm], squeezed them, kissed them and dropped them back into the Sage's lap. B. did not proffer the least resistance to this gesture, although he did not normally approve of people trying to touch his person.

Then Count Orlock said-

"I hope I do not seem an evil or undesirable sort of person in your eyes, Sir?" [I said to myself, "Of course you do, execrable degenerate!"]

B.: [chuckling] No, no. Would anyone dream of saying such a thing about you?!

O.: Sir... Surely your all-embracing love extends to embrace me also?

B.: [bursting into laughter] It is only in Bhagawan's tight embrace that all are born, all live and all die! Many refuse to acknowledge it; some- a few- Realise it!

O.: I hope I fall into the realising category, Sir!

Without waiting for a reply, he bowed low before Bhagawan, stooping deeply, and then glided out of the Hall; that was the last I saw of 'Count Orlock'.

12 July, 1936

Today morning the Shylock has returned to quiz B. again-

Q.: May I have a clear understanding of the difference between Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa Samadhi?

B.: Holding on to the supreme State of Pure Existence-Consciousness-Sentience, which knows no other thing, is Samadhi. When it is with effort due to mental turbulences, it is Savikalpa; when these turbulences are absent, it is Nirvikalpa. Abiding permanently as the natural state itself, without effort, is Sahaja. Like Nirvikalpa, there is an internal as well as an external Savikalpa, depending on whether the disturbing thoughts are from outside or from inside.

Q.: How can thoughts have an outside origin? Do not all thoughts have their origin in the mind only?

B.: I meant distractions. Either distractions may be thoughts, or sensory perceptions which arouse one's curiosity and thus make the mind stray away after the objects of the world. Either way the distraction is the Handiwork of the mind and must be successfully tackled if Realisation is to ensue.

Q.: Should all vasanas be totally destroyed before Self-Realisation takes place, or may some remain for Self-Realisation to destroy?

B.: If the body of the Jnana-siddha is destined to function in the world after sundering of the Granthi, some vasanas, which do not obstruct Self-Realisation, may remain. In Yoga Vasishtha two classes of vasanas are distinguished: Boga vasanas and Bandha vasanas. The former might remain even after Mukti is attained, depending on the body's prarabdha, but the latter are destroyed by it completely. Mental attachment is the cause of the bandha vasanas, but merely witnessing without attachment does not bind and can continue even in the Sahaja-stithi. It is to be recollected that all these explanations are not for the Jnani. Even to say 'body of the Jnani' would amount to utterance of an oxymoron. Why? His bodiless experience of the formless Reality is Absolute; or, all bodies could equally be identified as being His because He is there equally in all of them. You cannot localise Him to any temporal or spatial location.

Q.: If it is attachment to the things of the world that causes misery, then how is one to do away with this mischevious attachment, which is not permitting me to Realize?

B.: Reflect on the ephemeral, transient nature of your body and the world. When Yama wanted to offer all the empires and riches of the world to Nachiketan, the latter refused point-blank and insisted that he wanted only Realisation of the Sahaja-stithi. Why? Because only the underlying substratum is permanent. The forms are unreal, the substance alone real. Take gold and ornaments, or cotton and clothes or water and waves. The forms keep coming and going, but they are irrelevant to one who knows the substance- that is knows himself as the substance.

Q.: So, I must identify with consciousness only, and not the body?

B.: So far as consciousness is concerned, where is the need for identification? Drop the body-am-I identification and REMAIN as consciousness. Identification with consciousness is the Aham Brahmasmi or Sivoham method. It can take one only so far.

Q.: Then where is the need to ask, "Who am I?"

B.: The question is asked when thoughts arise, not otherwise. When manolaya is experienced, again one asks oneself, "Who experiences this manolaya?"

Q.: So the aim of the vichara method is to simply remain as subjective awareness unperturbed by thought?

B.: Yes. Also, the idea that, there is an "I" which is practising this maintainence of subjective awareness as a Sadhana in order to Realize, must be abandoned. Then alone will a positive result follow. Not the tiniest vritti or

idea must lie latent in this Subjective Consciousness which remains merely as Itself without spilling over into the Realm of thought; only then will it blossom into permanent sphurana. Thus, give up the idea that you are a Sadhaka trying to Realize. Then the Beyond will take care of you and all will be well. It is only by giving up useless accretions that Realisation is made possible, not by acquiring new vrittis or ideas or by practising meditation, yoga, etc.. Let go of everything and only the Self will remain.

Q.: Is meditation not useful?

B.: What do you meditate on?

Q.: On the Aham-vritti, so that on close scrutiny, I shall discover the truth that it is non-existent and so Realise the Self.

B.: [smiling] And who is going to make that discovery?

Q.: We have come back to Who am I?.

B.: Exactly. People are so used to associating with objects on the level of the mind that they are always looking to do something. Can more mental-doing reveal the Self? It can only make obscuration of the Self more and more dense. True Sadhana is not-doing [non-doing] anything with the mind. That is the import of the advice Summa Iru. Not all people can appreciate this kind of advice. They think Sadhana means they should do something. If I explain to them the truth they will become upset and think, "Swami seems to think I am unfit for Sadhana...". So when someone comes here and says he is going to practise this and that, I say "Very good!". We have no right to demoralise or discourage anyone.

Q.: So meditation is useless?

B.: It helps secure concentration of mind. The ultimate method is only Summa Iru, in so far as it can be called Sadhana at all [for really it is just the natural state of Self]; even Who am I? is only after this. That is why it is said that the Self reveals itself by itself to itself. Only the stillness of the nivritti state characterising the mrutamanas is competent to discover the Self- that is, discover itself to be the Self or Parabrahman.

Q.: If all sadhana is useless, what am I to do?

B.: Remain as THAT-WHICH-IS.

Q.: How is that to be done?

B.: Give up all vrittis and vasanas.

Q.: Again- how?

B.: Ask yourself Who am I? everytime a thought arises. The thought stands severed. Then return the mind to its natural state of quiet repose in the Self- that is abidance in and as pure consciousness of Being.

Q.: 'Revert to Subjective Consciousness everytime a thought occurs; when no thoughts occur remain as Subjective Consciousness; do not have concepts



within the mind such as 'I am doing Sadhana.', etc., do not aspire or desire for anything, including Realisation; allow the individual personalityhood to totally bite the dust.' This is the summary of Bhagawan's method. Am I right?

B.: Yes, that is it. However, the idea that you are witnessing Subjective Consciousness is an impediment to inherence in that state in which Subjective Consciousness remains merely as Itself. Ask yourself, 'Who is the one that imagines that he is witnessing Subjective Consciousness?'. Continue to fight with one idea after another until all have disappeared. The state of absence of ideas is the state of Realisation. Realisation is not a positive development; the point is not to reach anything or attain to something, but to give up everything.

Q.: So, I am supposed to witness without entertaining the notion that I am witnessing?

B.: There is nothing to witness. IT IS. Simple Being. When ideas create modifications in consciousness, which is the essence or substance of the mind, another idea made of the same substance is used as a tool with which to crush (annihilate) all other ideas; finally, this tool is also destroyed. That is why the example of the stick used to stir the burning funeral pyre is furnished.

Q.: So merely watching (observing) consciousness with a placid, thought-free mind is not a Sadhana that suffices to destroy the mind and bestow Realisation?

B.: If the aspirant is unremittingly sincere in its pursuit, the practice that you mention will in due course by itself cause sufficient introversion of mind to empower (facilitate) the mind to become ready for successfully investigating 'Who am I?'. However, it is erroneous to imagine that the two practices are one and the same, or even similar.

Q.: But they both aim at ensuring that the sadhaka remains attending to mere consciousness; how can they be distinct from each other?

B.: The act of attending to pure Subjective Consciousness alone still involves that one who undertakes such Sadhana. WHO IS HE?

Q.: But there is also that one who investigates 'Who am I?'.  
B.: He is both the subject and object of his investigation. That is why in the end, everybody must come only through this gate before reaching the citadel of the Heart. Who am I? is the only Sadhana which is such that the one making it is the same as the one in relation to whom it is made. The snake must bite his own tail. Otherwise he will not die. Neophytes who complain that Who am I? is not working are given the suggestion that they should watch the thought 'I', or that they should remain attending to Subjective Consciousness alone. Still less mature souls are told to repeat 'I', 'I' mentally, together with simultaneously concentrating on the sense of personality associated with 'I',

that is to say with the mental concept of 'myself'. Those who are not able to do even this should do pranayama, japa, moorthy-dhyana, or hatha-yoga. None of these practices, however, could possibly serve as a substitute for vichara, nor is it meaningful to confuse any of them with vichara or to imagine any of them to be the same as vichara. Vichara is the final door. The 'I' attends to himself, not to his Self. The ego attends to the ego and to nothing else; that is vichara. Attending to Subjective Consciousness, while it is a method having its beneficial use, is certainly NOT the same as vichara.

Q.: A popular Caucasian devotee of Sri Bhagawan has opined that the Sadhana of 'holding on to the 'I'-thought until the one who imagines that he is separate from the Self disappears' is 'clearly vichara masquerading under a different name'. Is that right?

B.: No. All sorts of ideas are being peddled under my name. What am I to do? Selling spurious and probably poisonous substances labelled as medicine under original, distinctive names is an offence in itself; selling them after pasting on them the label of the only medicine that actually works is an unparalleled acrimony. But what can we do? It is not for us to raise a hue and cry. We should stick to our dharma of silence.

Q.: A certain negro originally hailing from the West Indies has heard Sri Bhagawan's teachings second-hand from somebody. He has now set himself up as a teacher in his own right in California. He claims to have telepathically received enlightenment from or through Sri Bhagawan. He is at present 'teaching' all sorts of nonsense, supposedly inspired by Sri Bhagawan's Grace. He encourages his 'devotees', of which he has craftily managed to accumulate thousands through chicanery, to eat the flesh of newborn calves, emphasising that such food is of the utmost indispensability in those aspiring for Realisation. Himself and his followers lead debauched, libertine lives day in and day out, consuming opium and other drugs in copious quantities. He has openly proclaimed on several occasions that Sri Bhagawan has given him the exclusive right or license to preach the truth of Ajata-advaita throughout the English-speaking world. This man has the gift of the gab. Whenever anybody asks him any question, he veers the talk around to 'just being the Self'. I heard that owing to his knack in loquaciously ejaculating utter nonsense out of his mouth with superb spontaneity, which nonsense has, however, been cunningly been disguised to sound like arcane pearls of wisdom, he has managed to dupe even the Governor of California and the unfortunate gentleman's family into believing that he is an Enlightened Sage. According to what he refers to as his teachings, all are already Realised, and therefore, nothing need be done to obtain Realisation, other than 'just being the Self'. It is unfortunate enough that such scoundrels perpetrate their

mischief; it is woefully, lamentably unfortunate that Sri Bhagawan's sacred name is being used for such depraved purposes. If devotees who crave for Realisation fall into the nets of iniquity spread by such abominable people, are they not deprived of the chance to come across and put into practice Bhagawan's actual teachings?

B.: Those destined for Realisation do not go anywhere else; they come STRAIGHT HERE.

S>M>

Q.: When 'I' remains attending exclusively to itself, can this practice be known correctly as vichara?

B.: Yes: but note that 'I' should be attending actually to itself, and not to any conceptually fabricated idea concerning itself, which idea it might be believing to be itself.

Q.: (somebody else in the Hall now made this observation) B. is beginning to sound like a lot like J.K. these days when he addresses Caucasians!

B.: [laughing] Oh! is that so?

S>M>

Q.: Is regular ejaculation of semen an impediment to Realisation?

B.: It is thought that counts.

Q.: Then, if I manage to keep the mind in the Self, can I indulge in as much licentiousness as pleases my fancy?

B.: If the mind were submerged in the Heart, carnal lust would not arise.

Q.: Is it then impossible for a man to have children after Realising?

B.: What happens after the mind dies is beyond mental understanding. To Realise is to finally know that there cannot be anything to know. Such a one is like a neonate; he is not responsible for his actions.

Q.: If this idea were to become the norm, people would commit all sorts of crimes and then disclaim responsibility.

B.: The Jnani does not place himself on a pedestal and demand that passers-by come and kiss the dust of his soles. The Jnani does not expect any special treatment for himself, because he does not have any idea (mental picture or weltanschauung) concerning himself. On the other hand, he conclusively knows himself to not exist.

Q.: In that case, who is that one who is knower of the fact that he does not exist?

B.: When he apparently reaches down into the plane of duality to explain to others, he asseverates not to exist. Such a statement is doubtless absurd, for who is making it? The explanation is that since he cannot communicate when entirely absorbed in samadhi, when not in samadhi he explains the position that characterises his nature when he is in samadhi. The Jnani, however, is

always in his Sahaja state. He does not go into or come out of samadhi. The explanation is for the onlooker. When the passenger is fast asleep whilst travelling in a cart, he does not know whether the bulls are unyoked, yoked but standing, or moving. Likewise, the Jnani's mind is dead from his point of view; it moves only from the point of view of those who perceive him functioning in the world and answering questions.

S>M>

Q.: How can I tell how much progress I am making with vichara?

B.: Who is that one desiring to know the progress? Whose progress?

Q.: So I needn't bother?

B.: Yes, that is it.

Q.: How can I tell that I am performing vichara correctly, that I am on the right track?

B.: Thoughts are increasingly nipped and extirpated as and when, and soon as, they arise. There is no tendency to devote attention to the future or past. The sense of doership or identification with the body is increasingly attenuated. There is no attachment towards anything. These are not proofs, they are indicators.

Q.: It is possible that I have unwittingly already Realised, but do not realise that fact, so to speak?

B.: Impossible.

S>M>

Q.: What does the practise of vichara feel like whilst one is actually engaged in it?

B.: Go on seeing, 'What is this 'me'?'. But doing it intellectually is not the right way.

Q.: All mental activity does involve the intellect.

B.: Yes. This is cessation of mental activity. Realisation is not 'you' attaining to some exalted state. Realisation is the irreversible death of 'you'.

Q.: You mean death of the ego: for I am the Self, and cannot die.

B.: It is precisely this wretched misunderstanding that causes so many sadhakas to go astray.

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: You are the ego until the ego has been destroyed. What is the use of intellectually denying the existence of the ego while still remaining as it? Why falsely arrogate yourself to the status of being the Heart? Is it the Heart who is talking to me now?

Q.: Am I not the Self?

B.: Whose self are you?

Q.: I am the Self of myself.

B.: Is there, or is there not, in you an intermediary entity subsisting on thought-forms?

Q.: Yes. Thoughts come. But they are not apart from the Self: that is what I tell myself.

B.: No, that is not the way.

Q.: What am I doing wrong? Please tell me.

B.: You are still operating on the plane of the intellect.

Q.: Tell me how I can get past it.

B.: 'I' cannot get past it. 'I' is 'it'.

Q.: So I should learn to overcome myself?

B.: No. Learn to subside into the actual Self.

Q.: But how?

B.: Resign yourself to pure Subjective Consciousness.

Q.: Effort is needed to remain in that state. There is the one that makes the effort. His presence is unavoidable.

B.: Yes; the aham-vritti can only be further and further attenuated, but can never be completely destroyed by effort, because the one making that effort still remains. However, when a certain critical radius of introversion is reached, the Heart reaches over and pulls you inside, finishing the job. In order for this to happen, however, the aham-vritti should be reduced into a single, infinitesimal, dimension-bereft point. The aham-vritti can finally be torpedied into this point-like form only by means of deploying a Sadhana in which the one making the effort is the same as that in relation to which the effort is made. There is only one such Sadhana: Who am I?. 'I' is not merely a thought. It is a deeply entrenched idea, which thus requires a deep incision to uproot. Therefore, the wisest thing for one to do is to catch hold of this foundational thought, the 'I'-thought, and vivisect it – what is this 'me'? – giving thereby no chance to other thoughts to distract one. There lies the true value of the vichara and its efficacy in getting rid of the mind.

S>M>

Q.: I try to follow Bhagawan's vichara method. I do not succeed in Realising. Why?

B.: Why do you practise vichara?

Q.: Because I want to Realise.

B.: That is the mistake.

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: There must be a burning curiosity about or fascination with the 'I', including with its source, per se. If investigation of the 'I' is carried out with some other motive, it will never work.

Q.: How can I acquire this fascination?

B.: It comes automatically once a certain degree of spiritual maturity is reached.

Q.: How is this maturity to be attained?

B.: Various ways are available. But whatever previous development there may be, earnest vichara escalates it.

D.: That is arguing in a circle. I am strong enough for the quest if I am mature and it is the quest that makes me mature.

B.: The mind does have this sort of difficulty. It wants a fixed theory to satisfy itself with. But actually, no theory is necessary for the earnest sadhaka who toils with unintermittent determination to extirpate the mind.

Q.: Is it necessary to be free from even the desire or resolve to Realise?

B.: Yes. But that would be one of the last desires or sankalpas to be expelled.

Q.: When my health takes a turn for the worse, as it does occasionally, I feel fear. What should I do during those occasions? Should I tell myself that I am not the body but the Self, and that there is thus no need to worry because the Self is deathless, or should I investigate to whom the fear has arisen? Which approach is more in conformity with Sri Bhagawan's teachings?

B.: The latter.

Q.: Does the act of visiting sacred places of pilgrimage also contribute to introversion of mind?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: Recently I had a conversation with an Indologist, who opines that the brahmins of India are actually the present-day descendants of jews who migrated to India a long time back, and after having arrived here modified their religious beliefs and practices into what is today referred to as Hinduism. He also told me that the brahmins have descended from the lost Yissachar tribe of jews, which is mentioned in the Bible. Does Bhagawan agree with this idea?

B.: [no response]

Q.: Jesus said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'. What is the meaning? Are we wasting our time in placing our confidence and faith in Him? Is He exclusively a deity intended for reverence and worship by jews? But the jews do not accept his divinity!

B.: [after sifting through the Bible for a few minutes] Please consider these words also before arriving at a perfunctory conclusion that the Lord did not mean for you to be his disciple: '...if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed...' and 'Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.'. If you Love Him to the point of total self-abnegation, you are His. It is said that all of one's eggs should not be deposited into a

single basket. A true follower knows only one basket, and that is He. Remember: 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.' So, if you give up all else and seek Him alone, He will graciously absorb you into Himself.

Q.: Should I really hate all the members of my family?

B.: It is only a hyperbolic way of saying that the true devotee always puts God first. Has not Sri Ramakrishna made a similar comment? [reads out]

**'The man having an attitude of feeble vairagya imagines that he shall Realise God by and by; but he whose vairagya is severely intense- the heart of such a man longs and pants for God, even as the mother's heart pants to see her child, from whom she has been separated for a lengthy duration of time; such a man never seeks anything but God, and to him the world appears as a veritable well wherein he fears he may be drowned at any moment. To him his family-members and relations then seem to be so many venomous serpents or scorpions from whom he is inclined to fly away. And such is the strength of his impulse and determination that he never thinks of settling his domestic affairs first before he would seek his Lord.'** Thus, if you want your want for Him to not go in vain, you should wantonly want Him to the absolute exclusion of anything else.

13 July 1936

A moslem gentleman asked-

Q.: B. used two differnt terms yesterday- Self-Realisation and Sahaja-stithi. Is there a difference? Is the former a translated version of the latter?

B.: Once the mind apprehends Brahman in the realm of Subjective Experience, it is no longer interested in the vagaries of the world. It stays aloof from Sensory Experiences, thinking of them neither as a burden nor as a pleasure. He has clearly understood the world to be a dream, and sees objects of the world as merely mental projections [whereas the Jnani would see the Self only]. Such a one may be called Self-Realised. However his mind is not destroyed and vasanas remaining in seed-form cause inevitable rebirth. He cannot be said to possess the transcendental consciousness that the Jnani is always in. When, by the compassionate grace of God or Guru the remaining vasanas which pose an impediment are also destroyed, the mind is pulled into the Heart. There it perishes like a salt doll thrown into the ocean. This is the final Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani, and this alone confers freedom from future births.

Q.: Yesterday B. clarified about the three kinds of Samadhi. I have been thinking about it. I want ask- is it necessary to go through the trance-like

Nirvikalpa before moving on to the Sahaja?

B. called Chadwick to his side and said something to him. Chadwick exited the Hall and presently returned with a notebook, from which he read out as follows notes he had made from an early conversation with Bhagawan:

I asked my master if He would mind giving me a detailed explanation concerning the term Samadhi, and its various kinds. The Lord Ramana graciously assented and sweetly spoke the following words:-

The meaning of the word Samadhi is generally given as Union with Reality, but it is not so. Samadhi means the State of non-differentiation from Reality or THAT-WHICH-IS. The following are its kinds:

1. savikalpa samadhi- mind is forced by effort of will to hold on to pure BEING- without such deliberate attentiveness or volition, mind starts straying into world of sense-objects or realm of thoughts again- vrittis or concepts remain in latent-form or seed-form- if concentration is sufficiently advanced one progresses from here to aham-sphurana- aham-sphurana is generally not characterised by loss of body-consciousness- I-I pulsation is distinctly felt- bliss experienced- continuous inherence in aham-sphurana leads to sahaja samadhi thus bypassing requirement for kevala nirvikalpa samadhi.

2. kevala nirvikalpa samadhi- mind temporarily merged in parabrahman- like bucket dropped into well, but rope attached using which to haul it up again- rope represents vasanas or vrittis or samskaras- concepts or vrittis are merely in abeyance; they merely temporarily disappear only to reappear after the trance comes to an end- no possibility of I-I pulsation or any other sensation to be known during the duration of the trance- for that duration of time there is no one whom it can occur to- when the word 'time' is used, it refers to the experience [not actual experience, for that is only Being, but apparent impression formed by an extroverted mind] of the onlooker, of time passing- person immersed in kevala samadhi not conscious of passage of time because for that duration, as marked only by the observer, he is dead as an individual and alive only as Reality- no mind during kevala trance- thus, not possible to cognise anything known as 'time'- complete absence of body consciousness- even involuntary bodily functions cease- body resembles corpse- no way to tell apart from cadaver- incumbent body may be abandoned for good due to the intensity of the bliss experienced- if so, taking up of new body, gross/subtle, inevitable, because vrittis remain in seed-form- difference between yoga-nidra and kevala-samadhi- yoga nidra brought about based on patanjali's teachings or raja yoga method misapplied- deadliest of all stumbles on spiritual path- must be very careful to avoid- simply a long spell of sleep-like condition- story of man doing what he thought was tapas, on banks of river ganges- asks disciple to fetch water from river to drink and



goes into trance- wakes up 1000 years later- no river to be found- landscape has changed completely and finds his body immersed in a swamp- first thought that occurs to him after waking from trance- I want water to drink- therefore 1000 years totally wasted- yogi thinks experience of pleasure or bliss by him means salvation- absurd- many doing vichara think they have found Reality and fall into this trap- very difficult to leave- more addictive than cocaine or morphine- how to find out if one is incumbently confronted with this danger- just after a heavy meal where favourite dishes have been served, one is relaxing- there is a pleasant lull in the mind- no thoughts- just pleasure which stands on the threshold of drowsiness- this precisely similar to condition of yoga-nidra, only intensity of the pleasure is heightened manifold- mind not thinking, not sleeping, not dreaming, not cut-off to sensory perceptions totally, but yet NOT self-aware- just a blank mind- many piteous souls when asked to remain without thinking go to this state because this is the only thought-free state they know- think this is the goal of self-enquiry- think this is liberation- this is a dead end- worst thing that could happen to a sadhaka- once mind used to this sort of poisonous pleasure, would find coming out less and less desirable and therefore progressively less and less feasible- no rescue possible after the initial stage- tamas grows on increasing- eternal damnation- to avoid, mind must focus not on pleasure, or happiness or joy but on BEING- after certain critical limit of tamas reached and exceeded, rajas and satvas reduced to negligible quantities- thus taking on body to alter the balance between the gunas so that Realisation can be reached by making satvas only predominant guna, no longer possible because not adequate satvas and rajas left to work with to form body gross or subtle- no help possible- tamas grows and grows- body becomes a vegetable and then rots away- mind's tamas is on the waxing- unless Iswara himself takes pity and adds rajas to favourably balance the mix, thus putting the poor soul in some primitive body, so that he can go on from there, increasing satvas, no deliverance possible- great danger in raja yoga and kundalini yoga method- that is why Sri B. does not encourage- danger exists even for vichara practitioners who want pleasure or bliss more than freedom from bondage- whilst living in Hill B. encountered one such yogi- body falling into peices on account of neglect- everyone thought he was in samadhi, revered him- B. could see the truth- he had lost himself in a yogic trance [yoganiththirai]- B. tried to help him- man angrily pushed B. away, had become addicted to the pleasure, would never forsake it- B. left him to his fate and came away because nothing could be done- that is why it is important that AWARENESS OF BEING be sustained throughout the Sadhana- the moment self-awareness started to fluctuate or lull tried to take control, one had to stubbornly pull mind back into realm of Being- pleasure or

bliss not the goal- only one true goal- destroy possibility of rebirth- consciousness free from upadhis had to be sustained throughout sadhana for it to succeed- birth man's greatest disease- common man thinks birth=commencement-of-existence- nothing could be further from the truth- birth=assumption-of-limitations- this had to be understood at intellectual level before any meaningful sadhana could begin.

3. shagaja nirvikalpa samadhi- no description in words could do justice. No concepts, no sensations, no experience, no bliss, no cosmos, no person, no God, no nothing. HE IS THAT. Experience of the Self by the mind is blissful- Self itself neither bliss nor agony- it is as it is- words trupthi or shanthy more meaningfully describe Self than ananda, though descriptions cannot afford a glimpse into that state- state known as Sahaja-stithi, not newly created- even now it is there and you are THAT, but mind veils it- search for mind- mind never existed, it is discovered- discoverer himself does not remain to say I have made discovery- only Self remains- end of all effort- ONLY means of freedom from rebirth lies in this state.

Additional Notes:

kevala samadhi state, though not as bad as nidra state, not in fact desirable- does not happen to all aspirants- 'tis a waste of time that could otherwise be used to destroy vasanas that thwart one from reaching the final goal- goal not to attain Self- who can attain Self- what nonsense- are there 2 Selves- goal to destroy illusory not-Self so that Self alone remains- kevala samadhi generally achieved by faithful adherents of patanjali or ashtanga yoga school- again some danger- aspirant would think final goal has been reached once mind has known Brahman once- sheer absurdity- temptation to go into kevala samadhi instead of rooting out vasanas intense because of the terrific bliss felt- thus final goal delayed- right Master has to arrive to convince him this is not final state- problem is, would call himself a Brahmajñani, think himself to be a knower of Brahman, allow his ego to wax, would not listen to right advice- haughty behaviour may come on- thus this state best avoided- family members may be alarmed, may cremate body, no telling when body consciousness might return- vichara margam by-passes this stage- instead of this stage, aham sphurana already described serves as substitute- kevala samadhi in fact a bylane, not to be aspired for- those who want Bliss of Brahman without losing personality or individuality, kevala samadhi last threshold for them- jnana-marga does not espouse desire for bliss- vichara marga aspirant must not aspire at all- remaining naturally without desire is the hallmark of ideal jnana marga aspirant- even desire for enlightenment is a serious hinderance- just like you eschew other desires, eschew desire for trance or bliss or enlightenment also, by asking, to whom same has occurred-

REMAIN AS YOU ARE- free from thoughts, ideas, desires and all other sorts of vrittis- remaining in natural state alone true freedom, because this state cannot complain about embodiment or bondage- why sahaja samadhi explained only as negation- it is that which is beyond the ultimate- here no one besides the Self exists to experience the bliss of the Self- no question of pervading anything- nothing apart from him for him to pervade- that is why called advaita and not ekatva- no question of jivatman ever reaching parabrahman- if He be pleased with aspirant's sincerity, He himself reaches out and destroys him- this action naturally happens- no faculty of volition present in parabrahman to decide, let us give this jivatman liberation or destroy him- if jivatman approaches close enough, automatically sucked in and annihilated- but for this jivatman has to approach very very close- master gives example of asteroids passing close to the sun in orbit- the energy with[or velocity at or whatever it is] which the body is going around the sun and its distance from the sun would usually suffice to ensure that it was not pulled in by the massive gravity of the sun; progressive reduction in either of these 2 factors would make it more and more likely that the body might crash into the sun- likewise, according to B. "I" thought and its objectifying tendency were 2 factors that prevented ego from merging into Self- crush one of them totally, and that was enough- Guru's Grace like friction-action of debris that gradually reduces the speed of the body and gradually alters the course of its orbit so that it will eventually surely gravitate toward Sun- devotional path snapped ego's brain, the objectifying tendency- investigation path snapped ego's heart, the "I" thought- these 2 are aspects of same ego- killing one would kill the other and kill the ego- some aspirants ask I am ready for liberation why am I yet to be liberated- it shows they are not ready at all- the truly ready aspirant has no sankalpa or volition left to make any such communication, for the extent of his self-surrender is total- what is surrender- to surrender is to cease to have any cares, leaving it to the Lord to do as he likes with you- the truly surrendered one asks nothing because he feels no need, no desire- he does not even want non-existence of misery, much less aspire for release from samsara- Jnani is always in samadhi whether body moves about or is stationary or is dead- Jnani cannot see his body- there is only one thing that He can do and know and that is to BE the Self- people say so-and-so is a Jnani- from the Jnani's own point of view this has no meaning- nothing in him to manufacture the assertion I am a Jnani- there is simply no one there localised in terms of that body- the wise sadhaka does not decide to quit the household- nor does he decide to move into the jungle- he silently surrenders his faculty of volition to the Higher Power and is meekly led by it wherever it takes him, jungle or household, heaven or hell- since he has

already freed himself from the body-am-I idea, he would not think, 'I am being taken somewhere.'- what is bakthi- unselfish love for God is called bakthi- unselfish love is not for the sake of acquisition of material possessions, nor for attainment of heavenly realms, nor for attainment of salvation, nor for breaking free from the wheel of births-and-deaths, nor for fulfillment of altruistic or philanthropic motives concerning upliftment of Humanity- unselfish love is not even accompanied by the hope or expectation of being loved in return; it has nothing to ask- unselfish love simply knows to love, that is all- the earnest baktha is not affected by the presence or absence of all or any of the worlds- his own apparent existence is an inexplicable embarrassment for him, for to him everything is the Lord's- his will becomes entirely non-existent, the Lord's will taking its place- that is the love Job in the Bible had for God, that the gopis had for Krishna, that Karna had for Duryodana, love that knows to love only- if you are able to cultivate this kind of mad, all-consuming love for God, the resultant intoxication will ensure that worries about employment, means-of-livelihood, etc., etc., are kept well away from your mind- the truly surrendered one has no hopes or expectations as to what he wants the future to be; whatever happens, he accepts the same as the will of his Lord; indeed, he sees only the Lord Himself in all the objects and events that he experiences in the jagrat and swapna states- you can never make him experience pain, because the moment his body feels distress, he tells himself, 'It pleases the Lord to cause one of his possessions to undergo such-and-such sensations; who are we to question His will and why would we need to bother ourselves with the propriety of His decisions? It is for us to meekly submit to Him, and, keeping quiet, leave the rest to Him; that is all.'; cultivate this attitude and then no worry can touch you- you were not born by reason of your own volition; remain unconcerned, indifferent and disentangled also from everything that follows birth; this is the true renunciation- remaining as One with the Heart is neither a goal to be reached nor can it meaningfully be the object of any ambition or aspiration; it is the natural state of one and all; to remain as this pure undifferentiated Being, to whom there is no other, and in which there are no concepts, is no accomplishment: it is THAT with which you are identical; it is you; YOU ARE THAT- what is liberation- complete bondage to God is known as liberation.

P>S> Major Chadwick from England is a long standing senior devotee of the Maharshi. He arrived a year before me and was fortunate enough to stay at the ashram right till the Master's death. What you see above are the original notes made by Major Chadwick directly from the Sage's words. On this occasion, the gentleman was requested by Bhagawan only to read those portions of his notes that dealt with the topic of Samadhi. Accordingly he did

so, reading out ad-lib sentences from the notes you find enclosed above. Since he spoke quickly, I had difficulty following him. Since I wanted the information, I later approached the gentleman and explained that I had failed to properly follow what he had read in the Hall, and that if I might read his notes I would be glad to do so. He accordingly consented and handed over to me a sheaf of papers, and I quickly copied out the notes contained in them. I was so enchanted by B.'s words that I copied all of the notes the Major had made as contained in the said sheets, and not merely the portions pertaining to Samadhi. I have faithfully reproduced those very notes here, though they certainly extend beyond the scope of the conversations that took place at the Hall on this date, since I am confident the gentle reader will welcome any opportunity not to miss the Master's words. Whilst compiling this manuscript I wondered if I might convert these short hints into sentences; then I decided against it because I myself was not present when these statements were made by the Sage, and therefore, in the interest of preservation of authenticity, it struck me that it might be a better idea to leave them in their original, terse, pithy form. I do not think any of the Master's devotees would encounter any difficulty in ingesting, digesting and assimilating these quick, incisive bites of wisdom.

There is another explanation which I now oblige myself to furnish- by now a question would have arisen in the reader's mind, if he is of the inquisitive variety of human-being: why does the narrator seem to have- largely- ignored the opportunity to question the Maharshi? He watches others raise questions and doubts. He records the conversations. Why does he not himself feel tempted to ask any question of the Sage, except for a handful of occasions? Does he assume his own omniscience? Or perhaps he imagines that the Maharshi might not be able to answer his queries?

It is nothing of the kind, gentle reader. Put your anxieties at rest, please. The following are the reasons:

1. Many who come to the ashram are raised on a background of vedanta. They are able to tackle Bhagawan on various theories and hypotheses that they have come across in Books. I have no such background. One of my maternal uncles was, at the time I was a teenager, a district library superintendant. I could pick up whatever book I liked, provided I either renewed it or returned it on time, and no money need be expended from my pocket. Being somewhat of an introverted character in those days, I would thus fill all my spare time- of which I had a lot- in reading everything from Geoffrey Chaucer to Robert Louis Stevenson. My background therefore was in English Literature [although I would repeatedly fail the examinations pertaining to that subject also, at college!]. So knew nothing pertaining to the

various doctrines relating to theories of creation, etc.. My appetite for library books chiefly revolved around fiction, especially castaway fiction. Not without some sheepishness I admit that my principal favourite authors at the time were Frances H. Burnett, L. Frank Baum, Lewis Carroll, Charles Kingsley, R.M. Ballantyne, Erskine Childers, Johann David Wyss, and A.C. Doyle [for Holmes]. That does not mean I restricted myself to this list. I also read Edward Gibbon, J. C. Stobart, Thomas Nashe, Henry James, George Bernard Shaw, E. M. Forster, Nicholas Breton, Francis Bacon, John Donne, Robert Burton, Thomas Hobbes, John Evelyn, Friedrich Schlegel, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Ben Jonson, Thomas Overbury, Thomas Browne, John Aubrey, Giacomo Casanova, Margaret Cavendish, Francis Godwin, John Milton, Ivan Turgenev, Nikolai Gogol, Bram Stoker, Jules Verne, Miguel de Cervantes, H. G. Wells, James Joyce, Edgar A. Poe, Goethe, Louisa M. Alcott, O. Henry, Guy de Maupassant, Oscar Wilde, Jerome K. Jerome, Walter Scott, Joseph Conrad, Alexandre Dumas, Dickens, D. H. Lawrence, Tolstoy, Anton Chekov, Dostoevsky, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Herman Melville, Victor Hugo, Jonathan Swift, Henry Fielding, Aphra Behn, Frederick D. Maurice, Tobias Smollett, Frances Burney and anything else I could lay hands on and that appealed to my fancy- but it had to be fiction; I had no taste for metaphysics, philosophy, essays, speeches, textbook-style historical accounts or anything of the kind. It was a chance encounter with these two books that introduced the awakening of some throb of yearning in me, that till today I am at a loss to explain the nature of:- The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan and Ramakrishna The Man Gods, A study of Mysticism and Action in Living India by Romain Rolland. The first I chanced upon whilst at school, and the second, the year before college. Whilst reading these two books I would become abnormal of mental-mood; I would weep without knowing the reason; some strange yearning took possession of my soul and electrified the entirety of my whole; I wanted to... fall in love. Not with woman or man, for that would be fleeting, transient business. I wanted to replicate what Ramakrishna had done with Bhavatarini- I wanted my love to be accepted by the one who sustained this cosmos by Her will. For then alone would I have the solace of knowing my Love to be Immortal. There is not the least sexual tinge to this Love; this clarification becomes necessary because some minds are quick to interpret all love as being of an amorous variety. Neither is this Love what one harbours toward family members, friends and pet animals; that is stodgy attachment amounting in some cases to, at the most, affection of a long-standing nature. This Love has passion in it. One feels one's chest is going to explode with it any time. One feels like singing and dancing with the Joy of it. Yet what precisely it is- about that one is clueless. The mystery of the matter adds to

the ardour of the Love. Till 5 July 1936 I never succeeded in discovering the object of this Love; on that day when my Lovely Master, who is Love itself, locked his eyes with mine in a tight embrace that lasted for one moment in Eternity but from which there could really be no disentanglement or disaffiliation, I discovered my Love's Love. I discovered Bhagawan. Had I read metaphysics I could ask him questions about how the world had come to be; but I had read, albeit inadvertantly, only to kindle this magical Love, which had nothing to ask, expect or anticipate. All this long it had been searching for its Dear object. Now that was found. Nothing more remained to do- except Love. Sadhana may be a chore- I have not attempted it, I would not know- but this enchantress called Love, She is a Divine Privilege. She does not ask your concentration, She gracefully and effortlessly absorbs it into Herself. What is Left? Only She- Love. Since she had never any doubts to ask, I never really had anything to say to B. at all, because, quixotically, I recognised Her to be the Internal Bhagawan shining from within. The outer Bhagawan was the vexillum for the Love that my Heart resonated with and He proved by his perpetual, rock-like presence that the Love was not some delusional madness, that it was corroborated by physical Reality, by a legitimate source for its sweet fountain-spring of ambrosial nectar, although being Divine it must needs transcend all physicality. Therefore it was indispensable that He should remain outside, because my Love would otherwise become a vain dream once again, with no possible legitimacy for its sustenance or survival. He was there- that was enough! I could happily bask in the rays of His Glorious Love! Within I felt only B.'s Love radiating, and in front of my eyes I found, again, only him. So what should the B. within have to say to the B. without? He is everywhere by His Grace- what would He have to say to Himself, tell me, Oh! Revered Reader?

2. The first reason being Love, the second is awe. Whenever I enter His presence, my own inconspicuity becomes apparent to me, and I shrink before His majestic grandeur. He is the last person to give himself any airs. For this precise reason, one feels foolishly redundant saying even "I" in his presence. If saying "I" is ruled out, where is the scope to say anything else, tell me, Oh! Revered Reader?

3. Before meeting the Master I wanted Brahmajnana. I wanted to escape from the wheel of births and deaths. Soon after, I dropped all such foolish ideas. When we have found the Lord Himself, can then anything be asked of Him? The thing supremely worthy to be asked for is verily Him[self]; when He is found, what to ask, what remains to be asked for? Thus after meeting Him on the first occassion, the idea that I am personally responsible for my salvation, or for anything at all, gradually faded out and died. Hereafter only He counted,

only He mattered. For He alone is my Love. When one does not consider the personal-self to be worth a single strand of hair, will he ask anxious questions about its ultimate fate and scope for salvation, tell me, Oh! Revered Reader? Thus, the above factors are the reasons why I usually never encountered the need to question the Maharshi on anything.

14 July 1936

The moslem gentleman arrived early at the ashram today so that he could continue his firing-

Q.: Will B. kindly explain what is meant by Saktipada? Who is eligible to receive the same? For instance I am a Moslem and therefore cannot participate in any vedic rites. Am I also eligible to receive it?

B.: When the denuded mind [nivrittiyaana manam] is absorbed into the life-current or I-Current, it is called Saktidapa. Thus, thereafter only the current remains predominant and thoughts become pronouncedly weaker or vanish altogether, leaving the Self exposed. Does it require a Guru to awaken the current? One cannot generalise. It depends upon the pakkuvam. Some, when told Brahman is the only reality, abandon all other pursuits and allow the mind to fall into the Heart and be ruined there once and for all. Such a one would not need any Saktipada from outside. In such cases Brahman Himself may be said to confer Saktipada. As for being a moslem, 'Islam, Iman and Ihsan' is laid down as your responsibility. Attain perfection in it first and if thereafter further questions arise, we may tackle them then.

Q.: Creation is full of sorrow and pain. Why?

B.: Because of your outlook.

Q.: If I close my eyes to all the misery in the world, is it going to make the misery disappear?

B.: Why do you not try to alleviate the world's pain, then?

Q.: That is not my job. The philanthropists will take care of it.

B.: Then let us leave it to the philanthropists to tackle the question of why there is misery in the world.

Q.: But I want to know why there should be misery.

B.: The Thirikam school of Shaivism enunciates a threefold impurity as being the reason why a person is unable to appreciate the fact that he is not different from Being-Consciousness: anavamalam, mayamalam and karmamalam. These 3 poisons cause the ego to rise or depart again and again from its native state of pure Being and enter the wretched realm of thought, thus inviting misery. Anavamalam is the idea 'I am an individual person occupying this body limited by time and space; verily this body represents my existence.'. Mayamalam is the idea 'The world I see around me



is objectively real in itself; verily I am a constituent of it.'. Karmamalam is the idea 'I am the doer of the actions performed by this body; verily I am the controller of the activities and functions of the body.'. On account of these poisons defiling man's psyche, the unlimited Self becomes limited as the Ego-self. Thus it suffers misery and pain, because they are implied in any form of limitation. True Happiness lies with the formless Unborn only. What is born will definitely suffer. So, 'Leaving the Self and roaming around as the ego is the cause for all misery.' is the answer to the question of 'Why misery?'.

Q.: How to cure misery?

B.: Turn inwards and see to whom it has arisen.

Q.: Everyone knows man is born only to die. Still, why do people beget progeny?

B.: The vasanas embedded in the mind prompt them towards all kind of activities. The vasanas cunningly disguise themselves as legitimate needs and requirements of life, to avoid being subject to recognition or detection as themselves. You may have seen people complaining children are not born to them. See the layers of illusion involved- I-current, which is the pure reflected light from the Self, I-thought, which is the first mental modification arising from the current, Body-am-I idea, which is the first objectification performed by the I-thought, and finally other thoughts, such as I want children to be born to me, etc.. When someone comes here asking for a boon for a heir to be born, if I start explaining these things, they may torch the ashram and go away.

Q.: It cannot be denied that it is sexual desire that causes man to engage in coitus, even when reproduction is not the motive. Yet the desire is dormant in man. He is not to be blamed for his body's biological urges. Yet if the desire is not eradicated there can be no hope of Liberation. Why has God created such urges and cravings in man? Do they not raise a barrier between man and God, and prevent the former from attaining the Latter? Does God want to make it difficult for people to attain Him? If so what sort of ridiculous God is He? Also, can I please have B.'s opinion on the ancient Hindu practice of Tantric-Sex? Is it genuine? Is there any benefit in it?

B.: The urges [you mentioned] are vasanas. Vasanas are beginningless but one can put an end to them by engaging in steady, continuous vichara.

Vichara can only be into the not-Self. The Self needs no vichara. There is no need for one Self to discover another. There are no 2 selves. What is not-Self has no Being and is therefore of no relevance. People call it Atma-vichara.

Actually it is Ahamkara-vichara. Instead of asking, "Wherefrom have the vasanas begun?", ask yourself to whom the vasanas give trouble and discover that there has been really no trouble nor any vasana.

You ask about the biological sexual urge. That is impregnated in the ego-mind-body complex to facilitate reproduction, according to nature's design. If the act did not involve pleasure man would likely ask "Why should I give birth to young?" and there may be no impetus to propagate the species. Thus the act must involve some sort of paroxysm of joy. If it is intellectual pleasure only those with highly developed intellects would be able to bring forth young. But nature does not want it to be so. So, the pleasure must be something more fundamental to man's true nature of Unlimited Bliss. What is the highest joy man can know? It is the state of no-mind. Daily he experiences it in sleep. [Only the yogi has experience of it in waking; for the Jnani there can be no question of experiencing anything.] So, nature has seen fit to introduce this bliss[of no-mind] in the coital act, so that even the most dull-witted ones are not left out of the chance to bring forth progeny into the earth, for all would be tempted toward it, it containing the Inherent bliss of one's own Self [though heavily veiled by upadhis to avoid the possibility of the act itself being deployed as Sadhana]. A moment before emission of the seminal fluid, for precisely 1/128th of a second, the mind is removed. It is like a plate being exposed with a very quick shutter speed. The impression of the bliss tasted, leaves behind a strong craving for more such bliss in the mind. This is how men end up addicted to the act. There are schools among the Tantra-sastra proponents who opine the Self can be discovered by concentrating the mind on the bliss rather than on the act, at the time of performing such acts. They say that if the concentration is strong enough, the Self will be revealed. To this end they emphasise on the need for 'more and more practice' [laughs]. I also heard there was an esoteric society in Greece promoting the same view. My view is that it[the introduction of Athmic Bliss during coitus] is engineered by nature purely to prevent reproduction from turning out to be a resource available exclusively to beings of higher intellectual order, and to allow a chance for lower minds also to procreate, for they may lack the intellectual wherewithal to do it if the matter were to be left solely to the domain of the intellect. Coitus is for reproduction- it is not a route to the Self. Doing it as Sadhana may not be of any use- but of course, we have no right to impose our views on anyone. There are those who have been faithfully performing this 'Sadhana' for decades; the 'Sadhana' is its own reward, they expound proudly. What are we to say to it? Let them busily continue with their 'Sadhana'... [laughs again]

Q.: It is said that the Hill Arunachala is the cynosure of the Jnani's eye. What is so special about this Hill? What is its secret? It is said, 'Thinking Arunachala in the mind is enough for Salvation, even if thought of but once.' Is it empirically correct? I have thought of it, yet I am not yet liberated. How does

an insentient Hill bestow Jnana? Really, what is Jnana? Will Bhagawan make me understand all this?

B.: [after keeping quiet for a while] Have you read Einstein's 1915 scientific paper, The General theory of Relativity?

Q.: [surprised] Why, I do have some amateurish interest in the scientific field, though not trained in it! How did B. guess? I have heard of Einstein and the said paper, but have not read it. But may I wonder why B. has suddenly moved onto an unrelated topic? I was asking whether the Hill-

B.: Reading the paper, it occurred to me that, curiously, solutions were possible to his equations that allowed Einstein's relaxed Riemannian-space to deform in such a way that its curvature became infinite and its size zero, so that the laws of the theory itself should apply no more; theoretically, if such a situation were to be posited to actually arise in the physical world, we would be baffled, because it would require us to reckon with the idea of "keinnannigkeit" or "nicht-weltpunkt", which does not sound meaningful at all. In theory, if such anomalous peculiarity were to be encountered anywhere, no one would be able to tell what it was, because, quite apart from falling outside the scope of Einstein's own theory, it would be like an abyss knocked out of the universe. The ones curious enough to venture close and explore, can never come back to tell us the tale, because being a point with infinite density and infinite curvature of the relaxed Riemannian-space metric, it would pull you in and you would never be seen again. Likewise, no one knows what Brahman is; if you are curious or interested in knowing, approach Brahman by surrendering yourself to Him; then He will pull you into Himself, you will be no more and there will have been no question of misery. You asked who a Jnani is. He himself does not know, because no localised knower is left there to know anything. You see a body moving around like the others, give it the name "Brahmajnani" and treat it as if it were something special. The Jnani himself does not know anything- he is in complete ignorance, because when mind is destroyed all knowledge becomes impossible. You see a world about you and know so many things about it- therefore you are a Jnani. In me, there is nothing left to know anything, for knowing is a vritti of the mind, and there is no mind here- therefore I am a perfect Anjnani. People say a Jnani is a knower of Reality. It is absurd. There is nothing besides Reality so that this other-than-Reality might know Reality. What is, is only THAT. Therefore, one who is a complete Ajnani is called a Jnani. That is the correct explanation from the common point of view. From the Jnani's point of view, even this would be false, because nothing is left in Him to make the assertion, "I know nothing." or "I do not know anything.", for assertion manufacture is mental activity or function and cannot co-exist with the Real. The Real remains all

alone. If someone is curious enough to know what Jnana is, the correct course is to give up the ego.

Q.: If I give up the ego can I become a Jnani like Bhagawan?

B.: After giving up the ego, who remains to ask the question?

Q.: I am yet to give up the ego. That is why I am asking.

B.: Give up the ego and see.

Q.: If I give up the ego, would anybody be left to do the seeing?

B.: Exactly.

Q.: I do not understand. He who is apart from Brahman cannot know Brahman. This much is known. Now I am being told that one who has merged into Brahman would also not know Brahman. This means Brahmajnana is impossible. Though born into Islam, the Hindu doctrine of one's true identity with the Impersonal Absolute has always fascinated me. I want to explore it and try and see if I cannot Realise this Brahman, whoever He might be.

B.: Your error lies in thinking in terms of objective knowledge. Brahmajnana is not knowing, for that is a mere mental activity or vritti, but BEING. To truly know is only to BE. That which IS does not say even I-AM, leave alone Aham Brahmasmi. Brahmajnana is therefore knowing in the sense of Being. The triad of subject-knowing-object is not [to be found with regard to Brahmajnana]. The Supreme knowledge is to BE. That is Silence devoid of the wicked vrittis of the mind which ruin one's Immortal Peace. The Real is real always. It does not ask questions or raise doubts. The ego is a spurious construction on top of the Self. Once it goes, the Self alone remains. The Self does not say, At last I have obtained freedom! because it was never bound. So, who is left to obtain Jnana? At best you can say that illusory illusion has vanished, to onlookers. The Jnana-siddha who is verily the Self Himself cannot admit having been bound by any illusion. So once Jnana dawns, there never was anything but Jnana, there is no one on whom it has dawned, and so in fact no such dawn has ever taken place- Jnana or the Self has always remained as Jnana.

Q.: It sounds paradoxical and ridiculous.

B.: On the level of the ego itself the apparent existence of the ego poses a perplexing paradox. If you manage to transcend the ego, it turns out that no such thing as the ego has ever existed, and thus no questions arise; the Self-Resplendent Heart alone remains. That is the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani, who is simply Jnana itself. You ask how to reach it. I say there is no reaching it, because it is you as the ego who is obscuring your Self. Give up the ego in one simple single stroke. All your troubles will end then and there.

Q.: Which is the best method of eradicating this false ego?

B.: You may ask yourself Who am I?. If you find it impractical, self-surrender is the way.

Q.: I have read the pamphlet Who am I?. I shall try to practise the same. But what is this self-surrender?

B.: Leave it to God or Randomness to do as He likes with you. Throw away all contents of your mind, because you as a personal-self exist no more, and thus those contents, filled with information about the personal self and its value-judgements, are of no relevance to you any more. To surrender is to simply cease to care.

Q.: If I do not care for myself, who will care for me? What if God forsakes me?

B.: One who is surrendered does not care whether he is forsaken or granted deliverance or lead on to Self-Realisation or abandoned. I just said that all cares are discarded [on surrendering]. You asked why, despite thinking of Arunachala, you are not liberated. The purport of the saying is that one who surrenders unconditionally finds peace, not one who says Arunachala with his lips once and then allows his mind to run riot.

Q.: I asked about B.'s fascination for the Hill.

B.: This Hill, apparently mute, is a wonder-worker. Its mere physical proximity turns the mind Self-wards and, having purified it, plunges it into the Heart once and for all dissolving it there. But for that, first you should unconditionally surrender yourself.

Q.: Is Lord Shiva living in the interior reaches of the Hill, blessing those who worship the Hill?

B.: Shiva is the Hill. It seems motionless and insentient to you because ignorance locks your awareness or consciousness to this particular body. If you were in my state then you would tremble and shake in awe even when someone says the name 'Tiruvannamalai' in your earshot. This Hill is the 'Keystone of Liberation'. What cannot be gained without expending crores and crores and crores of births in rigorous tapas, can easily be gained in a single lifetime with the assistance of this rare and priceless Keystone.

Q.: How to use this Keystone to effect my freedom from the cycle of births and deaths?

B.: Simply surrender to it.

Q.: I am a Moslem. Shall I not surrender at the Kaaba?

B.: Whereever and to whomever you surrender, it must be unconditional. You cannot have any demands after surrender.

Q.: Shall I not pray for Salvation?

B.: Having once surrendered, it is no longer open to you to ask anything, whether in the guise of a prayer or otherwise.

Q.: Is not union with the Divine my duty, that I am obliged to endeavour to discharge to the best of my competence?

B.: Having surrendered no personality remains; thus, duties, responsibilities, etc. do not exist anymore.

Q.: In that case my family will have to starve.

B.: Why so, pray?

Q.: Yes. If I give up all my duties, commitments and responsibilities, there will be no one to take care of them. I am the only bread-winner of my family.

B.: Surrender is at the mental level. The body goes on with its functions as before.

Q.: But you just said surrender means to throw away all duties, etc.

B.: Give them[duties, etc.] up to the Higher Power and remain at peace. Some power will animate your body and make it discharge all its earthly duties in an appropriate manner. Do not think it is you who are doing it.

Q.: If I give up control over the body, some Superior Power will assume control over it, is that not so?

B.: Yes.

Q.: If the activities performed by the Superior Power with my body are not to my liking or preference, not to my satisfaction- what then?

B.: That is it- once you surrender, whether at Kaaba or Arunachala, whether to Allah or Shiva, know this- you cannot have any likes or dislikes after your surrender, nor any tastes or preferences. The Lord's will takes the place your will. Your will disappears. That is surrender.

Q.: So... whatever he does with me, that is- the finality?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Sufism or the teaching of al-Wahhab? Which is true Islam?

B.: Suum cuique.

Q.:Unicuique suum non praevalent!

B.: Contra principia negantem non est disputandum. Nosce te ipsum!

Q.: Vexata quaestio!

B.: Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit. Ad astra per aspera!

Q.: To reach the zenith, which is the best path? Bakthi or Jnana?

B.: Amor omnia vincit. Love is the easiest path, because you have surrendered, everything is done by the Higher Power, you are faced with no requirement to plan your life and you have no role in anything. However, Love has to be there in Germ-form right from birth. There is no inoculating it. Jnana, although it is not easy, can be cultivated by will. To one who has Love, Jnana comes easily. The Jnani is Love Itself.

Q.: So the loftiest form of Love for God is not prayer, but...

B.: Surrender.

Q.: Nunc scio quid sit amor!

B.: [laughs]

Q.: Does surrender lead to intoxicating Love for God, or does this Love alone prompt one to surrender?

B.: One who has intoxicating Love cannot find anything to surrender- he does not think anything to be his. Partial surrender leads in due course of time to complete surrender. Sampoorana Sharanagathi is merely another name for Parabakthi, and that is Jnana.

15th July, 1936

The Shylock returns!

Q.: What did Jesus mean when He said, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."? Surely He did not mean that people should suffer for not being able to understand His words?

B.: Many people arrive at Ramanasramam, pick up the Pamphlet Who am I?, come here, prostrate before the Sofa, ask me for benediction and go away. Do all of them attain Jnana?

Q.: Meaning it is necessary to continuously remain in the physical presence of Sri Bhagawan for years at a time, to stand a genuine chance of Realising?

B.: The mental presence is what counts.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: Sri Ramakrishna has said- 'Complete guilelessness is necessary to Realize God.'. One man may keep on doing tapas all the hours of day and night, but if he has not freed himself from the idea 'I am doing tapas.', he is not going to reap the benefit. Another may remain in the thick of the world attending to various tasks which it is the prarabdha of his body to attend to, without thinking that he is doing anything, having surrendered mind and body, heart and soul, to God. To such a one Realisation comes effortlessly. What Jesus means is not that He is deliberately trying to keep anyone in the dark about His teachings, but that to those whose ego has not subsided, His teachings would be incomprehensible. It[the passage] means that one who still arrgantly thinks "I", even after being told to surrender, deserves no mercy and that he will certainly find the path to Realisation closed to him.

Q.: Where has Jesus advocated self-surrender?

To this question B. sallied forth confidently with his own Advaitic Sermon on the Mount. One quote from Jesus would be read out by B. from the Bible. Then He would explain its advaitic interpretation. I have captured the flow in

the form of a small table, reproduced hereasunder; verse numbers have not been quoted because this is an enormously famous passage from the Bible, and I do not want to waste space in the manuscript:

<b>Words of Jesus</b>	<b>Bhagawan's unique interpretation of the same</b>
<p><b>Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.</b></p>	<p>Those whose individual volition is on the wane are on their way to the kingdom of heaven, which is not some distant physical realm but only the true, formless Self of man. Poverty in spirit means unwillingness to claim responsibility for the actions of the body, be they good or bad, but accepting that God alone is acting and that one's body is just a tool in His hands. Humility and deference come naturally to one who has surrendered the responsibility for his life to God. Since God's Own [Holy] Spirit has taken up the responsibility for such a man and his actions, since his own desires, ambitions and aspirations have been given up at God's altar in an attitude of supreme sacrifice, and since his love of God is so extreme that he has abandoned his personality once and for all and given himself up into God's hands completely, he is called poor in spirit, for his own ego does not count anymore and he has nothing called his personal-self. Such a one would certainly inherit the Heavenly Kingdom- that is to say, attain Self-Realisation.</p>
<p><b>Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God</b></p>	<p>The mind divested of vrittis is said to have freed itself from all impurities. Vasanas cling to the Heart tightly, not allowing it to shine. When by the Sadhaka's incessant heroic effort and God's grace the vasanas are destroyed completely, the Heart is no longer sheathed in impurities, and shines as God himself. Then the ego sees it was never parted from its beloved, God, but was always One with Him. Thus the pure Heart sees itself to be not different from God.</p> <p>To be supremely unconcerned in all matters, with the mind cool, desireless and without hatred, is the only appropriate behaviour for a sadhaka.</p>
<p><b>For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from</b></p>	<p>For one who is drowning in the venomous ocean of more and more action, and craves rest and peace, surrender is the proper remedy. Action cannot bring about freedom from action. Further doing is not the remedy by which the</p>



<p><b>the law, till all be fulfilled.</b></p>	<p>effects of previous doing may be ameliorated. All action performed will definitely cause bondage so long as the idea I-am-the-doer remains in the mind. Action performed with kartritva buddhi plants the seeds for more similar action to be performed in the future, casting one into an ocean of Karma. The actorless action alone is appropriate. 'One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.' means action which is spurred by personal doership will definitely bring on more actions in its wake. The way to free oneself is to surrender to God unreservedly.</p>
<p><b>...if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.</b></p>	<p>Do not try to surrender to God while the petty desire for revenge still rankles in your mind, thinking, 'I shall surrender, bring God over to my side and then gleefully watch God punish my foe!' Only that surrender is valid which is completely bereft of motive. If any motive for surrendering is still left in you, including desire for or anticipation of Salvation or Self-Realisation, cleanse the mind of those motives, and then surrender, for God or the Heart will deign to accept only that surrender which is totally motiveless.</p>
<p><b>Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black</b></p>	<p>Man makes vain calculations about his own talents and abilities; when circumstances do not follow in line with his plans, he becomes dejected and despondent and blames God for his foolish mishaps. Man faces these problems because he sets store by his own capabilities and calls out for God's assistance only when matters go out of hand. 'Do not swear by thy head.' means 'Do not place faith in your prowesses, but instead depend on God, for this is sweet dependance. Surrender to Him and accept all ensuing events in your life as His inscrutable, unquestionable will, for total acceptance alone is the essence of complete surrender.' Your only role in life is to fall in line with His plan for you in the world, meanwhile keeping your mind fixed in Him always. 'Thou canst not make one hair white or black.' means that man, though he pretends to be the doer of the actions performed by his body, has in fact no control over the parabdha that shapes the events and circumstances constituting his life.</p>

Thus he should duly recognise his helplessness before the excruciating swirling whirlwind of the triple-karma and surrender his personal-self up to God. [In this context the master narrated a story, to demonstrate how the behaviour of the sadhaka who has surrendered his personal will to God, ought ideally to be.] Sri Ramakrishna narrated the following story to his disciples- In a certain village there lived a weaver who was a highly pious soul. When a customer asked him about the price of a cloth, he would clearly give a break-up of the cost and profit. Such was the faith people had in the weaver that his customers would never bargain with him. One late night he was sitting in front of his house thinking about Rama. At that time a group of bandits happened to pass that way. They were searching for a man to carry the stolen goods and seeing the weaver they put the load on his head and commanded him to carry them. All of a sudden policemen arrived at the spot and seeing them the bandits quickly made themselves scarce. The weaver, with the load of stolen goods on his head, was arrested. Next day, when he was brought before the magistrate the weaver said, "Your honour, by the will of Rama I was sitting awake till late last night outside my house. By the will of Rama I was thinking about Rama. By the will of Rama a band of robbers passed that way. By the will of Rama they had committed a robbery in a house and they put the load of stolen goods on my head. Just then, by the will of Rama, policemen came and seeing them the robbers fled. By the will of Rama the policemen arrested me. This morning, by the will of Rama, I was brought before you." The magistrate realised that the weaver was a pious man and ordered his release. On the way back the weaver said to his friends that by the will of Rama he had been released. What about the moral of the story? Sri Ramakrishna would say a true devotee of God depends on Him for everything; every moment of his life he is aware that whatever is happening, is happening by the will of the Lord.

**for your Father**

There is no need to ask God for anything. He knows what

<p><b>knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.</b></p>	<p>to do and how to do and when to do and through whom to do. Leave everything entirely upto Him. Do not carry any more cares on your head. Let your body become a mere instrument in His hands. If the ego tries to take back control after surrendering, meet its evil attempts with "Fanatical Resistance". Ensure your personal-self has no place in your thoughts. If think you must, let every thought that arises be a thought of God. Let there be a "War of Annihilation" between the outward-bent ego and God's Grace which turns the mind steadily inward. Take no part in it; in the end Grace wins. You need not ask him for Realisation. Instead, surrender the asker to Him; that is necessary and sufficient.</p>
<p><b>where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.</b></p>	<p>One who is attached to the things of the world cannot find the Self. If the treasure you seek is worldly wealth, and your mind is intent upon accumulating the riches of the world, your mind cannot turn inward. If the treasure you seek is the company of fellow man, and your mind is intent upon socialisation with the other people you see in the world, your mind cannot turn inward. Only that mind which steadfastly seeks its own origin can turn inward and find the Self. Only if the treasure you seek is the immortal, imperishable Athman, will your mind plunge into the Athman and therefore lose itself. There is no taboo in handling property or mingling with people if necessity genuinely arises. Only the craving for them must never arise. One who harbours mental attachments toward worldly wealth, family members, social status, etc., etc. and yet prays to God for Mukthi is a hypocrite. The line may be understood to mean, 'Where your mental attachments lie, there alone your mind will also abide.' Thus if the yearning is for Self-Realisation, the mind gravitates toward the Heart. Eventually this final longing is also[to be] given up.</p>
<p><b>if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole</b></p>	<p>The eye referred to here is the eye of the mind. The in-let of consciousness is only one; turned outwards it becomes thoughts and the world; turned inwards it discovers itself to be the Absolute Self. When the mind is single- that is to say, one-pointed or fixed in Aathmanishtai- it is said to be immersed in or filled with</p>

<p><b>body shall be full of darkness.</b></p>	<p>light. When, owing to the fact of having succumbed to the evil power of avidya maya, the eye, forsaking its natural state of repose in the Self, sees objects, it is said to suffer from the malady of differentiation or distraction or delusion. Although the essence of the mind-eye is only SAT, it has yielded to the evil influence of avidya maya, and therefore incorrectly supposes itself to be a transient subject witnessing an intransient objectively real world around it; therefore such a mind is known as a mind which is immersed in or filled with darkness; such a mind is verily the greatest evil known to man.</p>
<p><b>The light of the body is the eye. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!</b></p>	<p>There is only one source that allows channelisation of consciousness into the body, and thereby permits ignorance to flourish- that source is the eye of the mind. 'The Light of the body is the eye.' is to be read as 'The source wherefrom consciousness is dispersed throughout the body is only the mind.' Man is given only one mind or in-let of consciousness; if this one and only mind be drowned in a deluge of darkness[the illusion of multiplicity], how inexpressibly, intolerably horrific must that darkness be[ சொல்லுக்கு இணங்காத தாளமுடியா கொடுரம்!]. The Master was asked at this point why Jesus did not say so [say all this that the Master was now conveying] openly if that is what He had indeed meant. The Master responded with these words- Already He was regarded as possessing extreme views, and that is why He was crucified. If He had doled out these ideas in the midst of the cultural situation that existed in Israel at the time, probably they would have dragged Him away to the Cross immediately. The Jnani does not fear for his body. However, not many at the time would have understood these ideas if they had been explained in their original Advaitic terms. Thus, not understanding the words, they would have discarded them. Jesus knew His words must survive for posterity. So, the message was cleverly encoded in parable and metaphor. This would make it entertaining, and would reach and appeal to a wider audience. That way the words would be remembered, cherished and preserved. The parable is the only method of cipher that contains its</p>

own key. The key is experience. A man in possession of the right, corroborative experience, on the same lines as the man who has constructed the parable, would discover an altogether subterranean level of meaning in the same text that the man on the Clapham omnibus would find hugely amusing. 'Milk for babes, meat for men.', it is said. Those who like the entertainment value discharge an important function- they keep the text alive and in popular circulation, so that one who is looking for its message without knowing where he ought to be looking, chances upon it by sheer accident and is thus benefitted. This is one more reason why Jesus buried his messages beneath parable. Not just Jesus, many ancient teachers gave spiritual advice in this precise manner.

Q.: Pardon- would the 'Christian on the Clapham omnibus' not find it somewhat blasphemous to hear it being suggested that Jesus was an Advaitin?

B.: [laughing] அடப் பாவமே! செல்கின்ற போக்கை பார்த்தால் அவசியம் மீண்டும் இந்த கழுத்தை தூக்கு கயற்றுக்கு அர்ப்பணித்துவிட வேண்டியது தான் போல் இருக்கிறதே! {B.

sometimes relishes such self-deprecatory humour; the devotees not so much.} [now on a more serious note] This sort of interpretation is for the followers of Ajata-advaita only. It will baffle the 'Church-goer on the Clapham omnibus'. He may arrive at the conclusion that some sort of witchcraft is being conducted to baffle his wits. The ordinary man wants something 'to do'. His entire life has revolved around 'doing' only. So when it comes to Realisation also, he eagerly asks, "Yes, seems to be very interesting. I am drawn to it. So please tell me... what ought I to 'do' to get enlightened?" What can one say? Sometimes I reply, "Don't do anything.". That typically enrages people. They imagine they are being mocked at. They say, "You are a selfish ghou[ சுயநல பிசாசு ]. You do not want to share the fruit of your Realisation with others." What can I do? Realisation is in Stillness only. Only பூர்ணமனோநிச்சலம் can discover [itself to be] the Self. Mental movements are powerless to apprehend the Self- they take one farther

	and farther away. So don't open such matters['Jesus the Advaitin'] for discussion where you see it would be patently unwise...
<b>Ye cannot serve God and mammon.</b>	To desire the welfare of the body and other earthly possessions at the same time while craving Self-Realisation, is trying to use a crocodile for a raft while crossing a river.
<b>Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. ...take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?</b>	The Sadhaka's extent of self-surrender must be so total that he is indifferent to what he does with his external life, what he eats, what he drinks, what he wears, etc., etc.. No one was suggesting that the body be neglected or purposely subject to destruction. To reach the state of kaivalyam one must die, but dying does not lie in destruction of the body; true death is the extinction of "I" and "Mine". Only, value-judgements, tastes and preferences should be given up. The quality of indifference to outer matters comes automatically to one whose entire focus is directed towards discovering God and merging in him.
<b>But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.</b>	God automatically protects the Sadhaka who is seeking Realisation from any harm. All one has to do is to focus the mind on the quest to the total exclusion of everything else. Other matters would be taken care of by God without the Sadhaka needing to ask. The Sadhaka who is still in the stage of asking for something or anything[from God]- he is not a pakvi. He has a long way yet to traverse.
<b>Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.</b>	The earnest sadhaka would not think of today even. How then can one who thinks of tomorrow be called an earnest sadhaka? God never forsakes one who has unconditionally surrendered. There is no need to worry about our perceived needs, defects and defeciencies. God takes care of them. We must never allow the mind to dwell on mundane or temporal concerns, but fix it always in the Self.
<b>Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast</b>	Ajata-advaita if discussed with one who is yet to arrive at the precious understanding that all action is futile, and whose mind yet moves amongst the senses, will result in



<p><b>ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.</b></p>	<p>seriously perverse and deleterious consequences to the one who opens the discussion unto such an ignorant one. One may even doubt, 'Is this the face of my mother?', but of this [aforementioned] fact there can be no doubt.</p> <p>How can the unenlightened one, who is without experience of Reality, and who sees a world outside of and distinct from himself, understand the Truth behind the true meaning of the sacred teaching of my peerless Sadhguru?</p>
<p><b>Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.</b></p>	<p>Seek the Self earnestly and you will find it- nay, if you are earnest He[Brahman] will come looking to you.</p> <p>Earnestness consists in not swaying away from the nectar-like words of the Guru having heard it once. Having heard the Guru, whose power to grant Liberation makes the gods in the Heavens hiccup with envy, utter once the words, "Thou Arte That." in one's ear, if one thereafter enters the world of vrittis and continues to allow his mind to move among the senses, and we are asked whether his folly can be compared to Indra's folly when he coveted the wife of Maharshi Gautama, we reply no, because it is worse.</p> <p>For the earnest sadhaka who is free from the poisonous delusion of mental attachment, enquiry into the Real nature of Being-Consciousness, denoted by the Word 'Thou', is alone sufficient for Realisation; he need not dwell on the other 2 words.</p>
<p><b>Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.</b></p>	<p>The strait gate is the path of merging the mind into Self. Not many manage to find it. If traversed, it gives Immortality, true Life.</p> <p>The wide gate is the path of allowing the mind to evaporate and become dissipated in the form of thoughts. Many find it and travel on it. It leads only to total destruction of peace and the complete ruin of one's Inherent Happiness of Self-absorption.</p> <p>The One and only Reality can only be experienced by those alone that attain peace by stilling the movements of the mind; it is well beyond the reach of those whose minds are restless.</p>

P>S> For some of the above verses, B. did not do the explaining himself. He simply read out an appropriate Tamil verse composed by the poet Muruganar that brought out the Advaitic implication of the Bible verse in question. The interpreter translated for the Hall, so that the Westerners be benefitted. In fact, I also had the chance to listen only because of the Interpreter. Changgath Tamil bamboozled me at the time.

Q.: Bhagawan says in verse 30 of the Ulladhu Narpadhu poem that the quest for Reality begins in the mind. Yet, when people ask him for practical guidance on the quest, he speaks of the Heart. What is the explanation? Is the Heart the last stage of the practice or the Goal itself?

B.: The Sadhaka begins the practice with the mind turned inward to oppose the onslaught of the ferocious, rushing thoughts which plague him day and night and leave him bereft of peace. By virtue of the practice, he eventually comes to locate the sensation of 'I' through feeling-recollection. When the mind eventually sinks in the Heart, undisturbed bliss is overwhelmingly felt. There is then the feeling of "I" which is not divorced from pure awareness. So, head and heart become, or are realised to be, one and the same.

Q.:In verse 266 of Vivekachudamani Sri Shankaracharya says that Brahman can be realised by Buddhi, the subtle intellect, which means that the intellect must be of immense help in Realisation. While it seems to be Sankara's opinion that the purified Buddhi is indispensable to Realisation, B. is of the opinion that it must be destroyed before Realisation dawns. Is that not so?

B.: The word "buddhi" is rightly translated by you as 'the subtle intellect'; that is the usual meaning; but in this verse it also specifically means the cave of the Heart. Nevertheless the subtle intellect can also realise Brahman and is therefore of profound significance to the sadhaka.

B. read out aloud verse 266-

"In the cave of the Buddhi there is the Brahman, distinct from gross and subtle, the Existence Absolute, Supreme, the One without a second. For one who lives in this cave as Brahman, O Beloved, there is no more entrance into a woman's womb."

The purified chittam or mind cleansed of vrittis is not different from the Self.

16 July 1936

Chadwick: [unhappily] I have been staying here for months. I see no improvement in me. If anything, my condition seems to be taking a turn for the worse. The viscosity of my thoughts is on the wax. I am consistently using Bhagawan's vichara method. Yet there is no diminution in the strength of the army of thought that I am attacked by day after day. I am desperate to Realize



in this lifetime. Or, if I am born again, Bhagawan must also agree to be born again to help me Realise in the next life. Without Bhagawan what can I do? Someone from the back of the Hall called out- "He is a Jivan-muktha. Where is the possibility of further birth for Him? Is not the suggestion absurd?" Chadwick merely ignored him.

B.: Give up the idea that you are striving for Realisation.

C.: [Aghast] What?! Bhagawan would have me abandon the quest? Has he decided I am unworthy to Realize?

B.: Did you pay attention to what was said to you? You were not asked to abandon the quest. You were asked to abandon the spurious idea that there is a 'you' which is trying to merge with a 'super-you'.

C.: Yes, the jivatman into the paramatman.

B.: Oho! பேஷ்! ரொம்பப் பிரமாதம்! So you have also picked up these terms. Only the other day I explained. One who asserts or believes in the existence of the Jivatman will never Realize.

C.: If there is no Jivatman who is the Sadhaka?

B.: Exactly.

C.: [gloomily] I understand nothing.

B.: Throw away the belief in the existence of the personal-self. It is only on that erroneous basis that you are now asking questions.

C.: But I must remain to perform Sadhana!

B.: What is the objective of Sadhana?

C.: Destruction of the ego.

B.: No, transcendence of the idea of its existence.

C.: So if I just free myself from the idea that I exist as an individual person, the Who am I? method is not needed?

B.: First discard that erroneous idea. Discarding that idea, do not bring in any other idea in its place, such as Aham Brahmasmi, I am being-consciousness, etc.. Remain free from all ideas- that is, all mental identification. Let the mind remain in the state of pure subjective awareness free from all objectification or identification. Then, if thoughts arise, tackle them with the counter-thought, 'To whom has this thought arisen?'. This arrests the further development of the thought. Then return the mind to its native state of pure subjective awareness. This is the way.

C.: Will repetition of 'I am not the ego, but am the Absolute Self.' help to weaken the grip of the ego?

B.: It is a mental activity. It strengthens the ego and makes it more obstreperous. Hear these verses-

[B. reads out Tamil verses from a notebook-]

Oh mind! Thou hast already suffered, thinking 'I am a Jiva.'. Do not fall into worse delusion by believing 'I am Brahman.'. In the Transcendental state there is no one answering to the name of 'I'.

Man behaves recklessly, even while believing 'I am this very little body.'. If he begins to imagine 'I am the Supreme One.', will anything remain that he will consider wrong to do?

C.: For Realisation, is it enough if I read B.'s works or should I read the ancient Hindu Advaita texts also, such as Adi Sankara, Nishchal Das and so on?

B.: [reading out from another page of the notebook-]

When mirage-water serves to quench thirst, and painted fire to cook meals, then deliverance can be had by mere book-knowledge.

Just as a dull-witted woman may believe that the festivities of marriage constitute conjugal bliss, so also the foolish man that has not won the experience of Truth imagines book-knowledge has brought him that Experience.

C.: Should I not acquire a good grounding in the basic concepts?

B.: The pamphlets made available here will do. Read them repeatedly if you feel like doing any reading. Dig deeper, not wider.

S>M>

Q.: What is the Supreme State?

B.: Remaining without the ego.

Q.: What is the ego?

B.: The thought "I" which hides the True "I".

Q.: If everything is an illusion, then what is Real?

B.: Being-consciousness.

Q.: In that case, how did illusion arise out of Being-consciousness?

B.: See if it arose.

Q.: How to know if Jnana is not merely Sunya or blankness [voidness]?

B.: Only by Direct Experience.

Q.: Which is the most effective place for practising vichara? Is it Tiruvannamalai?

B.: It is your own Heart.

Q.: The ego seems like the demon Raktabeeja. If one thought is cut, a thousand others take its place. What to do?

B.: Do not stultify yourself by constantly pondering over possibility of failure; that is the surest way to handicap oneself. Persevere with the vichara. All will come right in the end.

S>M>

The moslem gentleman again-

Q.: I want to effect Self-Realisation as quickly as possible so that I can escape from the sorrow of Samsara. Will the Who-am-I method suffice by itself?

B.: Yes.

Q.: I wonder how much time it is going to take for me to Realize?

B.: What is time?

Q.: One measures it by looking at the clock and the calendar.

B.: But what is it?

Q.: I leave it to the omniscient Bhagawan to enlighten me.

B.: Time is only a mental idea. Consider the following story from the Mahabharata:-

Revati was the only daughter of King Kakudmi, a powerful monarch who ruled Kusasthali, a prosperous and advanced kingdom under the bed of the ocean-floor. Thinking that no one could prove to be good enough to marry his beautiful daughter in the earthly realm, Kakudmi took Revati with him to Brahmaloaka to ask Brahma's advice about finding a suitable husband for her. Brahma was listening to a musical performance when they arrived, and so they waited patiently until the performance was finished. After the performance was finished, the King and his daughter humbly approached Brahma. King Kakudmi bowed and made his request: "O Brahmâ! To whom shall I betroth this daughter? I have come to you to ask on this point. I have searched for many princes and seen also a good many of them and none of them is to my liking and so my mind is not at rest." Brahma laughed at the foolishness of the King. "O King! The princes that you thought would become the bridegroom of your daughter, have all died; their sons and grandsons and their friends even have all passed away." Time, Brahma goes on to explain, runs differently on different planes of existence. During the time they had waited in Brahmaloaka to see him, 27 chaturyugas had passed on Earth. Everything that Kakudmi had and owned, his friends and family, his sons and wife, his armies and treasures, had vanished with the time that had passed. The King and his daughter were overcome with astonishment and grief for everything they had lost, but Brahma comforted them, and recommended a worthy husband currently on earth: Balarama, the twin brother of Krishna. Today, we so often think of time to be an arrow moving in one direction, with a beginning, middle and end. However, ancient Hindu philosophy was familiar with the concept that time is relative and many passages in the Vedic scriptures continuously point out that the cosmic time of the gods is different than the time on earth. What Kakudmi and Revathy thought were just minutes in front Brahma, were in fact millennia in terms of our time. Thus, aeons had passed away at home. When they came back, they did so to a vastly different place, which they could not recognise at all.

Q.: What is the moral of the story?

B.: Time and space are purely mental conceptualisations. They are totally unreal. Einstein's Relativity has already done away the ideas of absolute time and absolute space. Only the speed of Light in vacuum is said to be a constant. Likewise, in his 1930 publication, 'The Physical Principles of the Quantum Theory', Heisenberg writes, "...in classical physical theories it has always been assumed either that this interaction [the interaction between observer and object] is negligibly small, or else that its effect can be eliminated from the result by calculations based on "control" experiments. This assumption is not permissible in atomic physics; the interaction between observer and object causes uncontrollable and large changes in the system being observed, because of the discontinuous changes characteristic of atomic processes. The immediate consequence of this circumstance is that in general every experiment performed to determine some numerical quantity renders the knowledge of others illusory, since the uncontrollable perturbation of the observed system alters the values of previously determined quantities." His theory postulates that the more precisely the position of some particle is determined, the less precisely its momentum can be known, and vice versa. What does it all mean? Till now, the physicist thought, "I want to know more about it. So, let me go close to it and measure it, that I may study it.". However, when he tries to adopt the same approach at the sub-atomic level, nature is not so agreeable. The very act of measurement seems to influence- if not bring into existence- the data that is measured! Any pursuit of information concerning the position of the particle prior to the time of measurement is mere mental hypothesis. The only way to determine or ascertain information about the particle is to carry out a measurement; measurement contributes to generation of the same information the extraction of which had been the objective of the act of measurement, in which case we are not measuring but creating. Measurement [or observation] and creation have thus become inextricably interlinked. Aeons ago our Sages had discovered this and given it the name Drishti-srishti-vada. The physicist Bohr seems to feel that an experimental observation instantaneously collapses the inherently uncertain state of the particle in such a manner as to make its future evolution consistent with what we observe experimentally. For instance take a particle which is observed or detected or measured at a certain specific location. Thus the probability of its being detected in any other place suddenly becomes zero. Up until that point, the particle's position is inherently uncertain and unpredictable, an uncertainty which only disappears when it is observed and measured. This immediate transition from a multi-faceted potentiality to a single actuality, according to Bohr, need not necessarily warrant an inevitable

inference that there ought to be only one precise point at which such a collapse occurred. Thus, Bohr argues, it is necessary to discard the laws governing individual events in favour of a direct statement of the laws governing aggregations and probabilities. According to Bohr's model, there is no deep quantum reality and no actual world of particles- only a description of the world in these terms. Thus science is relegated to merely affording us a formalism that we can use to predict events and the properties of matter. The laws developed by Bohr and Heisenberg seem to suggest that particles exist in a combination-of-all-possible-states-at-once, lacking even basic properties such as a definite location, and instead existing everywhere and nowhere at once. Only when a particle is measured does it suddenly materialize, seeming to decide on its position as if by a roll of the dice. Thus their interpretation is essentially a pragmatic view, effectively saying that it really does not matter exactly what science means; the important thing being that it "works", in the sense that it correlates with reality in all possible experimental situations. Einstein, on the other hand, keeps arguing that the physical world must have real properties whether or not one measures them; he seems to particularly abhor Bohr's claim that a complete understanding of reality lies forever beyond the capabilities of rational thought, insisting that the idea that a particle's position before observation is inherently unknowable is nonsense and makes a mockery of the whole of physics. The good gentleman is apparently still convinced in his brilliant mind that the positions and states of particles must already have been established before observation...

Q.: From all this I gather that B. himself sees the world as some some sort of dream?

B.: There is really no world for B. to see. He abides as the Self and sees only the Self.

The moslem then sat silently in meditative posture for a few minutes near the Sofa. Presently he rose, thanked the Master, bowed and left.

P>S> The Latin sparring I could follow, but not the lines about Einstein's Relativity and Heisenberg's Quantum Mechanics. I have reproduced them here to the best of my ability. It is for the Reader to make sense of them, if he so happens to possess knowledge concerning the field. I wonder who gave Bhagawan Einstein's and Bohr's and Heisenberg's scientific papers to read! He is unlikely to have himself taken the trouble to procure them, for he was really not interested in any reading. Whenever he read anything, it was only to explain to a devotee some teaching or point of his. The fact that he was in a position to understand the modern complex physics of this era does not surprise me, not withstanding the fact that I am aware he is an exponent of the Ajata-advaita philosophy. He is Bhagawan the Omniscient.

17 July 1936

A dark young man has come to the ashram. For a long time he was standing outside the window opposite Sri Bhagawan's Sofa. Whenever B. gazed through the window, he would become tearfully fervent with emotion and slap his cheeks, first respective hands with the respective cheek-sides for a few times, and then in a cross manner, and then back again, and so forth. B. noticed it for a few times and then sent someone to bring the boy inside. After a few moments B. received the news that the boy was refusing to come inside. He felt that being a person of lower caste, he might not be entitled for attendance at the Hall. Bhagawan asked the messenger to say to the boy that such distinctions were not observed in the ashram. Again the messenger came back only to say that the boy was still hesitating.

B.: Ask him whether he will come inside of his own accord or whether Bhagawan should come out and forcibly drag him in here.

Moments later the boy was standing near the Sofa, silently crying, palms joined together in supplication in front of his chest. Bhagawan wordlessly motioned to him to sit down. For a while nobody spoke. The boy kept shedding tears. Then Bhagawan spoke to him of his own accord:

B.: [gently] What happened?

Q.: Sami, my name is Antony Pakirisamy. I am from Palayangottai.

B.: Why are you crying?

Q.: Everyone in the world is evil. Bhagawan alone is good. I am unable to stomach the contrast.

B.: What happened?

Q.: 3 years back, my father bought a house in a government auction. It was in a Vanniyar locality. Everyone advised him to leave the house on rent. But he adamantly moved into it. The local people were enraged. They shouted many warnings. But my father would not budge. 6 months thence, someone split open my father's head with a crowbar on the open roadside, killing him on the spot. I thought it would be a lethal action on our part to file a police complaint, because they are powerful people. But my mother was pertinacious in her resolve to file a complaint. She ignored my pleas. A report was lodged with the police. A year back the culpable party was awarded conviction in the trial court. My mother was overjoyed to hear the news, but not so me, because I know their behaviour well. 2 months back, the Madras High Court upturned the conviction and acquitted the man. Coming back from jail, he has come straight to our house only. I was away at work. When I came back, a big croud was standing near my house. Only, there was no house to be seen, only smouldering ruins. The devil had locked both the doors- heavy, wooden

doors- from the outside and set fire to the building while my mother had been sleeping inside. He had come prepared not only with big barrels of kerosene, but also locks, to be used. By the time people in the surrounding areas came there, he had rushed away, and by the time the fire was put out and the door broken open, only a charred cadaver was left inside; initially I did refuse to believe it was my mother, because my mother has never been unresponsive when I call out to her...

There was a stunned silence in the Hall. The youth was now not crying. He had a lost, abstracted look on his face, as though he had left his body behind long ago and astrally travelled to some far away place.... Meanwhile, Bhagawan had seemingly completely turned into a statue; his demeanour was poised more rigidly than usual. He was not looking at the boy, but had his eyes closed. This was unusual, because usually one would not be able to even catch him blinking his eye-shutters. His brow was not furrowed, but his lips were taut in a single, straight line; if one looked too continually it was slightly frightening, because he was not smiling. The boy also sat still. It is my guess that if I had had the power to sense psychic waves of communication, I would have seen the boy's grief- his agony, his pain, his mad anguish- being silently absorbed by the Maharshi. At length the Master stirred and found that the boy had dozed off, his back leaning against the wall, head lolled over to one side and mouth agape. Someone tried to call out to him to wake up but the Master gestured for silence. He was awoken only when it was time for the communal meal at the ashram, and taken to the dining hall. He tried to insist on seating himself outside the building whilst eating. B., who can be really solicitous when he feels the need, would have none of it- actually caught hold of the boy's elbow and stood him up when found him outside, and ordered him in! In the evening the boy had questions to ask, and he seemed more cheerful-

Q.: Will Sami please bless me so that I may Realize the fruit of 'Dahara-vidya'?

B.: Why do you crave it?

Q.: One who has attained it is said to be in constant union with Siva. I want to be with Siva all the time. Although my father converted to Christianity, I have no affection for Jesus Christ. I want Siva only.

B.: Try to practise gradual attenuation of the relevance of the personal-self. When it finally vanishes, the Real is left over as the residue.

Q.: What is the practical method for it? Is it the 'Who-am-I?' technique that Sami has pioneered?

B. Yes.

Q.: I am more temperamentally suited for the path of longing and devotion to God. I find the Jnana-marga unattractive. Lord Siva is my Beloved.

B.: Then surrender to Him without reserve, and He will take care of you. After surrendering you need have no worries or cares. Thereafter the responsibility for your life is no longer with you. It is His.

Q.: Many here are pandits and scholars in Sanskrit. They are able to worship Him by chanting Sanskrit mantras. I belong to a lower-caste. I do not know any Sanskrit. I feel regret I am unable to praise my Beloved by chanting mantras to Him in Sanskrit.

B.: He cares for Pure Love, not for Sanskrit. Listen to the following story- Gurudruvan was a hunter who made his living by selling the skin and teeth of animals hunted by him. He sold his goods during the day and hunted during the evening, or late at night, using his precise sense of hearing. His and his family's only source of nutrition was from the flesh of the animals hunted by him. One day he was roaming around in the forests looking for a target on which he could fix his arrow's aim. As he was walking along he heard a deep, melodious chant resonating from somewhere. Gurudruvan went towards the sound. He found that it was coming from a temple in the middle of the forest. Gurudruvan was acclimatised to hunting in this part of the forest. He knew well the routine followed for worship in the temple everyday. Usually the temple would be closed at this time. Today, evidently, seemed to be a special day for the God that the people worshiped in this temple. The temple was flooded with people, though it was late in the evening. It was a rhythmic chanting. Gurudruvan listened to the chanting for a few seconds. Then he went back to his work. Without the hunted animals, his family would not have enough to eat. Gurudruvan moved on. Though Gurudruvan went deeper and deeper inside the forest, today seemed to be an unlucky day- he could not hunt enough to eat for himself and his family. Gurudruvan knew that going back home with so little food was not a feasible option. So he went deeper and deeper inside the forest. Though Gurudruvan had been a hunter here his whole life, he had never ventured this deep into the forest. This part of the forest, although Gurudruvan could not explain why, was different. The trees seemed quieter, the sky seemed darker, and there was total silence. Gurudruvan brought out his bow and kept his arrow in readiness just in case prey should appear. As he walked yet deeper into the forest, he saw a tiny pond in the middle of a clearing amidst the trees. The pond shimmered with refreshing, cool water which reflected the multicoloured evening sunset. The sun peeped out of the thick branches of the surrounding trees. Yet, Gurudruvan being a hunter, the picture of scenic beauty spread out before him did not enter his mind. Looking at the spot, Gurudruvan smiled. It was the



perfect place to hunt. Animals invariably came to ponds to drink water. The trees yonder would provide the perfect hiding place. Gurudruvan planned to hide himself behind the enormous trunks of the trees there, or perch himself on one of their branches; from there he planned to hunt his prey. Silently Gurudruvan checked the place, using his sharp hunting instincts. After studying all the trees in the vicinity, he chose the tree closest to the pond, because it offered the perfect hiding place and because the view from there would cover all the banks of the small pond. He was climbing the tree when Gurudruvan heard a loud noise coming from his waist. Gurudruvan hurriedly mounted a branch of the tree and looked at his waist. He cursed his ill-luck angrily when he saw that his water pouch was torn. He looked down and saw that at one place the bark of the tree was sharp. He had not seen it. There the bark had scraped his water pouch. Now water was leaking from it steadily. Gurudruvan was not seriously perturbed by the fact, however; after all, he had found a place for himself by the side of the pond. He waited patiently on the branch of the tree, the water from his pouch steadily leaking and falling below. As he waited, he suddenly remembered the scene from the temple he had seen today. What words were they, that the people there had been uttering today? He was curious to remember, but his recollection failed him. Gurudruvan had never studied books or scriptures in his life. For his way of life it was unnecessary. Then suddenly it flashed across his mind that the word they had been chanting was "SHIVA". Gurudruvan being a man of the forest never understood devotion or temples or worship. As far as he was concerned, these men were fools to worship someone or something they could not possibly see in the flesh and blood. They were absurdly pouring their hearts out into the ears of a stone idol! He thought to himself in mockery of those whom he had seen at the temple, 'Why should I be like them? I will do the opposite of what they do. How amusing it will be!' So, sitting on the tree-branch, to pass his time Gurudruvan went on muttering s sharp eyes picked up a rustle of the leaves. As he peered through the dense cluster of branches in front of him, he found that the leaves of the trees were obstructing his view. Gurudruvan plucked off the offending leaves carefully and threw them down one by one. He was careful not to make a ruckus- otherwise he would scare away any animals coming towards the pond. He threw the leaves down one by one making as less noise as possible. The rustling, he discerned, was just a mole which had re-entered its burrow. Gurudruvan saw the evening sun setting and slowly darkness gathering around the pond. A chill wind blew over him. Gurudruvan shivered, but he did not even think of giving up his spot on the tree. 'Vashi! Vashi!' he went on repeating, for no good reason- it was simply that the phrase seemed to have stuck to his

tongue. Moreover, if he stopped uttering it, his mind started paying attention to the cold wind stinging his body unbearably. So he went on mumbling the reversed name, hardly conscious he was doing so. In the first quarter of the night, Gurudruvan heard movement near the pond. He quietly brought out his bow and fixed his arrow, ready to shoot. He knew that he had to rely more on his hearing than his sight to shoot correctly. Gurudruvan saw a faint silhouette of a deer coming near the pond. As the deer came near, Gurudruvan said to himself that it was a beautiful deer, a female. Gurudruvan was surprised, for such a thought had occurred to him today for the first time in all these years of hunting. Castigating himself, a hunter, for thinking such a foolish, unproductive thought, Gurudruvan took careful aim, pulled the arrow back and was about to let it go, when a voice spoke out of nothingness- 'Hunter! Please, please do not kill me!' He wondered whether some evil spirit had possessed him, and sat paralyzed with fear as he kept his arrow tautly on the bow, unable to let it go. 'Please have mercy on me! Please do not kill me, hunter!' said the voice, and the hunter understood the sound was coming from the deer. 'Why should I let you go? You are my food! If I let you go, I and my family would die of hunger! No! I must kill you!' responded the hunter, and again took aim. The deer said in a pleading voice, 'I am looking for my family. Once I am reunited with my family, I shall appraise my husband of the situation, and then I will surely come to you! I promise!' For some reason the hunter felt a strange emotion stir within his chest for the first time in his life. He had no idea that its name was Compassion. He said, 'Go! Go fast! Before I change my mind! Go!' Once the deer went away, Gurudruvan sat on the branch of the tree wondering what had come over him. If anyone were to come to know, he would become the laughing stock of the village! 'Vashi! Vashi!' his repetitions continued unabated. Another quarter of the night passed. Now Gurudruvan saw another deer from far. It was bigger and looked majestic. Gurudruvan could see it was a male deer. He promised to himself that he would compensate now for letting that female deer get away. The deer seemed to be piteously looking for someone. Gurudruvan reflected that thinking like this would only lead to his death by starvation. 'Hunter! I know you are hunting for me! But please let me go now! I am looking for my wife and young child. Once I see my wife and child, I promise I would come back!' said the deer. 'Go!' said the hunter ruefully, again relenting. He passed his time, as before, in muttering the strange word he had picked up that day and jocularly modified, and in casually plucking a few more of the tree's leaves and throwing them down. Another quarter of the night passed. Then he saw a female deer, with a tiny deer following in its rear, come towards the pond. He was elated at his double good fortune. The mother deer had kept her promise, and what was

more, brought him an additional reward! This deer said- 'Hunter! Have you seen my brother and sister-in-law? I have found their child and have it with me. The child needs to see its parents immediately.' The deer saw with widened eyes that the hunter meant to kill it. It spoke out tearfully, 'Think about this young baby deer. Please, hunter, let me go only for the present! I promise I would be back, after telling my family everything!' Gurudruvan slapped his head hard in frustration; however, he knew that it was the only right thing to do, to let the deers go. The deers skipped away. The last quarter of the night was almost over, when Gurudruvan had the shock of his life- four deers standing subserviently before him! Gurudruvan blinked wondering whether he was hallucinating. The faint light thrown by the Sun, a segment of which was now tottering upon the edge of the horizon, confirmed that indeed four deers were walking towards the pond. He instantly picked up his bow and arrow; however, the four deers approached nearer instead of running away. As the four deers saw the hunter, they bowed to him. Gurudruvan did not know what to say. One female deer said: 'Great hunter! Thank you so much! You trusted me and let me go! I have finished my duties and here I am. I will keep my part of the bargain! Yes, hunter! It was because of the fact that you let me go, that I was able to help the child meet its mother and father! I have come to keep my promise! We all have completed our duties! You can do what you wish with us!' The other female deer said: 'Great hunter! I do not have any family other than these here! Take my life too! I also want to go, where they are going!' The hunter said: 'Who are you? You are not deers. Who are you?' Instantly the deers transformed into Gods. The most magnificent God in the group said- 'Son! Your worship today, cannot equal anything that has ever been done in my name so far!' Gurudruvan merely shook his head in bewilderment. The God smiled and said 'This is the most perfect worship I have ever seen!' The God cleared away the mass of Bilva leaves at the bottom of the tree, exposing a Shiva-lingam underneath. The linga was wet and so were the leaves. Gurudruvan felt understanding come over him. 'Vashi! Vashi!' when repeated again and again had become 'Shiva! Shiva!'. The water sprinkled on the Lingam and leaves had dripped from his punctured water-pouch. He had been sitting on a Bilva tree all this time, plucking its leaves and throwing them down. Gurudruvan fell at the feet of Lord Shiva, who asked him thereupon, 'Child, is there anything you want from me?'. The hunter merely wept. Lord Shiva serenely smiled, blessed him and disappeared together with the other Gods. Thereafter the hunter never wanted nor needed anything, for Permanent Peace dawned upon him. [The Sage as usual not only narrates but also acts out the story; all in the Hall are moved, especially when he asks in a hoarse, teary voice "You are not

deers. Who are you?", when a look of pure astonishment and joy dawns on his face the next moment, and when he melts into a cascade of tears after the words, "...want from me?".]

Q.: Sami has made me happy by telling me the story; likewise, if he will pray enlighten me as to its moral, I shall be even more delighted.

B.:Covering a Shiva-lingam with Bilva leaves and sprinkling water on the same is done by many people on the night of Sivarathri. Are all blessed with darshan of Lord Shiva? No. So, what special merit has the hunter performed?

Q.: I am unable to cognise it. Sami must tell.

B.:You think and tell me.

Q.: [after some time] The hunter's worship was completely an accident... but how is that a good thing? Is it?

B.: [laughing] Yes, that is it. When people pray they want this and that. The moment you ask for anything, the prayer's potency is eradicated. When prayer is conditional, you are no longer praying for God but for yourself. It becomes a barter, a business transaction with a give-and-take. God does not know how to take. He can only give [Himself]. There is nothing, for God, that is yet His to take into His fold. Everything has verily always been His. When a newborn infant arrives into the world, does it come equipped with linguistic skills, so that it may ask, 'Mother, will you please give me milk to drink?'. No. It does not know to communicate. Thus, its guardians are especially protective of it, because if it were to need anything, it would not even be able to take cognisance of that need. So they anticipate all its needs and provide therefor, of their own accord. Likewise, one who, by virtue of having unconditionally surrendered to the Higher Power, does not know anything other than Being-Consciousness or God, is taken care of automatically by God. It cannot occur to such a one to ask God for this or that- what is left in him to make demands or requests? He has lost his personal-self long ago. So, for whom to ask? What is left after the loss of the personal-self is only God. So, to whom to ask? Who is to ask whom, for what, and why? One whose has really surrendered has his mind sunk in the blissful deluge of Being- no oblivion it is. The thought "I" would never occur to him, leave alone the thought "I have this need.". No "I" means no needs and no asker. The prayer, I want this and that, is a lower form of prayer that is found among people attached to worldly cares. One who reaches the zenith of yearning for God would not even pray "Oh! God, grant me eternal union with Thee."; he would simply renounce the thought "I" that is the cause for apparent separation; this is perpetual pray-er-less prayer; it is the loftiest prayer, for it is the same as surrender of the pray-er. It is said, 'God helps those who help themselves.'. I say, 'God takes over on behalf of those who cannot help

themselves[,and who have, recognising their inability to help themselves, unconditionally surrendered themselves to Him, heart and soul, mind and body]. The hunter in the story was so permeated with joy on seeing God that he was not interested in asking anything anymore. This effortless volitionlessness is the aim of Sadhana: it is a state in which "I" does not arise. Men subject themselves to all sorts of austerities, greedily craving for siddhis that would enable them to subjugate the world. This simple hunter was satiated- nay, overwhelmed- by a single vision of God. Thereafter he needed nothing- that means his idea of being an individual self melted away at the moment of the vision, leaving God alone as the residue.

Q.: This hunter in the story- he had never heard about God! Even when he hears one of God's names, he twists it!

B.: Sri Ramakrishna has said that Guilelessness is the way to God. One whose mind is loaded with concepts and ideas must first incinerate all this useless luggage before his mind can become light enough to be deployed for the purpose of sadhana. One who is a simpleton as it is has nothing much to lose- he finds surrender easier than the scholar, and therefore, yes, succeeds- elegantly- in Realising. It does not matter if you make no effort to propitiate God. If you have truly surrendered in your Heart, that is ALL.

Q.: The path of surrender seems less fastidious compared to 'Who-am-I?'. Have I made a correct observation?

B.: You say you find surrender suitable for your temperament. Adopt it.

Q.: In the 'Who-am-I?' path if a thought occurs, one asks 'To whom has this thought occurred?'. Likewise- in the surrender method- ?

B.: 'This is God's business, since I have surrendered to Him. What locus standi have I to involve myself in it?' In either case the question's purpose is only to arrest further development of the thought, and the mind should be returned to its native state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly as soon as the question is asked.

Q.: Now I want to ask- do we have the right to revenge ourselves on those who have harmed us?

B.: You have not the right even to think, 'This man or that has harmed me.'. Thoughts arise from the ego, which is an illegitimate, shadowy, spurious offspring of the Self. The ego has no right to remain apart from the Self. Do not hold on to this stolen property anymore, but return it to its rightful master, the Self. If you have nothing called "I", is there anything left yet to be harmed or destroyed?

Q.: So, forgive-and-forget is the best policy?

B.: Neither take offence nor remember [or commit to memory]. Then the question does not arise.

Q.: What about observance of caste differences? Is it not an evil? What does Sami say to this?

B.: Then why did you not enter this hall and the dining place?

Q.: I know Sami does not entertain any notions about caste, race etc..

However, the Brahmins here may view my presence with revulsion. I do not wish to cause any inconvenience to anyone.

B.: If your mind is unsullied by difference there will be no difference anywhere.

Q.: If, being a Pariah, I try to reside in this ashram permanently, Sami may not mind, but will the management not try to dissuade me?

B.: Have you any such plan in mind?

Q.: No, I am asking theoretically, will it not be dehorted?

B.: We do not discuss theory here.

Q.: Can Sami please bless me that His Grace remain with me even after I leave this place?

B.: If you look to Sami He looks to you.

After a few minutes the youth prostrated before the Sofa, thanked B. profusely, and left the Hall.

S>M>

Q.: Is it really true that I am not this body?

B.: Yes.

Q.: If so, when some damage is suffered by the body, why do I feel pain? If, say, a piece of burning coal falls on somebody near me, I do not feel anything, but that person alone feels the pain. Likewise if a thorn pricks my foot I alone feel the pain, but not the one walking by my side.

B.: Does the body cry out, saying, 'I am feeling pain!?' You associate yourself with your body and speak of it as your "I". The body is only in the mind. All pain apparently suffered by the body is as imaginary as the body itself. The body cannot know anything. It is insentient flesh and bone. Notions of pain spring from our own imagination only. Thus, in deep slumber, the mind being inactive, there is no pain.

Q.: Suppose I have a piece of metal wire in my hand. If I cut it into pieces, the metal cannot be aware that it is being cut, because it is insentient. Whereas, if a living body were to so much as be scratched, it explodes with agony. In what sense, therefore, does B. mean that the body is insentient?

B.: True the body experiences the physical stimulus of pain if it is injured, but why should that fact create a thought in the mind, "I am feeling pain."?

Physical pain creates mental agony because of the following reason- the mind assumes itself to be the body and appropriates to itself the bodily identity, because in the absence of such false self-objectification it cannot survive or

thrive. If the idea "I am the body." is abandoned, everything, including pain suffered by the body, is only Bliss.

Q.: But I am aware of the pain if the body is injured!

B.: When the body is injured, in the case of the unenlightened one, the following happens- His body feels the physical stimulus of pain, and his mind spontaneously manifests the thought, "I am injured.", causing him to become mentally agitated; the reason for the manifestation of such thought is the underlying erroneous idea "I am the body.". In one who is free from the mistaken idea of accepting the body for the Self, injury of the body causes no disturbance to his peace. Each one is indeed the Self, but absurdly confounds himself with the not-Self and so needlessly suffers on account of such dehatma-buddhi.

Q.: The question still remains- if, as postulated by Sri Bhagawan, the body is insentient, how can it and why does it feel pain at all?

B.: The word "pain" is employed because there is a prejudice in the mind against such stimuli. When the mind is dissolved in Pure Consciousness, its prejudices also disappear. For the enlightened one, therefore, pain and pleasure are physical stimuli that stand on an equal footing. He does not covet the one and abhor the other; nor does he abhor the one and covet the other. Mind gone, there remains no yardstick by means of which one sensation is to be regarded as pain and another as pleasure.

Q.: Sri B. seriously means to say he is unable to tell the difference between the sensation that ensues when an insect bites his leg and the one that ensues when someone is massaging it?

B.: That they are different sensations is self-evident; that the one is abhorrent and the other agreeable is mere mental judgement from which the Jnani is quite free. He himself seeks out neither pain nor pleasure, but accepts what comes his way without resisting; in Jnana only automatic acceptance remains.

Q.: For Jnanis it is different; what of the common man?

B.: You also are a Jnani; only, you think otherwise!

Q.: How could that be?

B.: The option of turning inwards and quietly allowing the mind to plunge and dissolve in the Self is equally available for all. It is not the fiefdom of a select few. All are verily only the Self.

Q.: That does not satisfy me. I am unable to Realise it for myself.

B.: So long as worldly attachments are present the mind cannot be successfully turned inwards.

Q.: How to eliminate worldly attachment?

B.: By turning the mind inwards.

Q.: Really!

B.: The more you hold on to the Self or retain the mind in its native state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly, the more the mental tendencies and worldly attachments wither off; the lesser the mental tendencies and worldly attachments, the easier does become retention of the mind in its native state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly.

Q.: Which comes first?

B.: The sadhaka recognises and reflects upon the ephemeral nature of the objective world and the transient nature of his own body. He gets fed up with material pleasures, because they eventually lead only to sorrow, when their enjoyment becomes, for any reason, impossible. He asks himself if a more permanent experience of life might not be possible. Then he discovers the Ajata-advaita doctrine. Initially he is not convinced, and argues that if it were a dream there would be no possibility of corroboration, but that here his relatives and friends are able to confirm the evidence provided by his senses; he also asks why the same dream should be repeated everyday, were it all only a dream- according to him, here he sees the same sun, moon and earth everyday, whereas in his dreams he finds himself in new worlds moment to moment. Eventually it dawns upon him that everything he thinks he knows, including an understanding of the apparent permanency of the world he believes himself to live in, is only thought or imagination. Then at the intellectual level he understands the truth- that the names and forms constituting the world are fictitious. This sparks a search for the substratum said to be underlying them, which alone is said to be Real by the wise. He hears the teaching that the source of the mind, Beingness, is the gateway to the Real Self. Then he begins the practice of quietening the mind by vichara or any other method, tackling various distractions as and when they arise, by withdrawing attention from them and fixing it on Beingness or the Self. The beginning is only becoming fed-up with the evanescent nature of the world and the fugacious attractions it has to offer.

Q.: The doubts B. mentioned- they are my doubts also. Why is everyone witnessing the same dream? The sun moon etc. are seen by all.

B.: In turn those "all" are seen by you only. In deep slumber when there is no mind, nothing is available to be seen, but your existence is a constant.

Q.: Why do I dream the same dream everyday? For instance yesterday I came to the ashram and had darshan of Bhagawan; he was sitting on the same sofa in exactly the same manner. Today I am seeing Bhagawan and tomorrow also it is going to be the same Bhagawan.

B.: The future is a mere mental projection. The past is a mere memory. Have you not had dreams where the places you visit look extremely familiar?



Q.: Atleast is the present real?

B.: Anything seen cannot be Real. What is seen is not Pratyaksha. It is not self-evident, because there is a subject-object relationship involved. It is merely sensory information that is fed into the mind by the strength of its own evil faculty of avidya maya. That alone is Real which shines by its own light. You are asking about the objects of the world. Can such objects exist without a YOU, a perceiver? When there is no perceiver, as in swoon or deep slumber, is there anything to be perceived? No. What is the inference? The objects owe the appearance of their apparent existence to you only. They are merely mental creations. The appearance of this enormous cosmos around you is merely... a mental information. The mind is fiction. Therefore the 'objects' manufactured by it are also fictitious. Have not the least doubt about it.

Q.: If everything is unreal, can we conclude that bondage and liberation are also unreal?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then why should I try to obtain Liberation? Let me remain as I am.

B.: Exactly!

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: Remaining as you are is the loftiest Sadhana.

Q.: How can remaining in ignorance be sadhana?

B.: You think that you are in ignorance. When you do not think at all, what remains is only wisdom. Removal of the screen of thought is all that is required for Reality to be revealed. Since you want a sadhana by means of which you may reach this thought-free state, vichara is suggested. Actually there is no need for any sadhana for one who has mastered the art of remaining as he is- the art of Being. That is the import of the advice Summa Iru. People generally misunderstand it. It does not mean keeping the body idle. It means keeping the mind still or free from thought. Remain perpetually absorbed in the thought-free I-Current. This will automatically lead you to the Sahaja-stithi without requirement for further effort.

Q.: Is even desire for Liberation an obstacle to Liberation?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: Why has God created the world? I want to know why.

B.: Did God come and tell you that He has created the world?

Q.: I see creation around me. There must be some reason for creation.

B.: You say "I see."; if you see that seer, all your doubts will be resolved.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: Is there anything to be seen in sleep?

Q.: No.

B.: Continue to remain in the state where there is nothing to be seen.

Q.: Should I always be sleeping?

B.: Not seeing anything while remaining AWARE is Realisation. That is God and that is everything.

Q.: Awareness of what?

B.: Being.

18 July 1936

An elderly pandit has arrived at the ashram. He handed out a slender notebook containing verses written in Sanskrit, to the master; apparently, he desired to hear from Bhagawan a lecture on Sankara's Aparokshanuboothi. When he arrived the Master was very gracious with him, asking him where he was coming from, etc.. When he disclosed his desire to hear the lecture aforesaid, B. kept quiet. He was told that the Master was not in the habit of giving lectures. If he required any specific clarifications, he could ask. But the pandit was woefully adamant, saying he was an old man and this may be considered the last desire in his life since next month he was going to Benares to die. He pleaded and begged Bhagawan; since the latter had already shown him some kindness, the pandit seemed to think he had a right to cajole the Master into giving in to his whims. Then he burst into tears and tried to catch hold of B.'s feet; this the attendants would not allow. So, seizing hold of the Sofa, he began banging his head against it, beseeching shrilly, 'Bhagawane! Bhagawane! Indha Kattai Vaega Vaendum, Bhagawane...'; eventually B. was forced to relent. It was late in the night when B. finished the lecture; except for the usual adjournments to the dining hall and his wonted walk on the Hill, B. had not stirred from the Sofa today; nor had he attended to any other task. The pandit had keenly listened to every word uttered. At the conclusion, he seemed profoundly moved, and wept, saying, "Today my life's purpose has reached its consummation; the culmination of all the punya done by me in this and all previous births has been successfully harvested by me today..."; Bhagawan merely looked on in his austere, pensive manner. When the master was talking his face would be scintillant with exuberance and vivacity, and one felt his incalculable Love pouring out into one; when his attention was not directed towards anyone in particular the look of utter detachment on that same face would often entice, if not spontaneously elicit, a feeling of unutterable awe and indescribable adulation from the onlooker. There were times when a palpable deluge of Jnana-radiation seemed to explode out of the gaunt figure so unostentatiously and unpretentiously seated on the Sofa. Perhaps it was always there, and one's mind was alert or

sensitive enough to attend to it only on certain occasions favourable to the purpose. I heard reports of people coming with notebooks filled with questions; sitting for two minutes in his presence, the notebook and all else would be forgotten; recollecting it later they would laugh at the notebook and tear it up. Whilst he was explaining Shankaracharya's work, I opine I could obtain a tiny glimpse into Bhagawan's own inner state, without any voluntary effort on my part, and it has thrilled me to the core. This life or any subsequent, never shall I forget that serene poise, that nonchalant manner of countenance, or that unique combination of indifference and compassion, all arising from an unfathomable inner calm, whilst handling people. The pandit, once he had finished with his tears, fell prostrate on the floor and stayed so for a quarter of an hour, his hands stretched out before him with palms joined in salutation: the only movement in his body was that his head was speedily half-rotating from side to side; he was pressing his left and right ears against the floor alternately. At length he got up, bent his torso over till it was parallel to the ground, pressed palms still clutched in front of his chest and all, and mumbled a few incoherent, teary words. Bhagawan looked at him and smiled brightly. The man reluctantly retreated towards the doors, unable to tear his eyes away from Bhagawan until he was well through them. Whatever I recollect of the master's enchanting words on the occasion I reproduce below:

1. Lord Hari, who is supreme Bliss, the first Teacher, the supreme God, the all pervading One, and the cause of all the worlds- unto him do I offer my most respectful salutations.
2. Aparoksha Anubuthi indeed is spoken of [as the most efficacious means] for Moksha-siddhi. By those alone who are pure in heart, through effort, [this truth] should be meditated upon again and again. [Note that direct experience is recommended as the principal means to gain the ever present Self. The direct experience referred to here is the experience of stillness or silence that prevails when the mind is submerged in its native-state-of-effortless-and-volitionless-awareness-of-being.]
3. By performing tapas even whilst situated in own's own station of varnashramadharmam, and by propitiating God, the four-fold sadhana is available to man, beginning with vairagyam.
4. The indifference with which one treats the excreta of a crow- such an indifference to all objects, from the realm of Brahma to this world, is verily called pure [indifference]. [Note that indifference should stay as such and should not become contempt; contempt indicates presence of prejudice in the mind, and prejudice, being a vritti, will obstruct the mind from sinking into the Heart.]

5. The following inveterate conviction is known as discrimination- Athmaswarupam indeed is permanent, not so [the] objects [seen in its light]. [Note that although this is merely an intellectual conviction it helps to check the mind from straying away from the Self towards the direction of sensory pleasures. Later on, when the retention of the mind in the Heart becomes automatic, such conviction becomes unnecessary.]
6. Permanent relinquishment of vasanas is called Sama. Restraining the outward-bent inclination of the vrittis [to whisk the mind away from the Self] is called Dama. [The more the vrittis are restrained, the more they weaken; when abidance in the Self becomes natural and effortless, the vrittis are found to have vanished.]
7. That alone is the highest Uparathi which is turning away from objects. Endurance of all sorrow is known as the forbearance that is conducive to happiness.
8. Devotion towards the words of the vedic teachers is known as Shraddha. Focusing consciousness on the Goal is regarded as Samadhanam. [Focusing consciousness on the Goal means focusing consciousness in such a manner that it does not spill over into the realm of thought but remains merely subjectively aware of its own inherent beingness.]
9. Oh Lord! When and how shall I be finally liberated from the bondage of Samsara? Strong inclination of the faculty of Intellect in this manner is called Mumukshatvam. [Longing or yearning for liberation is no doubt also a mental modification; yet, it serves as the one mental modification by means of which to sever all others, if it be frenzied enough.]
10. By a person who desires his own good, Vichara will be carried out so as for Jnanasiddhi [to dawn], by means of equipping himself with the Sadhanas outlined above. [Vairagyam, etc. may, without doubt, be regarded as the stepping stones to Vichara; yet, commencing the Vichara practice will of itself bring about those qualities, if there is earnestness on the part of the sadhaka.]
11. Just as, without light, the only means of perceiving the shape of objects is rendered void, without Vichara, Jnana will never spring by means of other Sadhanas. [Vichara is the one and only infallible means to bring about Jnanasiddhi.]
12. Who am I ? How has all this [creation] come about? Who is its creator ? What is the substratum underlying all this ? This is the way of that Vichara. [The first question is really the only one necessary; the other questions merely lead up to the first question.]
13. I am not the body. I am not a combination of the [five] elements. I am not a combination of the [five] senses. I am something different from all these. Reflecting on these lines leads up to Vichara. [Such thoughts as 'I am not this

or that but THAT.' may be initial stepping stones to Vichara; they cannot be the Vichara itself.]

14. Everything [seen] is produced by ignorance, and [everything seen] is completely dissolved by Jnana. Verily the various sankalapas are the creator [for everything that is apparently seen]. This [direct insight] is [known as the import of] Vichara.

15. Just like [the relationship between] the pot and the earth out of which it is constituted, the substratum is one subtle unchanging existence [which underlies the seer and everything that is seen]. This [direct insight] is [known as the import of] Vichara.

16. I am also the One, the subtle, the knower, the witness, the existent and the unchanging. I am THAT. Here [there is scope for] no doubt. This [direct insight] is [known as the import of] Vichara. [One should carefully consider the meaning of this shloka, because it is easily possible to misunderstand it. It does not mean that the individual self can ever become the knower of Parabrahman. It does not mean that there is a one, apart from the One, who says 'I am the One.' with reference to that One. Words like Jnatha and Sakshi may appear to suggest duality. The explanation is that once the knower knows himself he disappears; likewise once the witness witnesses himself he disappears. That is Jnana. Otherwise it means there is one to know or witness the Aathman, which is absurd and which cannot have been Sri Sankara's intention.]

17. Aathma is verily one and without parts. The body is constituted by many parts. Those enmeshed in the malaise of ignorance see synchronicity in these two. Other than this what is ignorance?

18. Aathma is the ruler of the body and internal. The body is the ruled and external. Those enmeshed in the malaise of ignorance see synchronicity in these two. Other than this what is ignorance? [This is from the sadhaka's point of view only. One who loses himself in the Aathman does not see anything as external or internal; in the case of such a one who has permanently dissolved his individual current of consciousness in the Parabrahman, there cannot be anything which could possibly serve as the basis for either classification- internal or external.]

19. Aathma is Jnana only and it is holy. The body is flesh only and it is unpalatably obnoxious. Those enmeshed in the malaise of ignorance see synchronicity in these two. Other than this what is ignorance? [Again this is only from the sadhaka's point of view. Being Reality the Sage cannot admit the existence of anything other than Reality. So far as he is concerned there is no ashuchi anywhere- all is only ananda. His eye does not see gross objects at all. Being consciousness itself it is awake to consciousness only. So the

Sage cannot know or appreciate any difference between punya and ashuchi. His ignorance therefore is supreme!]

20. Aathma is the illuminator and He is pure. The body is said to be inert. Those enmeshed in the malaise of ignorance see synchronicity in these two. Other than this what is ignorance? [Again this elucidation applies only to the seeker: there is no 'other' for the Sage to cast His illumination upon, and no such thing as insentience or inertness. All is only ananda.]

21. Aathman is permanent since it is of the nature of Reality. The body is of the nature of non-existence and therefore impermanent. Those enmeshed in the malaise of ignorance see synchronicity in these two. Other than this what is ignorance? [That alone is Real which shines by its own light. The body shines by the reflected light of the Self; thus it is unreal.]

22. That which is the source of all manifestation, that is the Aathmun. The nature of its illumination is not like that of fire and other such sources of physical light. Even when a fire is lighted, darkness prevails at night at other places. [Even when the sun is at its zenith in the sky, there are places where its rays are unable to penetrate. The Aathmun illumines, on the other hand, everything. This elucidation has been furnished for the sake of the sadhaka so that he might intellectually apprehend what Aathmun is, so as to satisfy his preliminary curiosity about Ajata-advaita. In truth, Aathmun cannot find anything other than itself. Its light therefore cannot illumine anything because it finds no objects to shed its light upon. In the Sahaja-stithi, the Jnani cannot find anything that is not He no matter where He goes.]

23. Alas the ignorant person, like one seeing an inert pot, ever knowing the body to be his, even so opines, 'I am the body.', and sits [contented with that foolish view]. [All know the expression, 'My body.'. Yet they do not ask themselves the question, 'Who is this "I", who says that this insentient flesh is his body? If the body is mine, who am "I", its owner? Since the body is only a possession of mine, it cannot be me. So then, Who am I?'. The reason the question does not arise is that the evil influence of avidya maya stands in the way. Vichara alone can lift this curtain of ignorance.]

24. I am Brahman only, calm, quiescent, and inherently of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. I am never indeed this body which is non-existence itself. [Realisation of the truth of] this [statement by means of direct experience] is called Jnana by the wise. [That one is not the body, but is Brahman, should be not an intellectual understanding but a matter of direct experience; thus the significance of the title of this work.]

25. I am without change. I am without form. I am without impurity. I am permanent. I am never indeed this body which is non-existence itself. [Realisation of the truth of] this [statement by means of direct experience] is

called Jnana by the wise. [How can non-existence exist? Can it exist? No. That is why it is called non-existence. However, in this shloka, it is said that the body is non-existent. The statement may puzzle the sadhaka, for he may wonder- 'The teachings say that the body does not exist. Yet I not only see my body, but also feel its sensations such as heat, cold, pain, itchininess, fatigue, etc., etc.; what is the explanation which could resolve the apparent conflict?' The explanation is as follows- there is an imaginary "I" which projects the body and the world which is experienced by this body. Both the body and the world proceed from the mind and are projected simultaneously. In sleep there is no mind and therefore no projection takes place. Thus in sleep one is bodiless and with neither body nor world to be seen, one is in bliss. Only, this bliss is unconscious bliss. In the Sahaja-stithi there is no one there to feel any bliss, because what remains is only bliss itself- that is the highest bliss. Anything seen cannot be Real. The apparent existence of the body, the world, the mind and its habits and thoughts, and Iswara is not to be confused with the Real Existence of the Self. The former appear to exist to the ignorant or fictitious or illusory Jivatman. The latter actually exists. What can actually exist is Reality only. Non-Reality is mere fiction. That alone which shines by its own light- without need for sight, perception, intellection, inference, understanding, etc., etc.- is the One Perfect Reality. That alone is pratyaksha and that alone is effortless Realisation.]

26. I am without disease. I am without intellection. I am without concepts. I am all-pervading. I am never indeed this body which is non-existence itself.

[Realisation of the truth of] this [statement by means of direct experience] is called Jnana by the wise. [There no all apart from Him, for Him to pervade; He alone verily is All. The shloka is intended for preliminary guidance to sadhakas, so that thinking along these lines, they may eventually arrive at the question 'Who-am-I?'. Thoughts such as these are useful for the purpose of eradicating the 'Body-am-I.' idea, but they themselves must disappear before Realisation. Realisation cannot be had by thoughts, no matter how lofty the thoughts might be. Thought is one thing and Realisation quite another.

Permanent cessation of thought reveals the Real. People try to reach the Self. It is a foolish, worthless effort. The ego is in no way competent to reach the Real, being itself unreal. All it has to do is to surrender itself to the Real and there is an end to the story of woe. Instead people think they can 'realise' the Self! What a pity! All that is possible to do is only unrealise the non-Real.

Then the Self alone remains, as it was always. Thus do I say- do not search for the Goal, search for the searcher, he will disappear and that is the Goal.]

27. I am without attribute. I am without activity. I am always. I am permanently free. I am indestructible. I am never indeed this body which is non-existence

itself. [Realisation of the truth of] this [statement by means of direct experience] is called Jnana by the wise. [The Self does not say all these things. He merely abides as Truth or Reality. These statements are meant to be contemplated by the sadhaka in the initial stages of sadhana so that his desire for Mukthi waxes more and more, prompting him to take up the Brahmastra for the destruction of the ego, vichara.]

28. I am without impurity. I am without movement. I am without limitation. I am without decay. I am holy. I am without death. I am never indeed this body which is non-existence itself. [Realisation of the truth of] this [statement by means of direct experience] is called Jnana by the wise. [The "I" in these statements refers to the Self or Parabrahman, but He does not make any of these assertions. The assertion-manufacturing entity is the ego. Once that is gone, only Bliss remains. The ego making these assertions, imagining itself to be Brahman or Self, is ridiculous- it is like placing the sign-board 'Viceroy's Office' above the entrance to a dilapidated palm-leaf hut, entering it in a coxcombish manner, seating oneself on a putrefied bamboo mat that is lying inside, and shouting at the top of one's voice, "Do you know who I am, Sirs? I am your master, Lord Linlithgow! Bow down to me, you ingratiating, oleaginous nincompoops! Bow, I say!". A few well-aimed rocks may come rushing into the hut, but will there be any other, productive result? No. Therefore, the ego will only invite pain if it tries to appropriate for itself the qualities of Brahman. The only useful thing the ego can do is to disappear once and for all, not imagine 'I am Consciousness.', 'I am Brahman.' etc. etc.. So, ultimately what is the worth of the four mahavakyas? The Self does not say them or believe in them. If the ego starts believing in them, as being applicable to itself, it gets into serious trouble. So what is the use of the mahavakyas? Surely they must have some purpose? They serve as contemplation exercises in the very beginning of sadhana, when the aspirant is taught the theory of Ajata-advaita. Their function is limited to only so much. Meditation on the mahavakyas cannot lead to Self-Realisation unless their import or purport be implemented practically; how to execute this practical implementation? Only by stilling the waves of thought once and for all. How is that done? By the Brahmastra- Aathma-vichara.]

29. O respected Fool! In your own body yet beyond the body, the auspicious one known as the Purusha [Saviour] is established as the ever-existent Aathmun; why do you obdurately deny Him? [Till the granthi is permanently sundered, some sense of bodily identification must needs remain. Thus the Aathmun is said to be within and beyond the body: till the moment of Deliverance, subjective consciousness is localised both temporally and spatially; upon Deliverance it is found to be the ALL. Though it seems to be



tied up in the body, in truth it belongs to the Realm of the Beyond. It is by focusing the body-consciousness into a point that we are absorbed into Absolute Consciousness; thus, subjective awareness initially seems within the body, but later on the body is found to be an appearance in it.]

30. Fool! Listen! By your own Aathma, with the help of the Srutis and by arguing with yourself, that Purusha who is beyond the body and is the very form of existence, by [egotistic] persons like you it is very difficult to Realise. [Therefore take the help of a Realised Master or Guru. People opine I say there is no need for a Guru. It is nonsense. Guru is absolutely necessary.]

31. Beyond the body, that which is actually denoted by the word "I", exists as the only One. On the other hand, the gross world is [the result of or] received from [the faculty responsible for creation of apparent] multiplicity [namely the mind]. How [then] can the embodied be the Supreme [Self]? [The gross shapes and forms seen by the eye in the jagrat and swapna states owe the reason for their appearance to failure to enquire Who-am-I?. When the world and body are only in the mind, which in itself is merely a spurious offshoot of the Self, how can the embodied body said to be the same as the ever-resplendant Self? The Real "I" is only One. The gross world seen in the said states is the handiwork of the evil power of avidya maya tormenting the mind. The mind's strand of reflected consciousness proceeds from the Self only. So, the world, including the body, is contained in the Self; for this reason, it is utter foolishness to give oneself to understand that the Self of one can possibly be localised to the body or any part thereof. Many think the Self resides on the right-hand side of the chest, and that they therefore must concentrate on that area in the body. It is absurd. One who is ripe on the path may feel a noticeable, pulling physical sensation at that region in the body. That does not mean the Self is particularly there. It is everywhere, or rather, everything is by it, of it and from it. Concentrating on a particular spot in the body may lead to temporary bliss but cannot bring about Mukthi. For Deliverance Who-am-I? is the only way. If any sensations result {as a consequence of pursuing vichara}, including the one aforesaid{of vibration being felt at the right-hand-side of the chest}, the mind must not be allowed to wander in their direction. Ask yourself 'Who felt or witnessed this sensation?' and continue the vichara until all duality is annihilated, once and for all.]

32. I abide as the perceiving subject. The body abides as the object of perception. This is obvious because when we speak of the body, we say, "This is mine.". How [then] can the embodied be the Supreme [Self]? [The body cannot say "I". We say of the body, "This is me." If this wrong identity be totally relinquished, only Eternity remains.]

33. I am without modification. However, the body is ever undergoing changes. This fact is directly apparent. This is obvious because when we speak of the body, we say, "This is mine.". How [then] can the embodied be the Supreme [Self]? ["I" in the context of such shlokas refers to neither the intellect {mind}, nor the Self, but to temporally-and-spatially-localised-consciousness or body-consciousness. The objective behind such statements is to ruin the 'Body-am-I' idea by repeatedly exposing it, at the intellectual level, to the truth that it is unreal, thereby forcing it to die.]

34. 'There is nothing superlative to the Aathmun.' This truth about the true nature of the Purusha is ascertained by the wise by means of listening to the Srutis. How [then] can the embodied be the Supreme [Self]? [Listening to the Srutis is sravana; the sadhaka must keep reflecting upon the truth that he is not the body, and to such contemplation is given the name manana; vichara is verily nididhyasana.]

35. 'Purusha alone is all.' Because it has been stated thus by the Srutis in the Purushasukta also, what justification could there possibly be in asserting that the body is the Self? ['Purusham yaevedham sarvam yadhbootham yachcha bhavyam; uthamruthathvasyaeshaano yadhannenathirohathi.' is what the text says. Thus: He is everything that has yet been; He is everything that is yet to be; He is the Lord of Immortality who shines more and more clearly as the sacrifice [of the ego] nears consummation.]

36. Likewise in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the Purusha is said to be without attachment. Therefore, what justification could there possibly be in asserting that the body, which is besmirched with all sorts of impurities, is the Self? [The said upanishad says that the Purusha is not contaminated by sense-impressions, but remains totally unattached, despite the fact that sense-impressions physically appear to continue.]

37. Again in the same Upanishad, the Purusha is indeed said to be self-illuminated. On the other hand, this inert body is illumined by an external source. Therefore, what justification could there possibly be in asserting that the body, which is besmirched with all sorts of impurities, is the Self? [The body and the world derive their inferred, notional existence from the mind. The mind rises from the Self. Therefore, for the mind, the body and the world, the Self alone is the cause. So, the Self can exist without any body and world, as in deep slumber; however, the mind, body and world are able to seemingly exist only since the Self exists. The question of the mind shining using the borrowed light of the Self is raised because such a thing as mind is falsely kept up; turned inward towards the source of illumination, no such thing called mind is found. Then only the Self remains, and no one is found who 'borrows'

the light of the Self. In the Sahajastithi there is nothing called insentience or reflected consciousness or borrowed light. There only Reality remains.]

38. Since it undergoes the fruit of actions performed by the body even after the fall of the body, by the karmakanda also Aathma is said to be different from the body, and permanent in nature. [Aathma cannot be affected by karma. This shloka posits an auxiliary argument which is meant to impart the teaching that the body is survived by the ego, and thus beyond the body there is the ego and beyond the ego there is the Real. One may say that the Self serves as the substratum on which the vasanas are deposited and out of which they are constituted. So, karma, which is nothing but the collection of vasanas of the individual, is only an accretion upon the Self. It is the vasanas which make the mind's shadow-like existence possible. The body is projected from and sustained only in the mind. Thus, on account of the vasanas latent in the individual's memory, bodies spring forth and perish. So, karma or vasana survives the death of the body; for that reason it is said to be different from the body. In my view, Sri Sankara's intended meaning for this shloka is only this: since there is something {known as the antahkaranam or the aggregate of the individual's mental tendencies} which outlives the body, one should not mistake himself for the body; the antahkaranam also is only a transient phase and sooner or later must merge into the Self. The mischievous interpretation that karma is binding upon the Self cannot be accepted.]

39. Even the subtle body consists of many parts, is capable of being moved from place to place, is the object of perception, is changeable and is limited by spatial and temporal constraints; therefore it is said to be of the nature of non-existence. Therefore, what justification could there possibly be in asserting that even the subtle body, which is besmirched with the aforesaid imperfections, is the Self? [The subtle body refers to the vijnanamaya kosha.]

40. Therefore, Aathma is different from these two bodies. The Real "I" is the unchanging Purusha who is Iswara himself. He is the formless Aathma of all, the form of all and the transcendental Reality underlying everything. [The Self is the substratum underlying both the apparent seer and the apparently seen. Once the mind is dissolved in the light of pure consciousness, there is neither seer nor seen but only Being. So long as there are objects seen, thus long ignorance remains.]

41. Thus, as a consequence of [understanding] the difference between the Aathman and the body, indeed the truth about the phenomenal world, just as mentioned in the Tarkashastra[,is brought to light]; what purposes of man's life are thereby served? [When one understands the Aathman to be real {since it does not form the subject matter of perception but is directly experienced}, the body to be unreal {since it is present only in one out of the 3 avasthas}, and

the world to be merely information presented to the five sensory organs available in the unreal body, he automatically understands that the world is also unreal, because impressions accruing to an unreal entity cannot possibly be real. However, if the knowledge that the world is unreal is not deployed toward winning Realisation, what is the use of such knowledge? It only results in madness.]

42. Thus, by explaining the difference between the Aathman and the body, the idea that the body is the Self has been shown to be worthy of being only discarded. Now it is proceeded to be explained the unreality of the difference between the Aathman and the body. [The body is not the Self; it is an appearance on the Self.]

43. Consciousness is only One formless Reality. At any time, division therein is not admissible. Similar to the perception of a snake in a rope, it must be known that jivatva is also a misleading appearance. [When the seer realises there is no snake, he sees the rope. When the jiva realises there is no world, he sees his own Self.]

44. On account of an error of perception or insight besmirching the knowledge or cognition of the rope, that very rope appears as a frightening feminine serpent in an instantaneous manner. Just so, in the same manner, pure consciousness itself never undergoes any change but appears in the form of the manifested universe[, owing to the evil influence of avidya maya]. [How to remove the error? Look closely and you will see that it is a rope, not a snake. Likewise, look closely at the mind and you will see that it finds itself to be the Self.]

45. For the world that is seen, other than Brahman, there is no cause. Therefore this entire world that is seen is Brahman alone and not anything else. [The names and forms of the world are unreal but its substratum the Self is real; when a goldsmith evaluates various items of jewellery made out of gold, he sees only gold.]

46. 'Everything is verily Aathman alone.' From this declaration made by the Srutis, we find out that the idea of a pervading entity and a group of pervaded entities is false. This supreme truth being Realised by direct experience, whence arises the scope for any [such] distinction? [Brahman cannot pervade anything, because IT alone IS.]

47. Certainly, multiplicity is explicitly denied by the Srutis. Remaining in the uncaused state of Eternal Realisation, how can appearance of any object be possible? [The Sage, though he lives in the world just like others, deals with objects; however they are objects only in the line of view of the onlooker; the Sage himself cannot register presence of any object.]

48. Also, by the Srutis the following curse is pronounced: 'The man, who, being deceived by [avidya] maya, sees variety in this [Brahman], he goes from death to death.' [Seeing variety in Brahman means allowing subjective consciousness to spill over into the realm of thought. Owing to such lapse, a world-that-is-not is seemingly created and the Self is obstructed from shining.]

49. From Brahman or Paramatman, all beings are born. Therefore they are only Brahman. Clearly understand this. [This explanation is for the jiva only. Otherwise, Brahman would contain within itself the various jivas, which is absurd, for Brahman is not made of components and it is indivisible.]

50. This is what the Srutis have sung- 'Brahman alone sustains all the various names, forms, and actions [of the world].' [The meaning is that there cannot be anything apart from the Self.]

51. A thing made out of gold remains indeed permanently of the nature of gold. Likewise, what is born out of Brahman remains permanently of the nature of Brahman. [The meaning is that never can anything have an identity apart from the Self; this is because WHAT-IS, is only the Self. It is not to be supposed that Brahman can give birth or produce multiplicity.]

52. The ignorant one who makes even the slightest distinction between the jivatman and the Paramatman is said to establish his fear [of Ajata-advaita firmly in the mind]. [One who distinguishes between the individual self and the Absolute Self necessarily thereby acknowledges the existence of the individual self; therefore he will never Realise. One who has totally given up the individual self has Realised. When one distinguishes between self and Self, he will become afraid for the loss of his personal self. This fear thwarts him from sinking his mind in the Heart. What to do about it? Refuse to accept the existence of the personal self. This does not mean you should contemplate along the lines, 'The personal self does not exist.'. Simply give up the idea that something called the personal self exists. This will suffice; it is the only way.]

53. When as a consequence of ignorance duality appears, then one sees another. When everything abides as the Aathman, then one indeed does not see another even in the least. [In the Sahajastithi the Jnani sees only Himself no matter where His body might take Him or no matter what tasks His body might be engaged in. He is like a lamp protected from the wind- there is not the least scintillation in Him.]

54. Since all beings are indeed of the nature of the Aathman to him who realises his immortal Self, indeed to him there is no delusion and no sorrow, in consequence of absence of duality.

55. It is declared by the Sruti known as Brihadaranyaka Upanishad as follows- 'This Aathma which exists as the Self of all is indeed Brahman only.'

56. Though this world is experienced [as though it were real], and though this world is appropriate or adequate for practical purposes, it is in fact of the nature of non-existence, because being a dream-like world, it contradicts itself at every moment. [The existence of the world is a paradox, because it seems real while it is experienced, and yet is able to shine only by the borrowed light of the Self, thus proving that it is not self-conscious, and therefore is illusory. The paradox is at the level of the mind only. At the level of Reality only Reality remains, and thus there is no scope for any questions.]

57. In the waking state the dream state is unreal. Also, in the dream state, waking [the quality of being awake] surely is not. Verily, in the state of temporary abeyance of mind [sleep, swoon, etc.] the states of waking and dream are not. Also, in the states of waking and dream, the state of temporary abeyance is not.

58. Thus the three unreal states are created by the three gunas. Their witness transcends the gunas. He indeed is the permanent One, being of the nature of Consciousness-Sentience.

59. To see the illusion of a pot in earth or the presence of silver in mother-of-pearl [after seeing properly] is not possible; likewise, one who has Realised does not see jivatva in Brahman.

60. Upon earth the name pot is foisted; upon gold the name ear-ring is foisted; upon mother-of-pearl the name silver is foisted. Likewise, in the Supreme, the word [concept] jiva is foisted.

61. Just as blueness in the sky, water in the desert, or a man in a pole are seen, likewise the cosmos in the Aathman is seen. [Thus, the Aathman, the adhishtanam or sadhvasthu, is the sole Reality, whilst the appearance of name and shape formed on it is unreal and deceptive. How to eradicate the illusion? By searching for the one supposedly affected by it.]

62. Just as a vetala in empty place, gandharvas in the air, or a second moon in the sky are seen, likewise the cosmos in the Aathman is seen.

63. Just as ripples and waves are water alone, or just as it is copper alone that surely appears in the form of a vessel, it is the Aathma alone that appears as the whole of the cosmos.

64. Just as it is the earth that appears under the name of a pot, or just as it is threads that appear under the name of a cloth, verily it is the Aathman that appears under the name of the cosmos. Know the Aathma as the underlying substratum by ignoring the name. [Once the world of name and form has disappeared- that is to say once the faculty of intellection or mental ingenuity is permanently ruined- Brahman alone remains as the uncaused undecaying underlying substratum.]

65. Also, by people, all dealings are done through Brahman, but as a consequence of ignorance they do not know it, just as a simpleton would have no awareness that earthenware is made out of earth. [Really the Higher Power does everything. Man only imagines himself to be the doer.]

66. Just as between a pot and earth there is the relationship of effect and cause which ever exists, likewise between the cosmos and Brahman. This understood by virtue of study of the Srutis. [The shloka speaks this message for the benefit of the sadhaka. In truth, it is not that the phenomenal, gross world is a manifestation of Brahman; it is that it is a manifestation of the mind which in its turn rises from the Self or Brahman. In the Sahajastithi, there is no world left; thus there is no meaning in asking, 'Is the world a manifestation of Brahman?', 'Is the world objectively real in itself? If not, what is its substratum?', etc., etc.. Only if a world be left to see can such questions arise. The Jnani is utterly ignorant of any world; all he knows is the Self; even here, knowing exclusively means knowing in the sense of Being or abiding as THAT. There is no one left to know anything. That-which-IS, remains. That-which-is-NOT, is nowhere to be found. Thus Sri Krishna says, Nasatho vidyathey bhavo nabhavo vidyathey sathaha.]

67. Perception of a pot is accompanied, indeed with force, by the mental image of earth that constitutes it, in the case of a man wise to the ways of the world. Likewise, even when the phenomenal world is seen, the self-effulgent Brahman alone is found to be shining whereas, in the case of the Jnanasiddha.

68. Just like the same rope always appears in two different ways to a wise man and an ignorant man, verily Aathman is ever-pure always, yet appears impure to the ignorant person. [The shloka makes reference to the means by which thought is manufactured. Although consciousness is the same for one and all, in the case of the ajnani, it finds a medium for reflection, the primogenitalis tenebra or original sin, which is only the thought or notion "I". Thus, in the case of the ajnani, consciousness cannot shine clearly, because it is perpetually clouded by the misty webs of thought that obscure it, of which the first grand-antecedent is the thought "I". The Heart of a man beseiged with worldly concerns is covered up with the dark mists of vishayavasanas, poorvasamskaras, ishtasankalpas and other vrittis, although this is false from the point of view of the Heart itself. At the core of this iniquitous dense mass, which in itself is insentient but derives its light to function only from the Self, is the primogenitalis tenebra. The chitbasa of the Self falls on the primogenitalis tenebra, and thoughts are produced; what the thoughts are depends upon the vasana that is released from dormancy at the particular time. The buddhi plays with the thought for some time, successfully deceives itself into believing that it has skillfully ["I" have] solved a problem or taken a decision,

when, in fact, everything is going to take place according to prarabdha only, and the vritti descends to the Heart again, to be retrieved at another time, and another vritti rises to take its place. So the person is drowned in the fathomless ocean of misery known as thought or mind. When Sri Sankara says that the Aathman appears impure to the ajnani, what is meant is that the ajnani's experience of consciousness is limited only to this thing called 'mind' that is elucidated above. The shloka should not be mischevously interpreted to mean that there are two Aathmans, one pure and the other impure. What IS, is only One, and that is THAT, the Aathman. What is experienced by the ajnani is a poor reflection of the radiant Heart. He experiences the mind to be his realm of reality, and the mind is in substance only Aathman; yet, it is looking at a reflection of the sun in a discarded coconut shell filled with muddy, putrescent water. The Jnani on the other hand has merged into the sun itself. So, while by His inherent nature the Self or Aathman is pure, the ajnanai never pays heed to the Aathman itself which is his real Self, but only sees instead an indigent reflection thereof. What he sees is the mind only, and while the mind is made out of chit from the Aathman, it is only an insentient mass of ideas that glows with apparent life owing to the light that falls on it from the Self, like an iron ball glows brilliantly when heated on a hot flame, and it stands nowhere in comparison with the Source of illumination Itself. Therefore the ajnani has never experienced the Aathman directly; he knows himself to be with reference not to Being but to ideas or thoughts, and so from his point of view what he sees is "an Aathman that appears to be impure"; not that the Aathman is besmirched with the upadhi of impurity, but that his mental constructs have thrown a veil over Reality, thus making his vision of the blemishless Aathman impure. "Aathman that appears to be impure" should therefore be correctly understood to refer to the ajnani's deluded vision, not to any fault in the Aathman itself. If you close your eyes to the sun and then complain of darkness, can that be the sun's fault? The wise man sees the rope as rope- he resides at the source of the mind, which is the same as subjective-consciousness-maintained-without-volition-and-without-effort. The fool sees a snake where there is none- he imagines there is a god who has created the world, that there are people in the world, that these people are born and they die, and that he himself is one of these people. Some hopelessly incorrigible fools go so far as to see a giant mountain-snake in a tiny rope; they tell themselves and those around them, "I am Brahman!", "I am Consciousness!", "I am THAT!", etc., etc.; the idea or objective behind those statements appearing as the mahavakyas is to help one to get rid of the 'Body-am-I' idea, nothing more; imagine believing oneself to be Brahman!]



69. Just as a kumbham is made out of earth, this body is also of the nature of pure consciousness. By fools in vain is made the discrimination between the Self and not-Self. [Those with worldly attachments cannot possibly make the fine distinction between the real and the unreal. Their steadfast conviction is that the world is objectively real in itself, and continues during their sushupthi also. They argue that while they themselves were asleep, other people watched the world, including observation of the bodies that were sleeping; the flaw in the argument is that this corroboration also is made available only during the same so-called waking state!]

70. Just as a rope is imagined to be a snake and mother-of-pearl to be silver, so is the [nature of the omnipresent] Aathman determined to be [limited to] the body by the exceedingly vacuous ones.

71. Just as earth is imagined to be a pot, and threads to be cloth, so is the [nature of the omnipresent] Aathman determined to be [limited to] the body by the exceedingly vacuous ones.

72. Just as gold is imagined to be an ear-ring, and water to be waves, so is the [nature of the omnipresent] Aathman determined to be [limited to] the body by the exceedingly vacuous ones.

73. Just as a post is imagined to be a man, and mirage to be water, so is the [nature of the omnipresent] Aathman determined to be [limited to] the body by the exceedingly vacuous ones.

74. Just as blocks of wood are imagined to be a house, and iron to be a sword, so is the [nature of the omnipresent] Aathman determined to be [limited to] the body by the exceedingly vacuous ones.

75. Just as to someone the illusion of a tree arises in water, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

76. Just as to a person travelling in a boat everything appears to be in motion, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

77. Just as to a person suffering from jaundice white things appear as yellow, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

78. Just as to a person with a wrong outlook everything appears to be defective, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

79. Just as a firebrand, through mere rotation, appears circular like the sun, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

80. Just as all things that are greatly large appear to be very small owing to great distance, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

81. Just as all objects that are microscopic appear to be large when viewed through lenses, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

82. Just as a surface of glass appears to be water, or vice versa, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

83. Just as a person infers the presence of a jewel in fire or vice versa, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

84. Just as when clouds move, the moon appears to be in motion, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

85. Just as a person on account of delusion loses all distinction between the different points of a compass, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

86. Just as the moon, [when reflected] in water, appears to be in a state of motion, likewise on account of besmirchment with ignorance [or ahamkara] the jiva sees the physical form of the body as being synonymous with the Aathman.

87. Thus, through ignorance, in the Aathman, verily arises the delusion of the body; that very delusion, again, through Realization, disappears in the same supreme Athman. [The question of why a delusion should arise and then subside may arise to the sadhaka. It is reasonable to ask, why should the delusion not have remained without arising? There cannot be an answer to the question, because the question is based on the following wrong precepts: || 1. There exists an individual "I" which is suffering from delusion or to which delusion has arisen. 2. There exists something called delusion [which is capable of affecting this "I"]. || Both of these ideas are totally incorrect. There exists no individual "I". There never arose any delusion. This is the truth. In that case what was Sri Sankara's intention in writing the above shloka? The sholaka is meant simply to increase mumukshatva and vairagya in the aspirant. On the level of the Absolute Self, there never has been any delusion or bondage; there cannot be.]

88. When the entirety of the movable and immovable universes is known as Aathman, as a consequence of negation of anything and everything not-Self, where indeed arises the question of the body being mistaken for the Aathman? [Discriminating 'This-is-Sat.', 'That-is-asat.', etc. is only a preliminary practice. For final Deliverance, vichara is indispensable.]

89. O Illumined One! Ever knowing the Aathman[to be your own Self], experience all prarabdha with the passage of time. To worry does not befit you. [The Jnani's experience of Consciousness is not besmirched or tainted with any upadhi. So He is always bodiless. The onlooker thinks that the Jnani is 'His body'; the Jnani himself does not make that mistake. Although the 'Jnani's body' is bound by prarabdha, he does not identify himself with that body or with any body; therefore, for Him there is no prarabdha.]

90. 'Verily, even after Self-Knowledge springs forth, prarabdha does not leave.' The statement which is thus heard in the shastras is now refuted.

91. Indeed upon the birth of Self-Knowledge, consequent to non-existence of the body and all other gross phenomena, prarabdha definitely does not exist, just as, upon waking, the dream world is not to be found anywhere. [The Jnanasiddha does not even see the body. He sees only the Self in the body. Destruction of the body makes no difference to the Self. The Self is never embodied, so the question of disappearance of its body never arises.]

92. That karma which is acquired in a previous life is known as prarabdha karma. In the absence of future birth, verily prarabdha does not at any time exist. [One who has destroyed possibility of future birth by killing the ego has no prarabdha to fear from in the present birth. Karma requires the karta. If there is no karta, whom can karma affect? The Jnani who has murdered the spurious ego that arrogantly rises up in opposition to God or Self and affirms "I", has put an end to the karta's life. Karta dead, there is no scope for the triple-karma to wreck mischief.]

93. Just as a dream-body is a superimposition, likewise indeed this jagrat-body. Verily, of what is superimposed how is birth possible? In the absence of birth, where is the scope for prarabdha? [The nature of the superimposition is the ignorance of error of perception- seeing a snake in a rope, fire in a crystal, water in a desert, etc., etc.. While consciousness is real, thoughts are fictitious superimpositions upon it. The miserable superimpositions hide the blissful substratum out of which they are constituted. Such superimposition is caused by avidya maya. How to escape from the poisonous clutches of avidya maya? Simply turn the mind Self-wards.]

94. Vedantic books declare nescience to be verily the substratum of the phenomenal world just as earth is of a jar; such nescience being destroyed, where[how] can the universe subsist? [For the world of name and form,

ignorance is the cause. When name and form have been destroyed, the cosmos is found to be not other than Brahman. The cloak of name and form hides the substratum called Brahman; once this cloak has been burnt to ash in the fire of Jnana, only Brahman remains. This cloak is none other than the mind or ego.]

95. Just as a person afflicted with delusion perceives only the snake by leaving the rope out of consideration, so does an ignorant person see only the phenomenal world leaving Reality [the substratum underlying the world] out of consideration.

96. The real nature of the rope being known, the appearance of the snake does not remain; likewise, its substratum being known, the phenomenal world becomes void. [Brahman realised, the world of names and forms becomes meaningless and void. The world as world disappears or becomes nullity once Realisation is reached. In the Sahajastithi of the Jnani, only Brahman or Reality remains, irrespective of whether or not something called 'world' appears.]

97. The body is also part of the phenomenal world. [Therefore it is unreal. It follows from this that prarabdha, which concerns itself with the body only, must also be unreal.] From where [then does the question of] prarabdha [affecting the jivanmuktha] arise [since he has already completely transcended all unreality]? Prarabdha is discussed by the Srutis only for the purpose of satisfying the mental curiosities of foolish persons.

98. 'And on the Realisation of that which is both the higher and the lower, all his actions are destroyed.' By the Srutis, use of the plural number in the above statement is indicated in a clear manner only for the negation of prarabdha. [On Realisation, the three-fold karma is totally destroyed; the implication of saying, 'All the actions of one whose ego perishes are destroyed once for all.' is only this.]

99. If the doctrine of applicability of prarabdha to the jivanmuktha is still obdurately enunciated by the ignorant- then there arises to them the need to reconcile the twin absurdities [of denying their own subjective existence which is perpetually experienced and of asserting the objective existence of a world which cannot be experienced at all], and then they also run the risk of abandoning the Vedantic conclusion that the Self or Aathman is the same as Parabrahman. Therefore, the sadhaka should accept the authority of those Srutis alone which contain the enuntiationem of true Jnana. [What is the meaning of the saying, 'The world cannot be experienced at all.'? The world can be seen, that is all. True experience does not mean seeing. Only Being can be Real Experience. 'Aparoksha Anubuthi' means Being, not seeing.]

100. Now, for the attainment of Self-Knowledge I explain 15 steps; through[that is, by means of taking the help of] them all, nididhyasanam should verily always be practised.

101. In the absence of constant practice, Realisation of the Aathman, the true nature of which is said to be Existence-Consciousness, does not arise. Therefore, the aspirant, so as to attain the highest good, Brahman, should practise nididhyasana for a long time.

102. and 103. The steps, in order, bear the following names: yama, niyama, thyaga, mouna, desha, kalatha, asana, moolabandha, dehasamyam, dhrikstithi, pranasamyam, pratyaharam, dharanam, athmadhyanam, and samadhi.

104. 'Everything is Brahman.' As a result of such knowledge, restraining the senses is called yama. This should be repeatedly practiced.

105. The continuous prevalence of one thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts, is called Niyama. This verily a superlative experience of bliss. By the wise it is regularly practised.

106. Having understood the cosmos to be an illusory appearance in the Self-conscious Aathman, immediate abandonment thereof is verily the renunciation highly esteemed by men of wisdom, because it is of the nature of immediate liberation. [Once the idea that the cosmos, including the body, is objectively real is fully abandoned, retaining the mind in the Heart is child's play, because the mind is no longer interested in jumping out after imaginary, phantasmagoric delusions; it wants to be with the Real. Therefore it becomes reluctant to leave the Heart.]

107. The wise should always remain undifferentiated from that silence which words cannot reach and from which the mind turns back without being able to scale, but which yogis are able to attain. [The implication of saying that the mind is incompetent to reach Brahman is that thoughts or intellection cannot discover Him. The dead mind discovers itself to be none other than Brahman. What is a dead mind? A mind whose vrittis have been permanently destroyed is called a dead mind. It is not a state of inertness or inertia, but one of indestructible peace or shanthi.]

108. and 109. Who is capable of describing that from which words turn back? If the phenomenal world were to be attempted to be described, this effort would also leave us in the same condition of being lost for words. By those who are firmly established in the limitless space of Consciousness, Silence is known as the permanent state. By the teachers of Brahman, silence of speech is recommended for children. [Enquiry into the nature of the phenomenal world leads eventually only into self-enquiry. Self-enquiry leads only to silence. Silence of speech is recommended for those who are puerile

mavericks upon the spiritual path. The Sage may talk, but His mind moves not. Thus, whether his mouth moves or not, the Sage is always in Silence. The sadhaka who has taken a vow of silence may roam around with balpam and slate in hand, yet he has accomplished nothing if there is no introversion of mind attained.]

110. That state of solitude alone is known as the space of consciousness, in the middle, beginning or end of which any gross matter is non-existent, but by which the entirety of the cosmos always stands pervaded.

111. On account of bringing forth all beings beginning with Brahma, in the fraction of a second, the One who is non-dual, undivided bliss is described by the word, 'Time'. [Creation is possible in Brahman only through the mind. When the mind forsakes its identity with the Self and strays away therefrom, all sorts of worlds are created in no time at all. Yet, Brahman is the substratum of all of them, and they are verily only Brahman, having no other actual identity.]

112. Verily, where easily and unceasingly contemplation of Brahman becomes possible, that posture alone is it necessary to know, not any other which results in the destruction of Happiness. [The posture that makes possible efficacious contemplation of Brahman is not any physical asana, but the total submergence of the mind in the Heart. Only this correct mental posture is of use to one who wants to sunder the knot of ignorance which ties him down to the world of gross matter and flesh. Contemplation of Brahman does not involve thinking of Brahman; it means merging the mind in Brahman.]

113. That which is established as the origin of all beings, as the substratum underlying the cosmos, and as the immutable One, and that in which the enlightened are completely merged- that alone verily qualifies to be known as Siddhasana, the supreme asana.

114. That which is the root of all existence, and that on which the practice of restraint of mind is based, is called Mulabandha. Since this practice is worthy of even those who are following the path of Raja-yoga, it is fit for being adopted by everyone.

115. Know that absorption of the limbs of the mind in Brahman, which is always serene, is the true equipoise of mind. Otherwise, maintaining straightness of the body like a withered tree verily cannot amount to equipoise of mind.

116. Having made one's vision of the nature of knowledge, one should see the cosmos as being of the nature of Brahman. It is this vision that is truly noble, not fixing the gaze on the tip of one's nose.

117. Or, where cessation of seer, sight and seen takes place, there alone should one's sight be fixed, and not upon the tip of the nose. [Sri Sankara

clarifies the meaning of Verse VI-XIII in the Bhagawad Gita.] 118. In all mental modes which have their origin in Pure Consciousness, verily seeing Brahman alone with the aid of the faculty of remembrance, and practicing restraint of all vrittis of the mind, is known as Pranayama. [The practice of restraining vrittis or chitta vritti nirodham does not bring about any permanent remedy to the malady of ignorance. In the state of deep slumber, thoughts do not perturb one. Yet on waking up, the trouble resumes itself. Vichara alone can destroy the dense, dark mass of ignorance which causes birth after birth, once and for all. The nirodham practice has been recommended here by Sri Sankara for beginners. One with steadfast vairagyam does not find use for preliminary practices of any sort. He is burning, dying to Realise. He plunges into the vichara as soon as he hears about it.]

119. and 120. The rejection of the objective reality of the phenomenal world is known as Rechaka. The thought 'I am verily Brahman.', is called Puraka. Thereafter, the steadiness of that thought is called Kumbhaka. This is the worthy course of Pranayama for the wise, whereas the ignorant [know only to] press the nose.

121. Seeing the Self in all objects and allowing the mind to be absorbed in the primal consciousness is known as Pratyahara. It should be practised by seekers of Liberation.

122. Wherever it is that the mind goes, in that very act of romping, seeing Brahman with the mind, alone is known as the supreme Dharana. [The import of the Shloka is this:- Whenever the mind leaves its source and starts wandering away into self-fabricated imaginary realms, bring it back to the Self and submerge it there.]

123. 'I am Brahman alone.' By the aid of this auspicious vritti, inhereing in the supreme-bliss-yielding state of depending upon nothing, is appropriately indicated by the word Dhyana.

124. Through changelessness of vrittis, and subsequently, through transformation thereof into Brahman, acheivement of complete vrittivismaranam may be referred to as Samadhi or the culmination of Knowledge. [The samadhi referred to here is nirvikalpa samadhi, which can be attained by vrittivismaranam. However, this is not permanent. Sahaja samadhi is made possible only after vrittinasham. What is forgotten can be remembered again. What is annihilated never rises.]

125. The aspirant should carefully practice the samadhi aforesaid that reveals his true nature of uncaused bliss, until, falling under his full control, it springs forth instantaneously when called into activation. [This shloka discusses the initial stage of practice. As the practice becomes intense, one is unwilling to leave the thought-free state. The prospect of thinking horrifies him. He is then

reduced into his original state of mere consciousness to which thought is radically and totally alien. Only thereafter is he absorbed by the Beyond. Then, there is no question of entering or leaving samadhi; what remains is only samadhi. Rather than samadhi being under his control, he falls into it never to rise again. The body's functions may continue as before, but He is not here...]

126. Then [,such a one who has learnt to at will dissolve his mind in the ecstasy of samadhi,] the king of yogis becomes a siddha who is denuded of all [need for] sadhana. The real nature of such a one as this can never become an object apprehensible by mind or describable by speech. [Samadhi is initially brought about by effort of will. Later it becomes the natural state from which no fluctuation is possible. Then, one's will or volition entirely having disappeared, only samadhi remains.]

127. and 128. While practicing Samadhi one may be forcibly confronted with numerous obstacles, such as lack of motivation to engage in enquiry, idleness, desire to experience sensory pleasures, sleep, dullness, distraction, feelings of joy, and the sense of blankness. One seeking Brahmajnana should slowly give up all of them.

129. Thinking about an object leads indeed to identification with that object. Thinking about voidness leads indeed to identification with voidness. Transformation of the thought-manufacturing faculty into Brahman indeed leads to perfection. Therefore only the last one, since it alone leads to perfection, should be practised.

130. Those who [wilfully] abandon the supremely purifying practice of submerging the mind in Brahman, live in vain; they are the same as animals.

131. Blessed indeed are those virtuous ones who know this consciousness of Brahman, as also those who cultivate it. They are respected in all the 3 worlds.

132. Those alone in whom consciousness of Brahman has manifested, and further, has ripened to perfection, reach the state of Eternal Waking that is Brahman, and not those who merely babble with words. [The method of Realisation is only the investigation 'Who am I?'. Engaging in interminable discussions or arguments about Ajata-advaita is a useless mental activity. It will not lead to Emancipation. It is like the Greek story of King Syshiboher, who was forced to endlessly roll a massive boulder all the way up to the top of an enormous, steep hill, only to helplessly watch it roll back down just when the top was about to be reached, and then roll it up again and so on and so forth. He is supposed to be still there in the underworld, rolling and rolling with all the might of his arms, but to no fruitful end. Likewise, jivas are born on the earth, but without investigating, 'Who am I, who believes he was born?', they



take themselves to be the body and do all sorts of things to safeguard life in the body and perpetuate its existence: education, career, employment and what-not. They even create young ones, thinking 'I am unique in this earth. I am going to die one day; atleast I must leave behind my biological footprint in this earth. Thus the continuity of my lineage is assured.'; finally they just die and everything done here is wasted and destroyed in a flash. Thus, mistaking the inert body for the self-luminous Self, they keep on undergoing births and deaths ad infinitum, like the poor king who keeps on- pointlessly- rolling the heavy boulder. If the total pointlessness of it all is once realised, the mind automatically rejects the objective world to be worthless, and turns to the path of Jnana. Desire for the enjoyments of the world arises only if and since the thought 'I am enjoying.' is possible, which in turn the thought, 'I am this body.'; once this mistaken identity is given up, desire for objects and sense-pleasure will not cause any more harassment, and thus the mind is able to easily turn inward. This is why vairagyam is said to be a sine qua non for Realisation.]

133. Also, those persons who are clever only in discussing about Brahman, but are devoid of consciousness of Brahman, and are very much attached to worldly pleasures, take birth and die again and again in consequence of their ignorance.

134. [Those aspiring for Brahmajnana should steadfastly remain completely absorbed in the state of motionless] repose in Brahman without swerving therefrom for even 1/32th of a second, just like Brahma, Sanaka, Suka and others.

135. Verily, in the effect, the nature of the cause inheres; not in the cause, the nature of the effect. Therefore, through investigation, it is discovered that in the absence of the effect the causative factor has gone away.

136. Then, indeed, that pure substratum alone remains which is beyond the reach of words. Verily, by scrutinising repeatedly the example of earth and the pot, this fact should be understood.

137. In the above manner, in those who possess chittashuddhi, vrittijnanam dawns. Thereafter vrittijnanam merges into Brahman. [Vrittijnanam is the pure-mind's experience of complete submergence in Brahman. However, actual Liberation lies only in manonasham. Notwithstanding how humongously blissful an experience might be, the aspirant should never stop thereat, but must relentlessly inquire, 'To whom has this blissful experience accrued or presented itself?', until all duality is transcended once and for all.]

138. Verily, one must in the beginning examine the cause by means of elimination; again, that same cause, by means of ascertainment in the effect, he perpetually comprehends.

139. Verily, in the effect, the cause should be seen. Thereafter the effect should be dismissed. Then, it is discovered that the causative factor has gone away. [Meaning that is to say- Ideas residing in the mind concerning or considering the causative factor as{to be} the causative factor are eliminated, leaving behind what was imagined to be the causative factor hitherto, but is now discovered to be the only possible One Existence.] Thereupon the Sage abides as the residue. [On the level of phenomenal, dualistic or apparent reality, Brahman is the cause and the world is the effect. Brahman is understood to be the substratum underlying the world of name and form. The world is discarded as being unworthy of one's attention; it ceases to be an object of one's mental focus upon development of the firm conviction that it is a delusion and a distraction. Next, this conviction, the understanding that Brahman is the sadvasthu{underlying self-sustaining self-luminous substratum of Reality} supporting the cosmos, and all other vrittis{mental modifications} are completely abandoned as being obstacles to one's natural state of Indestructible Peace, including the aham vritti, the primogenitalis tenebra or original sin of ignorance, which makes one think that he is distinct from his environment and makes him style himself "I" with reference to his inert body. What remains is Reality. That is the Sage or Jnani.]

140. A person who contemplates a thing with furious intensity and certain conviction, quickly becomes that very thing. For an example we may understand the illustration of the wasp and the worm.

141. Verily, the wise, cannot but, with extreme scrupulousness, perpetually remain without in the least swerving from the experience of the invisible, the phenomenal and everything else being only one's own Self which is of the nature of Consciousness. [There cannot be any doubt that there is a cornucopia of malefic-felons { சில்மிஷக்காரர்கள் } in this baffling world whose sole occupation it is to trap the credulous and the unwary into believing that falling into a certain set of beliefs constitutes the practise of Ajata-advaita. Ajt.adv. is subjective experience; one who believes in it is elegantly spoiling for himself any chances he might yet have at Realising it. Eradication of possibility of thought is called Ajt.adv.; can belief or any other system for thought-[synthesisation](#) lead you to it? If you go the way your thoughts prefer to lead you, you will be completely carried away by them and you will find yourself in an endless labyrinth. The Realised man who sees no other to teach alone is qualified to teach {Ajt.adv.}- not the clever scholar who has a masterful command of Sanskrit and the various Upanishadic texts, not the excellent orator with a splendid fluency in English who says, 'You are not the mind. You are not the body. You are Consciousness- You are THAT.', not the sorcerer who is able to display all sorts of magical tricks, not the occultist who

specialises in reading the minds of 'others', and nor yet the yogi who is able to become a corpse at will. The man on the Clapham omnibus, will, on reading a shloka like this, think to himself, 'It seems Sri Sankara is of the opinion that I myself am the visible, the invisible and everything else. What a fantastic view!'. The charlatans calling themselves 'Guru' also easily beguile such simpletons. So, believing himself to be Brahman, the man goes berserk. What a pity! When the shloka says, '...the experience of everything being only one's own Self...', it is not to be understood, 'Sri Sankara is asking me to believe that everything is my own Self.'. The shloka is a description of the Sahajastithi. The Jnani cannot be aware of objects, is the implication. One who thinks, believes or imagines that his ego is in this state is akin to the case of the cat that branded itself with a red-hot iron-rod in stripes across its back: it wanted to become a tiger. புலியைப் பார்த்து பூனை சூடு வைற்றுக்கொண்ட கதையைப்போல் தான் இதுவும்தான்.]

142. Having reduced the visible into invisibility, the learned indeed thinks of Brahman as the cause of the phenomenal world. Thereafter, he abides with the mind transformed into the perpetually blissful fullness of consciousness. [Having Realised, the gross world of names and forms is also found to be Brahman only. Therefore, the visible has been transformed into the subtle invisible space of consciousness.]

143. Thus has been described Raja-yoga, consisting of the steps outlined above. With this may be combined Hatha-yoga, in the case of those whose worldly desires are yet to be totally eradicated.

144. For one whose mind is completely mature to realise the Self, the method of Raja-yoga described here alone brings about the state of Jnana-siddhi. Such maturity is easily obtained in the case of those who are devoted to Guru and God. [It may be noted that here Sri Sankara is explaining his own system of Raja-yoga. It ought not to be confused with the system elucidated by Swami Vivekananda, which bears the same name.]

P>S> With regard to the structure of the above content, I feel it necessary to state that the text enclosed in parentheses within the main body of the translation represent words that are, in my opinion, additives rightfully made by Bhagawan to make the meaning more clearly accessible; the Sanskrit original may not correspondingly contain them. In the case of some shlokas B. gave a commentary also. This has been enclosed in parentheses. It follows the respective translations. Also, the explanation was given to the pandit in Tamil. The misdemeanor of any infelicitous rendering into the English tongue lies with me and me alone. The youthful habit of extensively [and lest I omit to mention, uselessly] reading countless works of fiction in the English language has left me with a reasonably good grasp over the vocabulary and sentence-

construction methodology, although I cannot pronounce a single word; equally, I am not even a dilettante when it comes to written Tamil; thus my brain has absorbed the meaning of B.'s words and presented them here in English. Curiously, since meeting Bhagawan, fiction has ceased to interest me; so has the world, which is, relatively speaking, also not altogether unfit to be given that label. Now I have zest for Reality only- that is Bhagawan's Love Eternal.

19 July 1936

The moslem gentleman rushed into the ashram hall very early in the morning today, just after me. He seemed alarmed about something. He revealed excitedly that he had had a dream a day prior, and inside that dream the following exchange had taken place between B. and himself:

[According to the man's incredible narrative, within his dream, B. and the moslem gentleman are in a marble-walled room facing the Kaaba, only inches away from the black, polished exterior of God's residence.]

B.: Why do you keep pestering me with unnecessary questions? What is the true purpose of your visit?

Q.: Like Bhagawan, I also want to become a Brahmajnani.

B.: If I give you Brahmajnana, what will you give me in return?

Q.: Anything you ask for.

B.: Will you give me your life?

Q.: Undoubtedly, for by perishing in your hands, I shall attain immortality.

B.: Will you give me your mind?

Q.: Yes.

B.: Give it, then.

Q.: How?

B.: Pursue the investigation, 'Who-am-I?'

Q.: Till when?

B.: Till it becomes impossible to ask the question.

Q.: If I refuse to give myself up to your mercy, what will happen to me?

At this point in the dream B. springs up from his usual couch and pounces on the poor man, uttering a terrible roar. In mid-air he has turned into a tiger. The Ramana-tiger holds the terrified moslem in-between its front paws and screams:

Ramana-tiger: Foolish child! You are already mine! How dare you continue to pretend otherwise? Surrender to me! How long can you withstand the pain of separation from Allah? Do you not want to return home?

Q.: I do. I know your Heart is my true home. But I am too weak. My vishayavasanas are hindering me from inhering in your Heart. My mind is too

strong... It is not allowing me to Realise!

R.T.: You know Allah will never forsake you. You know He loves you as His own child. You know that the only meaningful aim of your life is to see the Love you bear towards Him in your Heart, materialise into reacceptance into His flock. Therefore, no matter how strong your mind and its vasantas may appear to be, they are fighting a losing battle, because the enemy they are so foolishly fighting against is the supreme power of infinite Love, which can never be defeated! Whatever chicanerous tricks your mind may employ, ask it to remember this: It is fighting against ME, the vavasour of Allah!

Whomsoever smiteth against me, he surely smiteth against Allah!

Whomsoever caressingly loveth me in his mind even, he surely loveth unto Allah! The so-called treasure that you are cherishing in your mind, the "I": he is not yours at all. He belongs to Allah; he is mine. How dare you steal from me! How dare you appropriate stolen property for yourself and derive

enjoyment out of it, falsely imagining it to be yours! மூடனே! 'நான்' என்பவன் திருட்டு சொத்து! திருட்டு சொத்தையா நமது என்று நினைத்துக் கொண்டு அனுபவிப்பது! இந்த சொத்தின் உண்மையான உரிமை ஆளர் இடமே இதை திரும்ப அளித்து விடவும்! அல்லாவிட்டால் இட்சணமே இந்த சொத்தின் அசல் எஜமானின் கோபத்திற்கு இறை ஆகி விடுவாய்! Know this: The very moment you arose as the mind in the form of "I", you were doomed to ultimate defeat! The sooner you reconcile yourself to this fact, the better it is for you, because knowing that your ultimate annihilation is assured, why should you be not willing to surrender yourself here and now? Why and for how long will you continue fighting this hopeless battle? Why not just give up here and now and rest in peace for ever? Will you not obey me? Can you not see that I cannot fail to conquer you, because mine is a conquest of infinite Love? I am now coaxing you in the gentlest possible fashion, by attracting you with my merciful Love, by bringing you round to fight willingly and lovingly on my side of the battle, by gradually convincing you to let go of your attachments to all things alien to your own fundamental self-awareness, by showing you my face of Ruth, by patiently feeding you from within with my own gracious Love, and by making you love the prize I have in store for you, which is the absolute self-awareness that you actually are. But I need not be so kind, for you have already become my catch. I have already trapped you in the net of my Grace. I can now do whatever I like with you. I am the Aathman. I have come in this form, for I am hungry to devour your soul. Will you surrender now? Or shall I show you another face that I have, the face of Ruthlessness? Have you become tired of beholding my beautiful face of Ruth, perhaps? Have I erred in thinking that you will come around on your own if shown more and more

Love? Shall I decide to reconsider, to revise my approach? Do you wish to see my face of Ruthlessness, the rarest of the rare forms that I take? Or will you submit yourself here and now?

Q.: [quaking with terror]: I surrender.

R.T.: Come closer!

Q.: I am exceedingly afraid.

R.T.: [roaring furiously] DO AS YOU ARE TOLD OR ELSE FALL PREY TO THE FULL MIGHT OF MY FURY!!!

The moslem gentleman comes closer.

R.T.: Put your head in my mouth!

Frightened beyond measure, the moslem gentleman rushes into the Kaaba, screaming to Allah for help. But inside is the very same tiger!

R.T.: Now you see the futility of trying to escape from Allah! Verily, it is I who am Allah! You are facing your Creator! Will you not surrender atleast now?

Q.: Yes, my Lord.

R.T.: Your head in my mouth, then.

Q.: Will it be very painful, my Lord?

R.T.: Do you think you deserve the pain?

Q.: [merely trembles with fright]

R.T.: I think you deserve it. What do you say?

Q.: I agree, my Lord.

R.T.: Since you agree, you shall be spared the pain. Now- put your head in my mouth!

The moslem gentleman does as told, and he is swallowed alive by Ramana-tiger. That very moment he awakens, feeling drenched in cold sweat, and further, finds he has not stirred from his bed, though he has wetted and soilt himself, possibly from fear. He has caught the next available transport to Tiruvannamalai, and is now humbly seated before Bhagawan.

Q.: [croakily] Master, are such harsh methods necessary to impart to me the Truth?

B. laughed and did not say anything for some time. Then-

B.: [in a low, mellifluous note] Corvus oculus corvi non eruit.

Q.: I understand now, yes. Yes. Otherwise I would not have mended myself. But please do not do it again. I have surrendered myself heart and soul to you. I have nothing further to ask.

Now B. merely smiled and kept quiet, as he had been throughout the peculiar narrative. After some time the chap left after kissing the floor of the Hall seven times, and then bowing to Bhagawan an equal number of times. That he still looked shaky, was my impression.

S>M>

G.: Will B. not give me also a similar experience? I should be delighted to obtain it.

B.: [smiling] Did not my little savant relish the Latin expressions? Indeed, erudition incarnate, no room for doubt!

I blinked in surprise. True, I had on the other day- almost as a reflex action, unpremeditatedly- counted myself highly fortunate at being able to understand, and had congratulated myself smugly; now had arrived a forcible reminder that before B. the Almighty, such mundane abilities were nothing to boast about, and thus must be obsequiously viewed as a gift from God.

B.: [kindly addressing my penitent face] You were proud of your proficiency in Latin- is it not so?

G.: [contritely] Yes- yes, correct. I am sorry... I shall be without taking pride in my learning, hereafter.... But what I was trying to beseech is this- Am I eligible to receive an experience similar to what the moslem gentleman was blessed with?

B.: Vincit qui patitur. Veritatem dies aperit. Crescit occulto velut arbor aevo. [laughs]

S>M>

Q.: Pathala-ulagam, where demons are supposed to dwell, is mentioned in many scriptures in Hinduism. Does it actually exist? Suppose we dig deep enough under the Earth's surface, will we discover demons living underneath? Why has science uncovered no evidence of it, if so?

B.: Other than the landmass of Europe-Asia-Africa, the rest of the Earth's surface in land is called pathala-ulagam. Those living in it are also human-beings. Otherwise, would you call this nice man [laughing and pointing to a Caucasian gentleman meditating in a far corner of the Hall, with eyes closed in solemnity of practice, or perhaps intensity of bliss] a demon?

Q.: The books say demons inhabit the pathala-ulagam. I want B.'s clarification.

B.: First exorcise yourself of the demon [called "I"] that has possessed you.

Q.: What! I am possessed by a demon!

B.: This demon has victimised not only you, but many, many people.

Q.: What is the demon's name? Where did he come from and how did he enter into me? How to eradicate him?!

B.: His name is avidya maya or ahamkara. No one knows how or whence he came. Look for him- then he will run away.

Q.: [laughing in relief] Oh! It is B.'s usual teaching! For a minute I became numb with fright!

S>M>

Sri Bhagawan was given a sheet of paper filled with questions. He asked the interpreter to read them out.

1. The heavenly realm of Shambala is said to be located somewhere in Tibet. One who merely visits it once is said to be absorbed in Bliss forever. Is it so? Is it acceptable for ordinary mortals to aspire to locate and enter the place? Does the place actually exist, or is it a mere mythical construct? If it is there, how to find it, since the mountainous region is largely uncharted?

2. What is the secret of Mount Kailash? Does Lord Shiva really reside at the top of the peak?

3. It is said that if a sinner touches the mountain, he suddenly ages 2 decades in a span of 2 minutes. Is this true?

4. Is Mt. Kailash the axis mundi of the earth? Does it give access to the hidden realms of heaven that are frequently mentioned in the Hindu scriptures?

At this point, B. asked the interpreter to stop reading, and said to the young man who had presented the questions:

B.: Look here, I don't know anything about such things.

Q.: But B. is widely regarded as a Sarvagnar.

B.: People foist on me whatever they like. What am I to do? The kingdom of Heaven you seek is within. It is to be found by turning the mind inward, not by journeying to all sorts of impossible places.

Q.: If all places are the same, why did B. leave Madurai and come to Tiruvannamalai?

B.: Always the same question! You want to go to all sorts of exotic locations. I did not [personally] desire to go anywhere; rather, I was pulled here.

Q.: The same fascination you have for Mount Arunachala, I have for Mount Kailash. What is wrong in it? Both are dwelling places of Shiva.

B.: Right. You may do as fancy pleases you. Why solicit my opinion?

Q.: It is difficult to reach the mountain. Not many have succeeded. I want B.'s blessings so that I may succeed in safely reaching there. If I once have darshan of the mountain, it will do. Even if I drop dead the next moment, it matters nothing. Will B. please Bless my endeavour? I plan to start 2 weeks hence.

B.: [smiles]

Q.: Can I take it that B.'s blessings for my journey are descended upon me?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

A convivial, middle-aged Caucasian asked-

Q.: I understand that according to Bhagawan, Reality refers to consciousness unsullied by thought.



B.: What you comprehend, or think you are able to apprehend, can never be Reality. That subtle space in which this fleeting you, as you are now falsely imagining yourself to be, cease to exist, so exposing the actual, permanent you lying underneath as true Being, is Reality.

Q.: It is said that this mountain Arunachala possesses a powerful spiritual energy. If I carry away rocks from the mountain back home, will the mountain's power accompany me? From which portion of the Hill should rocks be gathered for maximum beneficial effect?

B.: Is there any use in going on rock-hunting expeditions? The contumacious mind must be introverted and destroyed. That [regaining the natural state of Self] is the only worthwhile thing to do in life.

Q.: I am interested in experimenting with alternate forms of medicine. What is B.'s opinion on Hahnemann's system of 'Like-cures-like.'? How can diluting a substance make its effect upon the patient more potent?

B.: [no answer]

Q.: What is B.'s opinion on the present German Chancellor? Today morning I met a Brahmin in this place, who confidently asserts that he is a divine incarnation, or a servile instrument in God's hands, meant to ruthlessly put down injustice wherever it occurs in the world, commencing from Germany. Is deployment of violence justified to root out injustice? Does not Mr. Gandhi advocate -

At that moment, an excited voice, in strained English, suddenly announced into the air from the back of the Hall-

'I am convinced that Sri Hitler and Sri Bhagawan are in the same supreme state of Brahmajnana. But perhaps Hitler may be a Brahma-rakshasha. Nevertheless he is also a Jnani, nothing inferior to that... Has not his deputy said, "Do not seek Hitler with the mind. It is through the Heart that you shall succeed in finding Him."? Is this not Bhagawan's teaching verbatim, when people question Him about finding God? Hitler may use violent methods because it is his ordained style of functioning. Nonetheless, He is an avatar. I know... Consider his inspiring words- "It is a necessity of human evolution that the individual should be imbued with the spirit of sacrifice in favour of the common weal, and that he should not be influenced by the morbid notions of those knaves who pretend to know better than Nature and who have the impudence to criticize her decrees.", "The Strong is Mightiest Alone.", "Man has become great through perpetual struggle. In perpetual peace his greatness must decline.", "He who would live must fight. He who does not wish to fight in this world, where perpetual struggle is the only permanent law of life, has not the right to exist.", "The sledgehammer of fate which strikes down the one so easily suddenly finds the counter-impact of Steel when it

strikes at the other.", and many more. Are these not the words of a Jnani? Is it not self-evident that it must be so? If B. will give permission I want to read out more, so that everyone can be benefitted by these holy words uttered by a great Jnani.'

There was no response from Bhagawan. The brahmin retreated into silence.

Q.: Yes, this is the man. What is to be made out of his outlandish claims? Is Herr Hitler really a divine instrument in God's hands?

B.: நாம் எல்லோருமே அவரால் ஆட்டிவைக்கப்பட்ட கைப்பாவைகள் தானே. [All sentient beings are verily divine instruments in the hands of the Supreme Lord{Parameshwara}.]

Q.: Sri Bhagawan wears only underwear. I hear, whilst living in the Hill, He was totally nude. What is the philosophy behind it? Is it aversion to luxury? Will being nude help in Realising the Self?

B.: Mental nudity is the way to the Self.

Q.: And what is that?

B.: Mind denuded of vrittis.

Q.: What is a vritti?

B.: A strand of modification in and of pure consciousness.

Q.: Still, what is the reason Bhagawan won't wear any clothes?

B.: Have you come all the way from the New World only to ask this question?

Q.: It is said that the Jnani never sleeps. Is it true? Do you never sleep?

B.: On the other hand, I am always asleep. I have permanently put myself to Eternal Sleep from which no waking could ever be possible.

Q.: B. is now talking to me. How can he be asleep? Is he talking in his sleep, then?

B.: Yes.

Q.: I am beginning to guess there is a hidden layer of meaning in all your answers...

B.: The Jnani's mind is asleep in Brahman. It is awake to Brahman but unaware of anything else- rather, there is no 'anything else' for him, apart from Brahman, to be aware of. "I" am not talking to "you"; these [are appearances that] are inseperable from Brahman. Their substratum or vasthu is Brahman only. There cannot be a not-Brahman. What IS, is only Brahman. What IS NOT, cannot BE. Thus the import of Sri Krishna's wisely enunciated words: Nasatho vidyathe bhavo nabhavo vidyathe sathaha.

Q.: The yogi smears his body all over with ash from the crematorium. What is the purpose?

B.: To remember: 'One day I shall likewise be reduced into ash.'

Q.: Why keep on reflecting upon such a macabre truth?

B.: To get rid of the idea, 'I am this body.'; so long as such an idea, or any other vritti, remains, Realisation cannot be had, even in dreams.

Q.: How, and why, did the Absolute Self or 'the Brahman' fall from his high state of Godhood, and become the mind?

B.: He never fell.

Q.: What then is to account for the existence of the mind?

B.: Its own ignorance.

Q.: How did that ignorance arise?

B.: On the false strength of the one who meaninglessly asserts, 'I am ignorant.'

Q.: If the assertion 'I am ignorant.' is wrong, all are then Jnanis.

B.: Quite so.

Q.: I am also a Jnani like Bhagawan, then? Am I not a mere mortal?

B.: In fact, all are only Jnanis- atleast in my vision it is so. One who feels otherwise should ask himself, 'Who is the one who admits the apparent truth of his own ignorance?'

Q.: Back to Who-am-I? again, I see!

B.: It is the only useful thing to do.

Q.: What is the purport of this investigation? I mean- what does it aim to reach?

B.: Subjective awareness maintained without volition and without effort is the objective of Aathma-vichara.

Q.: If everything is a dream, right now what is the position? I mean: Is Bhagawan appearing in my dream? Or am I appearing in Bhagawan's dream?

B.: Bhagawan does not dream. He is the Real.

Q.: So it is I who have imagined the great Ramana Maharshi, thus bringing him into existence! How great I must be, to have created not only this whole cosmos, but also Ramana Maharshi himself!

B.: [laughs]

Q.: You see the- pardon me- the absurdity of your thesis that the world is a dream... ?

B.: The world of name and form is the merest of illusions. Only the substratum underlying it is Real and True. Only by right Experience can this be further understood.

Q.: Can you give me 'the saktipada'? It is said to be transfer of psychic energy from master to pupil.

B.: Who is the master and who is the pupil? In whose point of view?

Q.: I humbly pray that my request be considered favourably.

B.: Catch hold of the "I-Current" and remain still. It will give you all you need.

Q.: How to discover this psychic current?

B.: Once all thoughts have subsided, a steady stream of subjective consciousness remains as the residue. Hold on to it without effort and without volition. It will lead you to the Goal invariably.

Q.: There is said to have lived a saint called 'Sadasiva Brahmendra' in South India. He is said to have bodily manifested at the same measured time, at various different locations, perfectly simultaneously! Further, according to the same legend or story, once for some reason the King of the land became furious with him and ordered that his arms be chopped off. This was done. The saint merely picked up the severed arms with his mouth, and holding them by the skin, betwixt his rows of teeth, demurely walked away from the place, blood trailing along in his wake. Even the slightest twitch of pain could not be observed in him. The king then begged for forgiveness. The saint said nothing; he seemed to be unaware of his environment; he would not even care to look at anyone. Just then, a beetle was about to drown in the pool of blood lying on the ground. Moved by compassion for the hapless creature, the saint dropped his severed arms from his mouth; instead of falling on the ground, the arms magically attached themselves in their original positions, and functioned normally! The saint rescued the beetle, which everyone else noticed only now, and went his way as if nothing at all had happened. What are we to make out of this story? Many otherwise normal people seem to believe in it!

B.: The world is under no obligation to produce forth only those events which lie within the horizon of your ability to comprehend.

Q.: So the supernatural... is real?

B.: Only as real as you are- you as the body or mind.

Q.: If I also try to get occult or thaumaturgic powers such as reading others' thoughts, moving physical objects using the mind, manifesting objects and making them vanish, predicting the future, spontaneously coming to know of events happening far away, transmutation of base metals into gold, etc., will they carry me towards or away from Realisation of the Brahman?

B.: The latter.

Q.: Why so- may I know?

B.: Because the powers are exercised using the mind. Patanjali himself says, Bahirakalpita vrittir mahavideha tataha prakashavaranyakshayaha. From this it is obvious that the Aathman will never reveal itself unless and until one has transcended the mind in its entirety. Whilst I was living in Virupaksha-cave, in 1902 or 1903, a man came who showed me many tricks of the sort you mention. Then he drove Palanisamy out, and showed me his crowing act. Do you know what this crowing act was?

Q.: I am eager to hear it.

B.: [in English] He slanted his body. The lower jaw remained on the neck. The rest of his head rolled off. I picked it up and parted the hair in a neat manner. The half-mouth in my hand, somehow produced the sound 'Thank you!'- in English. I smiled at it and fitted it back.

I and another in the Hall who could understand English were horrified; the American coolly said-

Q.: Oh! Really! B. is sure it was not a mere dream?

B.: [waving at the Hall] As much as all this is.

Q.: Will the omnipotent B. do the same trick himself now and show me, so that I am convinced?

B.: What you should be convinced about is this- such powers are worthless. They lead you away from peace. The illusionist, once his head was safely back on, wept and wept in front of me. He had learnt these tricks from an occultist by serving him like a dog for 3 decades; only now did he see the pointlessness, the futility and the evil repercussions of it all. Now he was tempted to perform these everywhere. As a result of the distraction, he was unable to find the time for genuine spiritual pursuits. His peace of mind was now totally extinct. He begged me to take the powers away. To that effect, I gesticulated him to circumambulate the Hill that very night. He replied that it was amavasai that night, hence he would not be able to see his way. I signalled it was all the better that he be not guided by his perfidious senses, but rather by God's grace. Thanking me, he went away. I never saw him thereafter. A few days later Palanisamy, it seems, chanced to meet him near the Sona theertham. He had followed my advice, and now was bereft of his psychic abilities. He sent his many thanks to me through Palanisamy. I never heard of him since. So, what is the observation? Even one with such advanced powers finds them a nuisance. Thus you should aim for Realisation and Realisation alone.

Q.: But it is all said to be pre-determined: 'One shall be able to Realise only if destiny permits it.' Who knows what she permits? I have heard that B. himself is not even a determinist, but an absolute fatalist. Am I right?

B.: Destiny cannot so much as cause a ripple upon the introverted mind. Let her do what she will with the body. You merge in the Self.

Q.: 'Destiny is powerless to disturb the introverted mind.' Very well. Now- has she the power to thwart a mind that is endeavouring to introvert itself? If yes, what is the use of engaging in spiritual practices?

B.: That power goes on diminishing the more and more the introversion becomes intense.

Q.: I will now frame the question in a slightly different way- If everything is predestined, are my thoughts also predestined?

B.: Do you choose to forsake the Self and think, or do you choose to inhere in the Heart? This is the only choice given to you at any given point in time. The only freedom given to you is to turn inward and drown yourself in the Heart. This is the one and only free-will allowed to man.

Q.: I find nowadays that my faculty of memory often gives me the slip. What is the remedy?

B.: Forgetting [also the fact of] your forgetfulness.

Q.: Is it true that for the south-Indian and Japanese people, Realisation comes easily relative to other cultures on the Earth, on account of conducive psychological constitution caused by appropriate upbringing?

B.: It may or may not be true. But can you help your place of birth? Can it be retroactively changed? Impossible. So, make the best out of the prevailing circumstances and try to direct the mind into the Heart here and now. All other pursuits are ultimately proved futile.

Q.: Am I under any moral obligation to Realise the Self? Is it my rightful duty? Or do I have a choice to remain an ignoramus, should I so please? Is it wrong morally not to Realise?

B.: If and once you practically understand the personal-self to be an illusion [or delusion], the inescapable obligation [to Realise] does devolve on you invariably and automatically.

Q.: The direct means to regain the Absolute- according to B., it is the one and only 'Who-am-I?' investigation, is that not so?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Why so?

At this point, B. said something to an attendant, whereupon the latter extracted a heavy-looking volume from the book-case in the Hall. The book was handed to Bhagawan. He opened it once and it had opened onto the very page he had been aiming for; this curious knack I have already noticed many times in the master. He handed the open book to the interpreter, and gave him some instructions. Presently the interpreter read as follows-

The following are the words of the Tibetan Yogi Milarepa:

Oh! Ignorant mortal! When you run after your thoughts, you are verily a dog chasing a stick. Everytime a stick is thrown, you run after it. Instead be like a lion. The lion, rather than chasing the stick, turns to face the thrower. One only throws a stick at a lion once.

Oh! Ignorant mortal! Know this for certain- all worldly pursuits have but one unavoidable and inevitable end, and that is sorrow. Acquisition ends in dispersion, building in destruction, meetings in seperation, births in death, and so on. Knowing this, one should, from the very beginning, renounce acquisition, accumulation, and the like.

Oh! Ignorant mortal! How long will you go on dreaming, rotting in this odious marsh of births and deaths? Do you not want to taste the sweet, intoxicating nectar of immortality? For this, investigate your "I". Do not entertain hopes or ambition for Realisation, but sincerely practise all your life.

Q.: Are there pre-requisites or qualifications needed for one who wishes to follow this path of inquiry?

B.: Only one- Complete absence of belief in the world as an objectively real, self-supporting, or continuous entity.

P>S> Palanisamy was Sri B.'s attendant whilst the latter was staying on the Hill. He is no more. I am told the Maharshi, at the time of the man's passage, gave him hasta-diksha by placing his hand upon the dying fellow's head. This is exceedingly rare. The master does not favourably entertain requests for hasta-diksha when asked, as far as I know. The only other case in which he seems to have granted this boon, is to his mother, likewise just before her death took place.

S>M>

After the man left the conversation in the Hall turned to Sadasiva Brahmendral.

B.: Yes, he is a genuine Perfected Being. There is no room for doubt... His 'Aathma Vidya Vilasam' is a work par excellence. Have you seen it?

After this unwitting remark, B. was eventually successfully prevailed upon into discussing this work. He read out only select verses from it-

I prostrate at the feet of the primordial Guru, who lives beneath the banyan tree, who expounds the Truth of Jnana with his lotus-hand held in an auspicious mudra, and who is glowing with the resplendent bliss of True Knowledge.

His sandals I salute who redeems those who have fallen into the limitless ocean of samsara, like a boat which helps passengers cross from shore to shore, and who tears apart the various confusing schools of barren philosophy.

The Self is ever devoid of attachment. It is indivisible, free from maya, gunas and other defects, and shines solely by the resplendent light of its own Self-luminance.

I, who was bewildered by worldly activities and enchanted under the evil spell of my own ignorance, have Realised by His Grace knowledge of the Self. I have thus broken off my shackles and now shine as the Eternal Light of Truth. I was earlier sound asleep under the evil influence of maya. I was wriggling in misery, experiencing thousands of dreams. Now, through the influence of my Guru, I am forever awake, and drowned in an unfathomable ocean of Bliss.

Having cast off my age-old tendencies toward objects of sense-pleasure, I now rejoice Eternally in Jnana. I have achieved this not by performing tapas, but merely by receiving the gracious glance of my Guru, who has gifted to me His own deathless nature of Sathchitananda.

I have given up my ego. Therefore I am rejoicing for ever and ever in the indescribable bliss of my merciful Guru's Sathchitananda-swarupa. I am irrevocably drowned in the ocean of silence known as Jnana.

By reason of my mental proximity to the tranquil, refreshingly cool vibrations of Grace emanating from my peerless Guru, the incomparably blissful expanse of the Self is now mine hereaftermore.

Realising that the whole cosmos is unreal and a creation of the evil power of maya, the wise man wanders around aimlessly on the earth, envy destroyed, desires crushed, pride devoured and self-respect incinerated in the all-consuming fire of Jnana.

He is aware that, for certain, in the blemishless Self there is neither maya nor her evil powers. Therefore he rejoices in pure bliss alone.

Immersed in the dimensionless ocean of pure bliss, the wise man, bereft of the sense of I and You, sports around like a toddler, taking amusement in the different behaviours exhibited by people around him.

Blissfully drowned in the Self without possibility of entrapment in the unholy net of Karma or Samsara, the wise man forever dwells in the Avadutha state. He is like a blind, deaf lunatic wandering around on the outskirts of a forest, not aware of the dangers lurking behind the innocent foliage and not caring. Having once become prey to the bliss of the Self, he becomes devoid of all other sensations. He thereafter remains forever in the peaceful embrace of the Self.

He, the king among ascetics, reigns supreme in his own kingdom of Self, which is blissful and devoid of penury. Long ago he vanquished his enemy, who went by the name of desire, by hurling the weapon known as vairagyam. If suddenly one day the sun were to send forth cool rays and the moon fiery waves of heat, the Jivanmuktha is aware that it is the work of maya, and he is not surprised by the same.

He is always engrossed in a world of Bliss the claim to rejoice in which lies entirely with Him, and with Him alone. He is occupied according to his own fancy. He may sing, dance or sit in silent contemplation, anywhere.

He knows no sin. He has transcended all illusion created by the evil power of sankalpas. He is utterly indifferent to whether his body is engaged in action or not. Therefore, he has secured a place for himself in the realm of Perfect Wisdom.



Having caught the mind, which is restless and trying to flee away like a pubescent antelope, firmly in the net of discrimination between sath and asath, and exhausted after his efforts in traversing the endless forest of the Vedas, the unique yogi finally reposes quietly in his own Self.

He has cut asunder the vicious, tiger-like mental tendencies of his mind, with the pointed and sharp-edged sword of courage of mind, and has finally triumphed in his objective. Now he is found playfully wandering in the forest of fearlessness that is his own Self.

He moves around only in the blemishless sky of pure consciousness. He causes the lotus-like hearts of noble persons to bloom, by reason of his sweet mental fragrance.

The moon causes the lily to bloom. Likewise, the enlightened one dispels the darkness of ignorance and shines his light unto all around him, even upto the realm of vishnupadham.

He shines as the formless truth of pure consciousness. He showers droplets of nectar from his own bliss, like a stationery cloud showering rain-drops. He cools the belligerent storm of agony that rages on in the minds around him.

The gentle breeze in the flower garden carries in it the fragrance of flowers in full bloom, thus freshening the minds of those who smell the air. Likewise, the enlightened one strolls about in the flower garden of Jnana, and he destroys the mental fatigue of those around him, by using his unique fragrance of bliss.

The Jnanai has abandoned this world for good, considering it to be a scorching, worthless desert. He is no more to be found in this world. Do you know where he is? He is swimming like a swan in the peerless lake of Jnana. The wise man has torn the intoxicated elephant called ignorance into pieces. He has driven out the ferocious tigers called sins. Now he plays around unchallenged, roaring like a lion, in his own forest of bliss.

Knowing that the lion of ignorance cannot climb there, the Jnani has, like a blissfully intoxicated elephant, mounted the peak of Jnana, using the refreshingly cool rope of meditation on the supreme, which is relaxing like cool water poured on one whose naked body is bared to the sun all the hours of day.

He is adorned with the priceless gem of non-attachment. His is the ever tranquil mind, which is always in mouna. Space is his clothing. His cupped palms are his begging bowl. The shade of a tree is his bed.

He is never weary of his wearisome pattern of life. He lies on a heap of prickly bushes, or on a bed made out of fine sand. He may be found by the side of a deserted river bank.

His light shines on all even though he may be resting on the bare earth instead of upon a bed. The cool breeze brought by the southern wind is his

chamaram. The pournami-nilavu is his lamp by night.

He sleeps soundly on the slab of a vast rock, though river water is noisily gushing all about him. Cool breeze affectionately caresses his face.

He wanders about the streets of the country just like a lifeless lump of inert matter. He is a mahamouni. His silent and continuous meditation can never be disturbed no matter what the circumstance may be. He accepts food offerings in the palms of his hands.

He who is mesmerised by the residual Aathman upon having rejected the entire cosmos as fiction, puts into his mouth the residual food offered by people as alms, meekly accepting the same as his prarabdham.

Even in his mind, he neither criticises nor praises. He is always engrossed in overflowing bliss. His mind is always cool, like sandalwood paste.

He is fixed in a state of complete motionlessness, like the flame of a nishkampa-pradipa. He has discarded all sastras. He has sacrificed everything including himself. For him there are no more duties.

He lives peacefully on the outskirts of some remote forest. His body is smeared with mud and straw. To him, the entirety of the cosmos is no more significant than a dried blade of grass. He is playfully engaged in perpetual contemplation of bliss. His realm knows not death or old age.

He sees not form. He hears not words. He remains unmoving in the state of intransient bliss. His body is asleep to the stimuli of the world, like an immovable log of wood.

He knows the essence of the agamas to verily be Himself. Not for him pride of birth or status. He considers himself one with the animals of the forest. He wanders around, not knowing anything apart from the Real, like an idiot.

He sleeps embracing the beauty known as non-attachment. His hands are his pillow. The sky is his covering-sheet. The hard earth is his bed.

He enjoys the company of the lady known as Jnana perpetually, because he has demolished the wall of difference, known as mind, in their inner apartment.

He has reached the haremlik known as Truth by travelling along the broad road known as vairagyam, which is illumined by the dazzling flame of Jnana. Now he perpetually enjoys the company of the maiden known as Mukthi.

To him, a bunch of flowers growing in a deserted place is the rosary, the absence of sexual lust is the tincture, and insults flung at him by others is the divine ambrosia.

He realises that the cosmos and nescience are synonymous. He neither rejects anything nor considers anything to be agreeable. He is ever non-attached from everything.

He pervades everything after identical fashion. He has no worries about past or future. He is not even aware of what is in front of him.

He has no aversion for what comes to him. He has no desire for what does not come to him. He is merely blissfully rooted in the Self.

Being free from the malady of desire, the supreme Jnani is lost in THAT which is beyond the insane illusion harbouring this barren cosmos.

By the grace of his guru, he shines as a paramahansa among men, for he has by the might of his Jnana uprooted the duality and differences that allow name and form to obnubilate this originally empty, destitute world which is not apart from bliss.

For him there are no injunctions pertaining to caste. He is unaware of anything that is not bliss.

He destroys all karma by exhausting prarabdha karma in his incumbent body. Then he gives up the body consciousness. Thus he becomes one with Parabrahman.

Sath always shines as the original One, which is serene, changeless, without beginning or end, and overflowing with the blissful fullness of absolute consciousness; it is the indestructible Truth which is never born, which does not age or die, which is totally devoid of all misery and which is purely self-effulgent.

The secret of never-ending happiness is the Truth of THAT which is imperishable, never far away, the other shore of the ocean of life and the fearless essence underlying all that is perceived.

He is tasteless, bereft of smell, formless, and free from the mischief caused on account of the 3 gunas. He is THAT, for he is the eternal Truth shining as the incomparable, fearless and perdurable Reality which is ever beyond the grasp of name and form.

One who contemplates on this Aathma Vidya Vilasam everyday will ripen into an Aathma-jnani and gain unshakeable Realisation of the Self.

S>M>

G.: After listening to these words I feel a craving to give up the life of the world, and retire to some forest ill-frequented by man, so that Brahmajnana should surely dawn on me.

B.: Your distractions will become worse if you do so.

G.: May I know why that should be so?

B.: Stand and fight. What is the use of running away like a coward? Do you think the forest is free from travails? You will be jumping from the hissing frying pan into the roaring fire.

G.: Why does Brahmendral recommend it then?

B.: He is not asking you to move into the forest, thinking, 'Let us go into the forest and there lead the life of a renunciate.'. The shlokas describe the state of the Brahmajñani. If, after Realising, you feel the need to move into any forest or desert or mountain, then you may do so- not now.

G.: But solitude helps in Realisation- so the elders say.

B.: What is solitude?

G.: Not mingling with others.

B.: Not seeing others is the true solitude.

G.: B.'s prescription is one step ahead, then. Let me choose a particularly isolated spot for meditation, so that I could avoid seeing others.

B.: I meant, impossibility of seeing others, not merely non-seeing them.

G.: Oh! What shall I do in that case? Should I tie a blindfold around my eyes like Dridrashtya's wife? Or should I gouge out my eyes like Kannappa?

B.: [laughing] Make the mind blind to the world. That will do.

G.: How?

B.: Plunge it in the Heart once and for all.

G.: How?

B.: Find the source of thought; having discovered it, abide there forevermore.

G.: Physical solitude is not to be aspired for, then?

B.: You cannot decide whether your body be in solitude or not. You have no say in the prarabdha of the body. Keep your mind away from association with the world and its objects, including the body. This mental solitude is the only factor in your dominion of control. Exercise this liberty to be mentally alone to the fullest and ignore everything else, such as whether the body is surrounded by people or not, etc..

S>M>

Late in the evening a small child arrived with her grandfather. Permission was solicited from Bhagawan to sing. His smile was taken as assent. The girl sang Oothukkadu Venkatasubbaier's 'Kuzhaloodhi Manamellam' and 'Venugana Ramana'. B. was rhythmically swaying his head and shoulders to the tunes, occasionally rising a hand in an appreciative gesture. Once I thought I saw his eyes moisten slightly, and my breath caught in my throat. [Like an infant with its mother, somehow my mind has started to instinctually mirror his apparent mental movements; why I know not...] At the end of the performance B. distributed some fluffy 'sohn-pappudi' that someone had brought along during the course of the day. He personally put some in the child's mouth. I thought to myself that she would be a great singer someday, due to this auspicious, direct manner of blessing from Bhagawan... The grandfather was delighted and left with his ward after many prostrations and salutations to Bhagawan.

S>M>

It is night. B., Chadwick, and myself are the only persons in the Hall who are in the Jagrat state. [On reflection, it is perhaps inappropriate to include B. in the statement; he abides as the substratum underlying the states!] Chadwick moves close to the Sofa and whispers something I cannot catch.

B.: [giving vent to a quiet yet alacritous chuckle] Oh! Oh! Yes. Surely! By all means. In a low voice, if you will...

C.: [pointing to me and smiling] He may not like it...!

B.: Gajapathi, Chadwick wants to sing a few lullabies. Do you mind it?!

G.: Mind it- why, I am bursting with enthusiasm to hear it!

C.: They are not religious songs; I merely thought-

B. jovially interjected him-

B.: I am no mood to hear preambles. Commence! Now!

Chadwick then sang a few children's rhymes. I do not think I shall forget them in a hurry, because such was the benevolent light shining out of the master's eyes as the performance was in progress that Chadwick could not resist the temptation to get up and do a mild dance, in which I soon joined! B.'s invisible air of frolicsome euphoria made us wiggle our bodies this way and that in tune with Chadwick's excited voice, restrained in pitch with some difficulty, to prevent the sleep of the attendants from being disturbed! The master was happily watching our antics, shaking his noble head this way and that to keep time with the tune! When minutes later we finished and made out of the Hall after prostrating to Bhagawan, the master was beaming at us, cheek balanced on fist, elbow on thigh, his body still quivering and heaving in silent laughter! I shall never forget that magnificent sight! Since they sound 'American-ish', I doubt if these rhymes are Chadwick's own invention.... To provide some amusement for myself when years later I shall sift through these same pages, I chronicle the rhymes here as best as I can remember:

#### Rhyme One

He who quietly bides his time,  
And day after excruciating day,  
Faces mortifying defeat ungrudgingly,  
But for joy sings a mirthful roundelay,  
However poor his fortunes be,  
He will not fail in any qualm  
Of poverty; the paltry dime  
Grows golden in his palm,  
Who bides his time patiently.

He who quietly bides his time,

He tastes the sweetest  
Of honey in the saltiest tear;  
And though he fares with slowest feet,  
Joy runs to meet him, drawing near;  
The birds are heralds of his cause;  
And, like a never-ending rhyme,  
The roadsides bloom in his applause,  
Who bides his time patiently.

He who quietly bides his time,  
And fevers not after the illusory  
Goal that none achieves,  
Shall wear laurel wrought with  
Crimson berries stiched into the leaves;  
And he shall reign a godly king,  
And sway his hand over every earthly realm  
With peace ruled by his sovereign signet-ring,  
Who bides his time patiently.

#### Rhyme Two

On the Coast of Coromandel  
Where the early pumpkins grow,  
In the middle of the deepest oaken grove  
Lived the old man named Yongy-Bongy-Bow.  
Two old chairs, and half a candle,  
One old jug without a handle,  
These were all his worldly goods,  
In the middle of the woods,  
These were all the worldly goods,  
Of the Yongy-Bongy-Bow,  
Of the Yongy-Bongy-Bow.  
Once, among the oak trees walking  
Where the early pumpkins grow,  
To a little heap of spiky stones  
Came the Yongy-Bongy-Bow.  
There he heard a Lady talking,  
Thus to the scheming Hens of Dorking-  
"Tis the Lady Jingly Jones!  
On that little heap of spiky stones  
Sits the Lady Jingly Jones!"

Said the Yongy-Bongy-Bow,  
Said the Yongy-Bongy-Bow,  
“Lady Jingly! Lady Jingly!  
Sitting where the pumpkins grow,  
Your buxom bosomy beauty  
Moves me to emotions naughty,  
Also your ample rear, so voluptuous and luscious,  
Triggers thoughts garish yet precious,  
Also your curvaceous bearing, so sultry,  
Tears my mind away from its acclimatised habits of gentry,  
Also your Rubenesque cheeks glowing like rubies  
Are fit to be caressed by the most angelic of babies,  
Also your titties softer than boiling chitterlings  
To my incorrigibly flaccid character changes brings,  
I ask if you will come and be my wife,  
for I don't believe in forcing by the knife;  
I am tired of living singly  
On this coast so wild and shingly;  
With boredom I am weary of my ceaseless strife;  
If you would only come and be my lovely wife,  
Quite exciting would become my sombre life!  
On this Coast of Coromandel where  
Watercresses grow here and there,  
Prawns are plentiful and cheap,  
And so will you not come and be my keep?  
You shall have my chairs and candle,  
And my jug without a handle!  
Gaze upon the face of the rolling deep,  
See you not that the fish is plentiful and cheap?  
Know this- if you turn me down, later you weep!”  
Said the Yongy-Bongy-Bow,  
Said the Yongy-Bongy-Bow.  
Lady Jingly answered sadly,  
And her tears began to flow-  
“Your proposal comes too late, Mr. Yongy-Bongy-Bow!  
I would be your wife most gladly!”  
(Here she twirled her fingers madly.)  
“But in Ireland I am wedded to a mate!  
Yes! you have indeed asked me far too late,  
For in Ireland I am wedded to a mate,

Mr. Yongy-Bongy-Bow!  
Mr. Yongy-Bongy-Bow!  
So keep, oh, keep your chairs and candle,  
And your jug without a handle-  
I can merely be your friend!  
Should my husband more apples send,  
I will give you three, my friend!  
Although yours is such a tiny prick,  
See! its drool does flow so thick!  
Although the wind might blow away  
All your drool the colour of grey,  
Yet I wish that I could modify  
the words I needs must say!  
Will you please to go away  
And that is all I have to say,  
Mr. Yongy-Bongy-Bow!  
Mr. Yongy-Bongy-Bow!"

Down the slippery slopes of Myrtle,  
Where the early pumpkins grow,  
To the calm and silent sea  
Fled the Yongy-Bongy-Bow.  
There, beyond the Bay of Gurtle,  
Lay a large and lively Turtle.  
"You're a treasure-trove," he said, "for me;  
For on your back beyond the sea,  
Turtle, you shall carry me!"  
Said the Yongy-Bongy-Bow,  
Said the Yongy-Bongy-Bow.  
Through the furious, roaring ocean  
Did the Turtle swiftly go;  
Holding fast upon his shell  
Rode the Yongy-Bongy-Bow.  
With a sad primeval motion  
Towards the sunset isles of Boshen  
Still the Turtle bore him well.  
Loosening his grip upon the shell,  
"Lady Jingly Jones, farewell!"  
Sang the Yongy-Bongy-Bow,  
Sang the Yongy-Bongy-Bow.  
Into the icy waters did he throw himself,



Merciless waves did his frail form engulf.  
For deep within had despondence ploughed,  
Prompting him to give up life beloved.  
The Turtle writhed in alarm and shock,  
But what is decided by the turn of the clock,  
'Tis alas! given to no beast nor man to stop!  
As the cold sea his lungs burnt,  
And He remembered the love unearnt  
His mother's smiling face had shown him  
The eager arms of death closed upon him grim.  
From the Coast of Coromandel  
Did that lying Lady never go;  
On that heap of spiky stones she mourns  
Still for the dead Mr. Yongy-Bongy-Bow.  
On the Coast of Coromandel,  
Thinking of his jug without a handle  
Still she weeps, and daily moans;  
On that little heap of spiky stones.  
To the scheming Hens of Dorking she groans,  
About the lost beloved with the tiny prick,  
Upon whom she had played so nasty a trick.  
She screams in agony for the lost lover,  
Who had treated her daintily as a flower;  
She screams and shouts without effect,  
Be the time of day noon, morn or sunset,  
For the Yongy-Bongy-Bow,  
For the Yongy-Bongy-Bow.

### Rhyme Three

The Camptown ladies sing this song—Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
The Camptown race-track is five miles long—Oh! doo-dah day!  
I returned therefrom with my hat caved in—Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
Therefore I go back home with a pocket full of tin—Oh! doo-dah day!  
Going to run all night!  
Going to run all day!  
I bet all my money on the bob-tailed nag—  
Somebody bet on the grey.

The long tail filly and the big black horse—Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
They fly across the track and their paths trespass—Oh! doo-dah-day!

The blind horse is stuck in a big mud hole—Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
Can't touch its bottom with a ten foot pole—Oh! doo-dah-day!  
Going to run all night!  
Going to run all day!  
I bet all my money on the bob-tailed nag—  
Somebody bet on the grey.

Old muley cow come on to the track—Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
The bob-tail threw her over his back—Oh! doo-dah-day!  
They fly along like a rail-road car—Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
Because my race is against a shooting star—Oh! doo-dah-day!  
Going to run all night!  
Going to run all day!  
I bet all my money on the bob-tailed nag—  
Somebody bet on the grey.

See them flying whilst tackling the heat—Doo-dah doo-dah!  
Round the race-track and then repeat—Oh! doo-dah-day!  
I win my money on the bob-tail nag—Doo-dah! doo-dah!  
I keep my money in an old tow-bag—Oh! doo-dah-day!  
Going to run all night!  
Going to run all day!  
I bet all my money on the bob-tailed nag—  
Somebody bet on the grey.

P>S> Major Chadwick is a highly distinguished scholar in the field of Advaita. He has translated more than one ancient Advaitic Tamil text into English. Let these childish rhymes not leave a distasteful impression upon the mind of the high-souled reader; he merely sang them on that memorable day because, upon having spectated someone else do the same thing, he suddenly seems to have felt an inexplicable urge to sing, and nothing else would come into his mind which he could readily deploy towards the purpose. Mons. Chadwick is still living at Ramanashram, for such is his devotion to his master that he would not abandon even the latter's grave. This should speak volumes about the splendid character of the fine gentleman.

20th July, 1936

The Caucasian gentleman returned early in the morning to again quiz Bhagawan-

Q.: Does the Jnani have no sensory perceptions? For instance, if Sri B. inadvertently stubs his toe against a brick, is there no sensation?

B.: The sensation is there, but not the idea, 'I am feeling this sensation.'; the Jnani's state can be correctly comprehended only by the Jnani; others merely maunder about with complicated-sounding words without actually Knowing. The Jnani or Jivanmuktha is said to be like a person fast asleep inside a house whose doors and windows are wide open.

Q.: I fail to comprehend the example.

B.: His senses are fully awake and alert, but yet fully inactive.

Q.: It seems paradoxical.

B.: His sensory organs perceive; yet, there is nothing for them to perceive because mind is dead. A new-born infant sees and hears quite well, but it never really understands anything. It knows only Joy, although people may even treat it cruelly. Likewise with the Jnani. He does not know anything[apart from Parabrahman].

Q.: Bhagawan explains to us the intricacies of various philosophical texts in expert fashion. How is it possible without the intellect? If mind is no more, how can the intellect, which is a component thereof, survive in isolation from it?

B.: It is like shadow puppetry. Someone else is moving the strings. I have no role to play anywhere.

Q.: Who is this mysterious 'someone else'?

B.: Some call him God, some call him Randomness, some call him Fate and some call him Causality. One who sees events, actions and circumstances inquires the reason therefor. The seer does not see himself- thus his own apparent separate existence is an inexplicable mystery. Yet, ignoring this primary question of his self, he goes around questioning everything else. So, in order to satisfy his curiosity all sorts of ridiculous theories are spun by philosophers and pandits. The truth is that there is no-thing to see, because there is no-one to see anything. The explanation of God, Providence, etc. being in control of the world's events is kindergarten-level spiritual advice. The Jnani who does not see anything has no questions; he knows the truth- nothing was ever created.

Q.: But I see a solid world around me! What does B. mean in saying that it is not there? For instance, B. is sitting on the Sofa. Is the Sofa invisible to his eyes? What is he sitting upon, then?! Is he floating in the air?!

B.: Is there any seeing to be done in sleep?

Q.: First let us finish discussing the Jagrat state.

B.: This is sitting upon the Sofa, you say. Yes. But the Sofa, this body, this hall, the Hill yonder and everything else is inferred existence. Thus it is not existence at all, but fiction, like asking the question, 'Santa-claus wears a

golden pince-nez. I wonder if I may know how many diopters the strength of the corrective lenses amounts to?' Can there be an answer to the question? At best, you can say, 'Since there is really no Santa-claus at all, the question never arises.' Actual existence is not to be seen. It is Being, which you always are. Do not think about it, but BE it: this is Realisation.

Q.: How to be the Self? That is the question. The Self seems to be like the carrot dangled in front of the foolish mule- very close yet altogether unattainable.

B.: You [as the personal self] are sitting on top of the [Real] Self. Get up and clear off. That will do.

Q.: How is that to be done?

B.: Permanently cease to believe in the existence of the personal self. Then the magic will unwind of its own accord.

Q.: Am I to understand that my personal self is unreal and non-existent? This is the self I have always known. Now I am being told it is non-existent. I have never known or even seen the Impersonal Absolute, the Brahman. Yet I am expected to believe that I am it and that it alone exists in truth.

B.: You are not asked to believe in anything. When asked to abandon all belief, you ask which belief you should take up instead. I said- Cease to believe in the existence of the personal self. You have interpreted it incorrectly to mean, 'Believe in the non-existence of the personal self.'

Q.: The difference is merely in sentence construction and grammatical formation.

B.: No. Abandon ALL belief. Only the Self remains. Relinquishment of belief cannot be brought about by another belief to the effect that such relinquishment must take place; it can only be brought about by letting go of everything you think you know and everything you hold dear.

Q.: J.K. has said- 'Total negation is the essence of the positive.'

B.: Exactly. Leadbeater's judgement [has] proved correct; he IS the World Teacher. THAT is why he dissolved the order. People criticize him in their unwisdom. I was reading one of his poems the other day... [reads out from a slender magazine or newsletter:]

I have no name,

I am as the fresh breeze of the mountains.

I have no shelter;

I am as the wandering waters.

I have no sanctuary, like the dark gods;

Nor am I in the shadow of deep temples.

I have no sacred books;

Nor am I well-seasoned in tradition.

I am not in the incense burning upon the high altars,  
Nor in the pomp of ceremonies.

I am neither in the graven image,  
Nor in the rich chant of a melodious voice.

I am not bound by theories,  
Nor corrupted by beliefs.

I am not held in the bondage of religions,  
Nor in the pious agony of their priests.

I am not entrapped by philosophies,  
Nor held in the power of their sects.

I am neither low nor high,  
I am the worshipper and the worshipped.

I am free.

My song is the song of the river

Calling for the open seas,

Wandering, wandering,

I am Life.

Q.: Sri Bhagawan denies creation. Whereas Swami Vivekananda has said- 'Creation is without beginning or end. There was never a time when there was no creation.' How to reconcile these views? How can Vivekananda, a Jnani equal to Bhagawan, have harboured a dissimilitudinous attitude with respect to creation, as compared to Bhagawan's own views? Does B. not endorse the Ajata-vada, which says that Maya is non-existent? Why then does Vivekananda endorse a view that affirms the apparent reality of the objective world? Why does he say that creation is continually taking place? Is it not admission of Maya's existence? Would not admission of the existence of Maya by a Jnani of the eminence of Swami Vivekananda impair the credibility of the Ajata-vada?

B.: Did Vivekananda admit Maya? I do not think so. Consider this- B. instructed the interpreter to collect a certain file from the Hall's book-case. The file was handed to him. As usual opening the required page in a single swift turn of the wrist, the master handed over the bulky leaves to the interpreter, asking him to read out certain paragraphs therefrom. Soon the interpreter read out in English, with B. orally translating in Tamil for the benefit of those in the Hall who were acclimatised to the latter language only, as follows-

Every attempt to solve the laws of causation, time, or space must needs be futile, because the very attempt would have to be made by taking for granted the existence of these three. What does the statement of the existence of the world mean, then? "This world has no existence." What is meant by that? It

means that it has no absolute existence. It exists only in relation to my mind, to your mind, and to the mind of everyone else. We see this world with the five senses but if we had another sense, we would see in it something more. If we had yet another sense, it would appear as something still different. It has, therefore, no real existence; it has no unchangeable, immovable, infinite existence. Nor can it be called non-existence, seeing that it apparently exists, and we slave to work in and through it. It is a mixture of existence and non-existence. Thus man comes to discover that his whole life is a contradiction, a mixture of existence and non-existence. There is this contradiction in knowledge. It seems that man can know everything, if he only wants to know; but before he has gone a few steps, he finds an adamant wall which he cannot pass. All his work is in a circle, and he cannot go beyond that circle. The problems which are nearest and dearest to him are impelling him on and calling, day and night, for a solution, but he cannot solve them, because he cannot go beyond his intellect. Also, the malefic weed of desire for sensory pleasures is implanted strongly in him. We know that the only good is to be obtained by controlling and checking the rebellious mind. With every breath, every impulse of our heart asks us to be selfish. At the same time, there is some power beyond us which says that it is unselfishness alone which is good. Every child is a born optimist; he dreams golden dreams. In youth he becomes still more optimistic. It is hard for a young man to believe that there is such a thing as death, such a thing as defeat or degradation. Old age comes, and life is a mass of ruins. Dreams have vanished into the air, and the man becomes a pessimist. Thus we go from one extreme to another, buffeted by nature, without knowing where we are going. We are incessantly floating down the river of life which is continually changing with no possibility of stop or rest; all agree that our lives go on and on without knowing any stop or rest; all crave peace, bliss and rest. Do all reach it? What are we to do? The man who has enough to eat and drink is an optimist, and he avoids all mention of misery, for it frightens him. Tell not to him of the sorrows and the sufferings of the world; go to him and tell that it is all good. "Yes, I am safe," says he. "Look at me! I have a nice house to live in. I do not fear cold and hunger; therefore do not bring these horrible pictures before me." But, on the other hand, there are others dying of cold and hunger. If you go and teach them that it is all good, they will not hear you. How can they wish others to be happy when they are miserable? Thus we are oscillating between optimism and pessimism. Then, there is the tremendous fact of death. The whole world is going towards death; everything dies. All our progress, our vanities, our reforms, our luxuries, our wealth, our knowledge, have that one end — death. That is all that is certain. Cities come and go, empires rise and fall, planets break into

pieces and crumble into dust, to be blown about by the atmospheres of other planets. Thus it has been going on from time without beginning. Death is the end of everything. Death is the end of life, of beauty, of wealth, of power, of virtue too. Saints die and sinners die, kings die and beggars die. They are all going to death, and yet this tremendous clinging on to life exists. Somehow, we do not know why, we cling to life; we cannot give it up. Death is stalking day and night over this earth of ours, but at the same time we think we shall live eternally. A question was once asked of King Yudhishtira, "What is the most wonderful thing on this earth?" And the king replied, "Every day people are dying around us, and yet men think they will never die.". This is Maya. There are, undeniably, tremendous contradictions in our intellect, in our knowledge, yea, in all the facts of our life facing us on all sides. A reformer arises and wants to remedy the evils that are existing in a certain nation; and before they have been remedied, a thousand other evils arise in another place. It is like an old house that is falling; you patch it up in one place and the ruin extends to another. It is like chronic rheumatism: you drive from the head, and it goes to the body; you drive it from there, and it goes to the feet. Reformers arise and preach that learning, wealth, and culture should not be in the hands of a select few; and they do their best to make them accessible to all. These may bring more happiness to some, but, perhaps, as culture comes, physical happiness lessens. The knowledge of happiness brings the knowledge of unhappiness. Which way then shall we go? The least amount of material prosperity that we enjoy is causing the same amount of misery elsewhere. This is the law. The young, perhaps, do not see it clearly, but those who have lived long enough and those who have struggled enough will understand it. This is Maya.

We must be bold. Hiding facts is not the way to find a remedy. A hare hunted by dogs puts its head down and thinks itself safe; so, when we run into optimism; we do behave just like the hare, but that is no remedy. There are objections against this, but you may remark that they are generally from people who possess many of the good things of life. I find that in Europe it is very difficult to meet a pessimist. Everyone tells me how wonderfully the world is going on, how progressive; but what he himself is, is merely his own world. This is Maya.

We often hear that it is one of the features of evolution that it eliminates evil, and this evil being continually eliminated from the world, at last only good will remain. That is very nice to hear, and it panders to the vanity of those who have enough of this world's goods, who have not a hard struggle to face every day and are not being crushed under the wheel of this so-called evolution. It is very good and comforting indeed to such fortunate ones. The common herd

may suffer, but they do not care; let them die, they are of no consequence. Very good, yet this argument is fallacious from beginning to end. It takes for granted, in the first place, that manifested good and evil in this world are two absolute realities. In the second place, it makes, at still worse assumption that the amount of good is an increasing quantity and the amount of evil is a decreasing quantity. So, if evil is being eliminated in this way by what they call evolution, there will come a time when all this evil will be eliminated and what remains will be all good. Very easy to say, but can it be proved that evil is a lessening quantity? Take, for instance, the man who lives in a forest, who does not know how to cultivate the mind, cannot read a book, has not heard of such a thing as writing. If he is severely wounded, he is soon all right again; while we die with fright if we get a scratch. Machines are making things cheap, making for progress and evolution, but millions are crushed, that one may become rich; while one becomes rich, thousands at the same time become poorer and poorer, and whole masses of human beings are made slaves. No sooner than man progresses and as soon as his horizon of happiness increases, his horizon of unhappiness also increases proportionately. The man in the forest does not know what it is to be jealous, to be in the law courts, to pay taxes, to be blamed unjustly by society, and to be ruled over day and night by that most tremendous tyranny that human diabolism ever invented, namely Free-market Capitalism. He does not know how man becomes a thousand times more diabolical than any other animal, with all his vain knowledge and with all his pride. Thus it is that, as we emerge out of the senses, we develop higher powers of enjoyment, and at the same time we have to develop higher powers of suffering too. The nerves become finer and capable of more suffering. In every society, we often find that the ignorant, common man, when abused, does not feel much, but he feels a good thrashing. But the gentleman cannot bear a single word of abuse; he has become so finely nerved. Misery has increased with his susceptibility to happiness. This does not go much to prove the evolutionist's case. As we increase our power to be happy, we also increase our power to suffer, and sometimes I am inclined to think that if we increase our power to become happy in arithmetical progression, we shall increase, on the other hand, our power to become miserable in geometrical progression. We who are progressing know that the more we progress, the more avenues are opened to pain as well as to pleasure. This is Maya.

Thus we find that Maya is not a theory for the explanation of the world, but rather is simply a statement of facts as they exist, that the very basis of our being is contradiction, that everywhere we have to move through this tremendous contradiction, that wherever there is good, there must also be



evil, and wherever there is evil, there must be some good, wherever there is life, death must follow as its shadow, and everyone who smiles will have to weep, and vice versa. Nor can this state of things be remedied. We may verily imagine that there will be a place where there will be only good and no evil, where we shall only smile and never weep. This is impossible in the very nature of things; for the conditions will remain the same. Wherever there is the power of producing a smile in us, there lurks the power of producing tears. Wherever there is the power of producing happiness, there lurks somewhere the power of making us miserable. This is Maya.

Thus the ancient teaching of Non-duality is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. It voices both these views and takes things as they are. It admits that this world is a mixture of good and evil, happiness and misery, and that to increase the one, one must of necessity increase the other. There will never be a perfectly good or bad world, because the very idea is a contradiction in terms. The great secret revealed by this analysis is that good and bad are not two cut-and-dried, separate existences. There is not one thing in this world of ours which you can label as good and good alone, and there is not one thing in the universe which you can label as bad and bad alone. The very same phenomenon which is appearing to be good now, may appear to be bad tomorrow. The same thing which is producing misery in one, may produce happiness in another. The fire that burns the child, may cook a good meal for a starving man. The same nerves that carry the sensations of misery carry also the sensations of happiness. The only way to stop evil, therefore, is to stop good also; there is no other way. To stop death, we shall have to stop life also. Life without death and happiness without misery are contradictions, and neither can be found alone, because each of them is but a different manifestation of the same thing. What I thought to be good yesterday, I do not think to be good now. When I look back upon my life and see what were my ideals at different times, I find this to be so. At one time my ideal was to drive a strong pair of horses; at another time I thought, if I could make a certain kind of sweetmeat, I should be perfectly happy; later I imagined that I should be entirely satisfied if I had a wife and children and plenty of money. Today I laugh at all these ideals as mere childish nonsense. This is Maya.

Vedanta says, there must come a time when we shall look back and laugh at the ideals which make us afraid of giving up our individuality. Each one of us wants to keep this body for an indefinite time, thinking we shall be very happy, but there will come a time when we shall laugh at this idea. Now, if such be the truth, we are in a state of hopeless contradiction — neither existence nor non-existence, neither misery nor happiness, but a mixture of them. What, then, is the use of Vedanta and all other philosophies and religions? And,

above all, what is the use of doing good work? This is a question that comes to the mind. If it is true that you cannot do good without doing evil, and whenever you try to create happiness there will always be misery, people will ask you, "What is the use of doing good?". The answer is that in the first place, that we must work for lessening misery, for that is the only way to make ourselves happy. Every one of us finds it out sooner or later in our lives. The bright ones find it out a little earlier, and the dull ones a little later. The dull ones pay very dearly for the discovery and the bright ones less dearly. In the second place, we must do our part, because that is the only way of getting out of this life of contradiction. Both the forces of good and evil will keep the universe alive for us, until we awake from our dreams and give up this crumbling building of moist mud-bricks. That lesson we shall have to learn, and it will take a long, long time to learn it. Attempts have been made to build a system of philosophy on the basis that the Infinite has become the finite. The analysis of the position of these philosophers is this, that the Infinite is trying to express itself in this universe, and that there will come a time when the Infinite will succeed in doing so. It is all very well, and we have used the words Infinite and manifestation and expression, and so on, but philosophers naturally ask for a logical fundamental basis for the statement that the finite can fully express the Infinite. The Absolute and the Infinite can become this universe only by limitation. Everything must be limited that comes through the senses, or through the mind, or through the intellect; and for the limited to be the unlimited is simply absurd and can never be. Vedanta, on the other hand, says that it is true that the Absolute or the Infinite is trying to express itself in the finite, but there will come a time when it will find that it is impossible, and it will then have to beat a retreat, and this beating a retreat means renunciation which is the real beginning of religion. Nowadays it is very hard even to talk of renunciation. It is being said of me that I am a man who came out of a land that had been dead and buried for five thousand years, and naturally, therefore, talk of renunciation. I proclaim that I steadfastly continue to maintain that total renunciation is the only path toward the true import of all religions. Renounce and give up. What did Christ say? "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Again and again did he preach renunciation as the only way to perfection. There comes a time when the mind awakes from this long and dreary dream; the child gives up its play and wants to go back to its mother. It finds the truth of the statement, "Desire is never satisfied by the enjoyment of desires, it only increases all the more, as fire does, when butter is poured upon it.". This is true of all sense-enjoyments, of all intellectual enjoyments, and of all the enjoyments of which the human mind is capable. They are nothing, they are within Maya, within this network beyond which we

cannot go. We may run therein through infinite time and find no end, and whenever we struggle to get a little enjoyment, a mass of misery falls upon us. How awful is this! And when I think of it, I cannot but consider that this theory of Maya, this statement that it is all Maya, is the best and only explanation. What an amount of misery there is in this world; and if you travel among various nations you will find that one nation attempts to cure its evils by one means, and another by another. The very same evil has been taken up by various races, and attempts have been made in various ways to check it, yet no nation has ever succeeded. If it has been minimised at one point, a mass of evil has been crowded at another point. Thus it goes. So, unhappiness is here, there, and everywhere. What does it show? That, after all, not much happiness has been gained by all our grand ideals. We all struggle for happiness and as soon as we get a little happiness on one side, on the other side there comes unhappiness. But shall we not work to do good then? Yes, with more zest than ever, but what this knowledge will do for us is to break down our fanaticism. Fanatics cannot work, they waste three-fourths of their energy. It is the level-headed, calm, practical man who works. So, the power to work will increase from the idea that desire leads only to misery. Knowing that such is the state of things, there will be more patience. The sight of misery or of evil will not be able to throw us off our balance and make us run after shadows. Therefore, patience will come to us, knowing that the world will have to go on in its own way. If, for instance, all men have become good, the animals will have in the meantime evolved into men, and will have to pass through the same state, and so with the plants. Only one thing is certain; the mighty river is rushing towards the ocean, and all the drops that constitute the stream will in time be drawn into that boundless ocean. So, in this life, with all its miseries and sorrows, its joys and smiles and tears, one thing alone is certain, that all things are rushing towards their goal. It is only a question of time when you and I, and plants and animals, and every particle of life that exists must reach the Infinite Ocean of Perfection, must attain to Freedom, to God. This is Maya.

Vedanta, I repeat, is neither pessimism nor optimism. It does not say that this world is all evil or all good. It says that our evil is of no less value than our good, and our good of no more value than our evil. They are bound together. This is the world, and knowing this, you work with patience. What for? Why should we work? If this is the state of things, what shall we do? Why not become agnostics? The modern agnostics also know there is no solution of this problem, no getting out of this evil of Maya, as we say in our country; therefore they tell us to be satisfied and enjoy life. Here, again, is a mistake, a tremendous mistake, a most illogical mistake. And it is this. What do you

mean by life? Do you mean only the life of the senses? In this, every one of us differs only slightly from the brutes. Does not this present life mean something more than that? Our feelings, thoughts, and aspirations are all part and parcel of our life; and is not the struggle towards the arena, the ideal, the state of perfection, one of the most important components of what we call life? According to the agnostics, we must enjoy life as it is. But this life means, above all, this search after the ideal; the essence of life implies progress towards perfection. We must have that, and, therefore, we cannot be agnostics or take the world as it appears. The agnostic position takes this life, minus the ideal component, to be all that exists. And this ideal, the agnostic confidently claims, cannot be reached; therefore he must give up the search. This is Maya.

All religions are more or less attempts to get beyond mundanity — the crudest or the most developed, expressed through mythology or symbology, stories of gods, angels or demons, or through stories of saints or seers, great men or prophets, or through the abstractions of philosophy — all have that one object, all are trying to get beyond these limitations. In one word, they are all struggling towards freedom. Man feels, consciously or unconsciously, that he is bound; he is not what he wants to be. It was taught to him at the very moment he began to look around. That very instant he learnt that he was bound, and he also found that there was something in him which wanted to fly beyond, where the body could not follow, but which was as yet chained down by this limitation. Even in the lowest of religious ideas, where departed ancestors and other spirits are worshipped, we find that one common factor, that of craving for freedom. The man who wants to worship the gods sees in them, above all things, greater freedom than in himself. If a door is closed, he thinks the gods can get through it, and that walls have no limitations for them. This idea of freedom increases until it comes to the ideal of a Personal God, of which the central concept is that He is a Being beyond the limitation of nature. This is Maya.

This Maya is everywhere. It is terrible. Yet we have to work through it. The man who says that he will work when the world has become all good and then he will enjoy bliss is as likely to succeed as the man who sits beside the Ganga and says, "I will ford the river when all the water has run into the ocean." The way is not with Maya, but against it. This is another fact to learn. We are not born as helpers of nature, but as competitors with nature. We are its bond-masters, but we bind ourselves down. Why is this house here? Nature did not build it. Nature says, go and live in the forest. Man says, I will build a house and fight with nature, and he does so. The whole history of humanity is a continuous fight against the so-called laws of nature, and what

does man gain in the end? Only anguish. Coming to the internal world, there too the same fight is going on, this fight between the animal man and the spiritual man, between light and darkness; but here man is permitted to emerge victorious. He cuts his way out of nature into freedom immortal. We see, then, that beyond this Maya the Vedantic philosophers find something which is not bound by Maya; and if we can get there, we shall not be bound by Maya. This idea is in some form or other the common property of all religions. But, with Vedanta, it is only the beginning of religion and not the end. The idea of a Personal God, the Ruler and Creator of this universe, as He has been styled, the Ruler of Maya, or nature, is not the end of these Vedantic ideas; it is only the beginning. The idea grows and grows until the Vedantist finds out that He who, he thought, was standing outside, is He himself who shines as the Reality within. He is the one who is perpetually free, but who through limitation, thought he was bound. This is Maya.

Q.: Yes, it is clear now. But I am not finished with my questions. I, a complete layman, want to become a Jnani like Bhagawan or Swami Vivekananda. What should I do?

B.: If you want to shine like the sun, first burn like it! Practice, more practice, further practice, and still yet more practice.... alone will reveal the Truth.

Q.: What should I practise doing?

B.: 'Doing' is not the characteristic of the Jnani. The man of the world is judged by the deeds he has done. The Jnani does not do anything- he cannot do anything. Thus, it is impossible to judge him. That is why the Christ said, 'My Kingdom is not of this world.'. You will be more successful in measuring the sky than in understanding a Jnani. How to attain his state? Summa Iru. That is the practice.

Q.: Am I to be idle all the time? Is engaging in gainful or productive employment a crime?

B.: The import of Summa Iru is, 'Keep your mind idle or asleep in the Self.'; as for the body, it has its own prarabdha to attend to. You have no right of say over the body. You cannot decide whether the body should work or remain idle. What is bound to happen will happen. If the body is destined to remain without working, work cannot be had even if you hunt for it. If the body is destined to work you cannot alter such destiny, for the body will be forced to engage in it. So leave it to the Higher Power. You cannot avoid or acquire work for the body as you choose. God has not permitted that freedom. Only one freedom is permitted to man- and that is the freedom to perish in his own Immortal Self. This is also the only free will.

Q.: Can meditation or vichara be carried on in the midst of worldly activity?

B.: The feeling "I am working." is the hinderance. Enquire, "Who works?". Remember to ask yourself "Who am I?" everytime such false notions of doership trouble you. Then no work can bind you; it will all go on automatically. Make no effort either to work or to renounce work. Your effort is the bondage. Simply remain as you ARE, and do not bother about the question of whether the body ought to work or to idle away. If you remain non-attached {neither attached nor detached, for both are volitionary}, the body's prarabdha will effortlessly carry it through whatever activities are meant for it in this life. You remain as the Self- everything else disappears. No more questions, doubts or misgivings arise. This is the way.

Q.: Back at home, they have introduced the following new prayer in my local church after the Vesper service-

'My Lord, give me the courage to change what requires to be altered, the serenity to accept what cannot be helped, and the insight to be able to tell the one from the other.'

Is this not what B. calls 'Surrender of the responsibility for one's life to God'?

B.: What you describe is a baby-step towards unconditional surrender, which is totally absolute and does not ask this or that. Letting go of everything is called surrender. Such a one would have nothing to ask. He simply says, 'I let go.' once and thereafter abides in and as Eternal Silence. What you describe is a partial surrender. If the strength of the sadhaka's vairagyam be maintained, throughout his sadhana, at an all-consuming level, then partial surrender leads to absolute surrender. Absolute surrender takes you to the goal effortlessly.

Q.: For one who completely surrenders, is vichara unnecessary?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is it true that by coming around this Hill repeatedly, Realisation can be gained in a relatively short span of time?

B.: Provided you unconditionally surrender yourself to the Hill.

Q.: Does B. have any parting instruction for me?

B.: Only the usual.

Q.: Which is?

B.: இருக்கையாகயிருப்பாயாக.

S>M>

Q.: Can I acquire Brahmajnana by reading the Scriptures, such as the Upanishads?

B.: No. As long as vishayavasanas remain latent, Realisation cannot be had. Reading of the scriptures is also a vasana. Realisation is possible only through the nivritti state of mind.

Q.: What is that state and how to acheive the same?

B.: When all vrittis of the mind die, the remaining localised consciousness which confines itself to the body also merges in Brahman. The mind denuded of vrittis is the way to the Self. Such a nude mind alone is verily in samadhi; making the body into a corpse and waking it up again is merely a worthless gimmick [played to gain applause or money]. Realisation is made possible only by and in this mouna-samadhi.

Q.: But how to reach it?

B.: Only by relentlessly pursuing the Jnana-vichara, 'Who am I?'

Q.: I am doing it. I see no result.

B.: Ask yourself, 'Who expects results?'

S>M>

Q.: What is this mouna?

B.: Mouna is not keeping the mouth shut. It is the beauty of eternal eloquence.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: That which transcends speech and thought is mouna.

Q.: How to achieve it?

B.: Hold some vritti firmly and trace it back to the source of thought. By such introversion silence results. When practice of mouna becomes natural it will end in the Self. Absence of mental activity is the natural silence of Jnana. On the other hand, forced subjugation of the mind is [called] meditation. The former is more beneficial. So, mouna is really eternal speech.

Q.: How will worldly activities go on if one gives up all thoughts?

B.: When women who are climbing uphill carry water-pots on their heads and chat with their companions all along the way, they remain very careful. Their thoughts are focused only upon the loads on their heads. The conversation is mere banter. Similarly when a sage engages in activities, these do not disturb him because his mind abides in Brahman. Actually he is not doing anything.

Q.: It is alright for the Sage. What of myself?

B.: Reach the state and then see for yourself. Why indulge in idle speculation?

S>M>

Q.: What is the significance of Ramanamajapam?

B.: 'Ra' is Reality. 'Ma' is the mind. Their union is the fruit of Ramanamajapam. Mere utterance of the word is not enough. The mind must be made to melt itself in devotion. Such intense devotion keeps thoughts at bay. In total eradication of thought lies wisdom. It is the way to Absolute Existence.

S>M>

Q.: When I went to the Annamalaiyaar temple today, a group of brahmins were discussing something. I went near, thinking that they might be

discussing Vedanta. I was horrified to discover that they were talking about Bhagawan in a disparaging manner. I wanted to rebuke them, but just at that moment one man made the remark, 'ரமணனா? யாரு? ஓ, அந்த பைத்தியக்காரனா! ஆமாம், ஆமாம், நான் கூட கேள்வி பட்டேன். நன்றாக ஓசி சோற்றை சாப்பிட வேண்டியது, தூங்க வேண்டியது, உடம்பை மத்தளத்திற்கு நிகராக வளர்க்க வேண்டியது, எந்த வேலையும் செய்யாமல் இருப்பதற்க்கு ஆக 'நான் ப்ரஹ்மஞானி' என்று சொல்லிக்கொண்டு திரிய வேண்டியது, பற்றாத குறைக்கு மற்றவர்களுக்கும் இதுபோல் ஒரு வீனா போன வாழ்க்கையை கடைபிடிப்பது எப்படி என்று விழுந்து விழுந்து பயிற்சி அளிக்க வேண்டியது! இது போல் கல்மிஷம் கொண்ட தடியர்களை தண்டிப்பதற்காகவே, தனியாக ஒரு சட்டம் எடுத்துக்கொண்டு வர வேண்டியது காலத்தின் கட்டாயம் ஆயிற்று, என்றால் பார்த்துக்கொள்ளுங்களேன்! கலி மிகவும் முத்தி போயிருக்கிறது உண்மைதான் என்பது தெரிகிறது பாருங்கள். ஆண்டவா! இந்தமாரி விஷமிகளிடமிருந்து உலகத்தை நீ தான் எப்படியாவது காப்பாற்ற வேண்டும்!'. I burst into tears and ran away from the place.

For sometime, I thought of throwing myself in the temple tank, for my failure to defend B. in front of the rouges. Then I decided against it, for I remember B. has spoken against such acts. So I have come here directly to ask Bhagawan what penalty should be paid by me, for this humiliating failure to defend his name amongst those rakshasaas who came in the guise of brahmins.

B.: [had been laughing all the while] What penalty I am going to impose on you? Only this- cultivate stoicism and forbearance, more and more stoicism and forbearance.

S>M>

Q.: Why is man born, only to die? Why does God create, only to destroy? Is it not absurd? If one is going to die one day, why is he born? If everything is going to be destroyed one day, why create anything?

B.: All creation is mental hallucination or delusion. In Reality there is no creator and no creation.

Q.: I desire to know the reason for the existence of the world I see around me.

B.: The apparent perceiver is the reason for the apparent perceptions.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: Perceiver perceived and perception are all completely fictitious.

Q.: For Bhagawan it might be so. I see a solid world around me. I desire an explanation for it.

B.: What of your own apparent existence in the form of this perishable body? Do you desire no explanation for that?

Q.: Yes, that too.



B.: Any number of theoretical explanations may be given to satisfy the craving of the intellect for the time being; but there will be no permanency in your satisfaction. Soon new doubts will arise and your old intellectual standpoint or belief will collapse. Then you will set about searching for a new explanation. This goes on happening until the mind becomes disgusted with temporal life as a whole; then, it plunges into the Heart and loses itself there- that is the final dawn of wisdom.

Q.: So, the world is something that appears to exist only because I am engaged or involved in perceiving?

B.: Quite so.

Q.: So, now, if I close my eyes for 2 minutes, during those 2 minutes do B., the sofa he is sitting on, this Hall and Tiruvannamalai, all totally disappear or vanish into thin air? [closes his eyes seriously for sometime] There, now, was B. not there in this Hall, were the other people in this Hall not present, even whilst my eyes remained closed? If I ask anyone, 'Excuse me, did you exist whilst my eyes were closed, or not?' will they not think I have gone mad? What is the explanation?

B.: You are confusing implicit existence with implied existence. No doubt corroboration is available from the 'others' seated in this Hall including Bhagawan, but naturally in a dream everything is in spontaneous synchronisation. It is [your] one mind that has become all this. So, naturally confirmation is available. What is the surprise in it? You think you are taking corroboration from others, and therefore asking this question. The one whom you are asking is [also] your own mind only. Of course he would corroborate. The idea that things exist, and then you perceive them, is implied existence. It derives its strength from the principle of intellection, which in turn from the buddhi[faculty of reasoning], which in turn from the mind. Implicit existence is swyam-pratyaksham. It shines by its own light, not by any borrowed light. Therefore it is the one thing Real.

Q.: Will sriramanamasmaranam help me Realise?

B.: If and only if it be accompanied by intense devotion. The devotion must be so intense that even the thought 'I am engaging in sriramanamasmaranam.' must not find it possible to arise.

Q.: Is J.K. really the reincarnation of Lord Maitraya that the theosophists waited for? Is he actually the World Teacher?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then why does he deny it?

B.: He neither denies nor accepts it.

Q.: Why did he dissolve the Order, if he is really the Teacher?

B.: The Order's purpose is consummated. The Teacher has arrived.

S>M>

The shylock and Chadwick were seriously discussing the death of the monarch George V who had passed away this year. The shylock was quite rational about it[quite unsurprisingly, considering the sort of callous outlook that one would only too readily expect from the Judeo-Bolshevik brain, if the literature of National Socialism be believed], saying that death would invariably come to reclaim what was born. Chadwick tearfully mumbled-  
C.: I thought he would get better. Hitler would not dare initiate any aggression knowing the great German king was in power! Now who will save my Little Island from that funny-moustached brute? Oh! Alas! The great man has left my island orphaned! Now his son, that debaucherous philanderer who is proverbial for his lecherous ways, has seized the throne! Oh! What will my little island do? Your Majesty, you have left all too soon, my Lord! Oh my Lord! Thou hast left me bereaved and abandoned! Good God, Good God...  
B. was watching quietly. One could sense a definitely disapproving note in his words when he finally said-

B.: [abstractedly, offhand] மூடா ! யார் செத்தால் என்ன ? யார் ஒழிந்தால் என்ன ? பேசாமல் நாம் செத்து நாம் ஒழிந்து விடுவோம் ! அதுதான் நல்லதுக்கு ஆகும் ! புரிந்ததா ?

Everyone was shocked by the words. The interpreter was not on hand. So Chadwick merely stared blankly. Later he asked B. in all seriousness if B. had cursed him to die that very day, and if so what would happen to his prospects of Self-Realisation. B. would not reply. Some in the Hall including myself managed to convince him [-or atleast, we hoped we did-] that the statement from B. was an Ajata-advaitic pronouncement, implying the unreality of birth and death against the backdrop of pure Self-awareness. Thus, we opined, it must not be taken literally to mean death, but only subsidence of the ego. I asked B. if it was not so. The master smiled and kept quiet. Chadwick's anxious face finally seemed to show some palliation.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that the legendary Sanjeevani herb is found somewhere in this Arunachala hill, by consuming which one attains to state of Immortality. Will B. please let me know where it is in the hill?

B.: The hill itself bestows immortality.

Q.: How?

B.: Constant remembrance of Arunachala's பூத உருவம் steadily but surely introverts the mind. Then the mind acquires the strength to plunge inward, or rather loses the strength to move outwards, towards thoughts, intellectual concepts or physical objects. Eventually it becomes still entirely; then the

Arunachala within pulls it into itself and destroys it once and for all. This is the Sanjeevani shakti of Arunachala about which you are asking.

Q.: Is it not a herb?

B.: I have said what I know.

Q.: Is the ultimate aim of spiritual practice, only destruction of mind?

B.: Yes.

Q.: One whose mind is dead would perhaps have life in the body, but he would be in a state of comatose senselessness, like a stony, frigid vegetable, unable to understand anything. Is that the perverse fate toward which all spiritual aspirants are gravitating?

B.: Absence of mind is pure Bliss. It is possible to function in the world normally, without mind.

Q.: Oh! How so?

B.: Some power takes over his body and animates it without his knowledge.

Q.: Is it God?

B.: Give it any name you like- God, Providence, Fate, Karma, etc.; the nomenclature matters not.

Q.: Are names unimportant in the scheme of things, then? How to call someone if he has no name?

B.: The fact is that in order to escape its own destruction the mind creates a world of name and form over the pure vasthu that is the Aathman. It abhors chaos and randomness and prefers order and systematisation. It creates cause-consequence relationships and gives itself to understand ideas about its environment, which is actually merely its own projection. It tries to study the nature of its body's physical surroundings and formulates laws by means of which it then expects those surroundings to function; deviations from existing laws give rise to the birth of new laws! Never once does it wonder, 'What is my self?'; thinking to conquer its surroundings, it foolishly occupies itself with sensory perceptions, thoughts, and intellectual hypotheses. Thus it is born again and again and needlessly undergoes all sorts of tribulations. Then it asks, 'Alas! Why has God done this to me?'. Who is to blame for our mistake, if not ourselves?

Q.: The state without mind is called Jnana?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then what or who is a Jnani?

B.: One who has mastered the art of not knowing anything and not doing anything.

Q.: I am unable to divine the explication underlying B.'s sibylline words.

B.: The Jnani's senses are unhinged from the world about him. He is sunk in the Self and quite irrevocably lost there.

Q.: How is he different from the man on the Clapham omnibus{ சாதாரண மனிதன் }?

B.: The standard of reality employed by the man on the Clapham omnibus is the jagrat state in the jagrat state, and so on. For the Jnani the standard of reality is Reality itself.

Q.: What is this Reality?

B.: Man's true Self.

Q.: How am I to realise this true Self?

B.: Whose Self is it?

Q.: Mine... but really who am I?

B.: Yes. All other questions lead up only to this supreme question.

Q.: What is the answer to the question?

B.: The discovery that the personal self, including the one making the discovery, never existed.

Q.: What remains thereafter?

B.: Only the Truth; it is the state where the world of word, name and form perishes and silence alone prevails.

Q.: How to communicate thoughts to others without the assistance of words?

B.: That is only necessary so long as duality still persists in the mind.

Q.: How to get abiding shanti?

B.: Shanti is the natural state. The mind obstructs one's inherent peace.

Aathma-vichara is only in the mind; it does not affect the Self. Investigate the mind; it will disappear. There is no entity by name mind. Because of emergence of thoughts, we surmise the existence of something from which they must originate; this we term mind. When we probe inwards to see what it is, there is nothing to be found except the real Self. After the false mind has vanished, Peace will be found to be Eternal.

Q.: Then what is buddhi?

B.: The thinking or discriminating faculty. These are only names. Call it the ego, the mind or the intellect; it is all the same. Whose mind? Whose intellect? The ego's. Is the ego real? No. We confound ourselves with the ego and call it intellect or mind. This is because of the evil influence of avidya maya, which has superimposed this ephemeral, illusory, and worthless world of name and form over the ever-existing substratum, which is verily pure Reality and the supreme Peace itself. How to escape from the illusion? By searching for the mind and finding it, including that very finder, to be non-existent, to have been always non-existent, and in fact impossible of existence.

Q.: Emerson says, "Soul answers soul by itself- not by description or words."

B.: Quite so. However much you learn, there can never be an end to objective knowledge. You ignore the doubter but try to solve the doubts. On the other

hand, search for the doubter, and the doubter and his doubts will both disappear.

Q.: Therefore, the question resolves itself into one of knowing the Self.

B.: Quite so.

Q.: How to know the Self?

B.: Enquire into what the self is. What you are now imagining to be your Self, is really either the mind, the intellect or the 'I-thought'. Other thoughts are able to arise only after the 'I-thought' rises. So, hold on to the I-thought without pause. Soon, you will find that all thoughts vanish leaving the Self alone as the residue.

Q.: The difficulty lies in reaching the Self.

B.: There is no reaching it at all because it is eternal, here and now. If the Self were to be gained anew, it would not be permanent. What is impermanent is not worth striving for.

Q.: How to obtain equilibrium of mind? What is the best way?

B.: Just now you were asked to investigate the mind. It is eliminated and the Real you remain over. Let your standpoint become that of Jnana and then the world will be found to be not apart from the Self. *Drishtin jnanamayim kritva pashyaet Brahmamayam jagat*. So, the question is one of outlook. The Aathman pervades all. You have now lost hold of your Self and go on doubting about other things. Find your Real Self and all your problems and doubts will disappear.

Q.: But how to find this Real Self?

B.: Are there two 'I's in the same One? How do you know your own existence now? Do you see yourself with these eyes? Investigate into yourself. How does this question arise? Do I remain to ask it or not? Can I find my Self as in a mirror? Because your outlook has, owing to the poisonous delusion of ignorance, become outward-bent, it has lost sight of the actual Self and your vision is external. The Self is not to be found in external objects. Turn your gaze within and plunge within; you will be the Self.

Q.: It is said that the unknowable can be attained only by the grace of the unknowable.

B.: Yes. He helps you to Realise, if only you would forsake the external world of word, name and form. Such is His merciful Grace.

Q.: How to kill the mind, since the death of the mind is said to bring about Realisation easily?

B.: Will a thief betray himself? Will the mind find itself? The mind cannot kill the mind. You abandon what is real and are holding on to the mind which is unreal and also trying to find what this unreal mind is. Was there any mind in your sleep? No. It is now here. It is therefore impermanent. Can the mind be

found by you? You are not the mind. You think you are the mind and therefore ask me how it is to be checked. If it is there it can be checked. But it does not exist at all. Understand this truth by search. Search for unreality is fruitless. Therefore seek the reality, i.e., the Self. That is the way to ruin the mind. There is only one thing Real, and that is Reality, which is the same as man's true Self.

Q.: What is the nature of the true Self of man? Is it always happy?

B.: It alone is what IS: the 'other elements' are only appearances. Diversity is not the nature of the Real. We read the printed characters on the newspaper but ignore the paper which is the background. Similarly you are obsessed with the modifications of the mind and ignore the ever-present background of pure consciousness. Whose fault is it?

Q.: Is there a limit to the Real Self?

B.: What is the Real Self?

Q.: The Individual soul is the only self I know. According to B. it is unreal.

B.: What is the individual soul? What is the cosmic soul? Is there any difference between the two or are they identical? Any appearances are bound to disappear. Anything created will certainly be destroyed. The eternal is not born- consequently, nor can it die. We are now confounding appearances on Reality with Reality itself. Any appearance carries its own end in itself. Can there be anything that appears newly? If you cannot find the Self through the Jnana-vichara method, surrender to the substratum of appearances unreservedly; then, actual Reality will be left over as the residue.

Q.: What happens to a man after death?

B.: Engage yourself in the living present. The future will take care of itself. There is no need to worry about the future. The state before creation, the process of creation, etc., etc. are all dealt with in the scriptures in order that you may finally endeavour to know the present. Because you say you are born, therefore they say, yes, and add that God created you. But do you see God or anything else in your sleep? If God be real why does He not shine forth in your sleep also? You are always -now the same as you were in sleep. You are not different from the one in sleep. Thus, why should there be any difference in the feelings or experiences governing the two states? Did you ask, while asleep, the question regarding your birth? Did you ask then, where do I go after death? Why think of all this now in the wakeful state? Let what is born think of its birth, the remedy, the cause and the ultimate results. What is birth? Is it of the 'I-thought' or of the body? Is 'I' separate from the body or identical with it? How did this 'I-thought' arise? Is the 'I-thought' your nature? If not, what is your Real nature?

Q.: To whom to ask these questions?

B.: Exactly- that is it. There is no end to it all.

Q.: Are we then to merely keep quiet?

B.: Doubts cease when your apparent ignorance is transcended.

Q.: How did this ignorance originally arise?

B.: Is ignorance asking you, 'Why have I arisen?'. It is you who are asking the question. So, find out who you are. Then other things will take care of themselves.

Q.: The vichara again! Why should I engage in this Aathma-vichara?

B.: Because if Aathma-vichara is not pursued, loka-vichara creeps in. Engage in Self-investigation; thereby the non-self disappears. The true Self is left over. This is self-investigation of the Self. The one word ' தூண் ' is equivalent to the mind, body, man, individual, the Supreme and all else.

S>M>

Q.: It happens to some that they pray- in all good faith- to God. Yet their prayers are unequivocally repudiated. What is the reason?

B.: Can you be trusted to know what is best for you?

Q.: I should hope so.

B.: That is your opinion.

Q.: What then is Sri Bhagawan's opinion?

B.: 'O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.'

Q.: The implication being?

B.: He knows what is best for you; you do not. Therefore unconditionally surrender yourself to him and leave your fate in his hands. That is the only thing to be done. Prayer is merely a lower form of surrender. It is highly prone to failure, because if what is asked does not aid Realisation, it may not be granted, even though you may be thinking that what you are asking is going to [serve as an] aid in Realisation. Or, your karma may not permit the request to be granted.

Q.: Spiritually-inclined people pray for strength to invert the mind. Or, they pray for Self-Realisation. How can that be not an aid in Realisation?

B.: Because it posits the dangerous notion that there exists an [individual] "I" who craves for himself the state called Realisation. Such prayers are unnecessary. Maam Aekam Sharanam Vraja. 'Only surrender to Me.'

Q.: Why does God allow karma to meddle with even the efforts of sincere aspirants who are trying to Realise?

B.: The arrangement of karma- [for karma itself is] unavoidable- is actually adroitly done in such a way as to give the sadhaka the maximum possible chance of completely cleansing the mind of all vrittis. So, if you are destined to

Realise in this lifetime, rest assured that your karma has been ingeniously arranged in such a manner as to inevitably take you to the Goal.

Q.: And if I am destined otherwise?

B.: Perhaps you would not be here today.

Q.: The same astute God who manipulates karma so carefully- why was he not careful enough to safeguard the Self from slipping into the bondage of ignorance?

B.: Does the Self complain of having thus fallen?

Q.: No. But I do.

B.: Are you apart from the Self?

Q.: The mahavakyas state that I am supposed to be one with Brahman.

B.: And your Experience is in Corroboration?

Q.: Alas! No. All I feel is the miserable ego.

B.: Yes. Misery is one with the ego. Kill the ego.

Q.: It seems to be an impossible accomplishment even for those with decades of systematic training in the spiritual field.

B.: There is no accomplishment possible. What is intimate and inherent cannot be acquired. The only thing to do is destroy the useless accretions that cause all the nuisance. We are not trying to attain anything. On the other hand, we are trying to give up everything.

Q.: Should I not try to attain Realisation of the Self?

B.: No. Give up everything. Only the Self remains.

Q.: It sounds simple enough. Yet, only one in a million men manage to reach this supreme state, according to Sri Krishna. Does it mean that, at any given point of time in the world, the number of Jnanis living should be a precise 0.0001% of the total population?

B.: [laughing] Possibly!

Q.: In my view even this seems an outlandish estimate. Are there now circa 269 Jnanis living in India, then, regard having been had to the numbers available by the 1931 Census?

B.: [somewhat mordaciously but without deviating from his good cheer] Why not? Do you suppose all Jnanis are unfortunate enough to be put in a cage like this, and put up for 'public examination'? [in English-] Ladies and gentlemen, presenting... THE FREAK SHOW! Exhibit No. 1- Sharji, the Venus of the Hottentots! Exhibit No. 2- Elephant-man Merrick! Exhibit No. 3- The 'Bhagawan', Ramana! அது என்ன பாழாகப் போன பகவானோ . No. Only those whose prarabdha is destined to be exceedingly miserable suffer like this! Sri Gandhiji has written, 'The woes of Mahatmas are known to Mahatmas alone.' [laughs heartily]



Q.: Other Jnanis, who, according to B., enjoy a better prarabdha- they would be meditating in solitary places such as inaccessible jungles and caves, well away from habitable zones of humanity, I presume...

B.: You may presume whatever you like, no doubt...

Q.: So I am wrong?

B.: It all varies according to prarabdha. The Jnani is unfazed by what happens to the body. He has nothing to do with it. He has no localised consciousness functioning from within it. Killing it cannot harm him. Torturing it cannot affect him. He is absorbed by the Beyond, and quite lost there- for good. He may have 4 wives and 32 children. He may be running a busy household with dozens of mouths to feed. He may be employed on both day and night shifts of duty. Or, again, he may be sitting in an inaccessible cave with sensory organs in an inactive state, body rotting. It may be either way, but all this can be only from the point of view of the onlooker, since action is altogether alien to the Jnani; he himself knows nothing, sees nothing, does nothing. He has quite perished. Only a Jnani can tell who is a Jnani. A person might look like a simpleton, yet he might know himself as the immortal Self. Another may display an unending spout of vedantic learning, yet his mind may not in the least have subsided. In this topsy-turvy world, which must needs always judge by its usual yardstick of 'doing', it is the latter who is generally extolled as the genuine case. The result? Misery for all involved. People cheat themselves into believing that they are in the vicinity of a great Mahatma. The pretender eventually himself foolishly comes to believe that he must indeed be a great Jnani, since so many people praise him day and night. So his ego becomes bloated; as a consequence he lands himself in all sorts of unpleasant situations. So, display of vedantic learning may cause a great very many problems for all involved. It is best to keep quiet.

Q.: B. said a Jnani may have numerous wives. Polygamy is a sin as per Hindu dharma. Can a Jnani sin, then? As far as my knowledge goes, the Manusmriti allows taking the next wife only if the existing wife or wives are mentally ill, infecundous, or unable to participate in rituals for the departed ancestors.

B.: What the Jnani does is always right. This does not mean that a man is morally excused in pretending to be a Jnani and then conveniently committing all sorts of crimes.

Q.: But how to tell who is a genuine Jnani?

B.: Only by yourself becoming lost in Jnana. However, there is one exceedingly rare exception. If a particular Jnani is destined to be your Jnana-guru, when you meet him there is an inexplicable mutual outpouring of ecstatic Love. The Love mentioned here is not consummated by any physical act. It is consummated only by surrendering to the object of such Love. The

Jnani himself never loves or hates; only, when he meets one who is destined to be placed in his ultimate care, he directs his attention toward that person. It is not volitional, but rather Automatic Divine Activity. There is nothing in him left to choose. Unto one who has the pakkuvam, the Grace or Love begins to flow of its own accord. The Jnana-guru might not look at the mature devotee or exchange words with him. Yet, one who is Ready feels the irresistible onslaught of inevitable rapid mental introversion in the form of blissful divine Love. This way you can tell that the person in whose presence you have such experience, is your Jnana-guru. Again, this might not happen in the case of all aspirants.

Q.: I have so far not had any such novel experiences with Bhagawan. Can I still Realise in this lifetime?

B.: All will turn out Right in the end.

Q.: Sometimes B. does not look at visitors. He does not respond to their queries. Does he refuse them his impartial Grace?

B.: Have you seen how they separate chaff from the Grain here? They pour the seeds on the முறம், and then trenchantly shake it in a speedious up-and-down motion. Can you guess the scientific principle underlying the act?

Q.: What is worthless and light in weight is blown away by the wind. What is precious and heavy is not affected by the movement. Yes, it is clear now.

B.: நல்லது !

Q.: One imagines things and enjoys them by virtue of his strength of imagination. It is said that gross manifestations of such mental creations are possible for Brahma the Creator. Should the same power not be available with His creation, man?

B.: That is your opinion.

B.: J.K. says that man should try to find out the 'I'. Then 'I' dissolves away, being only a bundle of circumstances. There is nothing assertible behind the 'I'. His teaching seems to be very much like the Buddha's.

B.: Yes. The truth is well beyond possibility of conceptual expression or explanation. It is pure Experience only, for there is no experiencer. When you finally do reach the Self, you will be shocked to discover that you have been foolishly searching frantically for something that was always right in front of your nose- no, even closer, for the nose and the object in front of it must be seen with the eye to ascertain their apparent existence, whereas the Self requires no perception to support its actual existence. The Self is pratyaksha-sakshathswayamprakasha-swaroopam. Everything shines in and by its light, but it knows nothing but itself. It shines by its own light alone. The lusturous beauty of it never fades. It is truly immutable, indestructible and imperishable.

One who loses himself in it has no more cares or worries. It is the one true goal of man's life, yet it is here and now. That is the great mystery.

21st July, 1936

Two Bengali gentleman have arrived at the ashram- father and son. At the Maharshi's express request, the son acted as the interpreter [to us seated in the Hall] for the conversation in Bengali between the master and the elder among the gentlemen, who had numerous questions to buzz Bhagawan with.

Q.: Creation is full of agony. Why did the Creator create?

B.: All these are only your mental concepts. The Creator never came and told anyone, 'I have created the cosmos.'; all these are only our unwanted mental concepts.

Q.: Then what is the explanation for the world that I see around me?

B.: The one who apparently sees is the explanation for what he apparently sees.

Q.: My meagre brain cannot understand such high-level philosophy.

B.: பறவா இல்லை.

Q.: Yet I want to see God.

B. asked the attendant to pick up a yellowing tome from the book-case. Soon, B. read out from one of the volumes of the Sri Ramakrishna Kathamritha, as follows, and the younger gentleman translated in English for the benefit of those in the Hall who could not understand the original Bengali, which, of course, was everybody except B. and his pair of visitors from Bardhaman-

B.: 'You say you want to see God. Is it possible without purity of Heart?

Therefore I ask you, will you weep and weep in yearning for God? Will you weep with obsessive longing of the Heart? Will you drown yourself in Love for him? For your wife, for your children and for worldly wealth, you shed enough tears to fill a cauldron a day. Tell me, kind man, do you weep for God? So long as a child remains engrossed with its toys, the mother attends to her cooking and other household chores. Eventually the child becomes exasperated with the lifeless toys. It ceases to relish them. Then, it hurls them away, and yells furiously for its mother. Then the mother lifts the rice-pot off the fire immediately. She runs to the child in haste and takes it up in her arms.'

Q.: What is the implication?

B.: Abandon the futile drama of the world. Then you will certainly find God. God cannot resist the temptation to consume the pure, unsullied minds of those who have relinquished the desires and worries of the world. He soon devours such minds.

Q.: Is the apparent reality of mind, body and world only a grand illusion?

B.: Quite so. [reading from the tome] 'Investigate the "I". Then you will find that there is no such thing. Take the example of an onion. First one peels off the red outer skin. This done, one finds thick whitish skins. Peel off these also one by one. What do you finally find inside? Nothing. Likewise, the discovery of the Aathman is made by rejecting everything in the world as unreal. In that state, the man cannot find his ego anywhere; it has fled away. Who is there left to make a search for it? Who can describe the experience of pure consciousness that is verily the true nature of the Parabrahman? Once a salt dall became curious concerning the question of the depth of the ocean-bed. It jumped in to carry out the measurement. The moment it touched the water, it melted in the sea. Now who can tell what the depth is? Who has returned from the Parabrahman to report that it has such-and-such qualities? Till one moves close enough to it, nothing can be said about it, for it remains obscured. The moment one draws near enough to it, one is sucked into it and destroyed. How then can one say anything about it? That is why a man becomes Silent when the Aathman is attained. No possibility of distinction from the Parabrahman is then left. As long as this self-investigation remains incomplete, man argues with gusto. When he completes it he subsides into the supreme bliss of Eternal Silence once and for all. When the "I" dies, all your problems and misery will arrive at an end. There are steep altitudes near Kedarnath that are perennially covered in snow. He who climbs too high cannot come back. Those who have tried to investigate what is there in the Higher Regions have never returned to tell us about it. Likewise with a man and his Aathman.'

Q.: Is my real nature then Brahman?

B.: [continues reading] 'Suppose a King is holding court. Suddenly his cook enters the palace, sits on the King's throne, and shouts, "O King! Know that you and I are one and the same!"; will the cook not be dragged away to the dungeons as a dangerous madcap? However, suppose one day the King, pleased with the services of the cook, says unto him, "Come, good man, sit besides me. What is wrong in it? There is no difference between you and me." Then, if the cook sits on the throne with the King, there can be no harm in it. It is harmful to go on repeating "I am Brahman."; it inflates the ego. The waves belong to the ocean. Does the ocean belong to the waves?'

Q.: Is it true that the Jnani has no mind?

B.: [continues reading] 'He who has Realised God, retains his "I" only for the namesake. No evil can be perpetrated by that "I". It is only an apparent appearance. It is like the mark left on the coconut tree by the branch. Only the mark remains; the branch was dispensed with long ago.' The mind of the Jnani is the burnt ash-skeleton of a coiled rope. Can this ash tie up anything,

although it looks like a rope? Eventually by action of the wind, the ash scatters onto the ground and is blown away into the elements. Likewise when the body's prarabdha is exhausted, the mind-appearance in the Jnani also ceases. The appearance is as regards the onlooker only. The Jnani cannot be aware of the body. He does not even see the body, but only the Self.

Q.: Is it possible for a layman like me to attain this exalted state, or is it for the fortunate destined few only?

B.: Total detachment from worldly cares is necessary.

Q.: Sri B. means I should take sanyasa and retire to a solitary place to practise meditation?

B.: It is unnecessary to leave home and wander about wearing ochre-robos, once you have understood the true meaning of renunciation.

Q.: Which is-?

B.: Giving up the ego.

Q.: How is that done?

B.: Either see its source so that it may disappear or surrender so that it may be struck down.

Q.: Surrender! Is not surrender considered cowardice? How can a true kshatria surrender?

B.: Intense devotion makes it possible.

Q.: If ultimately even God is unreal, is not devotion perfectly meaningless?

B.: Leave God alone. Ask yourself "Who-am-I?".

S>M>

Q.: If everything is only one's own Self, does not God become redundant?

B.: Yo maam pashyathi sarvathra sarvam cha mayi pashyathi; thasyaham na pranashyami sa cha mae na pranashyathi. So, the Realised-being sees only God everywhere, even in wickedness.

Q.: All the evil deeds taking place in the world- these are also God?

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: What kind of a depraved, mentally-ill God is he, who permits all this evil in the world to go on unchecked?

B.: God knows no evil. He is so pure that he cannot think of calling anything evil. He knows nothing but Love.

Q.: So, God is not aware that so much evil is taking place in his creation?

B.: Blissfully so.

Q.: In that case how can we call such an ignorant God omniscient? Anyway, what business has he enjoying bliss whilst his creation goes through such untold suffering? Should he not share the bliss with me?

B.: God cannot be ignorant. Therefore he must be free from imagination.

Thus, all this fictitious evil and suffering is quite invisible to his Eye, which

sees only bliss. There is no question of sharing bliss. It is ALL yours. It is totally, entirely yours for the taking.

Q.: So much suffering is going on in the world. Why does B. call it 'fiction'?

B.: It is a mere dream.

Q.: That is the opinion of the Vedantic texts, which cannot be used to serve any practical end.

B.: That is the truth.

Q.: If God's entire storehouse of Bliss is mine for the taking, why do I feel miserable all the time? Should I not feel blissful?

B.: Surrender to him and then all is bliss.

Q.: Which is the best method? Surrender or vichara?

B.: It depends upon the temperament of the individual. They are really different names for the same thing.

Q.: Is renunciation necessary?

B.: Renounce the renouncer; that will do.

Q.: Is retiring into secluded jungles not necessary for practising Jnana-tapas?

B.: Vitharaga bhaya krodha manmayamam upashrithaha; bahavo jnana tapasa bootha madh bhavam agathaha. So, giving up all attachments and altogether surrendering our lives to him is the true Jnana-tapas, not going to any forest.

Q.: What purpose is to be gained by satsangam? Can it serve as a substitute for the massive effort required to discover the Self?

B.: Chandanam sheetalam loke chandanath api chandramaha; chandrachandanayormadhye sheetala sadhu sangathihi. So, in the presence of the Sage introversion of mind becomes easier. Nothing can substitute your effort. Actually, satsangam is only Aathmasangam. Aathman alone is sath.

Q.: If all my effort to discover the Self by means of my own ingenuity fail, what can I do?

B.: Surrender.

Q.: Since Ajata-advaita denies the existence of even God, to whom to surrender?

B.: Surrender requires an object to surrender to only for those who are still in the kindergarten stage of spiritual development. The wise simply surrender. To surrender is to give up everything. How then may arise the question of finding out one more object to surrender to?

Q.: Should I not surrender to the Aathman within me, which is said to be my true Self?

B.: The ultimate truth is that surrendering "to" something or someone is not unconditional surrender and cannot be. You say you are surrendering to the Aathman, etc.. That means the Arbitrary Mental Conceptualisation called

'Aathman' is still left in your mind. So, how at all can it be unconditional surrender? At best it is a partial surrender. Absolute surrender is letting go of everything. The "I" thought and its vrittis, the summa totalis of your ideas about being an individual person, and thus the associated desires, patterns of thought-movement, ambitions, expectations, hopes, etc., etc. all are given up at one deadly stroke. Then only the Self remains. This is the real import of J.K.'s saying, 'Total negation is the essence of the positive.'. Of course it needs extreme vairagyam. The desperation to do it must equal [that of] one whose head has been pressed underneath water trying to rise to the surface to breathe, or one whose body has been doused in kerosene and set ablaze trying to find a water-body to fall into. Then, and then alone, is Realisation made possible. Others are merely wasting time in useless prattle.

Q.: If I want to cultivate such vairagyam what should I do?

B.: Thvameva matha cha pitha thvameva thvameva bandhu cha saka thvameva; thvameva vidya cha dravinam thvameva thvameva sarvam mama deva deva. So, initially one may practise surrender to a personal God.

Q.: If I am too weak to do even this?

B.: Patram pushpam phalam thoyam yo mae bhakthya parayacchathi; thath aham bhakthyupahritamashnami parayatatmanaha. So, one may practise worship of a personal God.

Q.: But according to Ajata-advaita the personal God is fiction.

B.: So is the jivatman. What is wrong in it if one fiction worships another?

Q.: Is it not a pointless activity?

B.: Then come over to the Real. Either practise dualistic or non-dualistic sadhana, but what is the point in comparing them both and saying, 'If this is valid that is meaningless; if that is valid this is meaningless.'?

Q.: Mine is a hopeless case. If I try to worship a personal God, I am put off by B.'s Ajata-advaita teachings. If I try vichara, I am put off by the thought that it is too difficult for poor wretched souls like me to pull off.

B.: Sarvadarman parithyajya maam aekam sharanam vraja; aham thvaam sarva paapaebhyo mokshayishyami masucha. So, total surrender is the only way.

Q.: Will I be saved in the end or hopelessly left to rot? I am exceedingly afraid.

B.: Pratijaanihi na mae bakthaha prapashyathi.

22nd July, 1936

Chadwick came rushing into the Hall today afternoon, holding a simply enormous parcel in his hands, which seemed to make even him look puny in size by comparison. He seemed super-excited. A sister of his, or some other relative in England, had managed to ferret out the address of the ashram.

Knowing his interests in 'Metaphysics of the East-Indian variety', that personage had sent Chadwick a huge load of books upon the topic. Chadwick was elated at the trouble that had been taken for his sake. He wanted to open the parcel at Bhagawan's feet. This done, he wanted to read out excerpts from all the books to Bhagawan and the Hall. B. seemed resigned to his fate. Any time B. could have said, "Enough.", and that would be that. But he did not. His Loving Heart did not wish to cause the slightest grievance in a devotee's mind. And so it happened to transpire that all day long today a beleaguered-looking Ramana Maharshi was listening to all sorts of redundant accounts written by 17th century visitors to the India at the time; evidently all these books seemed to be diaries which early English or Portugese colonial administrators had maintained for their amusement. Some brainless baboon had authorised these things for publication; still worse must be the mental condition of those who buy all this; and that purely ingenious intellect which has sent them to a man now settled in India for good I have no words with which to extol. The useless narratives looked in stupified astonishment at all sorts of routine Indian customs. Initially it was funny. As time and Chadwick's bonny voice went on, soon it became irritating and boring. Then I fell asleep- the only occasion on which I have done so inside the Hall! This is what I heard before I nodded off, as I can best recollect it-

'Let me first begin with a book describing Madurai, since it is a place B. is well acquainted with!' said Chadwick enthusiastically.

From "The Southlands of Siva: Some Reminiscences of Life in Southern India, by A. Butterworth, 1st Edition, 1923, John Lane for The Bodley Head, Great Britain":

The town of Madura lies on the Vaigai river. The river is of the usual South Indian type. Occasionally when the draughts become unmanageable, one may expect to see dazzling ribbons of pure white sand everywhere, with some puny trickles of clear water running between. The whereabouts of the town is indicated by the low, bare ridge known, for inexplicable reasons, as Pasumalai [cow-hill], by the rock called Yanaimalai [elephant-hill], and by the enormous mass of black stone known as Thirupparangundram. The town seems to have been built on a rectangular plan. This suggests that it was originally constructed within the walls of the temple in the middle; no traces of these walls now remain. The town is undeniably cramped and congested. At night, the river-bed and street corners are deployed as laterines, a practice difficult to check. There is a piped water supply, but this is inadequate; thus, the river water is freely drunk by a people to whom the term 'bacterial infection' would not be comprehensible. As a result cholera is always hanging about the place. The toll that the disease took of young English lives in the eras bygone is



apparent from the cemeteries and tombstones that lie scattered about the place. The disease has somewhat receded nowadays amongst Europeans, since towns are being gradually rendered safe by the introduction of mechanical water-supply. When it does strike, however, the blow is a vicious one. Decades previously, I saw a reprint in an Indian newspaper of an old poem, which is supposed to have been written by a man named Bartholomew Dovelung, at a time when his regiment was writhing under the grip of cholera. I reproduce here the verses thereof:

We meet underneath the crumbling rafter,  
And the walls around are bare:  
As they echo our peals of laughter,  
We find that the dead are already there  
Setting eyes upon us with their furious glare!  
So, stand to your glasses steady,  
We drink in our comrades' eyes.  
A cup to the dead already,  
Hurrah for the next that dies!  
Here are no goblets glowing,  
Nor home's vintage charm so sweet;  
It is cold and our hearts are growing  
As dark as the doom we meet.  
But stand to your glasses, steady,  
So that soon our spirits may rise.  
A cup to the dead already,  
Hurrah for the next that dies!  
There is many a hand that is shaking,  
There is many a cheek that has shrivelled;  
Although it is true that our hearts were breaking,  
And upon our stomachs we grovelled,  
Yet I must say we are content with  
The whiskey we drink with mirth!  
So stand to your glasses steady,  
For it is here that the revival lies.  
A cup to the dead already,  
Hurrah for the next that dies!  
A long time ago we laughed at others;  
We thought ourselves wise then;  
Lads, think of your mothers,  
If you should ever hope to see them again.  
So stand to your glasses steady,

For into man's innermost secret you may not prise.

A cup to the dead already,

Hurrah for the next that dies!

Not a sigh from the brass that sparkles,

Not a tear for the friends that sink;

We shall fall as our wine-cup sprinkles,

As mute as the whiskey we drink.

So stand to your glasses steady,

For it is death that respite buys.

A cup to the dead already,

Hurrah for the next that dies!

There is mist on the glass congealing,

It is the hurricane's sensous breath;

And thus does the warmth of feeling

Turn Ice in the grasp of death.

So stand to your glasses steady,

For soon the vapour flies.

A cup to the dead already,

Hurrah for the next that dies!

Who dreads to the dust returning?

Who shrinks from the lengthy shore

Where the high and haughty yearning

Of the soul shall sting no more?

No, stand to your glasses steady,

For this world is a miasma of lies.

A cup to the dead already,

Hurrah for the next that dies!

Cut off from the land that bore us,

Betrayed by the land we find;

The brightest have perished without fuss,

And us dull ones are left behind.

No, stand to your glasses steady,

For it is all we have left to prize.

A cup to the dead already,

Hurrah for the next that dies!

In my opinion, there is more to be seen in the city of Madura than in any other town in Southern India. The temple of sundareswara and minakshi is of particular interest. The statues here are less conventional and therefore more lifelike than usual. One group of figures manages to actually achieve the intended theme of horror. This is rare among the works of the dravidian

sculptors; when they aim at horror, they generally succeed in producing only ugliness. The most ornate and impressive amongst the stonework is the modern-seeming Kambattadhi mandapam, which has been carved excellently, although the exterior of the pagoda is unimpressive. It is roofed over to an unusual extent. The roof is pierced by the vimanas over the principal shrines. In most large dravidian places of worship, the darkness of the interior produces an oppressive sense of gloom. Here this effect is particularly pronounced. In places there seem to linger a uniquely unfathomable divine mystery in the air; this effect is made all the more profound by the light spilt from the golden flame waved before the idols. You emerge into sunlight when you reach the Golden Lily tank, the beauty of which is confined to its name; the stone basin is filled with water of the filthiest sort. I have no idea whether the locals drink it. Judging by the superstitious nature that most of them seem to have, I surmise that the illimitably pious ones might occasionally fancy it as a holy beverage. Round the tank is a cloister the walls of which are covered with sculptures of horrific scenes of impalements, disembowelments, and other tortures inflicted on the jains and the buddhists. Why are these here? Are the scenes not totally incongruous with the character of a people naturally averse from cruelty and violence? Whom am I to ask? Opposite the big temple is what could easily be the largest mandapam in Southern India. It is an oblong, wall-less, stone structure known as Tirumala Nayak's Choultry. It is just over a hundred yards long, and the flat stone roof is supported by many pillars adorned with the usual customary figures, including rearing horses and demons known as yahlis. It is a splendid example of Tamil Architecture. Tirumala Nayakkar, who seems to have reigned in the 17th century, has left, in addition to the mandapam, a remarkable place which is still used as a court-house, the outer courtyard of which is marvellously imposing by reason of the vast columns of European type which flank it. Behind lies the Darbar Hall, which is a peculiar combination of dravidian and European styles; the effect is menacing and belligerent, but this is atoned for by the originality and strangeness of the design. Some distance away is the square stone-built tank known as the teppakulam. A teppam is a raft. Most Hindu temples have a tank which involves the deployment of a raft for the performance of an annual ceremony in which the raft plays a dominant role. A notable feature of this particular tank is that it is characterised by a group of white structures that stand on a square islet in the middle; the picturesque central building is a six-storeyed pavilion, at each corner of which stands a little kiosque. Across the river lies the district collector's house, which is also attributed to the Nayakkar. The core of the edifice is an artificial mound, the purpose of which is to present an impression

of the building rising baronially above its surroundings, atleast when seen from a distance. The place is filled with ghostly shadows. The moonlight, pouring into the main room, breaks against forty squarish pillars whence spring cinquefoil arches. To the three-floored original structure, the administration of the public-works department has added a wing of an uncompromising, rectilinear order. Finally we have the Perumal temple with the Lakshmi temple adjacent to it; the lower part of the former is sumptuously ornamented in bold relief; as for the latter, it has afforded me much amusement, owing to the fact that I saw it under unusually favourable conditions, for the temple being out of use due to an exercise in renovation being carried out, I was able to inspect the penetralia which in ordinary circumstances are prohibited to European access. If the fine, gray, crystalline stone known as charnockite is rubbed with petroleum oil and powdered bobierrite alternately, it takes a glossy, jet-black surface that is hugely handsome to set eyes upon. The new shrine in the Lakshmi temple is made of this stone so treated. It is shaped on the most harmonious lines, for it is decorated with not only elegant richness but also fine restraint. The encompassing pillars are well carved. Their morose greyness contrasts very pleasingly with the smooth blackness of the central mausoleum. In its entirety, the structure is a noble piece of painstaking, punctilious workmanship. Thus and in many other ways did the enchanting city of Madura captivate and enthrall my fascinated imagination.

From "An account of the injustices which continue to be perpetrated in the name of Zoological Heirarchy in East India, known as the 'System of Jati', from the earliest times up till the present, being a combined intellectual and pragmatic analysis undertaken by H. Spencer and H. H. Risley, 3rd Edition, 1934, Victor Gollancz Ltd., Great Britain":

A special appeal directed at the noble hearts of my beloved English brethen, from the incalculably profound depths of my own exceedingly anguished heart-

Kind reader, you might have heard that India is the shiniest gem of the British Crown; are you acquainted with her dark, disturbing secrets? You might have heard that Indian philosophy is astute and precise; have you heard how the Indians subjugate and enslave millions of their own countrymen, leaving them wallowing about in an ocean of bloody tears? You might have heard of Indian saints; have you heard about the not-so-saintly behaviour of her racially-bigoted priestly community, who engage in perpetrating, even upto this present day, the very worst of gross injustices in the name of God? Before we proceed further, let us consider with an open mind the words of the good Professor Rapson, who has had a good deal to say about the subject in one

of his more recent books. The following content is reproduced with permission from the work "An account of ancient India from the earliest times to the first century A.D., by E. J. Rapson, M. A., professor of Sanskrit at the University of Cambridge and fellow of St. John's College, with 6 illustrations and 2 maps"-

☒ ...thus it is my inveterate opinion that the brahmin is a hypocritical, venomous creature. He has enslaved the lower 'castes' and holds them in his vice-like grip of total tyranny. With the Company he pretends that all is well in his relations with the poor wretches. Prima facie, his life seems to offer little to relieve the dreary monotony of the endless ritualistic and liturgical disquisitions which alone his religion is able to offer him, at least so far as outward appearances seem to indicate upon first glance. Looking at his religion superficially, one is quick to draw the immediate conclusion that the sort of life it enjoins for him is absolutely mechanical and unintelligent. The hymns from the rigveda are no longer used with regard to their original sense of meaning, but verses are taken away from their context and strung together fantastically, because they all contain some magical word of potent psychic power, or because the scheme of their metres, when arranged according to the increasing or decreasing number of syllables, resembles a thunderbolt wherewith the sacrificer may slay his foes, imagined or otherwise, or for some other equally ridiculous reason. Such a system admittedly may have been useful enough to secure the supremacy of the brahmin race and to keep the lesser men in their proper place, but it is not to be imagined that it can ever have satisfied the intellectual aspirations of the brahmin himself. Now we come to the truth that as a matter of fact, in India, a broad distinction between a 'religion of works', intended for the lesser, non-brahminical folk, and for the earlier stages in the religious life of the brahmin himself, and a 'religion of knowledge' which appeals only to an intellectual aristocracy, has always existed. Certain hymns of reflection in the rigveda show that the eternal problems of the existence and the nature of the higher power and of its relation to the universe and to man, were already filling the thoughts of sages even at such an early period. Theosophical speculation is not at all alien to the brahmin psyche. The whole of vedic literature is comprehensively called the chruti [revelation], as distinguished from the later smriti [tradition]. Chruti is divided into the 'religion of works' [the vedas] and the 'religion of knowledge' [the upanishads and the aranyakas]. The upanishads with which the philosophical hymns of the rigveda are closely connected in spirit, lead us into the realm of what we should call philosophy rather than religion; but the 2 have never been separated in India, where the latter has always been regarded as the necessary preparation for the former. Indian orthodoxy is merely the unquestioning acceptance of the inherent moral and spiritual

supremacy of the brahmin race. The brahmin is certainly superior in one respect- he is the great past-master of chicanery, exploitation and skulduggery. The other races, darker than he in complection of the skin-tone, he treads under his foot. With all the expertise that is borne in the blood of his generations of progenitors, he systematically oppresses the other races by deployment of a planned methodology of blatant deprivation. It is illegal for the other races to educate themselves, to use the decent roads that the brahmins use, to make use of covered spaces for the purpose of ejecting the bodily excrement, to access wells, rivers or ponds, to learn to read or write, to consume anything that does not form part of the permitted list of items edible, which are typically under-nourishing, or to visit physicians. Many women die from child-birth because midwifery is not permitted to be availed. A non-brahmin man who uses a road or a water-source meant for brahmin use, or tries to become literate or commits some other 'offence' faces swift punishment, the most usual being caning or castration. Those who 'offend' repeatedly face death by the hangman's ligature. Here, to perpetrate 'offence' means to violate these facinorously unjust customs imposed by the brahmins. I once unwittingly entered into a conversation upon the topic with a respectable-looking, matriculated, English-speaking brahmin-

Q.: Why are these denizens of the country subject to second-degree treatment?

A.: God has created the caste system based on the racial heirarchy of beings. The brahmin is the noblest racial stock in this part of the world. We are the 'Airian' Master Race. We are full fledged humans. They are lower in the order of evolution, similar to apes and orangutans. All resources of the state must therefore be controlled only by us. Can monkeys be allowed any say in how things are run? It is their fate to quietly accept whatever befall them. That they are being permitted to live is a great blessing given by us to them. If they wish to continue their existence which is authorised only by us, they so continue on our terms exclusively. If they do not so wish, they are welcome to perish. Good riddance! See how these brutes live! They excrete their bowel movements upon the open roads. They cannot read or write. They look thin and ill always. Their speech sounds like the screech of an anus that is forced to suffer from continuous ejection of excessive flatulence from the intestines. They know not what culture is. They wallow in filth. Only orgies are known to them, not marriage. They suffer from all sorts of venereal maladies. In short the scum of the Earth!

So saying, the brahmin angrily spat his red betel-leaf spittle on the floor, at my feet. This is more or less the attitude of all members of the brahmin race. They use these poor brutes to run errands, collect their ordure, till their fields,

clean their roads and more or less for every other task; yet, this is their opinion of them. The purpose behind keeping them in such a pitiable, physically and mentally malnourished condition is that otherwise they might rebel. Worst of all, they are taught that God has sanctioned this system; thus they meekly comply with everything. The brahmin's homily was yet to conclude; he went on-

That is why we keep ourselves away from these hellish creatures. Otherwise we should contract all sorts of diseases. Even if the shadow of such a creature is seen by me, I immediately purify myself by performing 7 ritual baths together with the usage of spells and incantations... I shall be affected with the Syphilitic disease otherwise! These perverse, abominable aberrations of nature must be thoroughly cleansed off the planet, sir! Only then will the Earth finally become a pure place! I hope Monsieur is aware that these are the descendants of 'ahsurah's [demons] and 'rotchaxa's [malevolent spirits]; their very existence is a blot upon graceful mother Earth. Do they not deserve to be annihilated then? Are we not doing them an enormous favour, therefore, by allowing them to propagate their filthy bloodline upon this sacred soil of Bharath? Should they not be ever indebted towards us, then, for it? What is Monsieur's opinion? I hope Monsieur agrees with me?

I checked myself from asking him, 'If they are all done away with, who will clear away your execrable-smelling odious egesta, pray, may I ask?'; I did not want to start an argument with an insufferable, polemical and maniacal zealot; to use reason with ones as these is unproductive. I merely nodded in pretended agreement and left the place. Most brahmins I met and could converse with are more or less of the same opinion. One told me, "They are Afrikaans. We are Airiann peoples. Of course we are the Master Race. Why doubt the eternally obvious?". They have apparently been trained to think in this way from the childhood phase in life, by the parents. This loathsome ideology, which treats only a certain race or collection of races to be human and dismisses the other folk as being dirty animals, stands out in stark contrast with the noble thoughts of the ancient ones who must have written the upanishads. Therein lies the curious dichotomous face of the brahmin. He will in the spirit of utmost uncompromising rigidity practise the brutal 'Jati' system just after the manner of his ancestors; yet he will delight himself in the lofty philosophical nuances of the upanishads which emphasize on the necessity for love and harmony between all beings. He will accept on the one side that the other races are unworthy to be regarded as proper humans, but are rather to be viewed as dumb brutes, but on the other side he will talk about how everything is only made up of the same Cosmic Spirit. When I once asked for an explanation, I was told- "A pair of hedge-shears and a pair

of forcipies are made out of the same iron; by reason of that fact would you contemplate interchanging their functions?"; it is thus hard-wired into the brahmin's intellect that he is destined to play the role of the Master Race and the other races are destined to lie subjugated at his feet. For this reason he can never be made to consider the moral implication of his acts from a neutral perspective. The so-called lower races do not even dare to meet a brahmin's eye while working for him, or to approach more than a certain customary distance. The exceedingly ignorant ones, and there is no dearth of them, slap their cheeks in the 'holy-way' whenever they see a brahmin approaching far off. The brahmin scrupulously avoids seeing them, for fear of contamination or pollution; the mere sight of such unholy creatures, according to the brahmin, would lead to diseases, bodily and mental. Whilst giving instructions in the fields, standing under the shade of a huge, luxurious umbrella, the brahmin speaks only to those of intermediate ranking in the rigorous racial hierarchy who come immediately beneath him, and these in turn convey the orders to the workers. The workers toiling in the hot sun are somewhat above those who collect the brahmins' ordure and compost it; those who collect the brahmins' ordure are somewhat above the other ordure-collectors! The worst of all are those who skin the flesh of the dead bovines and make footwear. They are never allowed to come into the town, but must always stay on the outskirts of the forest. Even mentioning them in front of a brahmin produces an expression of disgust, as- according to the brahmin- these survive exclusively by consuming the flesh of dogs. The name for this community is treated as a choice swear word within the brahmin custom! When footwear was needed a labourer would be sent to get it from these unfortunate ones. These piteous wretches have been cunningly indoctrinated by the audacious brahmin into believing that the brahmin is a divine creature appointed by God to look after the world. By playing with the sentiment of God, the brahmin has cleverly secured himself against possibility of revolt or mutiny. The non-brahmin actually becomes angry when any criticism about the brahmin is uttered in his presence! He says penitently, "Already for the sins committed by me I am born into this low race in the Hierarchy; if, in addition to the fact of my current lowly position, I hear but a single word against the noble brahmin, hell would surely await me upon death."; so, the attitude that he is low and the brahmin high has been deeply sowed into his mind by the brahmin. Such is the great intelligence of the brahmin; he has developed a system of slavery wherein the slaves themselves are altogether unwilling to break out of the grip of slavery, because of the way the brahmin has conditioned their minds by the dint of careful and deliberate effort expended over centuries. So, social reform is impossible here- it will lead to violent opposition not only from the



oppressors, but also the oppressed! I have heard that only in one region of India, namely the Bengal, a reformer, a Raja, bearing the name Raime-Moghul Roy, has succeeded- to a tiny extent- in doing away with this exceedingly acrimonious system of carefully planned exploitation. My travels have taken me principally into southern India; I never saw the effect of such reforms firsthand; I spent most of my life in India in the North Arcot district. My observations about the brahmin race are not merely local to the place of my particular geographic residence; they are the result of details collected both personally by myself and by the fortunate aid of numerous highly reliable acquaintances, dispersed through-out the land either in the capacity of officers functioning in eager servitude under Her Majesty's Administration, or as independant enthusiasts. Therefore such observations hold good no matter which region of India is taken up for consideration that encompasses a Hindu society, because they are inferences based on information gathered from the length and breath of the country. India's civilisation and heritage are regarded as the paragon of eastern accomplishment in the manner of living, but not many are aware of these dark truths that lie concealed from the superficial eye. Yet the profundity of thought charecterising India's ancient texts of philosophy evokes awe. For instance, the upanishad says, 'The wise man beholds all beings in himself and himself in all beings; for that reason he does not hate anyone.'. Again, 'When all the longings of your heart perish, then your mortal soul becomes immortal and attains the state of transcendental cosmic consciousness.'. Or again, 'He alone by whom the entire universe is constantly pervaded is the supreme knower and author of time, for he alone is sinless and omniscient.'. Thus we see that the ancient hermits of India who authored these texts called the upanishads were no barbarians or simpletons. They must have possessed advanced psychic powers and abilities. It must, however, be said that the upanishads are not systematically arranged in their content; they contain no orderly expositions of metaphysical doctrine; they give no reasons for the views which they put forth; they seem to be the work of thinkers who were poets, not philosophers. Nevertheless, they contain all the main ideas which formed the germs of the later systems of philosophy, and are, therefore, of the utmost importance for the history of Indian thought. The object of the 'religion of knowledge' is neither earthly happiness nor the rewards of heaven; such may be the fruits of the 'religion of works'. According to the upanishads, the joys of earth and heaven are alike transient. They may be pursued by the man who mistakes appearances for the reality, but the Sage turns away from them, for he has realised that as a consequence of action, the soul of man has become fast entrapped in a chain of mundane existences, and that it will go on from birth to birth, whether in this world or

other worlds, its condition in each such state of existence being determined by the good or evil deeds performed in previous existences. Thus, his sole aim is to obtain what he calls 'Mukthie' or emancipation from this worthless perpetual succession of birth and rebirth. This release is possible of obtainment only in consequence of acquisition of 'correct knowledge'. Acquisition of correct knowledge merely means removal of all wrong knowledge. The Sage realises the fact that there is no existence, except in the highest and only true sense of the term- that is to say, except in the state of transcendental cosmic consciousness, which is named the 'Atman'. In truth, Atman is everything and everything is Atman. It is not possible for any second 'being' to exist. All that appears to exist apart from the Atman is mere illusory appearance. It is a disguise of the Atman, caused on account of superimposition of name and form over it. Just as all vessels made out of clay, by whatever names they may be called and however many different forms they may assume, are in reality only clay, so everything which appears to us to have an independent existence, is really only a manifestation in Atman. Thus, one's individual self becomes transformed into the cosmic self or Atman, when 'correct knowledge' dawns. By the acquisition of 'correct knowledge', the Sage has freed himself from the circle of mundane existences, which are now plainly seen to be apparent only and not real. This panentheistic doctrine is an extension of the philosophy of Nihilism. It forms the main, but by no means the exclusive, subject of the upanishads. In the centuries to come, it was developed [with marvellous salubriousness and subtlety] into the school of philosophy known as 'Unmoving Non-duality', by the scholar named Gaudapoda, and his student Sunkar. Indians refer to it as the doctrine of the 'Vedanta' or the termination of all objective knowledge. The cultural influence of this 'Vedanta' philosophical doctrine has been more potent than any other in moulding the spiritual and intellectual life of the Indian aristocratic Hindu elite, namely the brahmin race, even down to the present day. One cannot help being moved by the solemnity and grandeur of the upanishadic poetry, even if one is unwilling to agree with its message which is the philosophy of unreality of the personal self or the individual soul; yet the puzzle remains unsolved as regards the modern-day legacy-bearer of those magnificent texts of wisdom, namely the brahmin, for he remains a thoroughly baffling phenomenon. On the one hand he will exhilarate himself with, and go into delectatious rhapsodies over, the lofty teaching of the upanishads that everything that exists is only the one immutable Atman which is of the nature of divine Love; on the other, he will with resolute tenacity practise the nefarious 'jati' system that is the reason for the untold suffering undergone by millions of his countrymen belonging to the other races. Yet, that there seems to be a clear contradiction between the

ancient teachings relished by him as sacred scripture and his behaviour towards his fellow man in practical life he will never admit. The supreme competence of the brahmin's intelligence in intellectually vivisectioning his dazzling scripture is matched only by his supreme obduracy in his total refusal to even see[,much less admit,] the truth that he is engaged in systematised exploitation of a pauperized, voiceless people. Our one inevitable conclusion is that the brahmin, while no doubt possessed of dizzying heights of mental capability, is also, in some fundamental way, inhumanly insane.... ✧

Again, before we proceed to state our own views upon the matter, let us consider with an open mind the words of the good Miss Katherine Mayo, who has had a good deal to say about the subject in one of her more recent books. The following content is reproduced with permission from the work "Mother India, by the Author of 'The Isles of Fear', Katherine Mayo"-

✧ Once upon a time in India, when all men lived according to their choice, the brahmin was the only fellow who applied himself to learning. Then, having become learned, and being by nature evil-minded, he secretly laid hold upon the sacred books, and cunningly wrote into those books false texts that declared him, the brahmin, to be lord over all the people. Ages passed. And gradually, because the brahmin only could read and because he gave out his false texts that forbade learning to others, the people grew to believe him the Earthly God he called himself and to obey him accordingly. So in all Hindu India he ruled the spirit of man, and none dared dispute him, not till England introduced schools for all. The brahmin's grip over the country is very strong. Because the might of thousands of years breaks slowly, and because he is as shrewd as a host of demons, it is difficult to thwart his power. He owns the press, he sways the bench, he holds eighty per cent of the public offices, and he terrorizes the people, especially the women and little children. For the other races are all superstitious and mostly illiterate. The 'Earthly God' has cleverly seen to that. Also, he hates the British, because they keep him from strangling the the so-called 'inferior races'. He makes much 'patriotic' outcry, demanding that the British go. And we know that if they go he will strangle the other races again and India will be what it used to be prior to 1858, a cruel despotism wielded by fat priests against a mass of slaves. Each Hindu in India pays to the brahmin many times more than he pays to the State. From the day of his birth to the day of his death, a man must be feeding the Earthly God. When a child is born, the brahmin must be paid; otherwise, the child will not prosper. Sixteen days afterward, to be cleansed of 'birth pollution,' the brahmin must be paid. A little later, the child must be named and the brahmin must be paid. In the third month, the baby's hair must be clipped; and the brahmin must be paid. In the sixth month, we begin to feed the child solids

and the brahmin must be paid. When the child begins to walk, the brahmin must be paid. At the completion of the first year comes the birthday ceremony and the brahmin must be paid. At the end of the seventh year the boy's education begins and the brahmin must be paid well. When a girl reaches her first birthday, her seventh, or her ninth, or when a boy is one and a half, or two years old, or anywhere up to sixteen, comes the betrothal, and big pay to the brahmin. Then, when puberty comes, or earlier, if the marriage is consummated earlier, rich pay to the brahmin. At an eclipse, the brahmin must be paid heavily. And so it goes on. When a man dies, the corpse can be removed only after receiving the blessing of the brahmin, for which he is paid. At the cremation, again a lot of money must be paid to many brahmins. After cremation, every month for a year, the dead man's son must hold a feast for brahmins, as great a feast as he can, and give them clothes, ornaments, food and whatever would be dear to the dead. For whatever a brahmin eats, drinks or uses is enjoyed by the dead. Thereafter, once a year, during the son's life, he must repeat this observance. All such ceremonies and many more the brahmin calls his vested rights, made so by religious law, according to him. Whoever neglects them, he says, goes to eternal damnation. During the performance of each rite we must wash the brahmin's feet with water and then we must drink some of that water from the palm of our hand. The brahmin man is indolent, produces nothing, and takes to no calling but that of lawyer or government official. Until we other races are able to hold our own in India, we prefer His Majesty King George V beyond the sea, who gives us peace, justice, something back for our money and a chance to become free men. The other option is to bow down to a million and a half tyrannical masters, here, who eat us up, yet say our very touch would pollute them. "Why, after so many years of British rule, do we remain 92 per cent illiterate?" reiterates the clever brahmin, implying that the blame must be laid at the ruler's door. But in naming his figure, he does not call to your attention a fact which, left to yourself, you might be slow to guess: not a single brahmin can be found in India who is illiterate! In the beginning, when the light-skinned German ancestors of the brahmins first came to India, they found there a darker, thicker-featured native race, the Dravidians, builders of the great temples of the South. And the priests of the newcomers desired that the blood of their people be not mixed with the native stock, but be kept of one strain. So they declared Dravidians to be unclean, "untouchable." Then the old lawmakers, gradually devising the jati system, placed themselves at the head thereof, under the title of "earthly gods" or brahmins. A quotation from the rule by which the unfortunate non-brahmin races are nailed to their fate will suffice to show its exceedingly egrigious nature:

The Bhagavata, a treatise on 'justice' written by the brahmin, says:  
"Whoever is guilty of murdering a brahmin will be condemned at his death to take the form of one of those insects which feed on filth. Being reborn long afterwards a paraiiah, he will belong to this caste, and will be blind for more than four times as many years as there are hairs on the body of a cow. He can, nevertheless, expiate his crime by feeding forty thousand Brahmins." On the other hand, if a brahmin kills a non-brahmin, it will suffice to efface the sin altogether if he recites the gayatri [a small prayer] twice.

Leaving the ancient roots of things, and coming down to the year 1926 A.D., we find the orthodox brahmin rule as to Untouchables to be roughly this: Regarded as completely sub-human, the tasks held basest are reserved for them. Dishonor and shame are associated with their name. Some are permitted to serve only as scavengers and removers of night soil. Some, through the ignorance to which they are condemned, are loathsome in their habits; and to all of them the privilege of any sort of teaching is sternly denied. They may neither possess nor read the Hindu scriptures. No brahmin priest will minister to them; and, except in rarest instances, they may not enter a Hindu temple to worship or pray. Their children may not come to the public schools. They may not draw water from the public wells; and if their habitation be in a region where water is scarce and sources far apart, this means, for them, not greater consideration from others, but greater suffering and greater toil. They may not enter a court of justice; they may not enter a dispensary to get help for their sick; they may stop at no inn. They may not even use the public road, and as laborers or agriculturists, they are continually losers, in that they may not enter the shops or even pass through the streets where shops are, but must trust to a haphazard chain of hungry go-betweens to buy or sell their meager wares. Some, in the abyss of their degradation, are permitted no work at all. These may sell nothing, not even their own labor. They may only beg. And even for that purpose they dare not use the road, but must stand far off, unseen, and cry out for alms from those who pass. If alms be given, it must be tossed on the ground, well away from the road, and when the giver is out of sight and the roads empty, then, and not till then, the watcher may creep up, snatch, and run. Many, if not all, pollute, beyond chaste men's use, any food upon which their shadow falls. Food, after such defilement, can only be destroyed. Others, again, exude "distance pollution" as an effluvium from their unhappy bodies. If one of these presumes to approach and linger by a highroad, he must measure the distance to the highroad. If it be within two hundred yards, he must carefully place on the road a green leaf weighted down with a handful of earth, thereby indicating that he, the unclean, is within pollution distance of that point. The passing

brahmin, seeing the signal, halts and shouts. The poor man forthwith takes to his heels. Only when he has fled far enough he calls back, "I am now two hundred yards away. Be pleased to pass." Still others have been forbidden to build themselves huts, and permitted to construct for houses nothing better than a sort of leaf awning on poles, or nests in the crotches of big trees. These may approach no other type of humanity. A Nair or priestly brahmin meeting a member of a 'lower race' on the road, is entitled to stab the offender on the spot. Under such conditions of preordained misery, certain communities among the Untouchables have developed a business in the practice of crime. These communities specialize, one in podcet-picking, another in burglary, yet others in forging, in highway robbery, in murder, etc., often combining their special trade with prostitution as a second industry. Scattered all over India and known as the Criminal Tribes, they number today about four and a half million persons. Now it must not be forgotten that the matter of Untouchability, like almost all other Hindu concerns, is woven, warp and woof, into the Hindu religion and that the Hindus are a tremendously religiose people. To quote the words of that prominent Indian, Sir Surendranath Banerjea: "You cannot think of a social question affecting the Hindu community that is not bound up with religious considerations; and when divine sanction, in whatever form, is invoked in aid of a social institution, it sits enthroned in the popular heart with added firmness and fixity, having its roots in sentiment rather than in reason. And dire experience shows to what lengths of blood-drenched madness the brahmin goads himself by a mere whisper that his position as the Master Race may be threatened." The impulse of His Majesty's government has always been to espouse the cause of the poor underprivileged non-brahmin victim. The Directors of the East India Company, as early as 1854, recommended that "no boy be refused admission to a Government school or college on ground of caste," and stuck to the principle until their authority was sunk in that of the Crown. Thenceforward it was continually reaffirmed, yet pushed with a caution that might seem faint-hearted to one unfamiliar with the extreme violence that the brahmin is capable of perpetrating. The workings of caste cannot be confused with snobbery. A man's caste is the outward sign of the history of his soul. To break caste by infringing any one of the multitudinous caste laws brings down an eternal penalty. If, as a Hindu, in obeying these laws, you inflict suffering upon another, that is merely because his soul-history has placed him in the path of pain. You have no concern in the matter; neither will he, thinking as a good Hindu, blame you. For both you and he are working out your god-appointed destiny. Today almost all that can be accomplished by civil law for the Untouchable has been secured by His Majesty's Colonial Administration.

Government has freely opened their way, as far as Government can determine, to every educational advantage and to high offices. And Government's various land-development and cooperative schemes, steadily increasing, have provided tremendous redeeming agencies and avenues of escape. But for Provincial Governments to pass legislation asserting the rights of every citizen to enjoy public facilities, such as public schools, is one thing; to enforce that legislation over enormous countrysides and through multitudinous small villages without the co-operation and against the will of the subjugated people, is another. The brahmin's total psychological indoctrination of the mind of the native races has made any co-operation from them for their own upliftment a laughable impossibility. The brahmin has played with their minds very carefully over the centuries. Now they think they are under a religio-spiritual obligation to serve the brahmin for all Eternity. In the Bombay Legislative Council, one day in August, 1926, they were discussing a resolution to coerce local boards to permit Untouchables to send their children to schools, to draw water from public wells, and to enjoy other common rights of citizenship. The brahmins members created a furore over it and walked out of the proceedings. Minutes later they arrived with large canisters filled with inflammable liquid and a whole herd of brahmins. If the proposed resolution was not torn up, they shouted, we shall burn down this office! The presiding-officer was helpless and had to give in. Thus, the brahmin, this embodiment of all that is satanic and unholy, has amassed in his hands both intellectual skill and the power of brute physical force. Regulations may prevail to bring the outcaste to the school door, but his courage may not suffice to get him across the threshold, for his self-assertion was done to death centuries ago. So that his admission to the school will mean, at best, permission to sit on the veranda and pick up from that distance whatever he can by his unaided ears. The brahmin not only does nothing for the enlightenment of the native Indian, but puts positive obstacles in his way, knowing that if he is enlightened he can no longer be exploited. Natives who have the temerity to send their children to school, even if the school be in their quarter, so that there can be no complaint of defiling caste children by contact, find themselves subject to such violence and threatening from the brahmin that they yield and withdraw their children. If the natives want not only education but Christian teaching, the brahmin's persecution is all the fiercer, for the brahmin is afraid that if the natives become Christians they will no longer be available for the doing of menial service. The first time that I, personally, approached a realizing sense of what the doctrine of Untouchability means, in terms of man's inhumanity to man, was during a visit to a child-welfare center in a northerly Indian city. The place was crowded with

Indian women who had brought their babies to be examined by the English professional in charge, a trained public health nurse. Toward her their attitude was that of children toward a wise and loving mother confiding, affectionate, trusting. And their needs were inclusive. All morning I had been watching babies washed and weighed and examined, simple remedies handed out, questions answered, advice and friendly cautions given, encouragement and praise. Just now I happened to be looking at a sinister brahmin woman with brutish, cruel face. She was loaded with heavy gold and silver jewelry and wore a silken mantle. She sat down on the floor to show her baby, unrolling him from the torn fragment of an old quilt, his only garment. This revealed his whole little body caked in a mass of dry and half-dry excreta. "She appears unconcerned," I remarked to the Sister. The Sister replied: "We try to get such women to have napkins for their babies, but they won't buy them, they won't wash them themselves, and they won't pay washers to wash them, although they are quite able to do so. This woman is well born. Her husband is well educated and enjoys a good salary. Sometime it may please her to hang that bit of quilt out in the sun in her courtyard, and, when it is dry, to brush off what will come off. That's all. This, incidentally, helps explain why infantile diarrhoea spreads through the families in a district. They will make no attempt whatever to keep things clean." As the Sister spoke, a figure appeared before the open doorway a young woman so graceful and with a face so sweet and appealing as to rivet attention at once. She carried an ailing baby on her arm, but came no farther just stood still beyond the doorway, wistfully smiling. The Sister, looking up, smiled back. "Why does she not come in?" I asked. "She dare not. If she did, all these others would go. She is an Untouchable- an outcaste. She herself would feel it wicked to set her foot upon that sill." "She looks at least as decent as they," I remarked. "Untouchables may be as intelligent as any one else and you see for yourself that they couldn't be dirtier," said the Sister. "But such is the custom of India. Since we can't alter it, we just plod on, trying to help them all, as best we can." And so the gentle suppliant waited outside, among a crowd of others of her kind, till Sister could go to them, bringing to this one ointment for baby's eyes, to that one a mixture for baby's cough, and hearing the story of another. But they might not bring their little ones in, to the mercy of the warm bath, as the other women were doing at will. They might not come to the sewing class. They might not defile the scales by laying their babies in its basket, to see what the milk-dole was doing. For they were all horrible sinners in aeons past, deserving now neither help nor sympathy while they worked out their curse. Many falsehoods have been uttered concerning the inferiority of character that has resulted from the Untouchables' long degradation, but evidence of the survival of virtues, through all the crushing of



the centuries, is by no means lacking. The Mahars, for example, outcastes used by the brahmins to collect night soil, practically as slaves, are now gainfully employed by His Majesty's Government as couriers. In that capacity they are said to be entirely trustworthy, transporting hundreds of rupees without abstracting the smallest coin. The Dheds, Untouchables from whom, in the Bombay region, most Britons' servants are drawn, and whom few high brahmins would tolerate near their persons, are, as a rule, honest, sober, and faithful. Therefore the brahmin's gigantic lie that the non-brahmins are degenerate races has exploded in his face. The brahmin is now itching to throw the British out of India so that his domination, subjugation and exploitation over the native folk may be completely resumed, to the position it was before 1858. For this purpose the brahmin has found a prop and a tool in Mr. Gandhi and his 'disobedience' movement'. Mr. Gandhi's motive is not to secure freedom for the native Indians from the Englishman; the native Indian feels the helping hand of the Englishman; he does not regard him an oppressor. Mr. Gandhi's motive is to secure freedom for the brahmins from the Englishman; this freedom is simply the freedom to freely exploit the innocent Indian natives, upto the very perihilionic hilt. It may shock the reader to become awake to the fact that Mr. Gandhi, a hypocrite of the first order, is in personal conduct given to extreme acts of horrific violence. Before the days his life became public, he was acclimatised to flogging his wife with a horse-whip, a few hundreds of times, if the poor disabled lady could not co-operate adequately with his excessively aggressive sexual advances. On one occasion he seems to have gone too far [that is, too 'deep'] in his remorseless cruelty, and the helpless lady began to suffer from intrauterine bleeding and other serious complications. A physician was summoned and shocked to notice the near-fatal injuries all over the woman's body, as also the mutilation of her private parts. Gandhi hushed up the doctor with money. However, the physician was later on stung by an attack of conscience, and decided to report the fact of what he had seen. Being an honest Englishman, he made the mistake of writing to Gandhi to inform the latter of his decision to alert the authorities, thinking it only fair so to do. Gandhi is no stranger to prison sentences, but these facts would tarnish his reputation in the eyes of the natives whose interests he pretends to serve. Therefore he took immediate steps to eliminate the threat. The Englishman, luckily, had already been transferred to England. Having to leave in a hurry, he had entrusted the relevant papers needed to file a criminal complaint upon Gandhi, containing a detailed eye-witness account of all that he had observed whilst attending to Mrs. Gandhi, as also her medical-file, containing details of her bodily injuries and disfigurements, to an American friend, a Mr. William Francis Doherty.

Mr.Doherty was in Bombay at the time, attending to some urgent professional commitments, and intended in the following week to file a complaint in the appropriate jurisdiction, namely Ahammadabadh. Mr.Gandi, growing wise to the risky situation, alerted his henchmen to physically exterminate- murder, no less- the American gentleman, before he could set foot in Ahammadabadh. Mr.Gandi had warned his henchmen to choose a time when there was general rioting all around, for otherwise, as an isolated case, the ghastly incident would in all likelihood attract a search for independant motive, possibly leading to the detection of his multiple culpabilities. Mr.Gandi also ordered for the revealing papers in Mr.Doherty's custody to be incinerated. Further, Mr.Gandi said, the man's death must be gruesome and painful, to serve as a deterrance for future attempts to approach the authorities against him, for purposes other sedition-related cases- these he was only too happy to have foisted upon him; they would give the natives the foolish impression that he was their hero and saviour. Accordingly, Mr.Gandi's henchmen plunged into swift, decisive, destructive action. The consequence? Consider this, esteemed reader-

Mrs. Annette H. Doherty's Sworn Statement in the State of California County of Los Angeles:

ANNETTE H. DOHERTY, being first duly sworn oath, deposes and says:

My deceased husband, William Francis Doherty, an American citizen, was a mechanical and electrical engineer and business associate of Mr. Richard J. Brenchley, engaged in sand extraction at Mumbra, adjacent to Bombay, India.

On November 19th, 1921, as he was quietly proceeding to the Bombay Improvement Trust work-shops, he was set upon, his eyes were gouged out and eventually he was beaten to death by a group of rioters in a public street of Byculla, a suburb of Bombay.

This was during the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, when Gandhi was at the height of his popularity as a saint and political leader, and had, through his violent speeches against the British, worked his followers into a frenzy of race hatred. My husband was probably mistaken for a Britisher when he was murdered by Gandhi's followers.

Within three days following this killing of my husband, word was brought me from Gandhi that he greatly desired an interview with me, begging me to set a time when I would receive him. I was then stopping with an American family in Bombay. Gandhi's emissary was Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Indian poetess and politician.

Mrs. Naidu was greatly agitated, and made many statements to me that I feel she would now like to unsay. Her chief concern, however, was that the American public should never be allowed to hear of this outrage committed upon my husband; and she very frankly asked me my price for refraining from ever discussing or advertising the affair in America and from myself returning to America. Under no condition, said Mrs. Naidu, would they be willing that the American public should learn that they were killing people so promiscuously that even a white face cost a man's life.

As to Gandhi's request for an interview with me:

At that time he was going about so unclothed that Mrs. Naidu suggested I call upon him rather than that he come to the American home where I was stopping – inasmuch as this latter might prove embarrassing. It was therefore determined that I should see him at his own headquarters in Bombay, which I did, a motor car having been sent by him to fetch me.

Upon this occasion of my visit with Gandhi he repeated to me in substance what Mrs. Naidu had said, but even more emphatically stressed the point that Americans, because they were so much in sympathy with him in his political views, must on no account learn the details of the murder of my husband lest it hurt the success of his movement in America and prejudice our people against him.

ANNETTE HELEN DOHERTY.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 4th day of January, 1929,

W.J. SCHISEL Notary Public in and for the County of Los Angeles, State of California. My commission expires Jan. 18, 1931.

The incriminating papers were never found. Apparently, hearing of this grisly incident, the physician who had attended on Gandhi's wife had decided he had better keep away from trouble; he was never heard of again and his identity remains incapable of discernment. It is therefore clear from all this that Mr. Gandhi will stop at nothing to have his aims achieved: the full expulsion of the British from India, followed by the complete enslavement of India's non-brahmin races, at the hands of the brahmin race acting under the leadership of their king, Gandhi. I therefore caution anyone tempted to fall prey to Gandhi's dark charisma and mesmerism: he is not the man he makes himself out to be! He is a ravenous wolf who is disguised as a meek sheep! Beware! ☩

We therefore see that the actual picture in India is quite grim. Now, does all this assume political significance? Even as we set the types for this book, a series of 'Conferences' is going on in the House of Peers at Westminster. The object? Home-rule for India! The cause finds many sympathetic voices in Britain; it is precisely to clear the confusion of such unfortunate persons that we open a brief mention of the topic here. Reader, you might even be one of those who are fascinated by the fakir Gandhi and his doctrine of 'peaceful non-co-operation'. It is to you in particular that our message must reach. There are certain alarming truths about Mr. Gandhi that we must make known to you; then, once you have all the facts in your possession, you may decide in accordance with the edict of your own conscience whether the demand for Indian Home-rule ought or not to be considered in a favourable light. At the outset, we must begin our little dissemination by alerting ourselves to a few facts. The brahmins are a race of people in India who traditionally have been high-priests. At one point of time in the convoluted history of the country, they came together and decided that the country must belong to themselves exclusively. To this end, they embarked upon an iniquitous scheme to enslave all the other races through a system of meticulous manipulative psychological indoctrination. Invariably, physical subjugation would lead one day to mutiny. Knowing this, the brahmin used all his knavacious mental adroitness to psychologically trap the other races in his system of deprivation and exploitation of the common Indian native. The methodology he used to achieve his egregious end and the result of his effort are described in the Professor's words you have read above. Millions of poor natives in India perished out of lack of food, hygiene and sanitation. The brahmin, on the other hand, steadily grew in prosperity. To put an end to this situation, three quarters of a century ago, Her Majesty's Reign, after the horrific brahmin-instigated murderous revolt against the officers of the East India Company, took matters into its responsible hands and passed the Government of India Act, 1858. Indeed, the Company had been noticing the brahmin's many

acrimonies and now finally wanted to raise its voice against him, moved at last by the cruel activities he had been long perpetrating. The shrewd brahmin grew wise to the situation and triggered the revolt to throw the Company out. His action succeeded, but to his disadvantage: the new Crown legislation severely curtailed the brahmin's abilities to exploit, abuse and torture his fellow man, and he resented it severely. Yet our able English Administration ensured that he could not resume his former evil ways, by means of strict supervision of his relations with his fellow man, whom he was hitherto wont to regard and treat as perpetual slaves. The Brahmin's efforts to re-establish his vice-like grip over the poor natives of the sub-continent have been continuously thwarted by His Majesty's government, with great success. Thus the brahmin despaired as to what to do, for he is adamant that his exploitation of the natives continue. We may mention in passing that the brahmin is actually ethnically not Indian, so he cannot be called a 'native'. His skin is akin to that of the sun-tanned European in colour and texture. The brahmin originally migrated from what today corresponds to the region of Brandenburg-Prussia, more than a millennium ago, with the intention of settling down in some Asian native territory and terrorising and enslaving its occupants, so that he himself could have an easy life at the expense of causing the suffering of millions. In this purpose these Germans succeeded magnificently, until we had our say in the matter and valourously put an end to all the rank injustice that was going on, rescuing the innocent natives from the clutches of the German oppression. This theory may sound outlandish, but, gentle reader, consider this shocking translated extract from the book 'Mein Kampf' authored by the leader of the National Socialist movement in Germany, Herr Adolf Hitler-

German tribes, usually almost ridiculously small in number, pitilessly subjugated native peoples into subservience, and, encouraged by the conditions of life which their new country made available to them, such as fertility of the soil, the nature of the climate, etc., and profiting also by the abundance of manual labour furnished unto them by the inferior race, they developed intellectual and organizing faculties which had hitherto been dormant in these conquering tribes. The Germans of old knew that in order for the establishment of the superior, German type of civilization the slavery of members of inferior races forms the most essential pre-requisite; for they alone could supply the mechanical means of labour without which no progress is possible. It is certain that the first stages of human civilization were not based so much on the use of domesticated animals as on the employment of natives who were members of an inferior race. Only after subjugated races were employed as slaves was a similar fate allotted to animals, and not vice

versa, as some people would have us believe. At first it was the conquered native who had to draw the plough and only afterwards did the ox and horse take his place. As a conqueror, the German subjugated the inferior native races and turned their worthwhile physical powers into organized channels under his own leadership, forcing them to follow his sole will and purpose. By imposing on them a useful, though painstaking, manner of employing their resources, he not only in his supreme mercy and grace spared the lives of those whom he had conquered but also made their lives easier than these had been in the former state of so-called 'freedom'. While he ruthlessly maintained his position as their master, the German of old not only remained master but also maintained and advanced civilization in the regions conquered.

In the above paragraph written by his own hand the gentleman has admitted that Germans have had for thousands of years the habit of arriving on Asian native soil in small numbers, and then ruthlessly subjugating the native population and reducing it into total slavery and exploitation! The writer is a major politician in Germany, and is respected and adored by the German people as their hero. His party is the largest in the German Reichstag at present, and the people there are demanding that he be made Chancellor at once. This book has served as the authoritative manual of life's ideology for most German people ever since it was first published, for so popular a chord has it struck with them, making Herr Hitler the unchallenged darling of the masses. Herr Hitler has become today the unequivocal voice of the German people, for so complete is their identification with and infatuation for him. So, his written opinion should surely settle the matter! Thus, the brahmins that tortured the poor, innocent, Indian natives, till Her Majesty's iron determination decided to have a say on the matter after the revolt in 1857, are actually none other than the Germans under the disguise of sun-tanned skin, who emigrated into the Indian subcontinent a thousand years ago with the express purpose of enslaving, subjugating and exploiting the local native population- in which purpose they enjoyed huge success until we, the justice-loving English folk, decided to intervene in order to permit justice to be restored! The Germbrahmin, then, had his evil practise of enslavement of the Indians, put an end to by the decisive action of the Crown in dissolving the Company and taking up direct responsibility for the welfare of the poor, crushed Indian natives. The brahmin- for a while atleast- was unable to fathom quite what had hit him, for when the Godly forces of Goodness and Light arrive, the malefic forces of Evil and Darkness stand bewildered and perplexed; for a long while he could do nothing; he waited and waited and quietly bided his time. Then his saviour

arrived- Mr. Gandhi. Although he may be loath to admit it, Mr. Gandhi is a brahmin. Mr. Gandhi's actual intentions are simply these:

1. By convincing the natives that we the English are his oppressors, he enlists their help in endeavouring to evict us from the country.
2. Once we are no longer there in the country to safeguard its poor natives, Mr. Gandhi will proclaim himself the Emperor of India.
3. The brahmin's total exploitation of the native races would resume itself as before, only this time with the vigour of complete vengeance.
4. Thousands of natives will perish in a merciless massacre systematically orchestrated by the brahmin rule lorded over by Mr. Gandhi, for the most 'inferior' among the races are viewed by the brahmins as being a contamination of the Earth's spiritual purity in accordance with their perverse religious views, and must therefore be physically exterminated according to them. Clear evidence concerning this point has been provided by the widely reputed Professor whose words you, gentle reader, have just read above. The Professor's interactions, as also those of his colleagues, with many, many brahmins in India has lead always to the elicitation of the same candid, brazen replies- that the so-called 'inferior' racial elements amongst the natives must be annihilated to avoid 'continued defilement and contamination of the Earth'.
5. Mr. Gandhi's proclamations about the need for 'non-violence' is a masterstroke of a ruse meant to propagate the gigantic lie that it is we English who are exploiting the natives of India, gain international sympathy, and melt innocent British hearts out of a misplaced and misguided sympathy. He seeks to instill the false belief in the English public that it is we who are torturing the natives, so that public support here for Indian Home-rule should grow and exert pressure upon Parliament to grant the same expeditiously, so that brahmin-raj may be restored. Once he has- God forbid!- seized the throne, his true murderous intentions will be made plain as day.
6. Mr. Gandhi has cleverly convinced many of the Indian natives themselves that he is their representative, whereas his true motive is to restore brahmin-raj over India, and so resume the former exploitation of these poor guileless mites, that was being carried out unchecked, before we the English decided to step in to rescue them. How did he accomplish this? By fraudulently pretending to be a messiah divinely inspired by God, he has thoroughly tricked the superstitious natives into worshipping him and obeying his slightest command.
7. His fiendishly and infernally cunning actual plan of action is to take the help of the natives themselves to pave the way for the resumption of their own exploitation in the hands of the evil brahmins, by mobilising them in large numbers to oppose Our Colonial Administration in India. To this sinister effect

he spreads the climate of hate and rebellion against the English Administration in India.

8. New evidence has emerged that Mr. Gandhi is acting not merely on behalf of the interests of his brahmin brethren in India, but is also a secret stooge of Herr Hitler. Mr. Gandhi's feeling of affection for and affiliation with his German ancestors has apparently not dwindled with the long aeons that have gone by since the first German conqueror- or rather, exploiter and plunderer and marauder- first set foot upon the Indian soil with the pernicious and insidious motive of enslaving the native population and reducing them to total misery. According to the information that has been made available to us, the agreement between Herr Hitler and Mr. Gandhi is this: Mr. Gandhi would weaken the Indian Regime of His Majesty from within by unjustly rousing the wrath of the natives against the English Colonial Administration, by feeding them with the lie that it is we English, not his brahmin race, who are exploiting them; in the meantime, Herr Hitler would lend military assistance from without in 'liberating' India from 'English clutches'. In this manner the duo hope to totally enslave the Indian natives for good.

9. Through a devious combination of winning international sympathy for the Indian 'Home-rule' [which is really the Germono-brahmin-subjugative-rule aiming at total slavery of the natives] movement, making the English public falsely believe we are committing a gross injustice by 'enslaving the natives', whereas His Majesty's government ceaselessly endeavours to prevent that very thing from happening by keeping the brahmins led by Mr. Gandhi in check, and indoctrinating the natives themselves into believing that the Englishman, not the Germono-brahmin, is the oppressor and tormentor of their folk, Mr. Gandhi and Herr Hitler hope to throw us out from India and enslave it firmly once and for all, thus magnificently executing the vision that the first German plunderer would have had whilst stepping foot into the Indian subcontinent so many centuries ago with greedy hopes of exploitation, plunder and domination. Apparently in recognition of his efforts to 'win independence for India from the oppressive rule of British domination', but in truth in return for his services to his true Fatherland [Germany], Mr. Gandhi will be crowned Emperor of India by the 'liberator' of the Indian natives, the future Chancellor of Germany, Herr Hitler. That would be the end of the story for the natives; the word 'Liberty' would vanish from their dictionary once and for all. Mr. Gandhi could then continue his present secret debauched lifestyle in the open, having no more to fear either the Righteous Right Hand of the English spirit of Liberty, Equality and Justice, or the natives of his country, who would successfully be brutally terrorised by his brahmins into helpless silence as they had been before the Crown's merciful intervention in 1858. Herr Hitler would obtain the satisfaction



of knocking off one of our important Colonies out of the Crown; he has sworn fierce retribution for the Great War; everyday he speaks out vehemently condemning the treaty of Versailles.

Dear reader, consider this: by supporting the Home-rule movement in India-

1. You are not asking for the freedom of the natives; you are asking for the tyranny of Germono-brahminism to be once again unleashed upon them, in its full, unmitigated fury and vengeance.

2. You are sullyng His Majesty's crown by making Our Beloved Great Britain lose one of Her prized colonies.

3. You are paving the way for Germany to destabilise and weaken Our Empire by taking it apart into pieces.

Thus, supporting Indian-home rule is not a gesture of pacifism or humanitarianism. It is a sacrilegious misplaced sympathy that has arisen in the mind as a poisonous toadstool planted by Mr.Gandhi's evil, deceitful propoganda, thrust right in our doorsteps! It is a denial to the poor, unsuspecting Indian natives of the freedom they so rightfully and richly deserve. Though he has chicanerously convinced them to worship him as a living God, Mr.Gandhi's loyalty lies not with the Indian natives, but with the brahmins and the Germans, his racial brethen. It is the death-knell to the Indian native, for us to listen to a word Mr.Gandhi says! Brave Englishman! Do not pay any attention- in the least- to Mr.Gandhi's malefic words that plant the venom of sedition in your mind! For this alien madcap of a fakir, would you, I ask, bear in your pure heart disaffection toward His Majesty, Our Beloved Monarch who rules by the Grace of God, and His Reign? I have left the facts in your custody as promised! Now I want to allow you to arrive at a desicion- does your conscience still permit, in all fairness, that you support Mr.Gandhi's demand for 'Home-rule' in India? Answer either way as you wish- but only after consulting your conscience first!

Lovingly yours,

The Right Honourable The Earl Derby

Lord E. Stanley KG GCB GCVO

Introduction

The matter of Race in India streches back to the times of.....

To what precise length of time the matter of Race in India streches back I quite never managed to discover; at that point in time I fell into a sound, peaceful slumber, my head bolstered against a corner of the Hall. When I awoke it was night, and Chadwick was saying, '...bored Bhagawan too much?'

B.: [seeming to suddenly snap himself out of a prolix reverie] What...?!

C.: I asked B. whether I have caused him excessive boredom by continuously reading out from these books I have been sent...

B.: No, it was no trouble, thank you...

C.: Shall I read out from the remainder of the books tomorrow?

B.: [hastily] No, no! This much will certainly do...

C.: Have I perhaps caused B. any annoyance by my sedulous exercise in reading out all this content?

B.: It is alright. Remain at peace.

P>S>

Chadwick's views on the late Mahatma Sri Gandhi were quite positive. The same thing can be said of myself, and the others in the ashram at the time so far as my knowledge of the matter goes. What Chadwick read out about the Mahatma was only the opinion of the Earl. He read it out in the Hall not because it endorsed his views upon the question of Indian Independance- I know for a fact that it does not- but simply because he wanted to read out the whole book, and these were its very first few pages. I specifically mention this because otherwise this work may run afoul of the Indian public; the Maharshi and his disciples were first-class champions of the Home-rule cause, though they did not participate in any demonstrations or other political activities, such a streak of behaviour being alien to their dharma. I have been told that when the Mahatma was assasinated the master plunged into deep mourning and refused food and water for three days. A close rapport by correspondence seems to have existed between the Mahatma and the Maharshi. One one occasion the Maharshi is even said to have remarked of the Mahatma, "His Heart speaks to mine and mine to his, directly. Our epistolary communication is only to reassure and soothe the hearts of our respective disciples.". Several stellar leaders of the Indian congress have visited the Maharshi on the Mahatma's express instructions. As for the Earl's allegations against the brahmins, I must confess hyperbole and exaggeration are rampant in his words; at the same time, it cannot be denied, however, that shameful atrocities have taken place in India in the name of caste. As to the question of whether caste should be abolished altogether, I brook no opinion upon the matter from my personal side. Let public opinion prevail.

23rd July, 1936

Q.: It is said that the Jnani breathes Jnana into others through the power of his silence, that words are not necessary for him. How does the Jnani enlighten his disciples? He does not lecture them with homilies. Does he use telepathic communication, then?

B.: His bodily presence creates a natural 'force-field' of mental quietness in the vicinity. Science has made the observation that if an adequate length of insulated copper wire is repeatedly wound around an iron truncheon, and then

electricity passed through the wire, iron filings placed near the truncheon are attracted to it. There is no modus operandi visible to the naked eye by means of which the magnetised iron is able to influence the iron filings; yet in fact it happens. Likewise, the invisible waves of Jnana radiating off the mindless one spontaneously affect those around him, whether they are aware of it or not. Sensitive minds become aware of it. Just like iron filings are quietly sucked towards the magnetised iron-bar, the Jnani's silent influence introverts the mind and facilitates its submergence or absorption in the Self. With practise the sadhaka Realises it as his natural state. Then he reaches the formless realm of Indestructible Peace. Note that all this is from the sadhaka's point of view only. The Jnani cannot be aware of any 'others' to help; nor is he bringing about all this; it all merely happens by the Power of the Presence.

Q.: I feel no such magnetic effect in B.'s presence. What fault have I committed?

B.: I have already said that it requires sensitivity of mind. Nevertheless, your inability to feel its palpability does not impair or diminish its effectiveness. You may not feel the potency of the Jnani's silent influence. Yet, it is there and it is helping you, notwithstanding that your opinion may be contrary-wise.

Q.: If an incorrigible atheist or materialist comes into B.'s presence will he also then be benefitted?

B.: Without doubt.

Q.: But he will not admit it!

B.: Does that matter?

Q.: How to cultivate this 'sensitivity of mind', so that B.'s automatic influence, which is perennially in operation but currently imperceptible to me, may be felt by me?

B.: Sensitivity and introversion are the same thing. The more the introversion, the more the mind becomes willing for further introversion. Progress is necessary until the stage is reached when extroversion has finally become inconceivable and impossible.

Q.: How to introvert the mind?

B.: Interest in the thought-stream should dry up. No heed ought to be paid to the personal self; it must become redundant, irrelevant and unworthy of any consideration. If this is achieved the mind fades away in due course due to lack of activity or use.

Q.: I understand the theory. How is to be done practically?

B.: Either investigate the root of the thought "I", or surrender yourself unconditionally or unreservedly to the substratum of appearances.

Q.: Does mental introversion imply need for solitude?

B.: Mental solitude alone is relevant.

Q.: What about physical seclusion?

B.: Pay heed to neither company or absence thereof. The mind must not be permitted to take any notice of whether there are others to mingle with or not. The mind must always be submerged in the beingness of the Self. Then it will not bother whether people are around or not. Conditions of outer life simply matter nothing so far as the Jnana-vichara sadhana is concerned.

Q.: So there is really no need to renounce the world?

B.: Only renounce it mentally by giving up the 'Body-am-I' idea.

24th July, 1936

Q.: Steiner postulates thus- 'The apparent duality in sensory experience can be overcome by discovering the inner hidden unity of perception and thinking.'

B.: Yes- perception is possible only when a thinker is still available.

Q.: [after seemingly engaging in deep reflection for some time] Some 9 years prior God has taken my youngest son from me. He was an intelligent, hard-working soul. Yet, the manner of his death was painful and gruesome. Some incurable tumour had lodged itself in his brain. Whenever one of the internal abscesses ruptured he would scream in pain and foul pus would run out of his nostrils. He died after suffering for 2-and-a-half years in this condition. Such was his suffering that in the end even my wife was praying that he should die, because we could not bear to see him in such a morbid condition, nor would he permit that we remove ourselves from his presence. Why does God torture innocent people in this manner? My son knew no sin. Is it because of evil committed in previous births? Or, is it to finish off the boy's karma in this birth itself, so that he need not be born again?

B.: It is not for man to endeavour to fathom the motives and mysteries of God.

Q.: But Bhagawan would know!

B.: B. only knows this: நல்லது மட்டுமே நடப்பதுண்டு;  
நடப்பதெல்லாம் நல்லதற்கு மட்டுமே.

Q.: This is mere abstract philosophy.

B.: On the contrary, it is living Truth.

Q.: I have read something of Bhagawan's teachings. Is it really true that I am not this perishable body but the imperishable Aathman?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Aathman is formless. Although I may not be one with it, it is yet undeniable truth that I am inescapably encumbered by this body, which certainly has form. How then can I be the formless Aathman?

B.: Let the body be there or drop dead. The trouble comes only when you identify yourself with it.

Q.: The body has needs like food, a place to stay, etc.. If I ignore the body how will it get on? How can I afford to nonchalantly neglect the body when I feel as my pain all the pain undergone by it?

B.: No one is asking you to neglect the body's reasonable needs. Only do not identify yourself with the body and do not assume the responsibility of doership for its actions. If there is pain let it be. It is only for the body. You are not the body.

Q.: But the body's pain is very real to me!

B.: It is so because of long habit.

Q.: How to break the habit?

B.: Only by more and more practise of introversion.

Q.: What is the secret of Sri Bhagawan's indiscriminate compassion towards all beings?

B.: The work Ellaam Ondrae contains an answer to your question. Consider what it says- [reads out from a notebook]

நான் வேறு, நீ வேறு, அவன் வேறு: இவ்வாறு எண்ணுபவன் தனக்காக ஒருவிதமாய் நடந்துகொள்வான், பிறருக்கு வேறுவிதம் நடப்பான். இவ்வாறு நடக்காமலிருக்க அவனால் இயலாது. நான் வேறு, பிறர் வேறு என்று எண்ணிக்கொண்டிருக்கும் எண்ணம் ஒரு விஷத்தன்மைக்கொண்ட விதையாக இருந்து, தனக்கு வேறு, பிறருக்கு வேறாக நடக்கிற பகூபாதகமாகிய மரத்தைத் தோற்றுவிக்கின்றது. ஒருவன் தானும் பிறரும் எல்லாமும் ஒன்றே தான் என்று அறிந்தவண்ணமிருக்க, எப்படி நியாயம் தவறி நடப்பான்? பேதம் என்கிற விஷவிதை உள்ளவரையில் உன்னையறியாமலே நீ தீமை ஆன காரியங்களில் மற்றும் பகூபாதமாய் நடத்தலில் ஈடுபடுத்தி கொண்டு தான் இருப்பாய் உன்னை. ஆதலால் பேதபுத்தியை விட்டுவிடு. எல்லாம் ஒன்றே.

எல்லாம் ஒன்றேதான் என்று அறிந்தவனின் மனது அடையும் சாந்தமும் ஆனந்தமும் யாருக்கு உண்டு! அவனுக்கு எந்த கவலையும் இல்லை. எல்லோருடைய நன்மையும் அவனுடைய நன்மையாயிருக்கிறது. பிள்ளைகளினுடைய நன்மையை தாய் தனது நன்மையாகக் கருதுகிறாள். ஆயினும், தான் வேறு இந்தப் பிள்ளைகள் வேறு என்ற ஒரு எண்ணம் அவளிடம் இருப்பதனால் அவள் அன்பும் பரிபூரணமான தூயமைக்கொண்ட அன்பு என்று கூறுவதற்கு இல்லை. எல்லாம் ஒன்று என்று அறிந்த ஞானியின் அன்போ, தாய் அன்பிலும் மேலான அன்பு. எல்லாம் ஒன்றென்று அறிந்து கொள்வதைவிட இவ்வன்பு வருவதற்கு வேறுவழி இல்லை. எல்லாம் ஒன்றே.

ஞானியின் இந்த அளவிற்கு உட்கொள்ளா அன்பு நிலைக்கு யாதொரு நிலையும் மேல் இல்லை. உள் என்றும் புறம்பு என்றும் சொல்லும் சொல்லுக்கு அவனுக்குப் பொருள் இல்லை. எல்லாம் ஒன்று தான். அந்த ஒன்று அவன் தான். அவன் உடம்பும், சொல்லும், எண்ணமும், அவனுக்கென்று சுயநலத்தோடு உழைத்தலை மறந்து வெகு நாட்கள் ஆகி விட்டன. அவற்றின் உழைப்பெல்லாம் எல்லோருக்கும் எல்லாப் பொருளுக்கும் பொதுவான அருள் உழைப்பு. 'தான்' என்ற துண்டு, போனது போனது தான். அந்த அகம்பாவத்துக்கு மறுபடி உயிர்த்தெழுதல் ஒருநாளும் கிடையாது. இதனால் இவன் அவ்வப்பொழுதே முக்தன் என்று சொல்லப்படுகிறது. இந்த ஸ்தூல உடம்பு இருந்தாலும், அது அவன் இருப்பு அன்று. இந்த ஸ்தூல உடம்பு இறந்தாலும், அது அவன் இறப்பு அன்று. அவன் நித்யன். அவனைத் தவிர ஒன்றும் இல்லை. யதார்த்தத்தில் அவனே நீ. எல்லாம் ஒன்றே.

Q.: It is very inspiring to listen to, no doubt. But how to attain this state? Is it possible for an ignorant layman like me?

B.: Christ has said 'Verily I saith unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.'; so, with steadfast vairagyam Jnana is possible for all, surely.

Q.: But how to attain it?

B.: By ceaselessly enquiring. Enquiry is not intellectual analysis. It is practical investigation. The idea "I-am-this-and-that." must be torn out by the root.

[reads out again]

நீ யார்? இந்த உடல் நீயா? இந்த உடல் நீயானால், நீ தூங்கும் பொழுது இவ்வுடலில் ஒரு பாம்பு ஊர்ந்தாலும் நீ அறிய மாட்டாயே. அப்படி இருக்க நீ இவ்வுடம்பு ஆவாயா? ஒரு நாளும் நீ இவ்வுடம்பு ஆகாய். ஆகையால் இவ்வுடம்புக்கு வேறாய் உள்ளவன் நீ.

Q.: B. speaks of self-surrender as a means to gain the Self. ' எல்லாம் ஒன்றே' ஆனால், யார் இடம் யார் சரண் உற்றுவது ?

B.: Exactly. So, really there is no surrenderer, nothing to surrender, no one to surrender to and no such gesture or action known as surrendering. Everything is verily already his and the position or situation has never been otherwise, except in our perverted imagination.

Q.: How to practise the sadhana of surrender if there is nothing to surrender?

B.: In the Realisation that there is nothing to surrender, give up the ego. Then, summa iruttal is the only state left as the residue.

Q.: Cannot be bhakti be a path to God?

B.: What is bhakti?

Q.: Love for God.

B.: Surrender, which is pray-er-less prayer and therefore the loftiest prayer, is also the utmost apogee of Love. Ovid has said- [translated from the Latin by Mr. George Sandys]

The tardie yeare I measure: I am he

Who see all Obiects, and by whom all see;

The world's cleere eye: by thy fair selfe, I sweare,

I loue thee aboue thought, Oh! my sweete deare!

So, true Love is that which transcends thought and intellect. That is the true significance of the saying, *Una salus victis nullam sperare salutem*. Your only hope is to lose all hope that your own efforts could ever suffice to take you to the goal. Thus, surrender yourself.

Q.: How is one to overcome the terrible fear of death?

B.: By giving up the idea that the body is the Self. Then the fact that the body is going to perish will not trouble you. Death is the tool used to fatally smite death. Kill the ego and then there is nothing left to die. Man is ever aware that the body perishes one day. Yet, he will not bother to disassociate himself from it. If asked to abandon thought for the body and embrace the immortal Self, the idea does not appeal to him. It is the accursed body which allows room for so much trouble to arise to plague him; yet, he meaninglessly tries to prolong the body's existence. What is the use of expending all our efforts over what must certainly be lost one day? Is it not better to fall in line with the eternal, and quietly allow ourselves to be absorbed and lost in him?

Q.: These lofty ideas will not appeal to everyone.

B.: One who has seen enough misery in his life naturally develops theevira vairagyam. Such a one is powerless to stop his own descent into mindless Realisation.

Q.: Should I go on telling myself, 'One day I am going to die. So what is the use of thinking or worrying about anything?'

B.: Ponder over the fact once and accept the truth of the body's mortality. Then abide as the Real.

Q.: If I ponder over such things fear of death seizes hold of me.

B.: Can you tide over the problem by living in continuous, false denial of it? Does not death conquer every soul, be it prince or pauper, beggar or baron? Consider the following story-

B. asked the attendant to remove a particularly dilapidated book from the Hall's book-case. This was handed to him. It turned out to be a childhood favourite of mine: **'GRIMM'S HOUSEHOLD TALES, WITH THE AUTHOR'S NOTES, TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN AND EDITED BY MARGARET HUNT, WITH AN**

**INTRODUCTION BY ANDREW LANG, M.A., IN TWO VOLUMES.—Vol. II.,  
PUBLISHED BY GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN,  
LONDON, 1884'** B. as usual casually opened the book at the right page, and began reading out the story in Tamil:

Once upon a time a weary giant was travelling on a deserted road, when suddenly an unknown creature sprang up before him, and said, "Halt, not one step farther!" "What!" cried the giant, "a creature whom I can crush between my index and thumb fingers, wants to impeditment my way? Who art thou, that thou shouldst dare to speak so boldly unto me?" "I am Death," answered the other. "None resist me, and thou also must obey my command. Be prepared to depart from this earthly realm at once!" But the giant refused, and began to fight with Death. It was a prolonged, bloody battle. At last the giant got the upper hand, and struck Death down with his fist, so that he dropped like a stone. The giant went his way, and Death lay there conquered, and so weak that he was sure he could never get up again. "What will be done now," pondered he, "if I stay lying here in a corner? No one will die now in the world, and it will become so full of people that they won't have room to stand beside each other." In the meantime a young man came along the road, who was strong and healthy, singing a song, and glancing around on every side. When he saw poor Death lying crushed by the side of the road, he went compassionately to him, raised him up, poured a strengthening draught out of his flask for him, and waited till he came to his senses. "Dost thou know," said the stranger, whilst he was getting up, "who I am, and who it is whom thou hast helped on his legs again?" "No," answered the youth, "I do not know thee." "I am Death," said the stranger. "I spare no one, and can make no exception with thee. But that thou mayst see that I am grateful, I promise thee that I shall not fall on thee unexpectedly, but will send my messengers to thee before I come and take thee away." "Well," said the youth, "surely it is something gained that I shall know when thou comest, and I am thankful I stand assured of safety from thine clutches for so long." Then he went on his way, and was light-hearted, and enjoyed himself, and lived without thought for the morrow. But youth and health did not last long, soon came sicknesses and sorrows, which tormented him day by day, and plundered away his rest by night. "Die, I shall not," said he to himself, "for Death will send his messengers over before that, but I do wish these wretched days of sickness were over." As soon as he felt himself well again he began once more to live merrily. Then one day some one tapped him on the shoulder. He looked round, and Death stood behind him, and said, "Follow me, for the hour of thy departure from this world has come." "What," replied the man, "wilt thou break thy word? Didst thou not promise me that thou wouldst send thy messengers to me before



coming thyself? I have seen none!" "Silence!" answered Death. "Have I not sent one messenger to thee after another? Did not fever come and bludgeon thee, and excruciate thee, and cast thee down? Has dizziness not bewildered thy head? Has not gout twitched thee in all thy limbs? Did not thine ears sing? Did not tooth-ache bite into thy cheeks? Was it not dark before thine eyes? And besides all that, has not my own brother Sleep reminded thee every night of me? Didst thou not lie by night as if thou wert already dead?" The man could produce forth no answer; he yielded to his fate, and went away with Death.

Q.: How did the giant manage to escape death?

B.: His appointed hour had not come yet. Eventually he also died, no doubt. What do you observe? This story is an excellent parable with an overwhelmingly profound practical message buried deep in its belly, for those mature few who are able to discern out the same: 'O puny mortal! Do not think it is possible for you to truly know or understand anything. You may imagine yourself exceedingly intelligent, but all your knowledge is like sentences traced with a finger on flowing water.' Some people meet with serious accidents and their condition immediately thereafter is so pathetic that everyone is convinced they would die in a few days thence. The person, however, eventually makes a miraculous recovery to full normalcy. Then, decades later, he is quite hale and healthy; but suddenly one morning fails to wake up from his bed. He is discovered dead. So, it is all prarabdha. That is the moral of the story. Departure of life from a body is possible only if the prarabdha of that particular body is exhausted. Soldiers may return home from battles with more than one limb missing, and little to no medical aid may have been available to be given them on the return journey from the front. Yet they survive. Another person is young, healthy and fit. Suddenly one day he falls down in a faint. Minutes later his breathing ceases and he has expired. Of course science would give out its usual palavering- names and explanations and other rigmarole- because man wishes to 'understand what has happened', because his mind yearns structure and order and despises Randomness, because according to him a logical reason is required for 'everything that has happened', and because in his view whatever happens now and hereafter should fit into his existing framework of knowledge. But what happens happens; an event that is about to happen does not stop to think 'Oh! We have never happened to this man before; what if this new experience of us should frighten him, or if he should find it undesirable, disagreeable or distasteful; what if we do not part of his repertoire of existing experiences?' before happening. Things just happen. It is man who spins all sorts of fictitious constructs between his perceptions of events, calling one a

cause, another a consequence and yet another a catalyst. Death, according to the man on the Clapham omnibus, is a far away certainty that awaits at the end of old-age. This is called 'fairy-tale' thinking. Children's stories end with '....and they lived happily ever after.'. There is no such thing as living happily ever after. There is no such thing as a perfect life. Only Reality can be perfect. All other perfection is intellectual or conceptual perception of perfection; such an understanding-based apparent perfection soon crumbles into the dust when new, unfavourable data arrive to shake up its foundations. The moment you are doomed to die one day, you are already dead today. So, what is called birth is actually death. Only the Unborn truly lives; those who are born are not living, but dying. That is why Jesus said, 'For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.'. If you try to prolong life in the body one day you shall certainly lose it; if you will give up the ego to the Aathman, you will discover True Life which is Eternity. Man foolishly imagines that his life is successfully managed by his own cleverness. When vipareetha prarabdha karma deals him a blow so hard that in a twinkling of an eye he loses everything he has been working for for countless decades, then he will realise the value of this teaching of sharanagathi. Till then he will say, 'No, thank you! I can manage my life impeccably, exemplarily well, I think!'. When fate deals him with so cruel a blow that he arrives at an 'existential crisis' and begins to question the reason for his birth, then he will take to the teaching of sharanagathi like a duck to water. Others will go on blabbering, 'But if I surrender, will God ensure this or that?', etc.; not so he that has already lost everything. 'The wise shall inherit glory but shame shall be the promotion of fools.', says the Bible. One who has nothing to hold on to in this barren yet attractive-seeming world, although to an outsider he may seem to be shouldering innumerable responsibilities and commitments, has nothing to give up and he is automatically absorbed into the Self. If God strikes a humongous tragedy in your life, know that the reason is only this- to humble your ego and make you surrender to Him. He Loves you and wants to draw you into Him. Will you go or not? [smiling]

Q.: [crying] Yes. Yes, I surrender. I crave B.'s blessings.

B.: You are never without it.

25th July, 1936

Q.: So far as abhyasa is concerned, each master recommends a different spiritual path. Is it not the cause for confusion?

B.: Once upon a time, Mulla Nasrudin and his son were riding a donkey to the town market. A group of people passed. Mulla heard them whisper: "What wicked times are these! Look at those two wretches! Have they no mercy

upon the poor animal?" Nasrudin, hearing this, told his son to get off and continue the journey on foot. Now, another group of people were passing by, and seeing this, commented: "What immoral times are these! Look at this man. His poor son with his frail body has to walk while he at his best age is riding the donkey!" Hearing this, Nasrudin told his son to ride the donkey and he himself got off to walk the rest of the way. A third group of people seeing this remarked: "What iniquitous times are these! This young man is riding the donkey while his sickly old father has to walk!" Hearing this, Nasrudin told his son to get off the animal and they both walked with the donkey trailing behind. Another group passing by pointed to them, laughing: "What foolish times are these! Look at these idiots. They have a donkey and they are walking all the way to the market!"

Q.: What is the moral of the story?

B.: No matter what you do, there will always be criticism. No matter how nicely you try to behave, you will always be rebuked on one ground or the other. Therefore aim for perfection in Knowledge that is Indestructible and Eternal, not in trivialities and mundanities. Whichever spiritual path you follow, misgivings invariably arise, and there will always be people who tell you that you are an abysmal fool to be doing what you are doing. No matter that there are many paths. You find out which is appropriate in your case and stick to it. But stay with one. In spiritual matters, follow the guidance neither of others nor of your own intellect; only listen to the silent voice of your own Heart. The Bible says:

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;  
and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him,  
and he shall direct thy paths.

Q.: Is the Guru not required, then?

B.: Whatever you genuinely require God provides without asking.

Q.: It has not been so in my experience.

B.: Because you judge Him by the puerile light of the intellect. Is it open to our tiny selves to pass judgement upon that Immortal One?

Q.: What about all the evil in the world, including atrocities committed in the name of God himself? Why is God putting up with it all?

B.: Leave it to Him to tackle the question. Take care of your problems and the world will take care of its problems.

Q.: Is social reform useless then?

B.: First self-reform. Then the other reform.

Q.: The community's needs should be placed above the welfare of the individual. That is the spirit of nobility.

B.: Can one blind man help another to walk? They will both stumble and fall onto the ground.

Q.: I bear respect and affection for God. Yet He fills my life with misery.

B.: The Bible says:

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord;  
neither be weary of his correction:  
for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth;  
even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Q.: So if something apparently goes wrong in my life, it is all for the ultimate good?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What is the proof?

B.: Shakespeare has said:

Love is not love which alters  
When it alternation finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove;  
Oh! no: it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken:  
It is the star to every wandering bark  
Whose worth is unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

So, love which calculates reward, judges the beloved, anticipates a benefit or demands means of logical adducement or proof in respect of reciprocation is not true Love. Only unconditional love could ever be true Love. He that unconditionally loves does not expect anything in return. He is quite motiveless in his love. It is not a barter transaction. He is not bothered as to even whether he is loved in return or not. It is not faith that matters, but Love-obsessive, crazed Love. The Love is its own reward. Faith stops with the level of the intellect. Love leads into the Beyond. Faith is the confident expectation that something is going to happen or not happen; it is mere mental activity. Love is Divine. The best description of God is 'Love'.

Q.: How to cultivate love for God?

B.: You cannot. God in His Infinite Mercy has to plant it in your heart[mind]. The seed of Love is God's. Nurture it with your river of tears of longing and yearning for union with Him. It will grow into the huge tree that throttles the poisonous creeper of the ego and destroys it forever.

Q.: How to persuade Him to plant the seed?

B.: Upon the minds of sincere souls it falls automatically.

Q.: What is a sincere and insincere soul?

B.: Absence of arrogance and egoistic conceit is sincerity. Thinking 'I must be without arrogance.' can never be true humility.

Q.: What then is true humility?

B.: Total absence of the false sense of personal doership.

Q.: Will B. not plant this seed in me?

B.: Yes. But only you can make it germinate. Seeds dropped by birds fall everywhere, but not all germinate and take root.

Q.: It needs the right soil!

B.: Exactly.

26th July, 1936

Q.: So many come here with the aspiration of Realising. Since Bhagawan is impartial, all equally receive his grace. Yet some succeed in Realising while others do not. Why?

B.: It is a question of pakkuvam. Some come here thinking they can obtain some super-power known as Enlightenment. When asked to abandon the personal self, which is the only self they know, they think they are being asked to give up life itself, and grow terrified. So they go away frightened. For one who has come anticipating something grand, it is hard to stomach the instruction, 'Give up everything.'; he has come hoping to acquire the state of God himself, but now he is asked to give up even what he already has, to relinquish totally himself and everything he considers his! So he beats a hasty retreat. The Self cannot be acquired by the mind. Give up the mind and the Self is revealed. Some think that by doing sadhana they will Realise the Self one day. They are not pakvis. One who feels as though he has been doused in kerosene and set aflame, one whose mind thrashes about uncontrollably in agony like a worm thrown into a fire, like a fish taken out of water or like a man whose head is being pressed down underneath water: his Realisation is not far away. Such a one is horrified at the thought that he is trapped in samsara. He somehow wants to break free. He does not wonder, "I wonder which sadhana I had better take up, so that I may, by virtue of practising it, eventually Realise my true Self?". When your head is pressed underneath water, do you think, "I wonder which is the most efficacious method for me to escape from this mortal danger in which I am incumbently placed"? No. You go mad with the pain of it. You struggle mindlessly, with every last ounce of strength and cunning you have, and more. In those moments your will to somehow survive is so overbearingly intense that if you do survive you have no memory afterwards of how you escaped. For those few moments, the

immensity of degree of single-pointedness of mind is such that there is no scope for auxiliary functions like memory-formation to remain in operation. What comes over you for those few moments is a sort of madness- it is not a normal state of mind. Likewise here. That is why it is said that you must be prepared to lose your sanity if you want Realisation.

Q.: Should I go mad if I want to Realise?

B.: It does not mean that you should trundle about on the streets tearing your clothes and throwing things at people. Here insanity means 'losing your mind'.

Q.: Is it not dangerous for the mind to be lost? How then, for instance, will I know the difference between good and bad if there is no mind?

B.: When the mind is gone, only Love remains. The mindless one cannot injure anyone, for he loves all as his own Self. Therefore he is altogether harmless, like a dead serpent.

Q.: Seshadri-swamigal is known to have thrown rocks at people who approached him mentally praying for fructification of sinful desires.

B.: Yes, but not a single rock fell on anyone.

Q.: Do all people who Realise, pass through these phases of madness?

B.: Yes, but it may not be obvious on the face of it. The turmoil or agitation is in the mind only. In the case of an unfortunate few, it does manifest as strange bodily activities. Without passing through the stage wherein peaks of ecstasy and melancholy alternate without warning and for no apparent reason whatsoever, a man can Realise, provided such stage has already been crossed in a previous life.

Q.: How do I know if I have crossed this stage?

B.: Had you, this question would not arise.

Q.: The mental unrest described by B.: would it not normally be classified as mental illness?

B.: Those insane fools, who, taking themselves to be the body or mind and knowing they are going to die one day, attend to things other than the means to Immortality which alone makes such inevitable death a laughable idea, will of course call mad those mad with Love for God. Should you pay any attention to what they say?

Q.: So there is no need to pay attention to what people have to say about me?

B.: Provided you are steadfastly resolved in the One.

Q.: Some say that in the intensity of sadhana performed, the face and shoulders of the person begin to emit light. Others say that such a person's memories of his past lives return to him, and he is able to recollect who he was in previous janmas. Others say that he is able to communicate with otherworldly beings belonging to the higher psychic realms. Is it all true?

B.: These are unwanted distractions from the Real. Even what you already see around you is perfectly unreal. Even if any such supranormal perceptivities are developed, they also must be- sooner or later- given up as being worthless and burdensome. Already with your present knowledge you suffer so much. If there is more knowledge the suffering is compounded.

Q.: So, ignorance is bliss!

B.: Quite so.

Q.: Is not acquisition of transcendental knowledge the aim of sadhana?

B.: No.

Q.: Then what is the aim?

B.: If at all there is any aim, which in fact there ideally ought not to be, it is the destruction of the illusory sadhaka who affirms, 'Yes, I am distinct from God and I must do sadhana to trace my steps back to him.' or 'The upanishads declare aham brahmasmi. Therefore I am myself God or ultimate Reality.'

Q.: If all thought is killed what is left behind?

B.: Pure consciousness, the stuff out of which thoughts are made.

Q.: What does one do with this pure consciousness.

B.: Pure consciousness cannot do anything. There is no one apart from him to do anything with him.

Q.: Then who am I?

B.: Find out!

S>M>

Q.: Is a Guru needed for Aathma-vichara?

B.: Absolutely.

Q.: Who or what is a Guru?

B.: That which rivets the entirety of your attention and faculty-of-mind unto itself and does not in the slightest permit you to think about anything else. Sai Baba has said, 'Take a potsherd for your Guru and see if you succeed or not.'. Fascination to the point of Total Obsession with something is called ekagratham. It leads to the same result as Jnana-vichara.

Q.: Is bhakti not necessary? How can a piece of discarded earthenware arouse it?

B.: Each one finds a different ideal to satisfy him. What one man finds worthless another discovers to be a priceless treasure. There cannot be any general rule about the matter.

Q.: I understand Guru to mean a Self-Realised person who helps others to Realise.

Sri Bhagawan made no reply. Soon thereafter the questioner left the Hall.

B.: People come here expecting me to corroborate their beliefs and ideas.

Why not talk to a Bell-Tainter cylinder and play it back? Atleast operating the

treadle will give the feet some exercise.

S>M>

Q.: I am a man with considerable faith in science. I expect logical evidence to be presented to me if I am to believe in something. If God exists, should he not reveal himself? If you give me proof that God exists I shall accept it.

B.: Has your laudable scientific outlook never observed that nature's style of functioning seems perpetually to conflict with man's? Whatever man creates, nature tends to erode and destroy. Nature or Providence seems to despise order and structure and favour randomness or entropy, as much as humans despise randomness or entropy and crave for order and structure. Clausius has said, 'The algebraic sum of all the transformations occurring in a cyclical process can only be positive, or, as an extreme case, equal to nothing.'; again, 'Heat can never pass from a colder to a warmer body without some other change, connected therewith, occurring at the same time.'. What does it all mean? We encounter a unique principle in physics that seems to have a motive, an agenda- entropisation or destruction with the passage of time. Anything left unattended perishes. It is necessary to put in constant effort to preserve anything the way it is; even then, one is able to hold out only for a brief while before Nature must needs have her eventual inevitable say-annihilation. Nature is the great destroyer of all things; she is the wielder of the scythe of death known as Time, with which she ploughs on in her pitiless carnage against puny man and his puny creations. Man's innate urge seems to be to create; nature's intent seems to be to reduce to rubble every beautiful thing man so painstakingly creates. So, sorrow is the certain, unavoidable consequence of all creation. Creation is the killer of man's inherent happiness. Has it not occurred to you that Nature might be trying to say something through this inviolable destructive behaviour of hers, that so invariably characterises her every action? Does Nature have a message for man? Man is in eternal conflict with nature. He is always fighting a battle that he is most certainly never going to win; yet he will not surrender. The only way to lose this war is to lay down your mental ammunition called thoughts and surrender to Nature or the Self. Otherwise go on fighting, but victory is impossible. What, therefore, is Nature's message to man? 'Surrender to me.', is the message.

Q.: My God! Is this what you are teaching to the people who come and sit here with you? What a totally pessimistic attitude to life! Everything is pointless. Whatever is created must certainly be destroyed one day. Therefore, let us all commit suicide this very instant, because we are all going to die one day anyway!

B.: My sentiment exactly.



Q.: What a dangerous madman I have come to visit! I believe you ought to be locked up, sir! I thought something might be wrong when I heard that you locked yourself up in a dungeon in this town's temple and attempted to starve to death! But why have you subsequently not attempted suicide?

B.: I have succeeded in committing suicide.

Q.: Then who is sitting on the sofa and talking to me now?

B.: I do not see anything by that description. So it is not for me to remark upon it. He who sees the phenomenon he believes himself to see, and describes: let him find out the explanation for it.

Q.: You really are mad! Raving mad! I wonder what will be the fate of these poor natives who seem to think you are some sort of God... This same world that contains so many prized artists and scientists: what a shame that it should contain such repugnant nihilists... but at least the nihilist believes life is meaningless!

B.: I am glad you have grasped the truth of the matter so readily....

Q.: I shudder to think of the fate of this world God has so lovingly created for man, if, listening to the dangerous advice of deranged maniacs like you, everyone abandons civilisation and moves back into the jungles!

B.: [smiling brightly] World? What world?

Q.: [wails aloud] AAARGH!

The aged Caucasian gentleman rushed out of the Hall. I never saw him again. B., meanwhile, was laughing so hard, tears running down his cheeks and all, that the Sofa's mattresses came loose, and he was about to slide down. The attendant rushed forward, but B. balanced himself on time and stood up. The attendant, who could evidently not understand anything that was going on, arranged the mattresses back with a perplexed, polite smile. B. sat down, still laughing. Just when his laughter subsided, Chadwick quickly entered the Hall, and with a puzzled frown on his longish face, he examined the Hall corner to corner by shaking his head from side to side, and said-

C.: Who is here?

B.: [beginning to smile broadly] What?

C.: Someone is running away from this place shouting, "Beware! There is a madman in that hall! Someone alert the authorities! Beware! There is a madman in that hall! Beware! Madman! Madman! Beware!". I thought B. might be in some danger, and so hurried in. Who came?

B.: [body trembling, with a precariously controlled voice] Do you know who the madman is?

C.: Who?

B.: Me! [explodes with laughter and collapses backward on the pillows bolstered against the sofa, body racked with to-and-fro motions; at this point

infectiously catches my eye; I also begin to shout in laughter]

C.: [smiling, almost despite himself] What's happening here? Is the joke on me?

B.: [pointing to me, in gasps managing to say] Gaja will explain...!

I then told Chadwick what had transpired.

C.: Why the impudent rascal! How dare he say such nasty things!

B.: Don't worry. அவனை ஒரு கலக்கு கலக்கி விட்டோமா இல்லையா ?! [He is quite bewildered.] [chortling] That is the way to deal with such persons...!

G.: But Bhagawan has insisted that life in the world need not be a hinderance to sadhana.

B.: Yes?

G.: He condemns creation.

B.: Actorless action is not harmful; in fact, bodily action is unavoidable for one whose prarabdha makes it so. What is condemned is the idea of personal doership only. The tenacious mind gives to or assumes for itself personal responsibility for the actions that the body is committing; this tendency of the mind is called creation. It is exclusively in this sense that creation is anathematised.

G.: B. speaks Vedanta to some and Physics to some and Bhakthi to still others. How is it?

B.: Once upon a time 2 exceedingly foolish persons went to the town for the first time. They were in an ancient marriage-hall. The festivities had not yet begun; people were yet to arrive. In a corner of the place, they saw a huge, polished plate of silver in a narrow alcove in which there was place for one person alone to stand. The first man got into the alcove and said in great astonishment, "Why, someone has placed my portrait here!". "What!", said the second man, "are you so famous hereabouts? I do not believe you. Let me see for myself. Get down." The first man exited the alcove and the second got in. "What a miserable liar you are!", said he. "Now I see your jealousy for me is indeed great. Your portrait indeed! Why, this is a portrait of me!" The 2 took turns to look, but each saw only himself. Soon they started arguing and then broke into a fist-fight. The violence of the blows traded was such that when one blow accidentally landed upon a beam supporting the ceiling of the ancient structure, it splintered thoroughly, and the wall containing the alcove crashed down into the floor, making the silver plate fall at their feet. "Why brother!" said one fool, "It is a portrait of both of us!" Thus rejoicing, they returned to their village before anyone could detect all the damage done by them and flog them for it.

G.: I fail to grasp the moral of the story.

B.: The Jnani is a pure transparent mirror. People see in him whatever they want to or whatever they would like to. Natively, he has no characteristics at all, like a mirror in a room that has no access to light. Whatever he seems to do in your presence and however he behaves with you has nothing to do with him and everything to do with you.

G.: If 2 Jnanis meet what do they see?

B.: The Jnani sees no one as ajnani. All are only Jnanis in his sight.

G.: So when B.'s blessed eyes set upon me, he sees only a Jnani?

B.: Yes.

27 July, 1936

The famous lawyer-devotee of Bhagawan who has written B.'s biography in English, titled 'Self-Realisation', has written to the ashram. B. read out his letter to the Hall. Apparently, Sri Narasimha-swamigazl has now gone over to the spiritual charge of the famous Meher-baba, whose ashram is near Ahammadnagar. He also sporadically visits the baba's own guru, Upasannya Maharaja. He entreats that B. never forget him.

Chadwick, who was among those in attendance at the hour, had something to ask:

C.: I still do not see why someone, after coming here, should ever feel the need for some other Guru, and go away to some other place. This man seems to have been a particularly involved devotee of Bhagawan. I chanced upon the huge mass of papers from which he had chiselled out B.'s biography, and went through them with interest. He has taken considerable trouble to interview many persons. Yet he evidently seems to have become disillusioned with B., for whilst departing he has not even collected his diaries, containing the record of his conversations with Bhagawan.

B.: What has surrendered here will eventually be devoured here.

C.: But why is he delaying his own Realisation unnecessarily?

B.: You attend to what you have come here for. Others can take care of themselves. It is indeed a great thing if we can take care of ourselves. We need not bother about others.

28 July, 1936

Q.: I am exceedingly anxious to Realise. What if I do not manage to Realise in this lifetime?

B.: Does it matter?

Q.: To me, very much, yes.

B.: When it has totally ceased to matter, then Realisation is not very far away.

S>M>

Q.: When Sri B. is actually of the opinion that Ajata-advaita is the only truth, why does he recommend Bhakti to some people who come here? Is it not doing them an injustice?

B.: What do you know about Bhakti?

Q.: I know that it posits duality by making the sadhaka presuppose the existence of a personal God; whereas, according to Bhagawan, from the stand-point of Truth or Reality the personal God does not exist at all.

B.: When, as a result of supreme unconditional Love for God, the mind melts away without the slightest trace of residue, it is Realisation of the non-dual Self.

Q.: My question is why people are not being discouraged by Bhagawan from continuing their dualistic practices of ritual worship, when the personal God does not even exist according to the Ajata-advaita school, which is the system of philosophy endorsed by Bhagawan.

B.: Worship of name and form is also a means to Realise the Nameless and Formless, provided there is motiveless Love- that is to say, unconditional surrender.

Q.: How so?

B.: Obsessive fixation on any one particular thought to the exclusion of all else, is the way. The one who does Jnana-vichara asks himself 'Who-am-I?' every time a thought occurs. The thought disappears and he is re-absorbed into the current of pure consciousness. The one who yearns in fathomlessly intense longing Love for God severs thoughts as and when they arise, by telling himself that it is not for him to think thoughts in which his beloved finds no place. Always immersed in thoughts of his beloved, he speedily reaches the stage where it has become fully obvious to him that rather than think about his beloved and thus cognise him indirectly, he might experience his beloved directly by feeling-contact, which is the same as self-immersion in the current of divine Love latent in the sadhaka always. Is this current different from pure consciousness? No. So, Bhakti or Jnana, the aim is the same: total destruction of thought. Only those desperate to escape from samsara, no matter what the cost or price might be, Realise; the others remain sadhakas. Imagine you have fallen into a cataleptic condition caused by an unfortunate concussion to the head. You are mistaken for dead and deposited inside an opulent ebony-wood coffin. The exquisitely carved lid is nailed shut and you are lowered deep into the bowels of the earth. Next the earth is filled in, a monumental stela is erected over the spot, eulogies are read out and then everybody disperses. Minutes later you wake up and all the sensory information that your brain had been unconsciously registering all this while flashes in upon you in a moment. Being trapped in this situation, the same

exact desperation you would feel then, if you are able to feel now for being stuck in samsara- for there is not much difference- Realisation is assured; else you may go on contentedly telling yourself, 'Once I am done with these my toilsome wordly responsibilities, I shall focus myself exclusively to the cause of discovery of my true Self...' or other similar drivel, life after imaginary life... Have you seen fish captured in a net? The complacent ones become food, but some jump about so uncontrollably that they manage to fall back into the ocean. Likewise, Sri Ramakrishna describes a high-souled creature known as the Homa bird. For one who is wont to postpone Realisation to the future, this 'future' never arrives. Till he goes to the grave, one concern after the other occupies him. Increasingly frustrated, each time he tells himself, 'Immediately after solving this problem I shall be in a position to commence my steadfast sadhana, which even the heavens will not be able to shake... But let me wait until this one last fleeting problem is solved, for I do not want anything else to occupy my attention once I have commenced my assiduous sadhana...'. Invariably, once one problem is over the next reveals itself soon after. It is like chasing your own shadow when the sun is behind you. Can you ever catch it? Therefore, Realisation is in the here and now. When Hanuman was asked what day of the week it was, he said, 'Brother, I know naught about these things. To me only Rama exists.'. So, that is the attitude of the ideal sadhaka. Mundane matters do not succeed in gaining access to his mind. Yet he may be impeccably discharging countless professional and household duties. The onlooker might think, 'Oh! poor man. What an encumbered life is this!'. In fact one who has altogether surrendered is not doing anything.

Q.: Should not one try to discover one's true Self by the dint of one's own efforts, rather than soliciting the assistance of imaginary deities, who really do not exist at all, according to Bhagawan's teaching?

B.: If you are real in this body and mind they are too. You cannot be selective in your approach to the Truth.

Q.: My body is a tangible physical existence. The gods mentioned in the scriptures are not to be found anywhere.

B.: The one fiction is gross; the other is subtle.

Q.: How long should Jnana-vichara be practised?

B.: Until the natural state is regained. Consider this ancient story from Thracia-

Once upon a time, a hungry fox, seeing some bread and meat left behind by shepherds in the hollow of an aged oak-tree, stealthily crept into the hole and obtained for himself a hearty meal. When he finished eating, his stomach was so full that he was not able to get out. He began to groan and lament his fate. Another Fox passing by heard his cries, and coming up, inquired the cause of

his complaining. On learning what had happened, he said unto him, "Ah! you will have to remain there, my friend, until you become such as you were when you crept in; and then you will easily get out."

So, without regaining the primal state of mind, escape from the infernal abyss known as samsara is not possible.

Q.: What is this natural state of the mind?

B.: Subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly.

Q.: How can I not make an effort to do something and yet do it? It sounds quixotic and ridiculous.

B.: You are so used to doing that your true nature of restful non-doing has become alien to you. Since your departure from the natural state has plunged you into an ocean of unending activity, you are become quite alienated from your natural state of blissful inactivity. So you are framing the absurd question, 'What can I do to regain the natural state?'. It is like asking, 'In order for the maximum amount of light to be facilitated to spill forth from this lantern, in what position shall I hold my hand in front of the lens?'. If you simply take your hand away, the light shines clear and bright. So, let go of the ego, and the Self is revealed. But people will not understand this. They want formulas, concepts, methods- in short, they want something they can 'do'. Whenever they have wanted something in their lives, they have done something to obtain it, and probably succeeded. So they think Enlightenment can also be won this way. Many charlatans also cater to the psychological requirements of such gullible people, prescribing mental exercises for them that plunge their minds into a state of deliberately sustained bliss; thus, the poor victims think they have successfully Enlightened themselves! [laughs] Alas, no! No amount of doing or 'meditating' can reveal the Self. The loftiest, most useful and most legitimate advice that can be given to an aspirant for Realisation is simply Summa Iru. But people want a formula by means of which this can be achieved: therefore the Jnana-vichara is prescribed. One who is desperate enough in his want to Realise will not waste time in gossip; he will abandon everything; thus, only the Self remains. Do not be attached to the body and do not aim at satisfaction of the never-ending requirements of the personal self; these are transient, illusory appearances in the One Real THAT. Whatever is born will certainly die. What is perishable is bound to perish. Why entrust your attachment unto something that is doomed to disappear one day? Samsara is like a glowing red iron rod that one holds in one's hand, wearing the glove of avidya maya. The evil power of avidya maya never allows the full might of the misery of samsara to impress itself upon your mind; nor is the pain withheld altogether. If you were to actually feel the full heat of the iron rod, you would

instantly drop it, and avidya maya would be cheated out of her fun. So, the pain is given to you in manageable doses, so that you think foolishly, 'Oh! this life is a mixture of happiness and sorrow.'; such an attitude allows the yearning for more experience of samsara to be still present in you. One who longs for God with all his heart is helped by God in the following manner: the glove is forcibly ripped apart. So, one who is a devout Bhakta may sometimes have to face stupendous tragedies that may make people remark, 'This is how God rewards his most sincere worshippers.'. This sarcastic statement is actually true in the literal sense. Whilst the glove is still on you can never be persuaded into dropping the red iron rod; once it is gone, discarding the furiously hot rod is inevitable, because, now, unlike before, the pain is too enormous to manage. 'Totally letting go of all the mind's contents' is the only sadhana that is effective for Realisation, not 'destroying the mind'. Mind, being fictitious, cannot be destroyed anymore than it is possible to kill a snake that one sees in a rope. When we talk of manonasha, it merely refers to a state where the illusion of the world is absent: that is all. How are you going to destroy what never was and what cannot be? If you want Realisation, all you need to do is this: LET GO OF EVERYTHING. In fact, all who have Realised have done only this in the end, having given up all sadhana to be useless skulduggery.

Q.: Is sadhana not necessary to Realise?

B.: The only genuine sadhana is to give up all sadhana. The aim of all practices is only to give up all practices.

S>M>

Chadwick asked-

C.: The same question elicits different answers from Bhagawan, when different people ask. Why, may I wonder?

B.: According to the temperament of each, guidance he receives.

C.: There is then no one single truth?

B.: That is beyond words.

S>M>

Q.: According to the Hindu scriptures, there is an intoxicating drink called somabhanam that the devas used to make merry with. How to manufacture the same? I wish B. would tell me. Is it a drink unknown to modern man or is it only alcohol which the ancients described by that name?

B.: Why hanker after such lowly pleasures when the bliss of the Aathmaswarupa is ever yours?

Q.: Is the Jnana-vichara technique really practical for the man on the Clapham omnibus?

B.: Why not? But it is true that it needs extreme vairagyam.

Q.: How to cultivate, then, vairagyam?

B.: One begins with the dawn of the intellectual comprehension that the bodily existence is undesirable, futile, meaningless, worthless, unvaryingly painful and above all totally unacceptable. A deep-seated love for permanence leads naturally to such an attitude. From thereonward things take their needful course.

S>M>

Q.: How can the tenacity of the ego be overcome?

B.: Only by refusing to pay it any attention. If even the least amount of importance or significance is attached to the ego, the consequence will be misery illimitable. Listen to the following story-

Once upon a time, there lived a washerman in a village. His pets were a dog and a donkey. The dog would guard his master's house and escort him wherever he went. The donkey would carry heavy bundles of clothes on his wearied body whilst journeying to the river and back. Both animals slept within the precincts of the washerman's compound; they were leading a contented life under the kind shelter made available by the washerman. Over time, however, the dog became embittered and morose, for he had begun to feel that he deserved a better master. On one unfortunate night, when everyone was sleeping, a thief managed to enter into the house. Even after seeing the thief, the dog did not bother to bark. When the donkey saw the thief entering the house, he asked the dog, "Dear friend, see you not that a thief had entered the house? Will you not bark to awaken our master?" The dog answered rudely, "Mind your own business. How dare you lecture me regarding my duties! I know how to guard my master. I have been guarding this house for a long time, but the master cares for me not in the least. Since the past few months, he does not even feed me properly. The fool is not in a position to appreciate my worth. I shall not awaken him. When this thief will steal valuables from his house, then he will come to realize my importance". The donkey angrily said, "O! foolish creature, this is not the occasion to complain; this is the occasion to engage in timely action. Please be quick and do something to wake up the master.". The dog replied obdurately, "No. He does not care for me. So, I do not care for him.". The donkey shouted in fury, "O! wicked creature, you are full of ingratitude towards your master. You are ignoring your duty just when you are required the most. I am not an ungrateful wretch like you. Since you neglect it, I shall discharge your duty instead, and wake him up.". Having thus spoken, the donkey then brayed at the top of his voice. The washerman woke up only after a few minutes, though the donkey screeched again and again. Meanwhile, the thief rapidly fled the scene, thinking that the sound of the donkey's harsh voice would have surely



awakened the household. The washerman rose and looked around, but could not find anything amiss. He became severely angry with the donkey, who had disturbed his peaceful sleep. The washerman soundly thrashed the poor donkey with a stout cane. The donkey was left to writhe in unbearable pain for months.

Q.: Pray, what sort of ridiculous story is this? The just are made and left to suffer; the unjust prosper. But I do admit that- nowadays- this seems to be the way of the world...

B.: The lesson underlying the story is that the ego asks you to do this and that, claiming that such is your duty or moral obligation. Never pay heed; if you do, you situate yourself in serious trouble soon afterwards. The body's prarabdha makes one automatically perform many tasks inevitably; apart from these, whatever one imagines one ought to do as a result of any perceived binding moral obligation, is only a stratagem to invite needless anguish.

Q.: How to distinguish the activities ordained by prarabdha from those that are self-imposed?

B.: All activities have their cause in prarabdha only.

Q.: Just now B. said that the ego prompts one to engage in unnecessary activities.

B.: The moment something happens its cause is prarabdha only. I am asking you to not act upon thoughts, but to let Randomness or the Higher Power take over the body's actions. If the thought, 'Is it not my duty to do this?' occurs, or if other thoughts of necessity for action occur, reject them all unequivocally by asking to whom they have occurred. If subsequently you witness that same action being performed by the body, never mind- remain detached, without any feeling of involvement in what the body might happen to be doing.

Q.: So the Higher Power will automatically fulfill my responsibilities if I remain in the thought-free state without using the mind?

B.: Provided you have unconditionally surrendered to it. Thus, the thought, 'The Higher Power has failed to execute my responsibilities in an effective manner.' can never occur.

Q.: In the story, the donkey was only trying to help the situation.

B.: It was no business of his to endeavour to fulfill a duty that was never his.

Q.: Were it not for the donkey, the thief would have looted the house. The donkey has performed a noble gesture, for in reward for having protected its master from harm, he has received blows from that same master.

B.: To continue the story, the donkey eventually died from the wounds caused by the blows. The washerman could obtain no immediate substitute. So, to bide away his idle time, he began to squander away his small accumulated fortune in gambling and drinking. Shortly he became so addicted to these evil

habits that any thought of resuming his profession left him. He spent all his money on placing bets in relation to the outcomes of card-games and purchasing toddy. Soon he died a penniless pauper from a ruptured liver. Had the donkey kept quiet, the ungrateful dog would have received the blows and would have been driven away. The washerman, though initially distraught at having lost all his savings consequent to the burglary, would have worked night and day to compensate, going even to neighbouring villages to collect laundry. He would have become a prosperous and rich man. With fondness he would have recollected his first donkey, the one that had toiled so much for him in his early days. He would have pampered it with a royal life and given it peaceful rest till the end of its days. The donkey has ruined all this from happening. Why? Because of his foolish, misplaced sense of duty. In the realm of apparent reality, things do happen for a reason- only the reason is usually beyond our detection or comprehension. The washerman was destined to die in this dolorous manner; so, the donkey imagined that it was his duty to bray at that particular moment.

Q.: If all conclusions gleaned from intellectual analyses are misleading, how are we to arrive at decisions regarding right and wrong?

B.: Surrender and the Higher Power will eliminate all need for decision making; actions will have become spontaneous and automatic.

Q.: Will those spontaneous actions be morally correct and appropriate?

B.: Having surrendered, no one remains to raise the question.

Q.: What if this higher power should force me into the doing of an immoral deed?

B.: Even were it to be so, you would never know. In that state, all distinction between right and wrong disappear. Moral standards are only as real as our own bodily and mental reality. Being non-absolute, in the absolute they have no place. It is also true that the one who abides as the One shows natural kindness and compassion towards all beings; he loves all as his own Self. Knowing only Love and being blind to anything else, he cannot know vice.

S>M>

Q.: On the spiritual path, what is man's worst enemy?

B.: Slothfulness or Tamogunam, whether you call it sleep or inertia or anything else.

Q.: No matter how hard I try I am unable to give up the bodily identification. What am I to do?

B.: No matter what the technique or school followed might be, there finally arrives a point in sadhana when we must acknowledge our own helplessness to proceed further and totally surrender.

Q.: How to do this?

B.: When Mr. Girish Ghose asked this question to Sri Ramakrishna, he was instructed to give a 'power of attorney' in the latter's favour. Really, this is altogether necessary and fully sufficient for Realisation. But what does it mean? It means that you place yourself unconditionally in the hands of the Guru and thereafter cease to have any cares.

Q.: For this, firm faith in the Guru would be necessary, of course.

B.: Not faith or belief, but Love, blind Love, that knows only to Love.

Q.: I have surrendered- still no help.

B.: Imagine people being onboard a frigate sailing in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Suddenly a deep fissure is observed in the bottom of the hull and the ship commences to undergo steady inundation. In the hope of making her stay afloat, the passengers throw all their goods one by one into the sea. Next, in the hope of saving the younger folk, the elderly jump into the sea. Next, in the hope of keeping the children atleast alive by the time the search-and-rescue party arrives, the middle-aged jump into the sea. Finally, the children tire of waiting for their parents and guardians to return. One child says, 'Let us jump over the railing yonder; surely our parents are concealed beneath the attractive curls of this bluish curtain that our splendid boat so marvellously stands and strides upon.'; the children agree amongst themselves that that is the thing to be done; they plunge themselves head-first into the ocean. Now who do you think is left to bemoan his fate- the frigate? So, if you have really surrendered, questions could never arise. Questions arise only to the questioner. The questioner has been given up. So, who remains to raise doubts or ask anything? There must be a 'you' before there can be any 'your'. The 'you' is discarded in the act of surrender. Therefore can or does now anything remain to be yours, be it problem, doubt or anxiety, that it should cause you trouble?

30th July, 1936

The Shylock asked-

Q.: In Vivekachudamani Sri Sankara says that the 'I-I' Consciousness is eternally shining in the Heart. I am not aware of it. I wonder what the reason might be for my failure to feel it.

B.: All men without exception have it, and in whatever state they may be – the waking, dreaming or dreamless sleep– and whether they are conscious of it or not. You say that you are unaware. That means you are expecting to spectate it as an object being perceived by a subject. On the other hand, the subject merely remaining as himself is known as the 'I-I' consciousness. Do not expect to see or sense it; BE it.

Q.: In Talks with Ramana Maharshi, the 'I-I' consciousness is referred to as the Absolute Consciousness, yet Bhagavan seems also to be of the opinion that any realisation before Sahaja Nirvikalpa is merely an intellectual modification of mind, for I heard him discuss the matter a few days back in such a vein.

B.: Yes. The 'I-I' consciousness partakes of the nature of the Absolute. Though it comes before Sahaja, there is in it as in Sahaja itself the subtle intellect; the difference being that in the latter the sense of forms disappears, which is not the case in the former.

Q.: I remember B. once telling me that there exists in the human body an orifice as small as a pinpoint, from which consciousness always streams out into the body. Is it open or shut?

B.: It is always shut, for it is the knot of nescience which seemingly ties the body to consciousness. When the mind disappears in the temporary Kevala Nirvikalpa it opens but then shuts again. In Sahaja it remains always open.

B.: How is it during the experience of 'I-I' consciousness?

B.: This Consciousness is the intermediate stage. Its function is that it serves as the key which opens the knot permanently. This knot is known as the Chitjada-granthi. So long as it remains untied, thus long ignorance lasts. So long as even an iota of body-consciousness remains, the knot cannot be severed. So long as vishayavasanas remain latent in the mind, permanent destruction of body-consciousness cannot be achieved by any means. The Sadhaka's aim must be to drain away the vasanas from the Heart. To this end vichara is the most efficacious method. It strikes at the root of the venomous tree of ignorance.

Q.: Does the enquiry "Who am I?" lead to any spot in the body?

B.: Self-consciousness is in relation to the individual himself and therefore has to be experienced in his being, with an aperture in the body as the centre of experience. This centre resembles the dynamo of a machine, which gives rise to all sorts of electrical-energy discharge. It not only sustains life in the body and the activities of all its parts and organs, conscious and unconscious, but is also the link between the physical and the subtle planes on which the individual functions. Also, like the dynamo, it vibrates physically and can be felt by the quiescent mind that pays attention to it. Those who are sadhakas on the path of Raja-yoga call it by the name of sphurana. In samadhi, one feels one with it as Pure Consciousness.

Q.: How to reach that Centre, where the 'I-I' Consciousness arises? Is it by simply thinking "Who am I"?

B.: Yes, it will take you inward of its own accord. You must do it with a tranquil mind. The nivritti state of mind is an essential pre-requisite. That means that

the objective-outlook or the 'I-am-the-body.' idea should be given up. This enjoyment should not be understood to mean that one must think, 'I am not the body but the immortal Self.'. When you are asked to give up thought, understand that it cannot be done by thinking, 'I must not think thought.'. A tabula rasa is not the same as a slate on which the words 'tabula rasa' have been inscribed.

Q.: How will the 'I-I' consciousness manifest itself when the Heart is reached? Will I recognise it?

B.: Certainly, as pure consciousness, free from all thought. It is pristine, unbroken awareness of Self or Being— there is no mistaking it when it remains uncontaminated by thought or by the faculty of intellection.

Q.: Is the vibratory movement of this Centre felt simultaneously with the experience of Pure Consciousness, or before, or after it?

B.: They are all the same. But the sphurana can be felt in a subtle way even when inherence in the Heart has sufficiently stabilised and deepened so as for the ultimate consciousness to be very near, or during a sudden great fright or shock, when the mind comes to a standstill. It draws attention to itself, so that the seeker's mind, rendered sensitive by absence of perturbation or agitation, may become aware of it, gravitate towards it, and finally plunge into it, the Self.

Q.: Is the 'I-I' consciousness the same as Self-Realisation?

B.: No. It is merely a prelude to it. Only when it has led to the Sahaja-stithi of Jnana can it be Self-Realisation or Liberation.

Q.: Having attained this 'I-I' consciousness, how does one proceed therefrom to the state of perfect Realisation?

B.: The current makes you drown in it of its own accord; the only thing necessary of being done is to stop fighting it and surrender to it.

S>M>

Q.: Soctartes has said, 'The unexamined life is not worth living.'. So, should we not try to find out why God has created the world? What is puny Man's role in the grand destiny of this gigantic universe?

B.: Socrates has said, "Gnothi seauton.". Let us do that first.

Q.: But Self-Realisation is not really a practical goal. To some like Bhagawan, it comes unsolicited. Others clamour and weep for it but it does not come. It seems a chance endowment rather than something that is won by merit or effort. Moreover, the path of Jnana-vichara taught by B. is steep. Even Benjamin Franklin has said, 'There are three things extremely hard, Steel, Diamond, and to know one's true Self.'

B. One who gives up everything including the quest for Realisation abides as the Real. This is the simple truth. There is no esoteric dimension to it. Those

who See the Real are known as 'mystics'. Stange world indeed! One who Sees that One which is the most obvious, fundamental, self-luminous and self-explanatory is called a mystical or mysterious one. One who neglects it altogether and chases after fiction is considered to be behaving in a normal manner. Who can comprehend the ways of this bizarre world?

Q.: Who, indeed, if not Bhagawan, the Omniscient One?

B.: Omniscience is really not knowing anything. The Omniscient One DOES NOT KNOW. He is permanently escaped from fiction. He abides as the immutable Real. Thus, there is really nothing for him to know, and he cannot find anything to know. Knowledge, the faculty of objectification and mind all really mean the same thing: suffering or illusion or nescience.

Q.: This lofty Vedanta is not for the man on the Clapham omnibus.

B.: Yes. He will listen to everything and say, "Oh! The personal self is non-existent! I understand..."; this statement from him shows precisely that he has not understood anything. The pakvi's mind falls as if struck by lightning [videlicet, into perpetual silence] once he hears the words 'The ego-self does not exist.' from a competent master. The others give themselves to understand that the ego-self does not exist; it is like a thief, who, having become altogether mentally deranged, dons the police-officer's uniform with the express determination of catching that same thief. Will the mission ever succeed? At best the lunatic may convince himself that the thief has been found. Likewise we imagine we have understood Ajata-advaita. One who operates from the mental realm of understanding and intellectualising has voluntarily journeyed far, far away from the Light. Mere intellectual acceptance or recognition of the non-existence of the ego-self will not bring about any genuine benefit. It is true that the Self is immediate and in the here-and-now; it is also true that one abides in constant identity with it always, whether one is so aware or not. Yet, to rip apart the dense cloud of avidya maya is not so easy. It primarily requires His Grace.

Q.: How to win His Grace?

B.: By recognising your complete helplessness and surrendering.

S>M>

A disturbed-looking youth, bedizened after the Caucasian fashion, entered the Hall and proclaimed unto Bhagawan that he had just committed matricide. While B. only seemed oblivious to his presence, those in attendance in the Hall seemed troubled. The youth continued thus: "I was born to an orthodox Brahmin family in Thanjavour. So as for the purpose of availment of higher education I enrolled for a B.A. programme in the Madras Christian College at George Town, Madras. Whilst there, I became hugely influenced by the ideas of the Bombay barrister and social-reformer Mr. Ambetkar. With my college

mates I participated in burning copies of the Manusmriti. I lopped off my tuft and sacred thread. Probably pretending to ourselves that we wanted to study the agonies of alcohol-narcotists struggling to give up their addictedness, my friends and I gorged on liberal quantities of Buchanan's Special Red Seal, that an Anglo-Indian classmate of ours- for our sake- emphatically wrote to for and got from his place overseas. One day my family came to Madras to visit relatives living in Mylapour. About a fortnight ago I had received a letter informing me of the tentative date of their visit to Madras, but I forgot all about it. In the midst of a frolicsome 'Red-Seal-ing' session at the hostel, I remembered suddenly about it. It had been months since I had seen my mother; I wanted to set eyes upon her blessed face at once. Lying to my friends that I felt like making a trip to the lavatory, I proceeded forthwith to leave for Mylapour. In my rank tipsyness, it did not occur to me that I ought not to show my face in so total an inebriated condition. I collapsed on the train and fell unconscious. The letter was still in my coat pocket, and it contained the address of the relatives' place. Someone must have taken me there. The next morning I awoke to find myself in an agraharam-style house. My mother was huddled in a corner, crying and wailing. Everyone was talking about the facts that a foul smell was coming off my mouth, as also my clothes [for I had evidently urinated on myself during the night], and that I was missing my tuft and sacred thread. My father took me to task for having fallen into evil ways. My mother seemed dazed and she never said anything. My father and uncles warned me and I was escorted back to hostel. A week later I received a telegram. My mother had hung herself to death from the ceiling of our home at Thanjavour. I rushed home. She had used her bridal saari for the purpose, the one she had always been remarking was earmarked especially for my future spouse on the occasion of the nuptial ceremonies. The note found crumpled in her limp and lifeless hand only said: " என் ஒரே குழந்தையை இழந்துவிட்டேனே ". [sobbing and thumping the floor of the Hall with his thighs] I have killed my mother....!".B., however, apparently was interested only in something that seemed to be attracting his gaze from without the window; he paid not the least heed to his welterous visitor and the latter's singular astraughtedness of behaviour. Although the discombobulated boy signalled to the master, waving his hands about wildly, B. remained motionless and unresponsive, frozen in the same position. The boy went on hiccoughingly shedding copious tears. Finally he said: "You are supposed to be a great saint. Have not you the least compassion for me?". The great domed head slowly averted its gaze from the window, inclined itself to meet the boy's eyes directly, and then spoke softly thus:

B.: What is the atonement?

Q.: That is what I have come here to ask you.

B.: [smiling placidly] Have you tried asking The Right Honourable The Baron Woolavington? Have you tried asking Mr. Ambetkar?

Q.: I am already much vexed of mind. Please do not taunt me like this. I have come here hoping that you would give me solace.

B.: What ought to be the matter for consideration is not how much salt the ocean contains but how much you need and how much you can extract. Also, when you look into a mirror, what you see is not the mirror but only yourself- or the surroundings; the man of the world sees only reflections on a mirror; rare is the man who sees the mirror as itself.

Q.: I find these statements ainigmatic and perplexing.

B.: If you please, you may stay here a few days. Keep quiet and see if your doubts are not automatically resolved.

Q.: Will the ashram management permit me to stay?

B.: Why not ask them yourself?

S>M>

Q.: It is said that one who attains Jnana takes a new birth even whilst he yet occupies the same body apparently. What is the import underlying this statement?

B.: Yes. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me..." "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." By incessantly inhering in the primal, natural state of being-consciousness, the Jnani has allowed his mind to die out of inaction. His body may seem to be acting in the world, but he is quite oblivious to it. He has no likes or dislikes, and his body remains stationary or moves about hither and yon as the arms of providence may chance to keep it idle or toss it around. He Himself is utterly incapable of movement. He is totally indifferent to whether the body remains[whole] or has been reduced into its constituent elements- indeed he barely registers the fact or knows. He is not interested in awakening anyone into Enlightenment or any such thing, because he does not and cannot see any others. People who come near him may undergo such experiences. But he himself knows nothing and does nothing. He has been quite destroyed by the Beyond. He can never be recalled. So, new birth means death as one imagining himself to be a creature of the flesh and birth into the Imperishable Absolute.

Q.: Is this state open for all to reach?

B.: Either it needs deep devotion or strong vairagya. If one finds samsara pleasant and agreeable, or even remotely tolerable and acceptable, he stands



no chance of breaking the strong bond of the hridayagranthi. The Buddha said that one pierced by an arrow would be interested only in plucking it out, and not in carrying out any research as to what metal the arrow was forged out of, what velocity it travelled at, and so forth. All our effort is directed only at removal of spurious accretions and not acquisition of Reality. An illusory appearance known as the ego makes illusory effort to eradicate his illusory ignorance; then he disappears, never to have existed.

S>M>

Q.: I have read that towards the end of the preceding century, Professor Seeley of King's College, Cambridge, made the discovery of certain fossilised remains of fox-like creatures somewhere near Durban city in the Transvaal; to these he gave the name 'Thrinaxodon liorhinus'. These creatures are not to be found today; they have completely disappeared off the face of the earth. One cannot help wondering: is man destined to undergo a similar fate one day? Some day shall we also go missing from existence?

B.: You are yourself Existence. First and foremost, find yourself thereas. Then such doubts and fears will never haunt you.

S>M>

Q.: How is it that Sri Guru Namacchivayar was able to discern that a fire-accident was taking place in the Chidambaram Shiva-temple and- moreover- to put out such fire without doing so much as lifting his little finger, whilst he himself was seated somewhere on this Hill in Tiruvannamalai?

B.: For the Jnani, where is time or space? Can there be time or space for Him? Time and space are merely figments of the imagination formulated by the thinking, effervescent mind; the Jnani, in whom there is no mind whatever, cannot be bound by them. The space-time manifold itself rests upon the Jnani only. Himself is the fabric out of which the manifold is made. Why then should we be surprised at beholding a Sage's apparently extraordinary actions? He does not see anything anomalous about his siddhis. They come to him naturally. He does not make any effort to learn, cultivate or deploy them. He wields them if his prarabdha be that way, not otherwise. We find such actions on the part of the Sage to be bizarre because we imagine that He is operating from within the body with which we incorrectly identify Him. But that is not the Sage's experience. You ludicrously identify yourself with a form and extend the same mistake to the Sage also. But can He be deceived? So far as He is concerned, being Reality, all there appears is- and could only ever be- Himself and Himself exclusively.

Q.: Why did Kannagi burn Madurai? It seems unjust to me.

B.: File a petition in Court. [laughter in the Hall]

1st August, 1936

Sri Bhagawan was handed over a parcel which has arrived all the way from Darmstadt, Germany. It contains a letter and a book. The letter says that the gentleman who is the writer thereof has heard of Sri Bhagawan in glowing terms from an American friend who is an enthusiastic cognoscente of Sri Aurobindo's method of yoga and numerous other oriental schools advocating man's spiritual ascent or evolution. The letter also contains a list of questions for Sri Bhagawan. The questions are not of a spiritual character; their purpose seems to be to analyze B. as a person, an idea that I find farcical. The gentleman writing states that his questions are not the manufacture of his own imaginative inventiveness, but are merely a replica of those put before the famous writer Marcel Proust, when the latter was but a precocious teen, with the intention of gauging the depth of his psyche and the astuteness of his intellect; the gentleman pleads with B. to reply to atleast 5 questions from the list, and send them to a Mr. Patrick G. Hiddleston residing currently at Sri Aurobindo's ashram. He does not wish to trouble B. to send the communication requisitioned for all the way to Germany; Mr. Hiddleston is expected to take care of the matter. All B. is begged to do is answer atleast 5 questions of his choice from the enclosed questionnaire, and post the reply to the mentioned name at Sri Aurobindo's ashram, Pondicherry. B. is assured that the replies are to satisfy the questioner's curiosity only; they shall never be published without obtaining B.'s express consent; on that count B. need harbour no trepidation. It is hoped sincerely that B. likes the present enclosed. B. unwrapped the brown parcel further and uncovered the book, 'Der Führer regiert: Tage der Nation der deutschen Jugend dargestellt', authored by a Herr von Erich Beier-Lindhardt. It has a picture of the German Chancellor Hitler on the front cover, standing by the side of another man, both saluting in the German way at unseen flanks of soldiers in the distance. The flag of the National Socialist movement in Germany vanguarded by Herr Hitler, now made the national flag of Germany, announced so to be only the previous year, is displayed solemnly by the side of the picture. To my surprise, B. handed over the letter to me and said:

B.: You choose any 5 questions from this, for me to answer.

G.: I am not competent to undertake the task.

B.: That judgement is not for you to arrive at; if you are incompetent at everything, you are also incompetent at judging your own competency; therefore anything said by you about your own competency at this or that cannot be taken seriously.

I could make no reply to this, and therefore painstakingly perused the contents of the letter, for my familiarity with Deutsche is at best poor. I proceeded to isolate out those questions which I believed might elicit an

answer of considerable spiritual potency from the master. Finally I chose; when I showed my choices to B., he said, 'Good. Now, you may write the replies as follows...' and commenced dictating once I had fetched a pen and blotter from the office:

Q.: B.'s idea of Happiness?

B.: Happiness is Itself alone. Ideas about it are unhappiness.

Q.: B.'s idea of misery?

B.: Thinking and thought-manufacturing faculty.

Q.: The greatest Love of B.'s life?

B.: Only one; Arunachala the Formless One.

Q.: The incumbent state of B.'s mind?

B.: The state of no-mind.

Q.: B.'s favourite occupation?

B.: இருத்தல். Let it depart for Pondicherry by today's post, if so expeditious an arrangement can conveniently be made...

G.: I shall see to it... Also, in the letter, B. is asked, "After the Re-militarisation of the Rheinland in March, the Führer has made the following remark- 'One who is a passionately fervent National Socialist need not seperately practise the observance of any religion or moral code of conduct. At the core of its Heart, the National Socialist movement is thoroughly spiritual in nature. Its ultimate aim is the complete spiritualisation of man, his utter transformation from creature of dark beastly instinct into creature of Light and Spirit. The gateway into Heaven is not through kneeling at an altar of stone before the Crucifix, but through emblazonment with toil and tears in the altar of the mind of the Swastika. The gateway into Heaven is not through breaking bread and sipping wine before the Crucifix, but through shedding of blood for the Aryan Fatherland so that its banner of the Swastika flies always at the zenith of civilisation. The gateway into Heaven is not the Wesensverwandlung that is said to occur whilst bread and wine are consumed before the Crucifix, but the drenching of the soil of the earth with German blood in sacrifice for the Aryan Fatherland that is represented by the Swastika. The gateway into Heaven-' "

At this point B. made a snapping sound with his right thumb and middle finger, and I looked up at once.

B.: [eyes wide open, smilingly glaring at me in mock anger, nostrils puffed out and temples and ears stretched back in pretended rage] நிறுத்தடா உனது வியாக்கியானத்தடை. இவ்வளவு போதும். அந்த குட்டிமீசைக்காரனோடிய பரமரசிகனோடா நீ ?!

G.: If I have committed any offence, may I be kindly pardoned? I was merely reading out-

B.: கேட்ட கேள்விக்கு பதிலம்.

G.: One cannot help admiring the funny-moustached man. He is taking the Treaty of Versailles apart, piece by piece. No one seems to have had the courage to raise the most trifling objection, leave alone mount a military offensive against the move! I remember reading Lloyd-George's comment about the matter at the time in newspapers: 'If Herr Hitler had not taken [this] swift action so as for the furtherance of the noble cause of reclamation of the German honour, with regard to this crucial question at this crucial hour, but if Herr Hitler had allowed the insults of the humiliating Treaty to go on and on without protecting his country's honour, I have to say that he would have been a great traitor to the Fatherland indeed...'. Everyone in Europe seems to love, adore and respect the funny-looking man!

B.: [still jocundously glaring and smiling at me, holding tip of right index finger pressed against right nostril, other fingers clutching chin, dome of forehead slanted forwards toward me, right condylus-humerus not inhumourously perched upon right iliac-crest] What is the one object of your supreme adulation?

G.: Bhagawan, of course.

B.: [gravely now] Remain firm in your monotheism, then. Is that understood? It is not the salvation of 'this' that is at stake.... What is enunciated is for your benefit only....

G.: I crave B.'s forgiveness. Forthwith I throw the ridiculous German Chancellor out of my mind. As for the imported books, correspondence and hand-painted Swastika flags in my room...

B.: Am I required to take a walk upto the Thirumanjana Gopuram today evening?

G.: I do not wish to cause B. any trouble. I shall burn it all up at the டாட்டு சந்தை மைதானம் today evening. Tomorrow I shall report to B. that it has been done. I will never shirk from obeying the Guru's slightest morsel of advice, to the letter....

B.: Are we then thoroughly finished discussing the matter?

G.: [hesitating] I do not think so...

B.: Proceed...

G.: [bursting into tears] Oh! but it is beautiful photograph! I had to write many times and spend a sizable sum of money to obtain it! At any time I clearly recollect it in my mind's eye; the Great Man is looking out of a window set in an enormously thick wall, possibly some sort of historical fortress; his elbow confidently rests upon the window sill; with divinely-inspired hope his eyes look out through the window's grim craticula-work, upon the world he is sure he shall justly rule one day; an expression of incomparable loftiness of pious grandeur and spiritual purity dominates the handsome face that knows only

self-sacrifice and heroic struggle against the dark forces of oppression and tyranny; light from the Sun illuminates both the noble face and the pock-marked wall adjacent, sharply bringing out the contrast between God's Messiah, the undisputed, fair leader of the Aryan Race, and the evil empire of dark, sub-human cultures that he is incarnated to forever vanquish; the mouth is slightly agape with wonder, at contemplating the benevolence of Providence in having revealed her Merciful Grace by pointing out to the Aryan Fatherland the identity of the Great Torch-bearer of Aryan culture... Once destroyed no replacement is possible... அய்யய்யோ ! இறையனாரே !

இறையனாரே ! இறையனாரே ! [Master!] O! most beloved ocean of compassionate Grace bearing the name of Arunachala-Ramana, can I not retain this one hallowed object? Please, I beg of you...

B. made no reply and he was looking out of the Hall's window calmly, apparently deaf to my screaming pleas. But I felt panicked and tense, as though I was, in some way, sinning against the master... Eventually when I spoke it was with a strange sense of relief; his Love had, as usual, won for me this battle also....

G.: Very well. The photograph shall be burnt also.

B.: Good. Now- the man who has written- what was his question finally?

G.: He wants B.'s opinion as to the question of whether Herr Hitler's claim, that being a committed National Socialist would suffice to gain access to the Kingdom of Heaven, is meaningful, and thus whether he could renounce the Church altogether.

B.: [sternly] You are to reply writing that Sri Ramana Maharshi says: 'Some poor souls are destined to traverse the deepest depths of Hell before reaching the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven, for so has the intransigent hand of Fate decreed unto their brow.'

G.: It shall be done. Also, Herr Haubacht asks for a personal message from Sri Bhagawan; so one observes from this letter...

B.: [smiling] Apostel Paulus hat gefragt: 'Tod, wo ist dein Sieg? Tod, wo ist dein Stachel?' Die antwort ist nur dies: Am ende steht der Sieg!

B. was now vacuously turning over the pages of the book sent to him. 'What are we to do with all these things?', he remarked pensively. Then he went over to the book-case in the Hall and deposited it there.

P>S>

Gentle Reader, lest the above text lead you towards the formation of perverse conclusions, I am no National Socialist. As a young man I was fascinated with Herr Hitler, it is true. Now, after the Global War has ended, I feel only disgust when I think of him. He seems to have violated all ethical standards in warfare, bombing civilian zones throughout England and resistance-offering

regions in Germany-occupied Europe; the German treatment of Soviet prisoners-of-war seems to have been most inconsiderate and brutal; the alleged outright murder of artists, musicians, doctors and mathematicians in occupied Poland seems to be a senseless act of sheer barbarism; and the summary execution of members of the Jewish community without giving adequate opportunity of being heard seems to be grossly unjust. I stopped idolising the man the day B. instructed me to that effect, as you read above. After the end of the recent Global War, I begin to doubt if Herr Hitler was fully compos mentis. One can only feel sorry for the unfortunate German peoples who believed in this man's empty promises for a glorious future, and thus tricked themselves into developing a moral obligation to obey his every senseless rant; but I sympathise with them, for I have, a continent away, felt his mesmerising charm, and am thus to an extent familiar with what devastating dehumanisation it can wreck upon the psyche of man. Thus, in my opinion, the German on the Clapham omnibus is not to be blamed for the many injustices committed under this man's rule. He seems to have been a mentally-imbalanced professional mass-hypnotist. Evidently that is how he has wielded such unwavering loyalty from amongst the unsuspecting German masses, and forced them into supplying co-operation for the waging of war without rhyme or reason. Many yogis in India possess the power of hypnosis; thank God they are not particularly keen on acquiring political power! Despite everything that was done to the Jewish community, the Russian prisoners-of-war, and the civilians in England and occupied Europe, I shall continue stubbornly to maintain that Herr Hitler's worst victims are the Germans themselves. Moral responsibility for the unjust activities carried on by the National Socialist regime functioning under Herr Hitler's arrant hypnotic influence, I insist, cannot be deposited on top of the head of the German; having fallen prey to his [probably yogic] hypnotic abilities, they have been forced into participation in all sorts of unjust acts, which, in every likelihood, they would never have done had they been allowed to avail unto themselves an opportunity to resist the man's spell-binding gaze and to retain their free-will; I have heard that Herr Hitler, even being an innate genius in the art, fine-tuned himself in hypnosis by extracting guidance from the book, *Psychologie des Foules*, authored by Mons. Gustave Le Bon. That is why the NS movement shows no major signs of any revival in Germany or elsewhere post-1945: with the death of the spell-caster, the spell of hypnosis is broken forever.

S>M>

Q.: My life is a tale of incessant misery. I have probably never known what it is to be happy. I have failed in absolutely everything in life. From the time of my

birth to the present moment, I have met with and known only failure. I do not wish to prolong this agony. I have decided to commit suicide. What is the best way? I am not proficient in the usage of firearms. Shall I starve to death?

B.: You say you have failed in everything. You also anticipate nothing but failure in the future. Therefore you say, I have set my mind upon suicide. But consider- is suicide failure-proof? If you have failed in everything, what makes you think your suicide attempt alone is going to succeed?

Q.: [seems stunned] Yes... I never thought of that. So, that option also seems to be ruled out! But now what am I to do? I am stuck between the devil and the deep blue sea! I cannot live anymore; my confidence in myself has totally eroded away. I am now being to understand that I cannot die also. If I am neither able to live nor able to die, what ought I to do?

B.: Simply cease to care- totally, about anything and everything. Forget the idea that you are a person. This is also death- in fact it is the only real and permanent death.

Q.: B. is advocating that I remain in a state of mental equilibrium free from thoughts. Is that not so? But this state is said to be exceedingly hard to attain.

B.: There is nothing to attain. Only give up everything. Every spurious accretion must be stripped away and discarded before the Self can be Realised.

S>M>

A rotund Telegu-speaking gentleman entered the Hall, prostrated to B., stood facing the sofa, extracted a few sheets of folded note-paper from his pocket, and immediately began reading out aloud:

Q: Does B. agree with the theory that the present occupants of India's northern region are invaders known as the Aryans? Is it true that they enslaved the weaker peoples amongst India's native races and pushed down to the south those whom they could not successfully enslave? Does such a hypothesis not explain why the Dravidian peoples are characterised by darkness of skin, while those living in the northern regions tend to be fairer? Where did the Aryan invaders come from, and what is their true home-land or mother-land: is it situated in Europe? Even Sri Krishna in the Bhagawad Gita calls Arjuna's behaviour un-Aryan when the latter, overcome with emotion caused by fraternal affection, lays down his arms and refuses to fight, ignoring his rightful duties as a kshatriya. The Germans have passed laws preventing their people from marrying Jews, in an effort, in their own words, "to prevent dilution and contamination in the purity of the stock of the Aryan blood". So therefore, who is the 'Aryan'? Is it the ancient Aryan priests of India who were responsible for the authorship of the Vedas? Are the brahmins of today the descendants of these priests?

B.: Why insist on reading Race-based underpinnings into Sri Krishna's words to the exclusivity of every other interpretation? For instance, Anaryajushtam might as well mean 'unworthy of being practiced by a cultured person'. The man seemed to want to argue further, but before he could say anything more, a compelling diversion arrived: a pair of rumbustious animals rushed into the Hall making, one might think, enough noise to make the roof quaver: a dog was furiously chasing a monkey. The monkey, sensing B. was the only safety for it, shot straight upto his sofa, leaped on to the master's lap, and from there clambered onto his shoulders. The attendant rushed forwards with a stick kept in the Hall for the purpose of threatening monkeys with: B. would not allow any to be actually beaten. B. stopped the attendant with a firm gesture of the hand, and there sat the monkey on the master, merrily grimacing and leering and rumbling to its heart's content at the dog barking away to glory below. The master kept compassionately stroking the creature's tail. With a sad droop of its tail, the dog finally went away after exhausting its energy on countless infructuous barks. The monkey gave a triumphant look around the Hall and majestically made its exit through the window.

B.: These simple creatures are indeed more blessed than man, whose head is filled with worries such as, 'What is the origin of my Race? Which derivatory genus thereof surviving today is its best representative?' Their concerns are happily rudimentary, restricted only to the basic requirements of bodily sustenance. They do not accumulate wealth and then worry, 'What will happen to all this after me? Will someone cart it all away one day?'. They are content if something is found to eat and water to drink. They live as God has intended them to live: without accumulation, be it of memories or of worldly possessions.

S>M>

Q.: But man alone is endowed with the ability to attain Brahmajnana.

B.: That is your opinion.

Q.: Can then an animal Realise the Self?

B.: It is not unheard of.

B. now looked at Chadwick, who was present in the Hall, squarely in the eye, and said:

B.: When you came here first, you asked [me] how the Guru's help is useful in bringing about Realisation. You were told that it makes the poisonous fangs of samsara ineffective. Now do you see?

C. merely looked uncomprehendingly vacant.

B.: Whilst the monkey was seated on this [pointing to his body], it was quite beyond the reach of the dog. Howl as it might, the dog could not sink its teeth into the monkey's flesh. It had to go away disappointed. Likewise, one who



has firmly caught hold of the Guru's glance of compassionate Grace has placed himself quite irrevocably beyond the reach of samsara. Samsara can then only menacingly bark at him; it is powerless to bite. For this, unconditional surrender is necessary.

C.: How can I tell whether my surrender is perfect or not?

B.: Questions or doubts, such as these included, arise no more. There are no more wants or cares.

S>M>

Q.:What is the meaning of B.'s prayer, 'Maal visham pattri, adhu thalai uttru iru munam, ninadhu arul pattridavaendum.'?

B.: The 'Body-am-I' idea must not be allowed to indurate itself. One must naturally feel alarmed and shocked to find himself habitating a body of form and shape; there is no use in trying to deliberately induce a feeling of alienation from the body. The idea of the bodily existence must become altogether unacceptable and intolerable. Then alone is Realisation made possible. One who feels comfortable with the bodily existence cannot Realise. One who thinks that Realisation is co-eval with the bodily existence is merely deluding himself. This intense vairagyam will come only when the truth is recognised: Samsara yields sorrow and sorrow only. People may argue, 'But life is commonly regarded as being a mixture of sorrow and happiness.'. For this precise reason, it is far removed from perfection, which ought to be happiness and happiness only. What is not permanent is not worth striving for. The so-called joys of samsara are fleeting and transitory in nature. For that reason, they are totally worthless. Bliss unshakeable, effortless and eternal, is to be had only in Realisation. Maal visham is the habit of identifying oneself with something, thus making it possible for the illusion of mind to arise; it is the same as avidya maya. If allowed to ossify, it kills one, for true death is not other than being trapped in samsara. If, before ignorance settles strongly upon the mind, the mind exposes itself to the Guru's compassionate Grace, Realisation becomes child's play. If one observes a poisonous weed growing somewhere, one must pluck it out by its roots and burn it; if neglected it grows into a huge tree, and then it will have become very difficult indeed to destroy. Success in worldly affairs waxes the ego bigger and stronger, and the sense of personal accomplishment makes its identification with the intellect more and more viscous. So, before one achieves anything in life, if one manages to introvert the mind, Realisation can be nabbed quite easily. This is why older people find it harder to progress in sadhana. Sri Ramakrishna has remarked, 'The parrot cannot be taught to talk when the membrane of its throat has hardened on account of old age.'. Passionate devotion towards the Higher Ideal must be cultivated in children at a young age, well before their sense of

a personal self is able to assert itself; for the deadliest danger is when the person finds a job; he imagines he is 'a self-sufficient entity'. It is [by me] observed that this pride of being able to support oneself materially or financially is a great hinderance to Realisation in the case of many people. Realisation needs you to surrender yourself totally and unconditionally. That will happen only if the feeling, 'I am helpless by myself; I cannot do anything; the only way out for me is to throw myself at the mercy of the Guru [or Randomness or Self or God or the Higher Power whether called by one of these names or any other] and keep quiet.' has completely enveloped the mind. If you think, 'I can support myself by earning a living for myself in this world.' it leads in the exact opposite direction to Realisation- away from. When asked to surrender, many people think they are being asked to surrender their moral obligation or spiritual quest to Realise. No. If you would Realise, you must surrender the "I" and that includes everything. So, before the Maal-visham of egoistic conceit thoroughly blinds one's eye of consciousness, one must fully open it to the Guru's merciful glance of Grace.

Q.: Should I quit my job if I want to Realise?

B.: It is pride in the activity that is condemned, not the activity of eking out a livelihood itself. Whether the body should work or not you cannot decide. The mind on the other hand is always in your control- atleast the direction of its orientation: introversion or extroversion.

S>M>

Q.: Can we say that B. came to Tiruvannamalai with the intention of becoming a sannyasi?

Someone in the Hall: B. has transcended the varnashrama-dharma.

B.: I had no idea why I was coming here and I had no say in the matter. Like an frog staring enthralled into the eyes of a snake instinctually moves toward it, I was mesmerised and drawn here. A sannyasi may have left home and he may be begging for food on the streets. Yet in fact he is a sadhaka only, so long as the slightest trace of the egoistic thought 'I am a sannyasi.' remains in him.

Q.: What is B.'s opinion on the practice of Caste-based discrimination?

B.: Sivavaakkiyar has sung:

சாதியாவது ஏதடா? சலம்திரண்ட நீரெலாம்

பூதவாசல் ஒன்றலோ, பூதம்ஐந்தும் ஒன்றலோ?

காதுல்வாளில், காரை, கம்பி, பாடகம்பொன் ஒன்றலோ?

சாதிபேதம் ஒதுகின்ற தன்மைஎன்ன தன்மையோ?

Q.: B. is in agreement?

Q.: Yes.

S>M>

Whenever any incoming mail piques the interest of the master, he reads it out in the Hall. An American Radio-announcer, Mr. Kenny Delmar, has written to the master, wishing he could visit personally. He however regrets that his busy schedule makes impossible, in the near future atleast, any travel to India. Ever since reading Mr. Brunton's Secret India, his mind is constantly thinking of Bhagawan, though he has no idea what B. might look like, apart from mental images gleaned from Mr. Brunton's vivid descriptions. A friend of his has promised to obtain a copy of a photograph of B. from an acquaintance, who had chanced upon one at Sri Aurobindo's place, and decided to keep it, since the man framed therein seemed "to radiate a peculiar, surreptitiously awe-invoking lusture from out of his eyes". If the impudence on his part, if any, in so doing would be pardoned, he wishes to announce that although he has never set eyes upon him, Mr. Delmar has ventured to render a poem about Sri B.:

He peacefully abides at the foot  
Of the Hill of the Holy Beacon unscalable;  
Untainted with the manner of the snoot,  
More than a continent away palpable  
Is his Reign of charming Grace  
Carried on with Supreme Mercy.  
In this world of unlikely solace,  
He is my only protecting Jersey.  
Day by day he waxes more in my heart;  
I wonder what his going to do  
With this incorrigible cretin of an upstart.  
Alas! If only my keenness grew  
To fully understand this great man's wisdom  
That I might become all the more frenzied with voracity  
His teachings devoid of animosity to Christendom  
In devouring with fervent alacrity.  
Forced to live with man so spiteful  
It pains me to be unable to break away  
From this bondage in the least not gainful.  
Yet towards my kind master's teaching I sway,  
Steadily and slowly but surely with perseverance.  
My longing for Light is of the utmost sincerity;  
Yet, being the child of unfortunate circumstance  
I cannot with wicked man break my solidarity.  
The day shall dawn when the might of God noble  
Shall reclaim this poor reticent soul he has sowed

Admire a people whose morality is mostly feeble.  
Thus I conclude my prayer with a head in solemnity bowed.

S>M>

Q.: I have heard that according to Ayurveda, the herb Rumex Vesicarius is supposed to endow the aspirant with the power of astral travel if consumed in a certain concoction of special preparation. Is it a fact?

B.: This [meaning himself] found a preparation made from the herb to be of efficacy in treating diarrhea. As for the siddhi of astral travel, why do you want it? Are you under the impression that it is going to give you happiness?

Q.: Why not? I can travel to worlds besides this one, and feast my eyes upon all sorts of novel and interesting sights and scenes available to be beheld there. Will this not be a fascinating experience, filled with happiness?

B.: Pleasure and happiness are not one and the same thing. There is sanchalam [restlessness] in pleasure; there is shanti [peace] in happiness. So long as there yet remains the possibility of anything to be perceived, you have never known shanti. So, if a world is seen, it means that the seer is not at peace with himself. Seeing one world is said to be misery by the wise; some want to see many worlds!

S>M>

Q.: Heeding B.'s advice, I have surrendered many, many times. Yet I see no ray of hope upon the horizon.

B.: Once unconditional surrender has taken place, no questions or problems can possibly arise. If the "I", scilicet, the questioner himself, has been given up for good, who remains to ask anything, or complain, or think, 'Alas! That this woeful affliction should cause so agonising a tribulation unto me!' or 'I wonder why I am yet to Realise, despite having surrendered to Bhagawan?'. The fact that questions and doubts still arise show that no surrender has actually taken place; only absolute surrender qualifies truly to be known as surrender. Thinking, 'I have surrendered.' is not surrender. One who has surrendered would never think such a thought, nor any other thought. A distinction may be discerned between practising surrender as a sadhana and actually surrendering. One who practises it as a sadhana thinks, 'I have entrusted the responsibility for my life in the hands of God. Hereafter I must not harbour any fears, worries or cares. God will take care of me.' whenever he encounters the misery of worldly cares. One who has actually surrendered has simply CEASED TO CARE a long time ago; if the sky were to crash down upon the earth it would not stir his nonchalance. It is no longer possible to elicit thoughts from him for whatever reason. Since he has long ago given up everything, including himself, he no longer has anything to think about or is there anyone in him to do the thinking. Only the latter surrender is known as

ananya sharanagathi; only this leads to Kaivalyam. People are so acclimatised to doing something with the mind that when asked to surrender, they plead, 'Yes, I want to surrender: please tell me what I should do.'; for such people the method of partial surrender is prescribed as a sadhana; in due course of time it leads to ananya sharanagathi in a sincere seeker- one who would readily give up everything for Realisation. Ananya sharanagathi is not a sadhana; one actually surrendering unconditionally would not have in him the slightest vestige of the idea 'I am giving up everything so that I can Realise.'; ananya sharanagathi is perfectly bereft of motive or purpose; its beauty lies not in 'doing' anything, but in totally giving up everything, not excluding even the thought, 'I have given up everything.'

Q.: But how to do this?

B.: I have just said that it is not to be done. Action [doing anything] is the anti-thesis of Relinquishment [totally giving up everything, including yourself].

Q.: Then what ought I to do?

B.: Give up everything and keep quiet.

Q.: So I must leave home just like B. and move into some forest-region uninhabited by man?

B.: Where your body might happen to be and what it might happen to be doing, is not within the purview of your control. That is the body's prarabdha. You attend to the mind and drive it Heart-wards. This alone is in your control.  
S>M>

Q.: It is said that the Jnani is God himself. How is it that despite this Godliness, a natural function of which must needs be the doing of good unto humanity, he prefers to live in isolation, ignoring the suffering of his fellow man? Has B. not heard of the maxim, 'Ubi cumque homo est ibi beneficio locus est.'?

B.: The Jnani is ignorant of suffering. Ignorantia sit beatitudo. He is awake to bliss only and he is conscious of bliss only.

Q.: What about us poor mortals? Does B. not feel sorry for the suffering of humanity?

B.: Suffering is in the mind only. All efforts to ameliorate suffering on the physical plane will yield only ephemeral results. The permanent way to get rid of suffering is to get rid of the sufferer, which is the suffering mind. Sufferer extinguished, no more suffering would be possible.

Q.: God must have had a good reason for having introduced all this suffering into the world.

B.: Yes.

Q.: What is the reason?

B.: So that you become disgusted with samsara, turn within, Realise and thereby arrive at a permanent solution to the problem of suffering. Your inferences about the sorry plight of the world are only objective knowledge. Such knowledge may be circumstantially correct, but it does not lead anywhere but to more and more painful births. So, to give up all knowledge is Jnana. Only that is wisdom. In a world where change is the only thing permanent, where Randomness and Entropy rule as Kings-in-duumvirate, what is done is eventually undone, what is built is razed to the ground and what is ravenously cherished is reduced into decayed mulch. Cicero has wisely observed, 'Natura vero si se sic habet ut quo modo initium nobis rerum omnium ortus noster adferat sic exitum mors: ut nihil pertinuit ad nos ante ortum sic nihil post mortem pertinebit.'. Such is nature's inexorable design. Yet man will not see the Truth and will foolishly keep on clinging to name and form, knowing all the while that it will surely lead him only into repeated ruin. Sattaimuni-siddhar has sung:

பாழான மாய்கைசென் றொழிவ தெப்போ ?  
பரந் தமனஞ் செவ்வையாய் வருவ தெப்போ ?  
வாளான விழியுடைய பெண்ணைச் சேரும்  
மயக்கமற்று நிற்பதெப்போ ? மனமே ஐயோ ?  
காழான உலகமத னாசை யெல்லாங்  
கருவறுத்து நிற்பதெப்போ ? கருதி நின்ற  
கோளான கருவிவிட்டு மேலே நோக்கிக்  
கூடுவது மேதனென்றால் மூலம்பாரே .

The totally ignorant Jnani whose mind is dead, on the other hand, knows that whatever seems to happen is only an appearance in the Real; he cannot be aware of diversity or variety; to Him, therefore, really, nothing ever happens, nothing could ever happen and nothing ever happened. Bidhyathae hridaya granthishchidyanthae sarvasamshayaha kshiyanthae chasya karmani thasmin dhrishtae paravarae. The Jnani who is drowned in the fathomless ocean of bliss that is the Aathman can only be 'aware'; he cannot be 'aware of'. The goings-on of the world are only a figment of the imagination. When ornaments are melted does anything happen to the Gold? Forms shift. The Adhishtanum, the Sadhvasthu never moves. It is the Real. You want to know God. Yet you also want the world to be free from misery. If this world were to be a perfectly happy place, why trouble to know God at all? Man's striving to know God is really the attempt to escape once and for all from this maddening world of pain, more pain and still yet more pain. [In the Apocrypha,] Jesus [has] said, 'Verily I say unto you, that even as a man cannot see with his eyes the heaven and the earth at one and the same time, so it is impossible to love God and the world. No man can in any wise serve two masters that are at

enmity one with the other: for if the one shall love you, the other will hate you. Even so I tell you in truth that ye cannot serve God and the world, for the world lieth in falsehood, covetousness, and malignity. Ye cannot therefore find rest in the world, but rather persecution and loss. Wherefore serve God and despise the world, for from me ye shall find rest for your souls.'

Q.: Will the man on the Clapham omnibus be able to appreciate all this abstruse, intricate philosophy?

B.: If not, for him awaits God's sweet path of Love. St. Augustine has wisely observed, 'Non intratur in veritatem nisi per caritatem.'

Q.: Can the Aathman be Realised by means of Love for God?

B.: Provided the Love serves so as to be an End in itself and is not intended to be a means to anything: it must be volitionless and motiveless.

Q.: Is Realisation an art or science?

B.: The former. It is the art of unconditional Love, that does not even expect to be loved in return. One who is burnt in the fiery crucible of this all-consuming Love has no complaints to make about the world, his life or their [perceived] shortcomings.

Q.: Does B. grant private interviews?

B.: Privacy? Where are the others? Are there any others? Whether you like it or not, whether you know it or not, you are always in solitude. Realise it. The Realised man is always alone but never lonely. The Jnani alone knows what privacy really is. He may stand nude in the middle of Downing Street, London and expose himself to ridicule from every single passer-by. Yet you cannot even lay a single scratch on his privacy. Why? Because HE IS NOT HERE. The Beyond has already devoured him. That is Real privacy. Other privacies are imaginary.

Q.: Aha! So this is the statement B. is trying to make by refusing to wear any clothes.

B.: How what is understood varies with respect to the temperament of the one who listens and assimilates.

S>M>

Q.: What logical evidence is there that I am not this body?

B.: Do you feel it in sleep?

Q.: After waking up there it is again, same as on the previous night, just before drifting off into sleep.

B.: Bodies come and go. You remain always as you are.

Q.: What is the logical proof that I am not this fleshy body but the formless Aathman? Is it a mere matter for belief? Is there no supporting empirical evidence?

B.: On the level of apparent reality itself, apparent reality does seem apparently real. Only when you transcend it do you see that it is total fiction, that it never existed.

Q.: So for the present I shall have to proceed on the basis of blind faith?

B.: Faith owes its allegiance exclusively to the realm of the intellect. It can take you only so far. The bhaktha discovers the Truth by unconditional Love; the one who engages in Jnana-vichara by unwavering Vairagyam. These two weapons are the magic wands with which to exorcise off the ego.

S>M>

At the end of the day Major Chadwick accosted me and said:

I have been staying here months. You arrived days ago. I have never seen the master so directly guiding anyone, so clearly giving instructions on precisely what to do... Wonder how you got attracted to the crap... Anyway, burn up all this poisonous NS literature, understood? Yes? That's my boy then...

Off he went.

2nd August, 1936

Q.: Is the Arunachala Hill the same as God?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Can I ask boons from it?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Will they be granted?

B.: [no answer]

Q.: What is the use in asking if the prayer is not going to be fulfilled?

B.: The one who puts his head inside a lion's mouth with the intention of counting how many teeth it has, the one of committing suicide, another one in an attitude of absent-mindedness and yet another one out of curiosity: all equally meet the same fate, which is total extermination.

Q.: At a circus the buffoons execute the feat with ease.

B.: This 5-faced Lion cannot be drugged with opium and deceived. There is no escape from His deadly jaws of Grace once they have begun to close in on you.

Q.: So this is the significance of, 'Arunai endru enna... valai thappumo?!'

B.: Quite so.

Q.: I also want to get trapped betwixt these blissful jaws that have ensnared

B.; what ought I to do?

B.: Keep coming around the Hill.

Q.: According to the Advaita school, God is verily the formless Aathman. Arunachala has a definite form and shape. This contradiction must needs



invariably arise if we address the Hill as God.

B.: Where the seer is one whose mental capacity for perception of name and form has been dissolved and destroyed in the Light of True Knowledge which dawns solely in the perfect absence of mind, Arunachala is seen never with form.

S>M>

Q.: What is the turiya state? Is it the same as the Sahaja-sitithi of the Jnani?

B.: The denuded mind is in Turiya. The dead mind has lost itself in and to the Sahaja-stithi.

Q.: Then what is Aathman?

B.: The Theosophist Mead has, in the book, *Studies in Hellenistic Theosophy*, his translation of the works of the Egyptian priest Mercurius ter Maximus, rendered a description of It as follows: 'That which is never troubled, which cannot be defined, which no colour hath nor any figure, which is not turned, which hath no garment, which giveth light; that which is comprehensible unto itself [alone], which doth not suffer change; that which no body can contain.' This is the same as THAT which is indicated by the words: 'Nanthahprajnam na bahishprajnam nobayathahprajnam na prajnanaghanam na prajnam naprajnam adhrishtam avyavaharam agrahyam alakshanam achintyam avyapadeshyam ekathmapratyayasaram prapanchopashamam shantam shivam advaitham....'

Q.: All these are only negative definitions.

B.: Exactly. The mind cannot comprehend the Aathman; all it can do is to subside, so that the Aathman may be revealed. 'Withdraw into thyself, and It will come; [cease to will,] and it comes to pass; throw out of work the body's senses, and thy [Inherent] Divinity shall come to birth [பிரகாசிக்குமம்]; purge from thyself the brutish torments—things of matter.'

Q.: Who then is the Guru? How does he help the aspirant to acquire knowledge of the Aathman?

B.: Jesus said, 'Verily that which a man loveth, for which he leaveth everything else but that, is his God.' Whatever naturally and effortlessly arrests your attention to such a degree that it does not permit you to think about anything else, is the Guru. Sai Baba has said, 'Take a potsherd for your Guru and see if you succeed in the Quest or not.' So, what actually matters is your own unconditional Love for the chosen ideal, not its own qualities, characteristics, etc.. The Guru does not help to acquire the Aathman. He merely removes the obstacles to it.

Q.: B. says that the spiritual Heart is the source and support of everything, and that the entirety of the manifested cosmos springs only therefrom.

B.: What is the doubt in it?

Q.: But in the essay 'Who-am-I?' he has written, 'ஐகம் தோன்றும்போது சொரூபம் தோன்றாது; சொரூபம் தோன்றும் (பிரகாசிக்கும்) போது ஐகம் தோன்றாது.'

B.: Where is the contradiction?

Q.: The spiritual Heart alone is referred to as the Aathmaswarupam. When this is shining in an unobscured manner, how can a cosmos be manifested out of it?

B.: In the Absolute Parabrahman, there is no scope for any world or jivatman or God to exist. When the ego has gone, no world is available to be seen and no seer is available to see anything. The statement that the world springs out of the Aathman is made merely from the sadhaka's point of view: Aavihi sannihitham guhacharannama mahatpadhamthraithathsamarpitham yejathpranannimimishathcha yadhethajjanatha sadhsadhvaraeinyam param vijnanadhyadhvarishtam prajanam. The absolute standpoint is only this: Na nirodho na chothpaththihi na bandho na cha sadhakaha na mumukshu na vai muktha ithyesha paramarthatha.

S>M

Q.: I am sitting in this Hall for the past 3 weeks. I am yet to gain any novel experiences. Perhaps I am not mature enough to obtain the same. Could it be so?

B.: What do you mean in saying that you do not experience anything? You are always in fact experiencing the experienter; only be conscious or remain aware of it.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: The expectation to see something or get something is the handiwork of the ego. Remain as you are. That is the natural state.

Q.: What should I be conscious of?

B.: Consciousness is always [conscious] of Itself. Only do not hinder it by allowing the ego to arise.

Q.: How to kill the ego which is hiding the blissful Brahman from view?

B.: Ignore it completely and it will go away of its own accord. Attempts made to kill it make it grow stronger and stronger.

Q.: When sitting in front of a Jnani, what is the proper mental temperament to be adopted?

B.: People try to purposely silence the mind. They only succeed in making the mind more and more rebellious. If you ignore the mind and its promptings whilst in the presence of One who is awake to the Reality, the waves of Silence emanating from Him will automatically engulf and whisk away your mind for [atleast] some time. Then you will know what it is to remain in the state of effortless awareness of being. Even after tasting such intoxicating bliss

but once, the mind repeatedly tries to regain it. So, whilst in the physical proximity of the Jnani, do not try to fight with the mind and do not attempt to silence it or make it return to its source; rather, pose no obstruction to the Higher Power from silently re-absorbing your mind from the inside. What sadhana of millenniums of years of arduous tapas may fail to reveal, is revealed in a trice in the presence of the mindless One. Again, when the Jnani speaks, do not make the capital mistake of intellectualising his words. Do not try to do anything with the words. Do not make an effort to implement what, in your opinion, the words are trying to say. Keep quiet. The words are not meant for the mind or faculty of intellection at all. They are seeds of Jnana that are planted by the Guru deep, deep down. If you keep periodically digging up a seed to check whether the same has sprouted or not, it will never sprout. Do not permit the intellect to bespoil [for yourself the benevolent effect of] the Guru's outstretched helping hand of compassionate divine Grace. He who would try to 'do' something with the Guru's priceless Jnana-upadesha is tout a fait flinging it into the nearest heap of garbage.

S>M>

Q.: What is the highest Happiness that is open for man to experience?

B.: Destruction of volition.

Q.: According to Bhagawan Aathman is one only. But the Mandukyopanishad divides it into 4: jagrat, swapna, sushupthi and turiya. Why?

B.: Only the substratum underlying these states is the Real. All these states including the Turiya are only mirage-like appearances over the Self. Reality is in Turiyateetha only.

Q.: How to make the mind Realise the Self? Can we purify it so that it becomes competent to apprehend the Reality?

B.: Even the pure mind or the mind engrossed in the Turiya state or the 'I-I' Consciousness, where the mind is utterly denuded of thoughts and vrittis, can really never be competent to reach the Real. Such a surrendered mind, however, is eventually absorbed finally into the Self when the destruction of its faculties of extroversion is totally complete. Then the mind dies. Such a dead mind alone is the cherished state of Sahaja-Jnana-stithi. This state alone frees one from re-birth.

Q.: Has Maya caused the ego to veil the true Self of man?

B.: What is Maya?

Q.: Illusion.

B.: Who claims to be afflicted with the illusion?

Q.: I know that I have not Realised the Aathman.

B.: You say "I". What do you mean by "I"?

Q.: Myself.

B.: What is your self?

Q.: The mind functioning within the body.

B.: What is mind?

Q.: The habit of thinking.

B.: What is thinking?

Q.: Emergence of thoughts.

B.: What is a thought?

Q.: Thoughts may be memories, desires, resentment, envy, anger, other emotions or feelings, or preferences towards certain things, aversions towards certain others, and indifference towards the rest.

B.: You are relating your system of classification of thoughts. The import of the question was, what is a thought made out of?

Q.: Neural connections in the brain, perhaps? I do not know....

B.: All thoughts are made out of subjective consciousness of being, which localised sense of being in turn derives its light from the Real Self. So, thus- Absolute Self\_\_ > Reflected-light-of-consciousness\_\_ > Primogenitalis-tenebra-or-the-notion-of-"I"\_\_ > Tendancy-of-objectification\_\_ > Faculty-of-Intellection\_\_ > Mind\_\_ > Thoughts-and-emotions\_\_ > Memories\_\_ > Personality\_\_ > Jivatman's-belief-in-its-own-distinctive-existence-in-an-objective-world. All these 9 fortresses must be stormed and destroyed before the Self can be Realised. The order must necessarily be from bottom-upwards. So, the sadhaka must first abandon the erroneous belief that the world is an objectively real entity in itself. This system of classification is for the purpose of exegetic exposition only. In truth the ego is one only, and looking for it, even this is never found. The quest for the Self leads to the quest for the undertaker thereof, namely the ego; the quest for the ego results in discovery of the Self.

Q.: So it is ahamkara-vichara, not Aathma-vichara!

B.: Quite so.

S>M>

An old lady with her grandson has arrived in the ashram. They come from Munmaud, Nashik. The woman is very old, frail-looking and almost blind. B. conversed with her freely in Marati. I was unable to follow anything. Later I gathered B. had asked her to continuously think, 'Raam, Raam, Raam, Raam, Raam....' without allowing any other thought to arise. They have brought 2 huge vessels. During the meal-time they are discovered to be Bhaturas and Aambata-bhaji. They had heard B. would not take anything unless all were given a share; thus they had taken the trouble to prepare and bring this! The food brought was still warm. I was wondering how it was possible, since Nashik takes more than a week to reach from here. Later from the boy's

broken English I discovered that they are temporarily put up at Dhintivanam, at a relative's place, which relative seems to be running a rice-mill there.

S>M>

Q.: If I abandon the quest itself and keep quiet, will I be able to Realise?

B.: If you abandon everything and keep quiet, no questions arise at all. Only Kaivalyam remains then.

Q. Then what about my Realisation?

B.: One who wants it does not thereby obtain it. The quest for the Real may be motivated by the desire for Realisation in the beginning. Later on as vairagyam intensifies, all desires drop off, including the desire to see God, attain Realisation, etc.. Finally all ideas are destroyed and the mind is pulled back into the Self and killed. This is how Realisation takes place.

S>M>

Q.: Is not the Marx-Engelsian doctrine- of a classless and stateless society as the ideal model for human civilisation- perfectly suited to bringing about amicable harmony amongst all peoples on the earth?

B.: Each wants to adopt for the country what he feels would suit him best.

S>M>

Q.: Are the elaborate yagnas and homas [fire-sacrifices] mentioned in the Vedas of any relevance in contemporary times?

B.: The real sacrifice is sacrifice of the ego. Where one is not prepared to give up the false ego, mere ceremonial pomp and show do not serve the intended purpose. Listen to the following story:

After the Mahabharatha war was over, the victorious King Yudhishtara of Hastinapura performed an ostentatious yagna so as to ensure the well-being of the subjects of his kingdom. The yagna was conducted in a grandiosely opulent manner; expensive and sumptuous gifts were given away to everyone. The yagna was so grand that people would not stop singing praises of it. At the commencement of the festivities, King Yudhishtara proudly walked up to Sri Krishna and said, 'My Lord, by the combined effect of your blessings and the might of us 5 brothers, I am now the soverign monarch of India! See what a grand sacrifice I have arranged to please the gods!'. Sri Krishna did not reply, but merely smiled and kept quiet, absent-mindedly, as it were, twirling the peacock-feather on his crown. Later, just when a group of people sitting in the hall where the yajna was being conducted were lavishly showering praise on King Yudhishtara for being so generous a monarch, a strange little mongoose trotted inside. It was the most peculiar mongoose anyone had ever seen. One side of the mongoose looked normal, like the fur found on any other mongoose. Much to the astonishment of everyone, however, the other side gleamed pure gold!The mongoose cast a glance at

the people assembled in the hall. Next it rolled over the floor and looked at itself, as if expecting a change in its appearance. Then it rolled over the floor again. Nothing happened. Then the mongoose looked contemptuously at all the people in the crowded hall, specifically Yudhishtara, and spoke disdainfully thus: 'I am unable to imagine why people insist of calling this a great yagna! This is a mere wasteful show of extravagance!' The mongoose shook his head as though severely disappointed with something. 'This is not a yagna at all, in my opinion!' Yudhishtara was so pained by these words uttered by the strange mongoose that he could even think as to how it was that a mongoose had spoken. He helplessly looked at all the people assembled there. 'I have followed all the rules required to be followed during the yagna. I have religiously done everything that the wise ones of this court asked me to. Why therefore is this mongoose telling me all these things?' The pandits of the court turned to the mongoose in great wrath. 'O! foolish mongoose! This is the most glorious yagna that the history of mankind has ever seen. It marks the end of the greatest war ever fought amongst the kshatriyas of this country. Are you aware how much wealth King Yudhishtara has given away to the poor and the needy? It enrages us to observe that you have the audacity to come here and tell us that this is not at all a yagna...How dare you insult the King in such an affronteous manner?' All of them directed baleful and vitriolic looks at the mongoose, as if expecting it to immediately utter an apology and scurry away from the place; but that was not to be. The mongoose confidently looked at everyone and smiled after its own unique ainigmatic fashion. 'I will now tell you a story. Having listened thereto, you can then decide about the greatness of this yagna...' The mongoose then proceeded to relate its tale: Once upon a time there lived a very poor old man in a small village. His wife, son and daughter-in-law were living with him. They lived a hand-to-mouth existence. Since each member of the family was an advanced tapasvin, none of them bothered about the family's poverty. Unfortunately, a great famine now struck the kingdom. The poor family, which already had had only meagre amounts of food for consumption everyday, now starved almost on a routine basis. One day, unable to witness passively the enormous suffering daily underwent by his family, the old man went out and with great difficulty managed to procure some rice for the household. His wife and daughter-in-law cooked the grains and divided the food into four parts, one for each one of them. Surprisingly, as they were just about to eat the food, someone knocked at their door. The old man opened the door. Outside he saw a weary traveler looking almost dead from hunger and fatigue. The old man immediately brought the man inside. After facilitating the man to wash himself, the old man spoke to the guest thus: 'O! Respected sir, are you

feeling hungry?' The exhausted traveler sadly nodded his head. 'I have been wandering for several days now without any food...' Forthwith, the old man, without the slightest hesitation, offered the traveler his food. 'You have come to our house at the appropriate time. We were about to have our meal. Please eat my portion of the food and satisfy yourself!' Without pausing to think, the traveler readily poured into his own mouth the old man's portion of the food. The others in the family watched the guest eating, leaving their own food untouched. The traveler, however, did not seem to be satisfied. He looked at the old man guiltily, as if he was still hungry. The old man's wife came forward and offered the guest her portion of the food. The old man became distraught that his emaciated wife should be handing over her pitifully small portion of the food to the traveler. He took her aside and spoke to her thus: 'You are under no obligation to sacrifice your belly like this. True, he is our guest. So, I have given him my portion of the food. But why you?' His wife smiled. 'Why do you draw this distinguishing line between us? Am I not your faithful wife? I have promised to take part in your life through everything, be it misery or joy. If you are willing to stay hungry so as for the cause of feeding a guest, I think it is my unequivocal duty also to do the same...' The traveler ate the second portion of the food; that fact notwithstanding, he was still hungry. The old man looked profoundly unhappy when the son gave the guest his portion of the food. The father watched sadly when the son held his parents' hands in his with emotional tears running down his cheeks. 'Father! Mother! You are not merely my parents; you are the only world I have ever known. I have learnt from the sastras that it is the patent duty of every son to fulfill the dormant wishes of his parents. You wish to feed this guest. You were even willing to give up your own portions of the food to satisfy his hunger. Now it is my turn to fulfill my parents' desire and ensure our guest is happy...' The traveler had the third portion. Yet he looked hungry. Now the daughter-in-law of the house came forward with her share. Upon having beheld this, the other three rushed forward towards her, feeling thoroughly miserable that such an adverse stroke of fortune should have come to pass. The old man said in a dejected voice, 'My daughter, I cannot let you starve. Such a prospect is morally abhorrent.' The old woman and the son also agreed with this opinion and tried to dissuade the noble lady from giving away her share. The daughter-in-law smiled and said: 'Father! The sacrifice that the three of you have made is the greatest sacrifice ever made in all the 3 worlds. Nothing can come close to it. I wish to be a part of this divine yagna. Please give my portion of the food also to the guest and let us satisfy his hunger.' Though the other three tried to persuade the daughter-in-law out of the act, she remained adamant and the fourth portion of the food also went to the traveler. The traveler was

thoroughly satisfied and he was about to exit the house. At that instant the house was ablaze with a brilliant effulgence. The Gods who had come in the guise of the traveler blessed the entire family. Said they, 'You have performed the greatest yagna in the world. For this you have attained Moksha. Come with us!' The people assembled in the hall of the royal court to watch Yudhishtara's yagna heard in arrant stupefaction, caused by wonder, as the mongoose continued its tale: I happened to be passing the house at the time. After I saw the family attain Moksha, I spotted a few scraps of the food which the family had given to the traveler, lying on the floor. I went closer, drawn to the morsels as if on account of a magnetic pull. Then, by accident, I fell on the food! That side of my body which fell on the food was transformed into gold! The mongoose finished his tale as he proudly showed everyone his gleaming golden coat on the one side of his body. Said the mongoose, 'There was no more of the food left. So I could not transform the other side of my body and it retains its regular hue.' The mongoose smiled morosely. 'Since then I have been traveling all over the earth from one yagna to another, in the hope that I might see another yagna which would be as great as the one performed by the old man and his family.' The mongoose pointed to the normal half of his body. 'As you are able to see, I am still waiting. I thought that- since so many people were singing praises of your yagna- probably this would be the other yagna that I am looking for. Evidently, I have been proven wrong.' The mongoose eyed King Yudhishtara with a doleful eye. 'Apparently, your yagna is not as great as the one performed by the family of this poor man....' Before the stunned King Yudhishtara could proffer any reply, Sri Krishna, who had been watching the whole scene with a merry twinkle in his eye, unobtrusively twirled the peacock-feather on his crown a little. That very moment the mongoose vanished from there!

A hushed, impressed silence had fallen over B.'s hall. Everyone stared at the master in awe. He had acted out the story, as he always did. His gestures always communicated more and better than the content of the story itself that had been related. The expressions on his face changed continually; torrents of tears had streamed down his face, choking his voice, whilst each member of the family came forward, prepared to starve to the point of extinction if necessary to feed the guest, in the story. Only after some time was the question posed to him by one of the listeners:

Q.: Please enlighten us as to the moral of the story.

B.: Substance-over-form.

Q.: I have come across the phrase in a textbook on the Double-entry Book-keeping system. Here in what sense does B. use it?



B.: Sri Krishna says, Whoever with Love offers me a leaf, etc.. So, what matters is the purity of intent underlying the deed. Sri Kannappan gave Shiva flesh as Naivaedya. Did the Lord not accept it?

Q.: Being a member of the adhvasi community, the hunter could know no better; therefore he was excused, I suppose.

B.: How casually you refer to him as an adhvasi! Are you prepared to gouge both of your eyes out using a blunt metal rod- so that the eyes should not suffer damage in the process of extraction- and offer them to Shiva?

Q.: If I accomplish it, is Self-Realisation guaranteed for me?

B.: Now do you see the "adhvasi"'s greatness? Did he ask this question before plucking his eyes out? Did he have any expectations or questions or reservations at all? His act was spontaneous, natural... His Love expected nothing in return. He had no desire even to be loved in return. That is unconditional Love and that alone is real Love. The Jnani, who is Love itself, knows only Love and to only Love. He is not aware of anything apart from [this unconditional] Love. Concerns of the world are alien to him.

Q.: What about worship made with broken coconuts, flowers, banana-fruits, incense-sticks and camphor?

B.: If there is no Love, can it be of any use? If a leaf or mere water is offered, it is accepted, provided there is Love, says Sri Krishna. Love is a sine qua non in any sacrifice or offering. You may offer all the wealth in the 3 worlds, but if it is done mechanically it would only amount to an insult: you might as well not do it. People perpetrate all sorts of unconscionable acts, and then go to Guruvayour or Tirupathi or some other place and offer God 'a share in the booty'. Some make a prayer before-hand: 'Dear God, if this heist succeeds, you get a 20% share...'

Q.: Will God in His Infinite Mercy spare such persons? Or does Hell surely await them?

B.: Is it possible to slip away from the consequences of wrong-doing? Sooner or later you will have to face them; sometimes, immediately even. When 'this' was at skandashramam, one man approached with a curious proposal.

Together with his cronies, he had hatched a plot to steal away the jewels of the moolavar ambal, Thripurasundari, at the Thirukkazhugkundram temple, and replace it with fakes. By befriending an unsuspecting one amongst the trustees, he had succeeded in acquiring temporary access to the key to the palliyarai, in that brief while managing somehow to impress that key's image onto a wet clay-mould; he proudly handed me the duplicate for examination. He had heard of mystical herbs growing on the Thiruvannamalai Hill, and mystical siddhas living there still in the body. He wanted to know where the particular herb was growing which could turn his body, at will, invisible, so that

his dacoity might not be detected. He had waited at a near-by spot until 'this' was alone, so that he could boldly approach, and freely communicate his unusual requirements. His friends were anxiously peeping in from outside. If 'this' helped him by giving him the requisite information, 'this' would obtain a reward of 1/5th of the melted gold, it was promised. To convince 'this', he had even brought a brass plate, some vermilion-powder and a big block of camphor. He spread the powder on the plate, made a small clearing in the middle of it, placed the camphor there, lighted it, and saying, 'If you tell me where the herb is, I swear- provided I do not get caught- you will definitely be given 1/5th of the melted gold.', in his enthusiasm, heavily brought down his hand, intending to put out the flame. His aim went awry. His misfortune was that he had placed the plate on an uneven surface of rock; when the plate was forcefully struck, the lighted camphor-piece rebounded and went straight into his mouth, gaping wide open with the expectation of securing the swami's agreement for his clever plans. His petrified friends watched, immobile, from outside. He gagged and retched; lest anything untoward should happen 'this' gave a blow to the back of his head and he spat out the camphor-piece; then he dranked the water he was given; but he would not stop screaming. He ran down from the place with his friends, yelling with all the air in his lungs, 'This sadhu has cursed all our plans... Now if we do it, we will definitely get caught... Alas! that I came to see this wretched fellow...!' All along I had never opened my mouth to say a word to the prospective bandit. Later, Perumal, Kunju and others came and saw a shiny plate, some scattered vermilion-powder, and a big key on the floor. Everyone wanted to know what it all was. I kept quiet; the men would still not have left the town...

Q.: Sri B. could have responsibly called the police...

B.: What for? No more crime possible from him, from that instant onwards...

Q.: What makes B. so sure?

B.: People's minds are open books to the Jnani. He does not need to strain himself to have to see. There is no effort involved in glimpsing; nor is it at all deliberate. It is merely an incidental observation: he never judges anyone; he cannot, for judging is possible only when the first mind, that engages in it, is available. When you see someone on the street, you automatically, sub-consciously register that he is tall or short, fat or thin, dark-skinned or fair, and so on, although the information does not really make any difference to you. Likewise here.

Q.: How did B. cure that man of his criminal tendencies?

B.: Nothing was, or is ever, done by 'this'. Things go on of their own accord.

Q.: But how did that thief reform? I gather B. did not offer him any homilies.

B.: Once the mind beholds the totally absolute grip that is the Higher-Power's grasp, if only for a fraction of a second, thereafter it sincerely commences to try not to do anything that it knows it ought not to: so much so that eventually it stops straying away from its captor, its source. That is Realisation. That is why the Jnani's presence is spoken of in lofty terms by the sacred texts. What centuries of learning fail to reveal, the Jnani's presence reveals in a trice. The Jnani cannot substitute your sadhana. What then is his use? He gives you this 'first-glimpse' into the Aathman. He reveals it to be first-hand, to be that which intimately abides as the core of your being, to be vibrating in your own consciousness all the time as "I-I". That is the import of the Guru's Jnana-upadesha. Until then man foolishly argues that God exists or does not exist. But after this experience has blasted him, he keeps quiet. He has experienced something first-hand. Faith and belief in something can be toppled away quite easily if you present a man with something that is more attractive. Do not people change their religion? But can experience be gainsain? In men bringing about this transition or shift, from a God who is the subject-matter of intellectual discussions at philosophers' conventions, to a God who is the subject-matter of direct, subjective experience or awareness, is the role of the Jnani in the world. He de-conceptualises and de-intellectualises God and gives Him to the mature aspirant in a way that can be felt by the latter as the experience of his own Self.

Q.: I am unable to acquire any such glimpse into the Self in B.'s presence. Why? Where lies my error? What is the remedy?

B.: It needs maturity in introversion of mind. Only graduates are admitted into doctoral-thesis programmes. Those who have long been sadhakas on one marga or the other find the Jnani's effortless radiation of peace to be palpable. Nevertheless, even in the case of others, the effect is there: only you do not feel it. Someday it will blossom into ripeness.

Q.: How much time will it take?

B.: Why do you want to know?

Q.: To give me confidence.

B.: Instead of anticipating the dawn of wisdom some day in the future, remain in the natural state here and now.

Q.: How?

B.: Remain without thinking thoughts, but effortlessly so.

Q.: Impossible.

B.: B. cannot do sadhana for you. The horse can only be led to the pond.

வாழ்ப் பழத்தை உரித்து வாயில் ஊட்டினாலும் அதை முழுங்கமாட்டேன் என்று பிடிவாதம் பிடித்தால் என்ன செய்யலாம் ?

S>M>

Q.: The man on the Clapham omnibus will never understand that God is to be sought inwardly. He will continue offering money at temple hundiyals... Is it wrong to offer God money? It is our own money that we are offering after all...

B.: Do you think God is interested in your worldly riches? Are YOU going to make Him rich? Does he not already own you and everything that you possess?

Q.: What then shall I offer God? Fruits, flowers or sweets? Anyway these things are not personally consumed by God; the naivaedya is only a symbolic offering...

B.: Offer Him your mind. That is the best offering. Really nothing is yours to offer. Everything verily has always been His. So, surrender is only giving up the wrong notion that there ever could be anything to surrender.

S>M>

Q.: According to your teachings, everything is an illusion. I mean to ask you, sir, about your own experience. If everything that exists is an illusion, are you real or not? I see you placidly perched upon this sofa. Are you there or not?

B.: No. I am not there. REALITY ALONE IS.

Q.: Then who is talking to me now from the Sofa? Reality, being the formless Absolute, does not do any talking, I gather.

B.: Who is talking to you? Your own mind is talking to you.

Q.: What! You are merely my own mind?! Am I to take this seriously?

B.: Just like water does not care whether it quenches thirst or not, the Truth does not care whether it is Seen or not. Either way it abides as the Real and remains so. All problems, questions and doubts are for the ego only.

Q.: If God knows everything why did He permit ignorance to steal over man?

B.: Has God made a proclamation saying, 'I have permitted the ego to plunge man in illusion.'?

Q.: No, but is ignorance not a fact in the case of most people, the only exceptions being rare cases like yourself?

B.: That is the mistake. No, ignorance is never a fact. It is fiction!

Q.: In that case, I am already enlightened!

B.: Quite so.

Q.: Make room for me on that Sofa, then. Move aside.

B.: [laughing] Why not? [Stands up]

Q.: Kindly do not mortify me like this. I was joking, sir. Please sit down. Your people are all staring at me.

B.: [resumes his seat]

Q.: Is it not a fact that I am an unenlightened man?

B.: Illusion is illusory in character. It is like the horns of a hare or the square-root of minus one: an impossible fiction. Look for the one who supposes his own ignorance and only Reality remains.

Q.: Then who is the one who engages in the quest to discover Reality?

B.: Look for him. He disappears. Only Reality is found always to have remained.

Q.: So the past never happened, the present is not happening, and the future is not going to happen...

B.: Exactly.

Q.: But who is now making the search for the Real Self?

B.: Again the answer can only be- Look for him.

Q.: But you just said he does not exist!

B.: Forget what I said. You make your own search and arrive at your own discovery.

Q.: Each one must find out for himself, eh, sir?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: Do people Realise naturally in B.'s presence or does B. force them to Realise?

B.: Sri Ramakrishna describes 3 classes of physicians. No one can Realise on his own. A mother will force her own son to learn to read and write everyday. She will advice her neighbour's son a few times to learn to read and write, but leave it at that. Likewise, if someone surrenders himself heart and soul to the Guru, the Guru is forced to take responsibility for his Realisation. For this unconditional surrender is necessary. If you cannot surrender unconditionally, atleast surrender yourself partially; in due course of time that will ripen into ananya sharanagathi.

Q.: How can a Jnani show such partiality? Is he not a man of God? Should he not force Realisation on all impartially?

B.: The Jnani is helpless in bringing about Realisation in him who would not surrender or him who is lacking in vairagyam to escape from non-Reality.

Q.: How to cultivate desire to surrender, and how vairagyam?

B.: Only by repeatedly trying to surrender and only by repeatedly turning away from the objects of the world the mind. Sincerity is necessary, not thinking, 'I must be sincere.'. Jnana-vichara and ananya-sharanagathi are the only two ways to Kaivalyam. Really the variation in them is in the nomenclature only. The true import of surrender is the genuine feeling, 'Not I, but Thou; not my Will, but Thine.', not saying with the mouth 'Yes, I surrender.' and then letting the mind run riot after its old patterns of habituation of thought. 'GIVE UP EVERYTHING.' is the spiritual message of the world's ancient Sages. It is that

simple. Everything else is only a watered-down modification of this pristine message, to suit temperaments of varying magnitudes of ignorance. This mental renunciation alone is the real renunciation. Its objective is manonirvanam or mental-nudity.

Q.: What about the sorry plight of one who is neither able to inquire 'Who-am-I?' nor surrender? Is he left in perpetuity to be tossed hither and tither upon the cruel ocean of samsara? Will the cruel arm of fate never relinquish its evil hold upon him?

B.: Eventually he may meet his Guru. But why do you worry about others? Attend to what you have come here for, and to that alone. Others can take care of themselves. It is indeed a great thing if we can take care of ourselves. There is no need to worry about others. One blind man cannot lead another. Attend to yourself first and foremost. First let us ourselves strike the Light; then we can show humanity the Light.

S>M>

Q.: I speak, read and write 18 languages fluently. How many languages does B. know?

B.: Are you conversant in my one and only language?

Q.: Yes, I know Tamil very well. I have written a commentary on the Panniru Thirumurai, for which, recently, I have been awarded with an 'honourary Philosophiae Magister decoration' from the Annamalai University.

Chadwick: [having just entered the Hall and heard the last few words] B. has long ago received his decoration straight from Lord Annamalai Himself; he does not need any universities.

Q.: யார் இந்த வெள்ளைப் பனைமரம் ?

B.: My language is the silent language of the Heart; it can neither be spoken nor be written.

Q.: Then what is its use or purpose? It is like a dog that can neither ferociously bark nor cheerfully wag its tail- an instrument devoid of possibility for meaningful application.

B.: Does Love need purpose?

Q.: Anything and everything requires purpose.

B.: You find yourself in this body; has it never occurred you to raise the question of what might be the purpose of the bodily existence?

Q.: The body has a natural cause: it is born because the parents procreate.

B.: Are you one with the body?

Q.: Am I the Aathman? Then why do I have a body?

B.: Does the body proclaim itself to be itself? Does the body say that it has a body?

Q.: No.

B.: Does the Aathman say that it has a body?

Q.: I have never seen the Aathman. I do not know what it is. Vedanta is not my field of expertise.

B.: Never mind Vedanta. Who says that he finds himself in a body owing to the fact that his parents procreated? Does the body say it or does the Aathman say it?

Q.: As far as I know, neither.

B.: Who says it, then?

Q.: I.

B.: What do you mean by "I"?

Q.: I am shocked to discover that to this elementary question I am able to find no answer.

B.: When you have found the answer to it, then you will know the universal language of humanity, which is Love.

Q.: What is the answer, then?

B.: The permanent disappearance of the questioner.

Q.: I am baffled.

B.: Come around the Hill today evening. It will be clear.

P>S>

The following does not purport to be Legal advice, and therefore may not be construed as such: I do entertain doubts about the veracity of this questioner's claim, for, to the best of my knowledge, lawfully only a University established by and under the authority of the Imperial Council can confer such honours; Annamalai University was floated by an Act of the Madras Legislative Council.

3rd August, 1936

Q.: After conversing with several devotees here, I have arrived at a rough observation that Sri B. gives spiritual advice which pertains to every conceivable genre, depending upon the inclination, maturity or palate of the aspirant in question. What, if any, is his nativistic teaching?

B.: [no response]

Q.: Is it Silence?

B.: Yes.

Q.: For those unfit to understand it?

B.: They are advised to keep quiet. [Summa iru.]

Q.: For those even this?

B.: The inquiry 'Who-am-I?' is suggested.

Q.: For those like me who lack the determination to practise this inquiry?

B.: Unconditional surrender.

Q.: To whom shall I surrender? To Sri Bhagawan or to my Guru Sri Chandrasekara Barathi of the Sringeri Mutt?

B.: Does surrender need a recipient? Simply surrender or let go of everything.

Q.: If I let go of everything, is Mukthi assured unto me?

B.: To let go of everything is to let go of this question also.

Q.: So, expecting a reward for surrender is not appropriate?

B.: How can one who has surrendered expect anything? To surrender is to give up the spurious 'you' once and for all. When you are not there at all, where is the question of expecting or anticipating anything? Who would be there to do the expecting or anticipating? If there is still anyone left to engage in expecting or anticipating, no surrender has really taken place.

Q.: If I give up everything, what will happen to my body? How then will it be able to find food for itself, leave alone earn a living or maintain a family?

B.: Were you asked to neglect the body? You were asked to not deliberately take care of the body- that is all. How is it that you translate the directive, 'Let go of everything.' into 'Neglect the body and its duties.'? The problem in its totality lies in the fact that you are labouring under the delusive impression that it is you as the ego who are maintaining your body, attending to your vocation, taking care of the household and everything else that it has fallen upon the body's prarabdha to execute in this lifetime. So, when asked to give up everything, that is to say give up the ego, you give yourself to understand that your regular routine will come to a standstill. No. Whether you are aware of it or not, whether you like the fact or not, the truth is that it is the Higher Power that does everything. We imagine ourselves to be the doer. When asked to give up the personal self, we imagine that the body's actions also should come to cessation, because according to us, it is the personal self that is the cause and source of all action. No. It is a mistake. The ego merely fraudulently assumes responsibility for the actions of the body. Doerless doing or actorless action is not for the Jnani only; it is true- as an actual fact- in the case of all. In the case of the ajnani, something called "I" rises up to falsely claim responsibility for the body's actions. This fictitious accretion is absent in the case of the Jnani. That is the only difference between them. If you give up the ego or 'Body-am-I.' idea completely, some power effortlessly takes over the body and makes it run through its ordained course of prarabdha without the need for the least mental involvement or participation on your part. This is a matter for experience. To surrender is to totally let go of everything. People attached to concepts of the intellect or things of the world cannot possibly let go; vairagyam is necessary to let go. How to cultivate vairagyam? Proximity to the Guru. Worldly attachment and the Guru pull the mind in opposite



directions. If Love for the Guru is unequivocal and unconditional, His pull eventually wins. Again, how to cultivate this Love? By nature the minds of most men are occupied with the problems of the personal self. What vocation shall I pursue? Shall I study further or shall I opt for employment? Shall I marry the girl I like, or shall I marry the other one, the rich, obese character that I was introduced to by my parents? What measures shall I take to safeguard myself from penury in old age? How shall I ideally invest my wealth so that it stands me in good stead when I am no longer in a position to actively work to earn a living? Will my children take care of me in old age or will they abandon me and go their separate ways? And so on and so forth. This is how lifetime after lifetime is wasted. If you would only keep quiet without thinking these thoughts, providence would admirably take care of you; but no, you must have your 'knowledgeable say'. It so happens that in rare cases a man ceases to take thought of his personal self and wholeheartedly gives himself to an ideal of beauty, be it sport, literature, art, patriotism or anything else. The quantum of importance attributed to the personal self becomes negligible when the loftier pursuit occupies the whole of his attention. Thus he begins, for the first time, to experience a Love in which the personal self has no space. Such is the sweetness of this passionate Love that he yearns to experience the pinnacle thereof. The desire for this feeling of Love is not motivated by the objective of personally experiencing it. The Love for the higher ideal eventually comes to dominate and possess the soul with such complete fervour that his desire for such Love is not on account of any motive to personally experience it, but simply for the sake of such Love itself. He does not think, I must experience more of this Love. He thinks, this Love must shine forth with the utmost possible intensity! Then, the ideal towards which Love hitherto had been directed merges imperceptibly into Love itself. Thus, the man is left with Love and only Love in his hands: Love without rhyme or reason. Feeling it but unable to attain it, he becomes crazed with longing. It is at this stage that God or Guru appears to him as the manifestation of his Love: the manifestation may or may not be an anthropomorphic form; it may be an abstract image or ideal altogether devoid of form or even name. Eager to consummate his Love, he surrenders totally to the Guru and Realisation devours him by operation of the Guru's benevolent grace. Swami Vivekananda has said, 'Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success.'. So, volitionless Love, which, allowed to wax indefinitely, surely leads to Kaivalyam, may as well come to an inveterate materialist or atheist: belief or faith in God is not of any

considerable importance, for it stops at the level of the intellect- it is Love that matters, uncaused, blind, mad, unconditional Love. In the work The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan, when Christian is about to drown in the dreaded river of Death, he has a vision of the Christ who reminds him of the verse: 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee...'. The next moment Christian finds steady ground to stand upon, and he manages to ford the remaining stretch of the river safely. Likewise, when Vasudeva was travelling to the house of Nandagopa and Yashodha, carrying the infant Krishna in his arms, the Yamuna river was in full spate, ready to devour him should he behave so unwisely as to step into it. Vasudeva thought of God and was immediately assisted by the giant 10-headed celestial serpent, Vasuki; thus he managed to ford the flooded river without incident. Again, when Sri Abbanacharyal heard the news that his Guru, Swami Raghavendra, was about to enter into his *brindavanam*, he forthwith rushed to *Mantralayam*, but did not know what to do when he was faced with the flooded *Tungabhadra*. He gathered courage, closed his eyes, thought of his Guru, and threw himself into the raging deluge. He was not swept away by the river, but landed safely on the other bank. How did all this become possible? Is not genuine Love for the Lord on the part of the devotee the reason? Thus, develop a deep obsessive infatuation with any particular ideal, and of itself that will plunge you into unfathomable Love; such Love invariably leads to *Kaivalyam*.

Q.: I am too weak to surrender, in the total sense of the term that I find Bhagawan suggesting. Also, I do not feel attracted to any one particular ideal or idea. What am I to do?

B.: It is holding on or doing anything that requires strength. If you feel you are weak, letting go of everything should be very easy, for that alone is non-doing. Nevertheless, if total surrender is found too hard, practise surrender as a *sadhana*. This is called partial surrender. In course of time it leads to complete surrender.

Q.: Various descriptions of God are given by scriptures belonging to the different religions. Which is the description that tallies with B.'s teachings?

B.: Words cannot convey the Real. Yet, the closest is, *Ehyeh asher ehyeh*.

Q.: What is the difference between attempting on one's own to Realise the Self and taking the help of a Guru?

B.: Suppose you want to go to America. Which is the sensible method? Taking a spade in hand and digging into the Earth, saying, 'I am confident that I shall eventually reach America, which must be located on the exact other side of this very spot.' or booking a place for yourself on the next outbound steamer?

S>M>

Q.: Upon beholding your blessed face, I also am inspired to Realise. What sadhana should be performed by me so that I may Realise within the shortest span of time possible?

B.: Why do any sadhana? Why not remain as you are?

Q.: Is sadhana not a sine qua non for attaining Self-Realisation?

B.: Because the present state is acknowledged falsely to be real, atleast on a relative level, you are looking for some form of sadhana to perform, thinking that sadhana is going to facilitate you to discover that which is ultimately Real. The problem with sadhana is that it presupposes the existence of the sadhaka. One erroneous attitude cannot get rid of another. If, on the other hand, you cease to believe in the existence of the sadhaka, the ego is given up in a single stroke and only the Real remains. Sadhana invariably involves the sadhaka; thus whatever sadhana you perform is indirectly strengthening the sadhaka's belief in his own existence; whereas, in truth, the sadhaka does not exist at all. So, instead of performing sadhana, keep quiet [Summa iru]. That is the way to gain the ever-present Real. 'Doing' cannot bring about Realisation. Absence of all doing reveals the Self as abiding eternally in Realisation. Here, doing has nothing to do with the body and everything to do with the mind. To keep quiet is to merge the mind in the Self.

Q.: Will keeping quiet yield happiness?

B.: The pleasant drowsiness obtained after eating a large meal in which one's favourite items of food were included, is also called happiness by some. The pleasant soporific feeling of bodily relaxation felt whilst one's limbs are being massaged, is also called happiness by some. The pleasure experienced by the mind whilst mulling over one's past achievements and anticipated future accomplishments, is also called happiness by some. The pleasures of eating, talking, creation of an idea, reification of an idea into an intellectually tactile structure or network thereof or tangible object or collection thereof, engaging in communion with nature whilst spending time in the wild, courtship, participating in sexual activity, watching one's offspring as it sails through the successes and failures of life, and so on and so forth, are called happiness by some. However, these are merely pleasures; so far as we are concerned, only that which is Absolute can be called happiness. The Aathman is happiness not in the sense that it yields pleasure but in the sense that it abides as shanti, that supreme peace in which there is not the least turmoil nor agitation.

Q.: What is the difference between manolayam, manonigraham, manonischalam, manoekagratham, manonivritti, manonasham and kaivalyam? I have heard that B. uses these terms but I remain ignorant of their meaning.

B. was pleased to furnish an explanation hereasunder:

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Manolayam	It is simply a kind of sleep. It is a dangerous retardation on the spiritual path.
Manonigraham	It means forcibly controlling the mind so that the mind sticks to one particular predominant thought to the exclusion of all others. This sadhana is characterised by the necessity for volition and effort to sustain it.
Manonischalam	It means that the mind is sunk in the Heart, but is not the same as Liberation because the mind is yet to die. The mind remains volitionlessly and effortlessly in this state, because it has lost all interest in straying away from the Self; objects of the world do not fascinate it or capture its attention anymore.
Manoekagratham	It means that owing to long arduous practise, Manonigraham has become a habit. Thus, effort is unnecessary but volition necessary to sustain this sadhana.
Manonivritti	It is a mind that has ceased to believe in the objective reality of the world it sees around it. Also, it is incapable of accepting the seeming veracity of its own apparent reality. The term may be used interchangeably with Manonischalam.
Manonasham	It refers to the state of the Jnani prior to destruction of the physical body.
Kaivalyam	It means destruction of the Jnani's body. From the Jnani's point of view there cannot be any difference between Manonasham and Kaivalyam.

4th August, 1936

Q.: In this world filled to the brim with wicked people, how can I ever hope to gain happiness?

B.: Are you in the world or is the world in you?

Q.: My body is made out of the elements and to the elements it shall return one day. So, certainly I form part of this world. Am I correct?

B.: Are you one with the body?

Q.: I feel and remember the body's pains and pleasures.

B.: So too in a dream we have a body and a mind that feels and remembers experiences undergone by that body.

Q.: So how can I be sure that all this also is not a dream? Am I now awake or dreaming? How do I tell?

B.: If perception of objects is still possible, you may be certain that you are dreaming.

S>M>

Q.: B. is a Jnani who has awakened from the dream of ignorance. How is it that he continues to see a world?

B.: [I] see no world.

Q.: B. is conversing with me now. Do I not form part of the world?

B.: World? World! What world? [I] can only repeat that [I] see no world.

Q.: I am unable to understand how that could be possible. B.'s eyes are wide open. His vision is good. How then can there be no seeing?

B.: No doubt this body has eyes that can see, but no one is available to think, 'I am seeing.'. There must be a seer before anything can be seen. 'No seer' implies impossibility of sight.

P>S>

It had been my observation that the master fastidiously avoids using the word "I" whilst communicating. In order so as to avoid becoming perennially bound to repetitive use of the passive voice, I rendered many of his statements into English after the regular fashion; thus I stood freed from the obligation to always opt for pleonasmic and circumlocutory sentence construction methodologies, and simple ones sufficed. It is to be noted that wherever this text appears to quote the master making use of the word "I" in the personal sense, that is not actually the case; I have merely framed those sentences by including the word "I" to ensure their grammatical correctness, cogency and coherence. The master indeed was so absolutely perfect in his Realisation that he had no possible use for the first personal pronoun; indeed the word had no meaning insofar as he was concerned, where it might be deployed in the sense of referring to his body as he or identifying him with it.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that maya is mithya. What does it mean?

B.: It means that the evil power of avidya maya cannot so much as lay a scratch upon the introverted mind. The ability of avidya maya, which is fictitious in nature, to wreck the havoc of her fictitious misery is limited to the fictitious realm of the mind; she cannot reach the Real. So, illusion is illusory. Really, the cosmos or illusion never existed: it cannot exist. The Real alone IS and the Real is ALONE.

Q.: Which is the best sadhana to regain the natural state? Is it only B.'s 'Who-am-I?' method?

B.: Prevention is better than cure. You yourself say that it is a question of 'regaining'. So, there is no question of acquiring anything afresh. Why leave or emerge from the peaceful natural state and enter the miserable realm of imagination, and then why ask, 'Which is the most efficacious sadhana that may be adopted by me in order so that I might go back to the natural state?'. It is like a man deliberately leaving the shade, wandering about in the sun, suffering, and then finally returning to the shade and saying, 'Ah! at long last I have reached the shade; how sweet is the shade!'. Why leave the shade at all? Likewise, why relinquish the Self at all? Sadhana, Sayujya, Moksha, Mukthi, etc. all arise only after leaving the Self. Why leave at all?

Q.: Somehow by some unfortunate mistake I must have left it. Let bygones be bygones. What sadhana shall I now pursue so that the mistake of having left the Self is set aright and I merge back into the Self again?

B.: Only remain without thinking. The thought, 'I have fallen from the Self and must regain the same.' must also vanish. Total absence of thought is necessary if Realisation is to be had. Even the volition or effort to remain without thinking is to be eschewed. Remain in the thought-free state all the time, but this state is not to be sustained deliberately; rather it must be one's natural condition that is abiding and permanent.

Q.: What an impossible idea! I must not think, but I must make no effort to remain without thinking!

B.: Remaining in the volitionless and effortless thought-free state is not something to be done. Rather, it is the unfathomable bliss entailed by total absence of any sort of doing. This is not sadhana. This is absence of the sadhaka. You want a formula to reach it. There is no formula. Anything that is given to you to do can only lead you farther, and further, away from the Self. Abandon all effort and the Self is Realised.

Q.: Without sadhana how can the Self be Realised? Is sadhana then a hinderance rather than the means to reach the Self?

B.: The aim of all practices is only to give up all practise. The beginner on the path is given something to do because he cannot appreciate the import of the advice 'Summa iru.'. It may be kundalini-samplavam, moorthi-dhyanam, mantra-japam, pranayamam or anything else. With prolonged practise, his mind becomes sensitive to the pull of the Aathman within. Then it repeatedly plunges into the Aathman until abidance in the Aathman or Summa-iruththal has become the permanent natural state. When the mind has lost all interest both in Realisation and in turning towards the objects of the world, then the Self pulls in and destroys such a nude mind. So, sadhana is only the preliminary, preparatory procedure by means of which the mind is made ready for introversion; actual introversion is to be had only in summa iruththal, and

summa iruththal alone can lead to Kaivalyam, not any sadhana. Sadhana does have its use in the beginning. Later on, as one becomes acclimatised to the bliss of keeping quiet, sadhana is given up.

Q.: Mr. Brunton writes that he has had fantastic visions of Bhagawan in this same Hall. The same is not available to me. I feel unfortunate to think that it should be so.

B.: Discard the idea of acquisition of experiences. We are fighting a totalen seelischen vernichtungskrieg against the mind. The result is the irreversible destruction of the experiencer. If you covet experiences, will the experiencer ever be willing to perish?

Q.: If I want to Realise, then, should I want to die?

B.: The apparent bodily existence must become intolerable and unbearable.

Q.: It sounds difficult.

B.: Machiavelli has said, 'Where the willingness is great, the difficulties cannot be great.'. Difficulty or ease is only an idea; it has nothing to do with actual Realisation. Actual Realisation is like the bleaching of a photographic plate. First an image forms. Then the image becomes brighter or more deeply exposed. As the duration of exposure becomes longer and longer, shapes and forms start disappearing. Finally, the plate becomes completely exposed and not a single shape or image can be discerned from it. Here the sun is the Self and the plate the mind. The stithaprajna's mind is a tabula rasa. It has no volition, memories, desires or motives. It cannot do anything at all. It is not merely stunned or paralyzed or asleep: it is permanently lost in being-consciousness. Only such a mind is killed by the Self.

Q.: Theoretically I understand it all.

B.: That is the mistake.

Q.: What mistake is being referred to?

B.: Attempting to understand the words prevents you from experiencing the state being described by the words.

Q.: What should I do then?

B.: Do not do anything. Summa iru.

S>M>

Q.: When B. was living on the Hill, it seems he chanced upon a cobra and a peacock fighting, whereupon he told the cobra, 'You cannot win. If you persist in fighting, you will be killed. Withdraw from the fight and retreat. Do you not want to save your life?'. Reportedly, the cobra understood and fled the spot. My question is, can B. talk to snakes?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Can he talk to all animals and even plants?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Can he understand their language?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is it all not ridiculous? Humans alone possess adequate intelligence for linguistic ability. Only the human brain is biologically complex enough to accommodate possibility of language. What B. is saying is scientifically impossible.

B.: Has yet science discovered completely how the neurological system exactly functions in humans?

Q.: I do not think so....

B.: Why, then, do you not insist that science should first form a complete understanding of how the human neurological system works before you think any thoughts?

Q.: Thoughts just come... It is not that I think on purpose; thoughts are spontaneous.

B.: Likewise everything is spontaneous. You expect people to 'understand things logically' before they act. So, an infant must not develop any linguistic ability, because he has no 'logical understanding' of how, or the processes by means of or on account of which, his brain develops that ability; someone who is not an expert in anatomy must not move about his hands and legs. Science concerns itself with objective knowledge. Such knowledge knows no end; it cannot be perfect [poornam]; new discoveries and inventions are being made everyday. One who apparently knows something merely thinks he knows. Real knowledge does not concern itself with knowing anything. It merely IS. Therefore perfection in knowledge is only perfect ignorance. One who thinks that he knows anything is living in darkness; one who merely knows, without knowing anything, is totally ignorant, and therefore he is living in Light. Those whose objective knowledge perishes in the light of Self-knowledge awaken into true Immortality. By dying once and for all they become truly deathless. What has Sri Yeshua said? 'For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the teaching's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose[remain in forgetfulness of] his own Self? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Self?'

Q.: Very well, if animals can talk, does each species have its own distinctive language?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What is the language spoken by snakes?

B.: [laughing] [makes peculiar sound akin to steam vigorously escaping through a narrow crack]

Q.: What does it mean?



B.: Summa iru!

Q.: Who taught B. the languages of animals?

B.: The same power that taught him to Realise.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that Sri B. has roamed all over the Arunachala hill, which I have heard is much beloved unto him.

B.: What is your question?

Q.: Does this hill have life?

B.: Everything has Life; there is nothing apart from Life; Life alone IS; Life alone can BE; Life is the Self; Life alone is the Self; the Self is Life alone.

Q.: Everything has life, B. says. Thus, everything must be the same. Yet this hill is special. How so? Is it so merely in Bhagawan's imagination?

B.: B. has no imagination.

Q.: What sets this hill apart from the countless other objects to be found in this limitlessly enormous world?

B.: Go around it today evening and see for yourself.

S>M>

Q.: I have heard that B. was harassed by intoxicated sadhus whilst he was living on the hill.

B.: Some narikuravas also tried to give trouble once. They tried to kill a dog so that they could extract its teeth, make magical amulets out of them and sell the finished artefacts to the public during the upcoming deepam festival, by pretending that the teeth belonged to a fox. I freed the trapped dog before they could crush its head with a huge boulder, as was their usual habit. The leader of the group approaching from a distance with his men, giant stone held ready in hand, shouted repeatedly that I should not free the dog, as he came up running in rage seeing this crouching over the catch struggling in his trap. But this paid no heed. The dog was extricated from the metal spikes and set free. It tried to stay there but this chased it away. The irate man, shouting expletives, then raised the boulder high up in the air, as above as all the strength in his hefty arms would permit, and brought it down on the feet of this body. The rock landed with force on the intended target and rolled away. There was no reaction from this. The man then broke off a branch from a nearby tree and flogged this continuously till he succeeded in bringing about swollen weals and drawing blood. Yet there was no reaction from this. Then he got frightened and did not know what to do. He caught hold of this hand, placed a few half-anna coins in it and fled with his men. This threw the coins into the shrubbery nearby and for several days did not return to the Virupaksha cave, not wanting to be seen in such a condition, as it might

evoke distress from Palanisamy and the occasional visitors, mostly children. It stayed in another cave on the hill for a few days until all the wounds- But at this moment, there erupted commotion in the Hall. Even as B. had been narrating the incident, several had started crying, but now a woman sitting on the back had fallen unconscious in a faint. She was carried outside and laid supine on a bench near B.'s mother's grave. B., looking clearly annoyed, came back to the Hall after watching people- a few woman-workers serving in the ashram kitchen- return her to [physical] normalcy [atleast]. Her hysterical wails [Bhagawanae! Bhagawanae! Bhagawanae!] were now clearly audible in the Hall.

B.: [to the Hall] This is why we should keep the mouth shut.

Q.: Why did B. not quickly alert the authorities?

Chadwick: [tears steaming down cheeks, in an unusually tremulous voice] B. would not have approached the police, I know.

G.: I also feel sad.

B.: What for? Is B. only the body that received the blows? The one who attacked, the stick, the act of beating- these are also Bhagawan. Everything is in Bhagawan only and nothing without. There cannot be anything apart from Bhagawan.

G.: This is Advaita.

B.: This is the truth.

Q.: Did B. care to atleast apply some topical medication on the lacerations, to prevent the wounds from festering? Suppuration of deep contusions can cause the blood-stream to become seriously infected...

B.: This is a poor koupeenadhari. Where would he go for medicines, etc.? Moreover, why bother? Are we dependent upon the body for Life? What matters it whether it remains or not? Kuthambai-siddhar has written:

முத்தி பெற்றுள்ளம் முயங்குமெய்ஞ் ஞானிக்குப்

பத்தியம் ஏதுக்கடி - குதம்பாய்

பத்தியம் ஏதுக்கடி ?

செத்தாரைப் போலத் திரியுமெய்ஞ் ஞானிக்கு

கைத்தாளம் ஏதுக்கடி - குதம்பாய்

கைத்தாளம் ஏதுக்கடி ?

S>M>

A strange, decrepit old sadhu, who claims he is a centenarian, has arrived at the ashram. When asked for his name he gives the response, 'Purampoekku chamiyar'. He claims to have first met Sai Baba in 1898; ever since leaving the saint, according to him, he has never lowered his right hand; it remains pointing up towards the sky, index finger unfolded and outstretched straight but the other fingers folded in. The arm seems covered with greyish-white dust or

fungus and the long fingernails have become an intertwined mass reaching down to the elbow. There are lumps of knotted hemispherical flesh all over his body, particularly a large one above his eyebrows. His back is hunched and his legs severely bandied, so that his knees are splayed wide apart. He walks with left hand clutching his gyrating hip and right pointing at the sky. He assures B. that even whilst sleeping and attending to calls of nature, his arm is never lowered. As a parting gesture, Sai Baba had given him darshan of Shiva; as a mark of gratitude he has taken a solemn vow that he ought not to ever lower his right hand. This is his guru-dakshina to Sai Baba. His body, and the single orange 4-cubit dhoti that is only raiment, are smeared with holy ash. The effect is particularly pronounced with regard to the face; blood-shot eyes stare out of a grey face decorated by a matted beard and hair reaching down till the knees. When not engaged in talking, he chants, without pausing to draw breath, in a mildly audible manner, 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva...'; the inflection of his intonation at uttering the incantation seems to be perforce characterised by manner of pleading thralldom. One cannot deny that there is an unpleasant odour emanating from him. He is cross-eyed to an extreme degree. It takes a while to discern that the colour of his bedraggled dhoti is the saffron; so begrimed is it. His head droops down in perpetuity except when he is talking. He pays no heed to anyone else in the ashram; the only apple of his eye happens to be the master. The sarvadhikari offered him new clothes, but he appears not to hear. He sat near the Sofa and told B. his story, how he had been born into an honourable Brahmin family in Conjeevaram and had developed proclivities toward licentious behaviour in early youth, as a result of which his family had been ostracized from the community. Unable to bear the anguish, his parents had committed suicide by hanging from a banyan tree. He still remembers the sight of his mother's and father's swollen face and bulging eyes. His father died quickly, but his mother took a long time, twitching and kicking in agony so that her garment became divested off her and fell to the ground as a consequence. He could not move to cover her nude cadaver because the parents had tied him up whilst he had been sleeping under the tree with them. He had awakened to the sounds of his dying parents writhing from the tree. He cried and cried but he could not break free. Tears were dripping off his mother's lifeless eyes, and trickled down the end of her pretty snub-nose [ லட்சணமான குடைமிளகாய் முக்கூ ]; the poignant eyes seemed to look at him understandingly, pityingly even; those lovely eyes, once so remarkably charming and vivacious, were now glazed over with the coldness of brutal death. The memory of those eyes remain etched in his memory forever. He had relished in taking delight in nude, nubile bodies of ravishing young women; now he wanted to cover his mother's nude cadaver,

for this nudity nauseated him, but he could not; he found himself forced, by a perverse stream of inviolable attraction, to stare at the form inside which he had germinated, repulsed and fascinated at the same time by its present naked, grotesque condition. Slowly a crowd began to gather at the place. Before anyone could talk to him, a mysterious sadhu appeared at the place, untied him and threw some sacred ash at his face. That was the last thing he remembered before he woke up at Benares. He stayed there with a group of cannibalistic aghori sadhus whose exclusive diet was putrid human flesh and cows' urine. The sadhus made money by manufacturing hooch; stirring the foaming, stifflingly pungent liquid, boiling away day and night in large copper urns, using human femurs as ladles, was the first task assigned to him. He participated in their strange rites and rituals, going to smashanas at midnight and dancing round and round burning bodies. In the dead of the night he co-operated in secretly 'hijacking' off cadavers left to float away in the Ganges. The bodies were brought to the secluded abode of the aghoris and buried underground in a mixture of human excrement, boiled and smashed centipedes, and clayey soil. A year later the bodies would be excavated, taken to pieces and consumed raw by the experienced aghoris, and after boiling in anethole, acetic acid or methanol by the junior ones. None dared to come to their remote abode, situated by an isolated levee of the Ganges, except the man bringing them chemical supplies once a year. Occasional wayfarers would pass the place by with cloths draped over their noses. The workers in the smashana adjacent would not dare stay in the ghats after sunset. Sodomitic pedication rituals were also practised by the aghoris on every amavasya night by the light of candles lit inside skulls. After several years with the aghoris, he was bathing in his usual abandoned spot on the Ganges one day, when a frightful paralytic stroke seized him and his legs and hands became petrified with numbness. He was about to drown when a stout hand pulled him out of the water in a single swift movement and he found himself face to face with the enormous Trailanga Swami. The Swami commanded him to visit the great mystic Sri Ramakrishna. He replied he did not know where to find him. The huge Swami gave him an address located in a place called Cossipoure near Calcutta, and bade him memorise it; he also asked him to make his visit at the dead of the night. He complained he did not have the money to undertake the expedition. The Swami pinched his stomach hard and said, 'O! aghori, when you shall have your next bowel movement, search carefully and you will find that your needs have been taken care of.'. So saying, he laughed and jumped into the Ganges, disappearing beneath the swallowing waters. Sure enough, the next day morning, he found a heavy gold coin in the manner predicted. Without informing his fellow aghoris, he left

for Bengal. Whilst on the train, he felt suddenly felt giddy and drank some water from a jar proffered unto him by a sufi-pir who was his co-passenger. He fell unconscious immediately. Just before losing consciousness, he heard the old moslem laughing and saying, 'I am sorry, but Allah has decided that you must merge into Him in this lifetime.'. When he awoke he was at Howrah station, lying down on the platform. His appearance had become totally unrecognisable. The skin all over his body had broken out into warts. He was a hunchback. He was unable to exercise any control over his bowel movements and was constantly passing motions involuntarily. His knees had splayed out in opposite directions. His hip would move in an ungainly manner whenever he attempted to walk. If he tried to walk too fast, he would fall down. He thrived on beggary at the station for a few days. Then he remembered Trailanga Swami's advice and walked to Cossipoure. He waited outside the garden till it was well past midnight. Then he scaled the wall and somehow landed unhurt on the other side. In the darkness he stumbled for a while blindly. Then a strange figure arrived with a diya, balanced on a copper plate, held in the left hand. The right hand was punctiliously cupped around the diya to prevent it from being extinguished by the vagaries of the wind. The man was thoroughly emaciated; he seemed to have sticks for limbs; and there was blood-soaked linen wrapped around his throat. Yet the eyes were live coals. Those eyes were enough to tell him who he was facing, that it was no mortal; they were nothing like he had ever seen. A strange, sweet voice spoke in an unheard-of tongue. Yet he understood every word, although of the language itself he could not make head or tail. 'My son...' said the Paramahansa, 'why have you kept me waiting so long?'. The aghori burst into tears and fell at the Paramahansa's feet and kissed them again and again. After some time the Paramahansa said: 'You are one of the 5 rarest of men destined to meet all the 3 Shooting-stars. Gowhauti is your next destination. Forthwith proceed to the temple of Kamakhya upon the Nilachala mountain. You should sit continuously in the sanctum sanctorum [garbagraham] of Tirpurasundari and think only 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva...'; no other thoughts must form in your mind; will you pay heed unto my words or not?'. The aghori begged the Paramahansa to cure his disabled figure. The Paramahansa said with tears in his eyes, 'My son, I can, but I shall not. The Mother wants you to be Absorbed in this lifetime. For that suffering is necessary. You will stay in the temple until the call arrives from Sakorie.' The aghori begged and pleaded, but the Paramahansa only said in a teary voice, 'You may leave through the gate; the gurkha will not wake up ere your departure. You will board the train to Gowhauti a few hours hence. For this necessary purpose, the detestable thing called money is to be found by you in the usual detestable manner.' The

aghorī wanted to look at the divine face for the rest of Eternity, but the master blew at the diya. By the time the aghorī's eyes adjusted to the sudden darkness, the master was nowhere to be found. The aghorī made his way toward the street-lamp burning outside and soon found himself outside the compound. Soon he made his way to the temple in the strange land where could not understand anyone. He sat by Tripurasundari day and night. The priests tried to drive him away when it was time to lock up the chambers, but the aghorī would not budge. Contemptuously, they bodily lifted him and threw him out forcibly. But mysteriously, the key got jammed in the lock and would not turn. Another lock was sent for at once, a new one. This effort also met with the same result. 8 more attempts were wasted. Finally the aghorī was offered an apology. He was given an engraved plank to sit on, inside the garbagraham. With him inside, the old lock worked perfectly well. So, during the nights the aghorī remained alone with Tripurasundari. During the day he was mobbed by people who babbled unintelligibly to him and poured milk and honey over his head. He had become too weak to protest or wash himself; so he just sat there. When he felt hungry he ran his palm over his head and then licked it. There he sat motionless as days passed into weeks, months and years, thinking only, 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva...'. During the night Tripurasundari emerged from inside the sanctum sanctorum and danced with him in ecstasy. The dim light of the diyas lit by the priests at the time of their leaving made the dew-drop-like beads of sweat formed on Tripurasundari's 3 breasts shimmer as she danced with him in the crazed joy of blissful divine Union. Sometimes thoughts of carnal craving formed in the aghorī's mind as he touched the cool body of Tripurasundari. The moment this happened, she disappeared; in her place the aghorī's dead mother appeared suspended from the ceiling by a ligature round her neck, exactly as he had seen her all those many years ago: the nude body, the tears dripping down the end of the capsicum-shaped nose, the bulging eyes staring with pitying compassion, but yet surely dead... Then the aghorī screamed in agony and his lust was broken; Tripurasundari returned and the dancing continued. She would tell him stories of aeons ago when the devas and asuras were at perpetual war; ultimately the Earth had fallen into the hands of the asuras; yet among the asuras there were God-fearing souls, deeply pious and wanting to adhere to dharma... He would address Her as 'Amma' and lie on her lap, while she told him many, many stories, lovingly stroking his grimy head... Passionately he would plead with her to kill him, saying that his life had reached a point of utter purposelessness, and that death by her honourable hand would grant him Salvation. She would smilingly shake her head. Two-and-a-half years passed thus in blind bliss. And then one night when the aghorī made his usual request

to be killed by her hand, she replied to the plea for the first time; she pleaded her helplessness in the matter, saying cryptically, 'Although I am a god and therefore have the Transcendental Consciousness, I cannot rescue you from samsara. Only a Guru can do this. I am perceived by you; therefore the truth of my own reality is on a par with yours. Thus I cannot Liberate you. Only one who is here, but yet not, can take you away from here, which is not.'. The aghori became deeply distressed upon hearing this, and screamed, 'Who can be greater than you, Mother? Can anyone be greater than my mother, who is God Herself? Why do you deceive me thus, Mother?'. Tripurasundari placed her hand calmly upon the aghori's forehead and said plaintively, 'Dear child, I am Yogamaya. I am the Empress Supreme of Illusion. It is within my competence to grant worldly wealth and riches, fame, power, physical invincibility or anything else on this plane of Maya. But what your soul craves for is Aathmavidya. That I have no power to grant. When the time comes, this certainly I shall do for you, for this alone I can possibly do to help you: I shall die for you so that you lose yourself in the Real.'. The aghori went almost mad with the pain he felt upon hearing these words. Tripurasundari clasped the weeping, deformed child in her bosom and said, 'My son, know this and accept it to be true: we are both unreal. You are seeing me. Thus I cannot be the Real God for whom your soul craves with such mad passion. I am the reason why God is hidden from you. The moment you become mature enough to learn to appreciate this fact and thus begin to despise me, I shall commit suicide, just like I did in the human form at Kanchi, to entice you to plunge into the Path. Then you will become blind to me, and God shall shine forth.'. But the aghori could not make head or tail out of these words. He wept bitterly, 'Do not leave me yet again mother...'. He began yelling, 'Amma vaendum... Amma ennai vittu pogakkoodadhu... I do not want Salvation, just let me remain with you for ever and ever...'. Tripurasundari said: 'I also want to remain with you. But I cannot be selfish. I have a responsibility to deliver you up to the divine End. A few days later you will leave this place and entrain for Ahammadnagar. From there walk to the village of Seeradi. Ask for the Masjid of Hakkim Sai. You may take this to be my last darshan.'. Upon having heard these words, the aghori rushed to clasp the sword of the Mother from the diety in the garbagraham, for he wanted to end his life then and there. He seized the sword but the Mother laughingly wrested it away from him with ease. 'Do as you have been told, child.'. But the aghori held on to her blouse and would not let go. 'Come what may, I shall not part from you.', he said resolutely. The Mother merely said, 'Partake of my ambrosia.'. So saying, she spread her legs and with them straddled an engraved pillar in the chamber. Fresh, sweet-smelling blood gushed forth and flowed in a glistening serpentine rivulet. The

aghorī drank with joy to his heart's content. So rapt was he in the act of licking the nourishing blood off the floor that he involuntarily relinquished his grasp upon the blouse of the goddess. That very moment the goddess laughed and pounced into her stone idol, disappearing instantly. The aghorī let out an anguished cry, but that was the last he saw of Tripurasundarī in the flesh. For a few more nights he tried to entice the Mother into manifesting again, by begging and threatening in turns. But stone remained stone. Finally he took leave of the priests. They loaded him with presents and honoured him by presenting him with a pair of silver cymbals. He left the place, sold the cymbals for which he had no use, and proceeded to Ahammadnagar, reaching by means of a train journey that was cramped but on that account gave his vexed mind some relief from its torturous agonies, for watching the man on the Clapham omnibus filled him with incredulous wonder: there seemed to be no restlessness or impatience, whatsoever, to Realise God in one's incumbent lifetime! What sort of strange creatures were these, talking about mundane things connected with the temporal corporeal existence! As if any of it would matter in the face of grim Death... After two days of incessant walking, he managed to reach Seeradi at last. When, after making the necessary inquiries, by means of resorting to successive bouts of largely unsuccessful hand-gestures, he entered the Masjid, he saw that an old man was sitting there smoking a chillum. He was clothed in a Kafni and a towel was tied atop his head. He was tending to a fire burning nearby. He did not notice the visitor; his back was turned to him. No one else was there. The aghorī took a few steps forward. The hakkim turned suddenly and stared straight into his eyes; they were the same eyes that he had encountered in Cossipoure; they transmitted the same magnetic charm that arrested the activities of the soul and the agitations of the mind! The aghorī prostrated to the Hakkim on the hard earth of the masjid, and begged to be blessed by him. Hakkim Sai said, 'This place is called Dvarakamaayi. Maayi says that you may stay here until Shiva reveals Himself to you.'. The aghorī was overjoyed and asked the Hakkim whether he should continue his repetition of Shiva's name or adopt some other sadhana, so that he could avoid rebirth; this, for some reason, seemed to infuriate the Hakkim beyond measure and he shouted in a rage, 'How dare you talk about sadhana after coming to Maayi!'. The aghorī became afraid that he had offended the Hakkim and shrank into a corner of the derelict-looking building. The Hakkim kept staring at him and the aghorī burst into tears. 'Are you going to ask me to cure you of your bodily deformities?', said the Hakkim. 'Never, never!', cried the aghorī, 'Only rescue me from samsara, O! noble master.'. 'You need not do any sadhana. Remain in Dvarakamaayi till this brick is one day broken.' said the Hakkim, pointing to



a large earthen brick by his side. So, the aghori tried to serve the Hakkim in a devoted manner. But invariably the Hakkim would stubbornly rebuff the aghori's attempts to please him with his devout services. The Hakkim insisted that the aghori stay away from the eyes of other devotees visiting the Masjid; he was driven away to a corner of the ramshackle, partly-sheltered terrace on the roof of the building. For weeks he stayed in this manner, lovingly peering at the Hakkim through a large crack in the masonry. Finally the Hakkim took pity at the aghori; during night he was permitted to sleep in the hall. The aghori learnt that people referred to him as Sai-maula. To the aghori's great joy the master asked him one day to massage his legs. 'I have allowed you this divine privilege. What will you give me in return?', asked Sai-maula. 'I am ready to lay down my life.', said the aghori. The master thereupon simply said, 'Everyday you must light my chillum early in the morning and offer it to me.'. The aghori thought it was a simple task and felt relieved for the fact that nothing more arduous had been demanded of him. Early next morning he came down and stood reverentially before Sai-maula. The master offered him one of his chillums, a tiny pebble and some cured weed. The aghori tried to light the chillum from the dhuni briskly burning at the place night and day. Mysteriously, when he approached close to the flames, they faded and disappeared; but when he receded they seemed to roar into life again. Try as many times as he might, the result was the same always. Sai-maula became impatient and screamed, 'What! Are you incompetent at even this simple task?'. The aghori tried availing of the tinder-box, but strangely, the tough flint-striker broke into pieces upon the first attempt. Sai-maula's fury knew no bounds; he roared, 'Will you light my chillum at once, or shall I banish you from Masjidmaayi this very instant, once and for all?'. The aghori did not know what to do and began to weep like a child in fear. He thought of his Mother Tripurasundari; suddenly he was seized by an inspiration. With the utmost intensity of the prowess of concentration he could possibly muster, he recalled before his mind's eye the image of his beloved mother, hanging lifelessly from the banyan tree beneath which he had seen her cadaver suspended; her nude lower body and dead yet compassionate eyes floated vividly in front of his mind. He pushed the pebble into it, then stuffed the weed, and pressed the chillum hard against his umbilical-cavity, all the while keeping the image aforesaid intact in his mind. The weed burst into flame! As the aghori handed the chillum to Sai-maula, the latter smiled and said, 'In this manner you shall light my chillum early in the morning everyday; otherwise who will absorb your mountain-load of karmic accumulation?'. The aghori complied without hesitation; from that day onward, the first thought in his mind, when he awoke every morning, was only that of Sai-maula, followed by that of the sorry

cadaver of his dear mother. As summer came the heat of the sun on the terrace became unbearable. But the aghori never complained. One night the master beckoned to him and gave him a cloth which was dyed in green. He bade him have it tied around his head always. The aghori obeyed. The next day onward, when the sun attacked him, he felt no heat at all, but cool and refreshed! If ever he accidentally disrobed himself of the green head-cloth, the sun would scorch him. He stayed with Sai-maula for many years, eventually being permitted to present himself in the hall during the day and to run errands for the master. Almost 2 decades passed; then the dreaded event happened. A devotee sweeping the hall had broken the brick Sai-maula always used as a pillow. The master wailed inconsolably like a little child and announced to a shocked gathering that soon his tenure on the Earth would end; then he told the story of the brick and its significance: "My Guru is Venkusa of Saeloor. I stayed with my Guru for 12 years. I never did any japa or pooja. I did one thing only- I stared at my master's face uninterruptedly for all those years. I forgot food, sleep and everything else. I forgot I had a body. I saw and remembered only the moon-like face of my Guru. Finally my Guru asked me to close my eyes. I did not want to do so, for I could not bear to stop gazing at his divine, lovely face. But I could not disobey my Guru. So, shedding tears of agony, I shut my eyelids for the first time in 12 years, after overcoming through great struggle the harsh difficulty of recollecting how to do so. The moment my eyes closed, my Guru appeared in the right-hand-side of my chest. I was overjoyed. I could see him more clearly than I had done for these 12 years. Seated in the heart of my heart, the beloved master sweetly beckoned me to embrace Him. I eagerly plunged into the heart to hug my master, for whom I had infinite Love. As soon as my master's embrace trapped me, I died, after thinking my last thought, 'I joyously discover that only my master has always existed, me never.'. This body went into deep samadhi, and the face glowed like the sun. Seeing this, another, older devotee of the master, who had been serving him uninterruptedly for half a century, became jealous, for my face had betrayed to him that I had gained the knowledge of the imperishable Aathman. He seized the large brick that the master used as his feet-rest, and dropped it on my head. Had it met its mark, the brick would have killed this body. The master said kindly, 'This boy will lead millions on the path of Truth. He must not die without the fruit of his Realisation being made available to the whole of humanity. Therefore I cannot allow this brick to complete its task.'. So saying he sprinkled water at the falling brick. The brick froze in mid-air. Seeing this miracle, the disciple who had hurled the brick got affrightened and made himself scarce at once. Meanwhile this body woke up from samadhi and glimpsed the face of the master, but without identifying him

with it. This body saw my master but I was not there to see, for I had lost myself in him. The master continued: 'For 86400 nimishas this brick will remain thus. It cannot remain so forever, for it has been hurled by a person of considerable spiritual merit; thus it cannot go without effect. It has been thrown with the aim of killing one life; that life has yet many tasks to complete upon this Earth, which it cannot return to, so as to effect the completion of; thus that life ought not to be killed. The only way is to offer my own life.'. Ignoring all pleas and tears from his disciples, including myself, who held on to his feet in desperation, he went and calmly sat under the brick suspended in mid-air. All tried to drag him away from the spot, but his body had gone into samadhi and would not budge. We held our palms in a protective intertwined manner above his head. But the effort was destined to be useless. On the expiry of the 86400th nimisha, the brick, which for years had supported the master's feet, crashed down upon his neurocranium, easily tearing our hands away. His skull exploded open and the contents splattered and drenched the earth. We were forced to bury him without the head. On learning that the master had given up his life for my sake, I went to the Manasarovar lake by foot to drown myself there. I tied the brick which had ended my Guru's life securely to my feet, and jumped into the lake; but Mother Parvathi pulled me out by the hair and asked me, 'Is this how you utilise the gift of elongated lifespan your Guru has given you by sacrificing his own life? Should you not carry out his vision for you?'. I felt ashamed of myself. Mother Parvathi said, 'Go to Seeradi at once. From there you will bring Light and Joy into this dark world.'. Although I did not at all desire to play the role of a Guru, I bowed my head in assent, for I could not disrespect what evidently had been my Guru's wishes. The Mother said, 'Do not fret; take this brick with you as your Guru's blessings; when it is broken the prarabdha of your body has ended.'. Then she gave me some jujubi fruit to eat and vanished. From there I automatically walked and walked without knowing where I was going. I carried this brick on my head everywhere as my Guru's prasad. Eventually I arrived here. I stayed here for sometime. I buried my precious brick at the foot of the neem tree yonder. Then I went to fight at Gawlioure against the Caucasian invader. We lost and the cunning Englishman won. I narrowly escaped capture. Then I returned here. After I settled at this Masjid I remembered and searched for my brick under the neem tree, but someone had removed it. The absence of the brick puzzled me; I wondered whether there was any culpability by way of negligence on my part as a result of which my Guru's prasad I had come to be forced to forfeit; I felt as though I had lost my Guru once again. I asked the sun, the moon, the wind, the oceans, the rivers, the sky and the birds whether any of them had seen my brick. Nobody gave me a satisfactory answer. Then

I asked all the mountains of the Earth. I exhausted all mountains but one: the mountain of Shonadhri. When, with the intention of communicating with the mountain, so as to question it regarding the whereabouts of my invaluable sacrosanctious brick, I turned my mind towards it, I became lost in a deep samadhi. So great was the effulgence of Poorna-jnana radiating from out of the mountain that, for a time, I forgot even my Guru's name. Those who then came to the Masjid thought I was dead and made arrangements to bury my body on the outskirts of the village. At the time I was wearing an amulet upon my neck. With the words, 'Keep this carefully. It is forged from metal that fell as a fiery ball into the Earth, from outer space, nearly 4500 years ago, and it contains a portion of the umbilical-cord that was instrumental in bringing into this world Moosa, the Prohpet of the people of Alsham.', Abdulaziz Binmuhamad Albashir, the fakir who introduced me to the blessed feet of my Guru Venkusa, had given it to me as a parting gift before transferring custody of me over to my master. The men carrying out my interment thought it a waste to allow the amulet to be buried also; they were under the impression that it was made out of silver. They ripped it away from my neck; at that moment I awoke from my long samadhi. The men ran away terrified, but my amulet was gone. Now I had lost everything; but apparent happenings on the physical plane were no more wont to affect me after my dissolution in my Guru. I came back to the Masjid and plunged into samadhi again. The body became weak and shrunken with the passage of time; I had no interest in sustaining or prolonging life in the bodily existence. Visitors were saddened by my plight but none dared to attempt to rouse me. One day, Mhalsapati came rushing into the Masjid. He was carrying the brick in hand; he had had a dream in which he had been asked by Khandoba to dig at a particular spot by the side of the banyan tree appurtenant to the premises of the temple; he had also been asked to deliver up the brick found there to the Masjid of Sai-maula. I was happy to receive the brick, my life-companion ever since that day. I thought of giving Mhalsapati some reward for having reunited me with my Guru's prasada, but could not find anything suitable. Just at that moment a crow flew into the Masjid and dropped something on my lap from its beak: it was the fakir's amulet. I gladly gifted away the amulet to Mhalsapati. Everyday I lie down with this brick supporting my head. Today this brick has broken. It means that my prarabdha has broken. I cannot survive the destruction of my beloved companion. I cannot survive the breaking of this brick. Soon I shall be taking leave." The aghori was shedding tears of immense agony as he heard these words. That night Sai-maula commanded him to look into his eyes. The aghori was startled to suddenly see Shiva in the place where Sai-maula had been. Shiva danced round and round the dhuni, ferociously rattling his

damaru for all the world to hear. He beckoned the aghori to come close, but the latter stood rooted to the spot in terror. Shiva raised his right hand up towards the sky, pointing at the heavens with his index finger. The aghori extemporaneously mimicked the gesture, without knowing why he was doing so. Then Shiva laughed and opened the vertical eye on his forehead. As soon as the aghori, timorous yet fascinated, stared into that unfathomable eye, he lost consciousness of the physical world. The next thing he remembered was that Sai-maula was sprinkling him with water. Sai-maula commanded him to get up and told him that his work here was finished. The aghori fell at Sai-maula's feet and washed them with tears of gratitude and joy for having shown Shiva to him. Sai-maula merely glared at him as he usually did. Then he produced a silver-coin from his robes and asked the aghori to go to Swami Nigamananda; the aghori was bade listen to the address and commanded to start forthwith. The aghori had not the courage to naysay the word of the master. He quietly departed after prostrating once more at the feet of the master. After walking a few steps away from the Masjid, the aghori became aware that his right hand was still poised pointing up in the air towards the stars and the moon. Out of the Love, respect and gratitude he bore toward Sai-maula, he resolved to let it be so always. Swami Nigamananda gladly received him and day after day taught the aghori the nuances of Aathma-vidya. The aghori asked the master to impart unto him knowledge of the ineradicable Parabrahman. The master responded with the kind words, 'My child, you are older than me in years. You have suffered much in God's name. You are a worshipper of Shakthi. Yet, to reach the Absolute, which is at once both intimate and remote, you must learn to disconnect your mind from the senses; so far your experience of God has been in the objective realm only; this is woefully inadequate for Liberation, my son. You must practise retaining the mind in the pure essence of its nature, which is sath; this sadhana alone can facilitate you to realise God in the subjective realm; such experience of God alone is real and intransient.'. He was also told that according to the teachings of the Upanishads, Gaudapada, and Shankara, the one sole Aathman alone was real and the world unreal; experiencing the Aathman was possible only if one's belief in the reality of the objective world was given up. On account of the master's benevolent, vigilant guidance, and as a result of years of rigorous training, the aghori finally experienced Brahman through nirvikalpa samadhi, just weeks before the master gave up the body; after 3 days he awoke from samadhi and proudly announced to the master that he had won Liberation by the latter's redeeming grace; the master made no response. Last year, however, only a few days before his final absorption in the Infinite, the master called the aghori by his side and told him, 'Do not be

filled with conceit and think that you have reached the final state of Liberation. You have not.'. The shocked aghori could not think of any reply to make. The master told him, 'After this body dies, go to your home-town of Kanchi. Meet the Sankaracharya who is the pontiff of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam. Obtain his blessings. He will show you the way to the Guru who will bring about your Liberation.'. After Swami Nigamananda passed away, the aghori obediently did as he was told. When he arrived at his destination, he was not permitted to go inside the Peetam. He tried to stealthily make his way in during the night, but was captured, severely beaten, and thrown out. He lived on the road near the Ekambaranathar temple, seated alongside the beggars outside the temple. Many people cast him curious glances because of his eccentric appearance. When the beggars were being fed, the aghori ate with his left hand as was his usual custom. The organiser of the annadhanam considered it disgraceful since there seemed to be nothing wrong with the man's other hand. When the aghori was asked whether the right hand was paralysed in its raised position, he replied in the negative. The organiser asked the aghori to eat with the right hand, saying that otherwise it would amount to insult of God's prasada. The aghori ignored him and went on eating with the left hand. The priests of the temple then arrived and told the organiser, 'He seems to be a sorcerer who has come to this place with the express malefic intention of ruining all the good-merit[punya] you are acquiring from sponsoring this annadhanam. Chase him away at once; otherwise, the entire punya you are earning from this noble exercise of feeding poor people will fail to fructify.'. The aghori was asked to get up and go away. He paid no heed since this was the first meal he was having in days, and he was desperate to wash his stomach with something. Then the organiser lost his temper. He brought some workers, and they bodily lifted him from the ground and threw him into the nearby gutter. There was an iron pipe-line running alongside the inner wall of the gutter. The aghori's forehead rammed against the same and the concussion caused him to lose consciousness. When he stirred it was the dead of the night and the place was deserted. He satisfied his hunger by means of licking leftover food off used banana leaves, a huge pile of which he found discarded nearby. Then, not knowing how to execute his mission of meeting the Paramacharyal, he lay down in a corner of the dusty road bemoaning the fact of his perverse fate to himself. Then he observed people were erecting a pandal and preparing a dais near the Kamakshiamman temple. He overheard a conversation between an elderly brahmin couple passing upon the road, and learnt that the Paramacharyal would come there in a few hours, at the break of dawn, to deliver a lecture. In the darkness, he quietly crept beneath the dais when the workers were busily engaged in

attending to some other aspect of the preparations. His spine ached from having to lie in cramped fashion beneath the low dais. He waited for hours before he finally heard a noisy commotion amidst the gathered crowds; this meant that the Paramacharyal had arrived. In a flash the aghori pounced from beneath the dais, fell flat before the Paramacharyal, caught hold of his feet, pressed his forehead upon them, and shouted, 'Salvify me!'. The Paramacharyal's attendants dragged him away at once and tried to restrain him from attempting to approach once more; when he seemed reluctant to give up his endeavour to again approach the saint, they tried to thrash him. The aghori looked pleadingly into the eyes of the Paramacharyal; immediately the saint screamed, 'Nirutthungoeda! Nirutthungoeda!'. The saint emphatically asseverated that the man ought to be fed and brought into his presence in the evening. Reluctantly the order was complied with. In the evening the aghori sat in padmasana before the saint and closed his eyes. He could feel his Ajna chakra vibrating and humming. Suddenly the saint touched the aghori's head with his stick. The aghori's body shuddered violently and he went into samadhi. He had no idea how much time passed thus. He awoke to water being sprinkled upon his person. The Paramacharyal was sitting opposite him, on the floor! The aghori immediately prostrated to him. Of his own accord, the Paramacharyal said, 'Your Moksha-guru is a perfected being whose residence is the sthalam which bestows Libreation when merely thought of. Go to Thiruvannamalai. Ask for Sri Ramana Maharshi.'. The saint then arranged for food and some money to be given unto the aghori. When the aghori landed at the railway station here, he stood gazing in wonder at the beauty of the Arunachala mountain for a long time; for reasons unbeknownst to him this mountain elicited a feeling of awe from him. A couple of workers were removing luggage from a bogey and he was standing in their way inadvertantly. They called out to him repeatedly to move aside but he did not hear their words, so rapt was he in beholding the mysterious, picturesque pulchritude of the Hill. One of the men pushed him aside and said, ' டேய் புறம்போக்குப் பயலே! வழியில் நிற்கிறாயே அறிவு இருக்கிறதா உனக்கு இல்லையா?'. The aghori reflected wryly that the name indeed suited him very well, and therefore decided to adopt it for himself, as his monastic name. He went to the temple and had darshan of Lord Arunachaleshwara. Then he went for giripradakshinam. He spent the night sleeping in the forested region near simha-theertham. This morning he completed the girivalam and had darshan of Lord Arunachaleshwara again. When he set eyes upon the lingam, it emanated a reddish glow that was not visible to anyone else. Overjoyed, the aghori has rushed straight to the ashram to tell his story. Now he is before Bhagawan. Bhagawan's eyes

remind him of Ramakrishna's, Sai-maula's and Tripurasundari's eyes. He feels B.'s cool glance of Grace penetrating his mind and flooding it with serenity and peace. He begs Bhagawan for Moksha.

B.: The responsibility to Salvify[bring about liberation from samsara] you is that of the Lord's. You need not bother about it. Did you not surrender your life to God long ago? Why then do you bother about your Salvation? Having surrendered, one need not and ought not to harbour any cares or worries. Your responsibilities are now God's. Leave it to him to execute them as he sees fit, by using you as a mere tool. Do not identify with the body and imagine yourself to be the doer of its actions; if the ego is given up the body's activities are found to go on of their own accord. You have no role to play in securing your own Liberation; or, your only role is to keep quiet. Just keep quiet. Bhagawan will do the rest.

B. seemed to treat the aged aghori with great compassion and solicitude. The aghori was in turn peering with great joy into the master's inscrutable eyes. It was now well after night-fall. The aghori was given some food and then led by the sarvadhikari to Palakoththu, although the former asked that no trouble need be taken for finding him accomodation, for he was quite acclimatised to staying in the wild, and found staying admist civilisation strenuously burdensome.

S>M>

G.: What does B. think about this aghori?

B.: Do you recollect these words of the Christ: '...ego non judico eum; non enim veni ut judicem mundum, sed ut salvificem mundum.'?

G.: Yes...

P>S>

For those who might not know, a nimisham is a unit of time. It represents 6.25% of one second.

5th August, 1936

Q.: How to destroy illusion?

B.: If it exists it can be destroyed.

Q.: It would not exist from B.'s point of view, of course. B. is a Jnani. But what about the man on the Clapham omnibus?

B.: Incessant practise alone reveals the truth that illusion cannot exist, that Reality alone is [actually] capable of Being in Existence.

Q.: Ought I to practise Aathma-vichara if I want to Realise?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is it to be practised at fixed hours in the morning and evening?

B.: Always in all states except sushupthi.



Q.: What is the difference between jagrath, swapna and sushupthi, which are experienced by ajnanis, and turiya, which is experienced by Jnanis?

B.: There is nothing available for the Jnani to experience. He is in turiyateetha. As for the ajnani, sushupthi is simple nescience, whereas in the states of jagrath and swapna sath can be consciously apprehended and inhered in.

Q.: Is there any difference between jagrath and swapna?

B.: No.

Q.: Each dream is a different dream. Last week I came to this Hall and it was the same Hall and the same Bhagawan. So, there is the additional feature of continuity in the jagrath state. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: Within this dream you are talking of continuity. Therefore, it is merely dream-continuity. In dreams also we have so many memories.

Q.: But since my childhood I am exposed to the same people, environment and world. These were all not created this instant, as in dreams, but over a period of time. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: Memories of objects, objects, the perceiving subject: all these are created instantaneously, from moment to moment. Thus there is no such thing as the past or future.

Q.: What a strange view of the world!

B.: We have strayed so far away from the Real that fiction has become natural, whereas Truth has become alien. So, when reminded of the Truth, people become uncomfortable, and refuse to accept it. Given the choice between what is right and what is easy, the lesser man opts for the latter always. Unmitigated brutality [on the mental plane] is necessary in order to make the ego subside. Everytime he rises, forsaking his source, he must be invariably crushed and sent back into the Self again. The administration of such harsh treatment needs limitless vairagyam on the aspirant's part, which develops only with availability of Guru's Grace. It is like the strategy followed by a mongoose to eat a snake that has opted for a termite-hill as its place of dwelling. Everytime the snake rises his head from one of the holes in the termite-mound he observes the mongoose hungrily waiting outside, and he drops back into the hole again. Eventually one of these 2 things happens: the snake becomes extrodinarily desirous of food for his belly, rushes despetarely out of the mound in search for prey, is pounced upon by the mongoose, has his neck bitten into and is killed instantly, for he has not the strength, in his

starved condition, to put up any efficacious fight with the mongoose, and then is devoured; or, he is too scared to leave the mound and dies in it out of starvation, and the mongoose sniffs at the entrance to the mound, easily discovers the fact of a dead snake lying inside, pulls the cadaver out with his claws and devours it.

Q.: What is the key to the allegory?

B.: We need a mongoose who will patiently wait until either outcome is brought about. The mongoose is Guruvarutkataksham. It arrives as an unsolicited divine gift from God unto pious souls.

Q.: The ego is the snake. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How to win Guru's Grace?

B.: Only by introverting the mind more and more.

S>M>

Q.: Ever since Brunton's book 'Secret India' was published, B. has become a sensation in the worlds of mysticism and Blavatskian-theosophy. Nowadays, each week B. is visited by atleast one new Blavatskian!

B.: [laughing] True, but what is to be done about it? This is not inviting anybody... This does not feel he deserves special attention- or any attention at all. This does not know anything...

Q.: If he does not know anything why are so many people coming to see him?

B.: Is it such an easy task to not know anything, to have forgotten everything?

Q.: Then the supreme Knowledge is really total ignorance.

B.: Quite so.

Q.: So B. is an ajnani and we are all Jnanis.

B.: [laughing] Exactly.

Q.: So, the purpose of sadhana...

B.: -is to effect the complete destruction of all knowledge, so that total forgetfulness prevails, not excluding even eradication of the idea, 'I have forgotten everything.'. Eventually the "I" is forgotten. This is the birth of Indestructible Wisdom. That is Jnana.

S>M>

Q.: What happens after death?

B.: What happens when you go to sleep?

Q.: I wake up again the next morning.

B.: Likewise you may awaken into another body after death. But it is not actual awakening.

Q.: When I wake up after going to sleep, my memories and sense of personalityhood are preserved; they survive sleep. What survives death, if anything?

B.: The memories may go, but the vishayavasanas and poorvasamskaras are carried over inevitably. Since one's self is now incorrectly identified with the changing ego, mind or body, the question of birth and death arises. If this erroneous identification is dropped, Self remains as Self and no doubt could ever arise. Birth and death are really altogether alien to your true nature. Really you were never born. Realise the Unborn that is truly you.

S>M>

Q.: Is B.'s Jnana-vichara technique a psychological process?

B.: It begins in the mind, no doubt.

Q.: Where does it end?

B.: Its end is the disappearance of the mind, or rather the discovery that the mind, including the discoverer, could not exist at all.

Q.: Does the enquirer commence by assuming that the true self of man is neither his body nor mind, but the formless Aathman or Parabrahman?

B.: No. Do it with an open mind. Absence of pre-conceived notions is quite essential.

Q.: What is really the answer to the question?

B.: The only correct answer is the disappearance of the questioner. Answers produced by the intellect cannot be right.

Q.: Is not 'Arivae naan.' the answer? That is what B. has written in the essay.

B.: It means that the nature of the True I is abidance as Self-awareness alone. Arivu does not say naan; it is you who say so. So, find out who you are.

Q.: B. has Realised for himself; will he not simply tell me?

B.: The answer does not lie in the realm of intellection but in that of subjective experience.

Q.: Will B. then not give me the experience?

B.: B. is always giving. How many are mature enough to take?

Q.: If I am immature how am I then to attain maturity?

B.: Only by introverting the mind more and more.

Q.: How is that done?

B.: Only by continuous investigation into the source of the mind- vichara.

Q.: It is a baffling vicious cycle.

Q.: To whom does the perplexity present itself? Ask yourself that, discover the Truth and be at peace.

S>M>

Q.: What is the secret of the Jnani's unshakeable composure?

B.: He does not have anything which he can yet lose; he has nothing to lose and nothing to gain. His state is bliss beyond imagination. Kaduveli-siddhar has sung thus:

சந்தேக மில்லாத தங்கம் - அதைத்

சார்ந்து கொண்டாலுமே தாழ்விலாப் பொங்கம் ;  
அந்த மில்லாதவோர் துங்கம் - எங்கும்  
ஆனந்தமாக நிரம்பிய புங்கம் .

Objective knowledge or memory is the disease that drowns man in the ocean of perennial agony that is samsara. The Jnani is free from this disease. That is the secret.

Q.: If everything is a dream how did the dream arise?

B.: Remaining within the dream you are asking this question. Any reply given to you is only going to be a dream-reply. So, the question does not make any sense. First wake up from the dream. Then, if need be, we may ask the question.

Q.: How to wake up from the dream? Is it merely the simple Who-am-I?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: Which is the most efficacious of sadhanas? Is it only Who-am-I?

B.: The mind is only a shadow. All attempts to chase, suppress or bury it are futile. The only way to escape from it is to find its source and stay there. This is not sadhana in the sense of doing anything. It is a motionless, volitionless and effortless state of spontaneous subjective awareness. To BE this state alone is freedom. This state cannot be reached by the mind by the aid of any sadhana. On the other hand, subsidence of the mind facilitates this state to be exposed or laid bare. Subsidence of the mind may be brought about by continuous practise of investigation along the lines of the question, 'Who am I?'.  
S>M>

Q.: I have been engaging in B.'s vichara method for then past 5 years. My efforts are sincere. Yet, there is no improvement in me. My thoughts are as vigorous as ever and I am still unable to discover the Self.

B.: There is no possibility of finding the Self with the mind. Give up that idea.

Q.: The discovery by a man for himself of his own true self is the objective of vichara. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: There is no question of discovering anything. We are not trying to find, but to lose. If one has lost everything, including himself, the Self is automatically revealed. You say you are going to discover this and that- but who are you, the discoverer? If, as you say, you embark upon the quest to discover the Self, you are doing so by using the treacherous mind as a foot-hold. The mind will never give himself away. Trying to elicit the co-operation of the mind in ruining the mind is futile and it is not the way of vichara. Vichara does not pre-

suppose the existence of any entity by name mind; it looks for the mind and discovers the Self; it does not go about looking for the Self. The quest to discover the Self will lead back only to the quest to first discover the discoverer- namely the mind.

Q.: So it must be called Mano-vichara, not Aathma-vichara!

B.: Quite so.

6th August, 1936

Q.: Do you approve, sir, of the death penalty?

B.: No.

Q.: Do not serious crimes warrant the same? Will it not, in future, serve as a deterrent for those contemplating perpetration of such crimes?

B.: You may add all sorts of spice-embellishments to fish whilst cooking it, but they are merely accretions that enhance the primal flavour; the original odour of the fish does not change in character. State-sanctioned murder is still murder.

Q.: The scriptures of your own country say: 'Tyajyeath kularthae purusham gramasyarthae kulam thyajyeath gramam janapadasyarthae...'. So, Hindusim, which is, after all, an Aryan religion, seems to tally with Germany's 'For the Greater Good.' ideology.

B.: [laughing] What ingenious astuteness! Why did you omit the last quarter of the shloka?! The shloka's intent is to demonstrate that for the sake of gaining the Aathman, the entire world is worthy of being given up. We, evidently, operate out of the long-established habit of interpreting things to suit our own convenience...

S>M>

Q.: Does meditating on the chakras have any use?

B.: It may be helpful for securing concentration of mind...

Q.: But if I want Salvation or Liberation, 'Who-am-I?' is the way?

B.: Quite so.

S>M>

Q.: If everything is predestined, the question of whether or not I Realise in this lifetime is also predestined. So abhyasa is useless if it has already been written on my brow that I shall not Realise in the current janma. Am I correct?

B.: How do you know what has been written on your brow? Do you know?

Q.: So abhyasa is a gamble!

B.: This question is pestering you because you are under the impression that free-will is a fact. If everything is predestined it stands to reason that the question of whether or not you engage in abhyasa in this lifetime is also predestined. So why bother with such ideas? Prarabdha cannot affect the

introverted mind. The more and more you introvert the mind, the more and more you transcend prarabdha. Someone must be available for karma to affect. Otherwise whom will it affect? If the one whom karma is wont to affect is no longer alive, what can karma do? Listen to the following story- Much against the advice of his well-wishers, a wealthy brahmin named Vimooda Aiyyer once decided to enter into the business of money-lending, thinking it to be lucrative. On the very day of opening his establishment, the foolish gentleman lent money to a penurious habitual drunkard, his first customer early in the morning, who had neither property nor family, without making any proper enquiries, thinking, 'Goddess Lakshmi will be offended if I turn my first business of the inaugural day away.'. Months after the borrower died of a ruptured schirrhotic liver, the ignorant creditor, in the hope of recovering his money, encountering one of the borrower's whisky-friends [ குடிநண்பர்கள் ] on the street, asked about him. 'Why, he died quite a while ago,' responded the other, 'but who are you that you make these solicitous enquiries about him?'. Not wanting his business reputation to suffer by permitting people to alert themselves to the fact that he was so dim-witted a business-man as to lend to such thoroughly hopeless cases, the creditor managed to bluff, 'Oh, he is my sister's son!'. 'What! Why, you were the very person I was looking for!' said the man, catching hold swiftly of the creditor's dhoti. The perplexed creditor could not make head or tail of the situation; he merely stared at the other in befuddlement. 'Once he borrowed money from me whilst in inebriated condition, and said that if anything happened to him, we could approach his mother's brother. When he died, I was very sorry that I had forgotten to take down this relative's address. You are the very man I have been searching for; now of your own accord you have come; what a decent man you are!'. The creditor became alarmed and told the truth, but this enraged the other man. 'What lies you utter to avoid your rightful obligation! Will you produce the money or shall I muss you up?', he roared in a fury. The poor brahmin, never having encountered such situations before, became extremely frightened. Without further ado, he handed over the heavy gold necklace around his neck and fled the place as fast as his legs could carry him. He had entertained hopes of getting back his money, but he had now lost several times more. Such is the sorry plight of karma which awaits the Jnani, who is dead in God. It is like aiming a large pebble at the Sun with a catapult, thinking, 'Poor fellow! 'Tis a matter of moments before he lies slain here at my feet.', gaping upward in eager anticipation, and having the same pebble land on an eye and black it out. So, no ego, no karma.

Q.: Yet, if karma does not permit it, the ego cannot be killed.

B.: The statement is true, but with respect to the ego or from the point of view of the ego only. Transcend or bypass the ego by merging the mind in its source. Then there will be no trouble on account of karma. Then karma becomes akin to a snake with its venomous fangs pulled out. It may exhaust itself by hissing and hissing, but it would have no power to harm you in fact. Prarabdha may damage a Jnani's body this way and that, but he derives only amusement from it all. He cannot be perturbed by anything. He who has nothing to lose in this world, not even himself, for the simple reason that everything possible of being lost, including chiefly himself, has already been lost, is verily the happiest man under the sun.

Q.: Should all renounce home then, and run away into the jungles, just like Bhagawan?

B.: It is mental renunciation that is of any use. The other thinks, 'I am a renunciate.'. Therefore his renunciation is pointless.

S>M>

Said the Shylock-

Q.: The staple diet of the southern region of India is rice. In the north it is wheat. Which, according to B., is more conducive to development of the sattvagunam of the mind?

B.: What is your opinion on the matter?

Q.: Based on my experience, I will say that rice makes the mind unruly, corn makes it sleepy, whilst unleavened wheat alone keeps it poised steadily in the beingness of the Self.

B.: [laughing] Good. [சக்தைகப் போடு போட்டான் போ !]

Q.: [surprised] Is it a correct observation?

B.: In your case, yes. Flesh and lactic foods definitely agitate all minds, but even in the case of the other foods, one must rule out those substances that cause irritation to that particular mind. Prussic acid kills one and all, but the peanut kills him alone who is allergic to it. What is suitable and what is unsuitable in one's case can be determined merely by aid of a rudimentary observatory study.

Q.: Has not B. said dairy products are permissible?

B.: Those who are recovering from addiction to morphine are given cocaine so that they might gradually withdraw from all drug usage. It does not mean that cocaine is good for health. Likewise, to those as are habituated to consumption of flesh, dairy products are recommended as a makeshift intercession. Gradually a single grain- what grain is to be elected depends upon individual mental temperament as was stated- must be made the staple diet. Then the obstreperous mind can be brought under control easily. Milk is a produce of nature meant to feed the toothless infant. Do we not have teeth?

Q.: Everybody drinks coffee mixed with milk here. B. will not raise any objection.

B.: Who is this guttersnipe to object to the ways of the high and the mighty? The name for this place is 'Sri Ramanasramam'. [laughs] Do you think anyone is interested in listening to this here? Do you know what people do? They come with a certain conviction. This is asked to ratify and corroborate the same. What is presented is not a request for an opinion, but a fait accompli. The swami is only permitted to say 'yes' to their pre-existing notions and beliefs; he must confirm what they think they already know to be legitimately true. If the swami keeps quiet, he is politely pestered until he demurely nods his head. So, what can he do? Where spiritual matters are concerned, this draws the line, but in other cases people seem to have their way.

Q.: Shall I plead with the sarvadhikari to remove objectionable things from the ashram's menu?

B.: Keep quiet. Where is the need for this reformist attitude? Reform yourself and the world stands reformed. Attend to what you have come here for. Otherwise you will land in soup.

Q.: Am I permitted to ask, generally, whether coffee is permissible?

B.: Caffeine, Alcohol, Nicotine, Morphine, Cocaine, Codeine, Amphetamine or whatever else it might be under whatever name, form or disguise: avoid all drugs. Starting a habit is easy. Giving it up might take lifetimes. The more you have become acclimatised to a habit, the harder it has become to give up. That is why people find it difficult to give up the habit of thinking: it is man's oldest habit- and the most deadly. Prevention is better than cure. People are tempted by curiosity to fall prey to all these substances. Strangely enough, inquisitiveness along the lines of 'Who-am-I?' alone seems rare. That is the fundamental question. Somehow, people ignore this and are drawn toward other curiosities. [twinkling at me] As Mr. H. G. Wells puts it, 'First things first.'. Let us first find an answer to the curiosity of who we really are. Then we can proceed to satisfy other curiosities, including for the experiences brought on through the influence of drugs upon the mind, should they remain.

Q.: Which is better- 2 or 3 major meals a day or tiny portions of food consumed throughout the day at periodic intervals, say once in every 2 hours?

B.: The latter. But do not ask, 'Then, why is it not being enforced at Ramanasramam?'. This has nothing to do with Ramanasramam.

Q.: What does B. mean? The ashram is the consecrated earth where B.'s darshan can be had.

B.: The introverted mind has Bhagawathdarshanam alone everywhere. As for consecrated earth, consecrate your mind by losing it in the Self; then it is



found that everything is only consecrated earth.

S>M>

Q.: If milk is abhorrent, why are cows being kept at the ashram?

B.: Why have you come here?

Q.: I have come to obtain the benefit of B.'s sathsang.

B.: The cows have come for the same purpose.

Q.: How can a dumb animal appreciate the value of Realisation?

B.: That is your opinion.

Q.: Can an animal Realise?

B.: It is rare but not unheard of.

Q.: Everybody is aware that the sahsraram must bloom for Realisation. Do animals also, then, possess the 7 chakras that govern the rise of the kundalini-shakthi through the sushumna-nadi?

B.: For Realisation, what is necessary and sufficient is not any chakra or nadi but unconditional Love. Elders say, 'It has been demonstrated that if the Guru's grace is available, even a thorn-plant can be Liberated.'.

Q.: Will B. not take pity on me and Liberate me by showering his Grace on me? If- after all- Liberation may be bestowed on a nuisance-causing thorn-tree, which, poking them, causes no small inconvenience to passers-by, is it too much to ask that I, a human, be Liberated?

B.: You were just told that it needs Love or Surrender. Guru's Grace is like an ocean. How much salt-water you carry away depends upon the size of the vessel you have brought. What is the use in having brought a tiny vessel and then unreasonably lamenting, 'Alas! What great parsimony characterises this ocean's behaviour; he has so much water to offer but does not permit that I carry away more.'? Your vessel of unconditional Love or Surrender must be large enough to support your requirement for water from the ocean of Grace that is the Guru.

Q.: How to make my surrender perfect, so that I can take as much water as I like from B.'s ocean of Grace?

B.: Repeatedly trying to surrender completely, leads to complete surrender eventually.

S>M>

Q.: It is said God is anywhere. I search for him everywhere. I find Him nowhere. Why?

B.: It is like the silly woman who thought she had misplaced her pince-nez. She searched everywhere. She could not find it. After sometime a friend of hers happened to meet her on the street. She was asked why she looked so worried. She replied she had misplaced her expensive pince-nez. 'Why, what do you mean, you silly old thing!', replied the enquirer, 'There it is, right on

your nose!'. The despondent woman's grief turned into joy. 'Why, yes, goodness gracious!', she exclaimed, 'Here it is, funnily enough! To think I contemplated ripping apart the carpet to look for it! Profoundly silly of me, indeed!'. She thanked her friend and went her way.

Q.: The moral is-?

B.: You say you have looked everywhere. Have you looked beneath the mind? Have you looked into yourself? Have you looked within?

S>M>

Q.: Whose fault is it that I am suffering from ignorance? Did I ever ask for ignorance? Why has the Creator thrust this ignorance on me?

B.: You seem to know that you are ignorant. Can it be called ignorance? It is wisdom. When it has matured, it is Realisation.

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that B. once said[extracting a fold of note-paper from his pocket and reading out aloud]- 'Once upon a time, before a large segment of Lemuria sank beneath the ocean to atone for the sins of man-kind, before the remaining portion of Lemuria, today referred to as India, merged with Asia, giving rise to the Himalayas as a consequence, an ancient Tamil colony once thrived with Madurai as Her capital, in the same place wherein today the Indian Ocean is to be found. This ancient Tamil civilisation was technologically advanced farther than the Caucasian mind can begin to imagine today. There were no diseases. All men lived for a minimum of 125 years before symptoms of old age would begin to manifest. Man had developed the ability to fly up in the air using his bare hands and legs; he could walk on water, handle fire without injury and perform many other feats which are regarded impossible today. All living here were spiritually advanced life-forms who could easily communicate at will with psychic beings in the astral realms. Whilst negotiating the skies, the devas passing this place would pause, salute reverentially, and then resume their journey. Here lived not man, but super-man! These Tamil-speaking people lived here when man in other parts of the world had not yet shed his fur and not yet learnt to walk on 2 legs. Tamil therefore is the most ancient language in the world! Be proud of it, my dear Tamil children!' ?

B.: Around a year back someone came here and read out this article from some magazine.

Q.: Well?

B.: What is it that do you want to know?

Q.: Is it all true or not?

B.: B. is expected to know everything. Unless he answers each and every question put to him, he cannot be called great.

Q.: B. is known as the 'Sarvagnar'. If he does not know about kumarikandam, who else would?

B.: B. does not know anything.

Q.: Please tell me whether the information on kumarikandam is authentic or not. As a proud Tamilian, I wish to know.

B.: [makes no response]

Q.: Is silence an indication that B. is unwilling to talk to me? Or that he actually does not know?

B.: The latter.

Q.: It is ridiculous. The Jnani knows everything. Am I correct?

B.: He knows what is worth knowing.

S>M>

An enervated, feeble-looking Anglo-Indian has arrived at the ashram on a flying-visit. There were colourful marks on his forehead and this has only served to accentuate the overall comical effect of his drooping personality. He introduced himself to B. and the Hall as coming from the ashram of the Caucasian Vaishnavite monk Krishna-prem, located near Almoira, a place nestled within the sinuous folds of the Himalayan mountain-ranges. His first observation on coming to this place is that the weather here seems to be unbearably hot. B. answers his questions very graciously-

Q.: My life is filled with problems and problems only. What am I to do?

B.: Thinking creates all your problems. Mr. Brunton has made the sagacious observation that '...the intellect first creates problems and then tries to solve them.'

Q.: No doubt endlessly worrying about problems is- in itself- a problematic habit, but problems may originate as a result of external circumstances also.

B.: No. You look at it as a problem. To another the same set of adversarious circumstances might present itself as a delightful opportunity or challenge to prove his mettle. Perception of the same thing varies from perceiver to perceiver. One says the flagon is half-full; another calls it half-empty. Yet both are correct.

Q.: What is the best way to tackle problems? Should I, in an optimistic vein, treat them as challenges?

B.: When you are travelling on a train, do you carry your luggage on your head?

Q.: No. I place it on the luggage rack.

B.: Likewise, surrender the responsibility for your actions to God and remain silent.

Q.: Only one who has faith in God can effect such surrender. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: What is required is Love, not faith.

Q.: Is faith of no importance, then?

B.: 'Faith in God' is a cunningly contrived, innocuous-sounding term for an insidiously preposterous idea that allows people to demand things from God as though He were their servant. It means you are under the impression that by praying to God or by offering Him this or that, you believe yourself entitled to receive boons in reciprocation. You want events to unfold after a preferred particular pattern in future; to this end you seek out His co-operation and offer Him this and that in return; is this any better than a barter-transaction? Is there anything which you can legitimately offer upto God? Is not everything His already? So, 'Faith in God' is an imaginary tender that man has fabricated so that he can order about God as he pleases; it is the very anti-thesis of Sharanagathi, which enunciates the teaching that individual will or volition must be eliminated in favour of God's will or Randomness. To surrender unconditionally is to absolutely relinquish your volition and keep quiet. It is Love itself. This Love has no expectations. It anticipates no reward. It knows no gratification. It has no needs or wants. Such Love alone can be the Sharanagathi that opens the orifice of the Heart that grants access into the Kingdom of Heaven. Faith alone, being a mere intellectual modification revolving around ego-centric interest, has never lead anyone to Deliverance. Faith does have its use, and that is only this: it helps to cultivate Love. It is said that Bhakti is Jnana-matha. Apprehend, therefore, the Redeeming power of unconditional Love: she sunders the veil of avidya maya and makes possible Realisation of the One Real.

Q.: If I want to cultivate and experience this divine Love of which B. speaks, what should I do?

B.: Passionate yearning for God, which is not motivated by any rhyme or reason, is necessary. Trying to please God so that favours- such as the comforts of worldly life- may be obtained from Him is what the man on the Clapham omnibus prefers to do; he wants this or that from the Lord. Prayer for Realisation or Union with the Divine is also a selfish prayer. On the other hand, the Baktha has nothing to pray for. His yearning for the Lord is not motivated or sustained by any modification of the intellect [vritti], but is natural and instinctive, like an infant's love for its mother.

Q.: I lack any such yearning. What am I to do? Should God not, in His infinite Mercy, bestow me with yearning for Him?

B.: He will, provided you unconditionally surrender to Him.

Q.: After surrendering, I need not worry about my own Salvation. Am I correct?

B.: After surrendering there is no need for you to worry about anything at all; you are no longer responsible for anything.

Q.: Then who will take care of my earthly duties?

B.: Go through them without the feeling that you are the body that is engaging in the action. If responsibility is thrown unto the Higher Power, some force takes charge of the body and makes it go through the actions for which it has come. You have no business judging the efficacy, efficiency or propriety of such actions. Let the body act in accordance with its prarabdha. Never mind what becomes of the body or mind; you remain permanently in the state of quiescent-alertness[jagrat-sushupthi], that is, of unceasing submergence in the fathomless expanse of the chidakasha of the Heart.

Q.: If, after surrender, things do not proceed favourably?

B.: Never mind how they proceed. Remain steadfastly in the beingness of the Self.

Q.: Can I opt for the method of 'Who-am-I'?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What factors or precautions should be kept in mind whilst practicing the vichara sadhana?

B.: Do not pursue the investigation with any objective- such as, 'I must Realise the Self.', etc.. Here also, only if and when the sadhana is devoid of volition, does it serve its purpose. The volition, 'I must remain without volition.' is also volition. When asked to produce a clean-wiped slate, do you write the words 'tabula rasa' on the slate and present it?

Q.: What to do to attain the volitionless state?

B.: You were not told, 'First attain the volitionless state; thereafter you may commence the enquiry.'. The enquiry, when sufficiently intense, automatically takes care of the requirement and fulfills it. The same stands good in the case of the one who longs for Bakthi. Initially the man wants this or that from God, and repeatedly thinks of God so that his prayers might be fulfilled. Later on, he finds that frequent thoughts of God have purified his mind- an unintended, serendipitous corollary. Now he begins to think of God not for the sake of fulfillment of worldly desires, but for the sake of God Himself. Eventually he abandons all thoughts except for the one thought of his God. This is parabakthi. In His inestimable Compassion, God or Self kills even that one thought, and pulling him into the Heart, there destroys him once and for all. This is Kaivalyam.

Q.: I am not going to pretend that I have understood everything B. has told me. Yet, may I be assured I have B.'s Grace and Love to watch over me in the quest?

B.: [reading out from his usual ancient 1898 reprint of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorised Version of the Bible] Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee... Fear not: for I am with thee...

The Anglo-Indian beamed with joy. He bowed before B. many times and then strode out of the Hall energetically, taking meticulous care to avoid stepping on the aghori's beard, which lay as a crumpled, grubby mass upon the floor in front of his hunched form that seemed to be absorbed in some sort of inexpressible inner ecstasy.

7th August, 1936

Early in the morning as usual the sarvadhikari arrives with wet dhoti and prostrates in front of the Maharshi, whose eyes are closed. The meditating aghori and myself are the only others in the Hall. Observing the master in a meditative inflection of comportment, I have, as always on such instances, closed my eyes. The sarvadhikari rises; he lingers for a fraction-of-a-second longer than usual. Then he moves toward the door.

B.: நிற்க .

The sarvadhikari halts with a startled jerk.

B.: என்ன ?

S.: It is nothing... [after a few moments, of his own accord] [There is] a small problem... I thought whether I should trouble B. about it...

B.: என்ன ?

S.: [like steam breaking out of the chimney of a train] Perumal seems to be hell-bent on giving us further and further trouble with each passing day. It seems, every morning, together with one or two evil brahmin accomplices to lend credibility to his talk, and some of his like-minded cronies, he is standing near the kambaththu-ilayanar sannadhi, calling passers-by, and telling them fabricated stories about Sri Bhagawan which are calculated to show him in a poor light. The other day Sudaresan was crying to me about it inconsolably. Yesterday, the accursed sinner has cornered that Anglo-Indian outside the ashram. He has masqueraded himself to be the ashram's official collection agent, and demanded money from the Anglo-Indian. That foolish creature has given him Rs. 150!! Just now I received the news from Chinnayyan, who had been discreetly watching the whole scene from a distance; Perumal had seen him observing from the corner of his eye; lest he should alert us immediately, the knave has stood guard outside the ashram until night-fall with a stout club, glaring and brandishing menacing gestures at Chinnayyan. Chinnayyan has promptly fled, fearing assault. Now when he came and told me I felt shaken. Even legitimate donations which should come to the ashram, which have

been earnestly offered as an indication of the goodwill of B.'s devotees, are going wayward like this. I was thinking of going to the police station. I wonder whether B. might approve of the said course of action...

B.: What is the doubt in it?

S.: [brightening] Today after the noon-meal, I shall gather four or five devotees and-

B.: [interrupting] What is the doubt in it? Of course no such thing shall be done.

S.: But [even] leaving the monetary losses aside, because of his calumnious activities, the ashram may become unpopular with visitors. Of course those who have once had darshan of B. will not believe his libel, but some gullible newcomers may be deceived by him...

B.: [laughing] Is that your worry? If people stop coming here altogether because of him, the entire legacy of this shall be bequeathed unto him in undying gratitude! [seemingly reflecting] But what has this beggar to offer? A stick, three pieces of rag, a worn water-pot: who wants all this?

Then, still smiling, he waves off the flummoxed sarvadhikari, instantly dismissing him.

S>M>

After staying for a week or thereabouts, the 'Buchanan's Red Seal' boy announces to Bhagawan in a decorous voice today morning that he must needs take his leave on the afternoon of that day; he states that he regrets he must leave the master's sacred company; he wishes wistfully he could remain forever at B.'s feet. The master smiled and kept quiet. All these days the boy had sat silently in the Hall like a stone awaiting the sculptor's chisel. I observed him to be gazing at the master uninterruptedly, with an expression of serene delectation lighting up his otherwise inane face. He seemed to become restless to have to remain in the Hall when the master was not there. When the master went for his walks on the Hill, he tried to accompany him, but the attendant going along with B. would debar him. Then, after the first such occasion, he neatly managed to succeed, because he seemed to be going to Palakoththu; after a few minutes, to the surprise of B.'s attendant, he was apparently found further up the Hill on the path, to which spot he had beaten them by climbing irregularly at the face of the Hill, to the left of the path. When he offered salutations to B. with a grinning face, B. laughed and went on, but the attendant, allegedly, became annoyed and asked him sternly to go back to the Hall. The boy nodded but tried to follow them stealthily. The attendant became enraged and tried to march him back down, but the boy began to throw a tantrum, saying he wanted to stay by B.'s side always. B. calmly said, 'Varattum vidu.'. Soon a thorn pierced the boy's foot; at once he

plucked at it and threw it away, but when he walked, an c tiny remainder thereof seemed to send a shock-wave of torturous pain up the entire limb the moment he set it upon the ground. He sat down on a rock and tried to extricate it off his sole, but although his fingers could feel it, he could not see it; when he tried to take hold of it, his fingers only clutched at air. Evidently it had calculatedly lodged itself in this infuriating manner only to give him trouble. B. and attendant were nowhere to be seen. The boy came back sadly limping into the Hall. Those in the ashram set his foot aright in no time and advised him not to follow B. on the latter's walks hereafter. Presently the master returned; upon his arrival at the Hall, B., even whilst entering, looked at the boy steadily and squarely in the eye. Upon those rare instances wherein B. permitted anyone to make full eye-contact, the receipient of such nayana-deekshai was indeed blessed; here, B. seemed to want to deliberately stare at this boy! The boy became emotional. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he fell procumbent to the floor and tried to catch hold of the master's legs. Unsurprisingly, he was not permitted to make the intended physical contact, for the attendants were as vigilant as ever. Someone entered the Hall and told B. that whilst on the Hill the boy's sole had been pierced by a small thorn, that in concatenation he had come to the office in a state of humongous perturbation, and that the trouble had been set aright at once. B. again looked at the boy and said, 'Hereafter do not indulge in this sort of mischief. Is it understood?'. The boy slanted his head and did not say anything. However, thereafter he never attempted to follow B. up the Hill. Instead when the master was away he would sit there fidgeting and casting sudden expectant glances upon the Sofa. When at this time those who came to clean the Hall asked him to wait outside till they were done with their chore, he would say, 'I also want to help in this task.'; he was not permitted to have his way in this either, but was resolutely shown the door and bade wait outside till their job was done. He tried complaining to B. once that he was being purloined and ostracised inside the ashram. B. candidly said, 'If each attends exclusively to what he has come here for, no such angst would arise. Instead of paying attention to our purpose of coming here, we want to mimic others here; therein lies the whole trouble.'. Thereafter the boy became largely unobtrusive and did not give any trouble. Now, at the hour of parting, he wanted B. to remember him always, even if he were to forget B.! B. laughed and said, 'Is it so easy to forget Bhagawan?'. The boy forgot his moroseness and laughed also. Then he prostrated, rose, raised his hands high above his head in salutation, reverentially touched the Sofa and applied his fingers to his eyes, and, taking a deep, prolonged, final look at B., tearfully exited the Hall. I could not help taking a look at the retreating figure of the boy, at the aghori meditating in a



corner, and finally considering myself, and wondering impromptu, 'Can it be that all those who lose parents at a young age become quintessentially cranky?!'.

S>M>

Q.: [on a disapproving note] That boy is a self-professed drunkard, even at such a youthful age. B., however, has seen fit to shower love and kindness upon him in unlimited measure.

B.: Oho! he is a drunkard; is he? Maybe. But is he any worse than you?

Q.: [stunned] What does B. mean?! Why, I am a perfectly self-abnegating teetotaler! B. knows it well!

B.: [quietly] Do you not drink 'filter-kaapi' 5 times a day?

Q.: [indignantly] But coffee is no intoxicant!

B.: That is your opinion.

S>M>

Q.: Who is the supreme victor in this world?

B.: The supreme loser.

Q.: Loser of what?

B.: Of anything and everything; principally himself.

Q.: What is the benefit obtained by throwing everything, including oneself, away?

B.: The underlying substratum is revealed.

Q.: What is this substratum and why would I want it to be revealed?

B.: The substratum is your true Self. [smiling] Are you not curious to know it?

Q.: Very much so. How do I know it?

B.: You put it succinctly: 'Throw everything away.' Principally, oneself, the "I", must be thrown away.

Q.: Who throws, what is thrown and at whom?

B.: The ego or thought-manufacturing faculty, recognising the futility of his [own] fleeting, transient, apparent existence, simply fades away. What is left is the Self only. It is not that the Self destroys the mind. It is that the mind, which was once operating in the nefarious, anguish-causing realm of thoughts and objects, now turns inside and discovers itself to be the Self. The mind which wants to do this cannot; only a volitionless mind can. If you throw everything away, yourself foremost, the mind automatically fades away owing to lack of use. Then the residue is discovered to be the Self and nothing but the Self. Who makes this discovery then? Nobody. The term 'discovery' is used here in the sense of 'shining clearly or without obscuration'. The man on the Clapham omnibus is also hazily Self-aware; but in his case, the false, ruinous idea, 'I am an inhabitant of this body made up of flesh and bone and I function from within it.' or 'I am the mind which functions from within the brain.' makes an

unceasing stream of thoughts arise; thus his Self-awareness does not shine clearly, for it is obscured by an unyielding, perennial curtain of thought or imagination or fiction. It is this single idea, which makes possible thoughts to arise, that is known as man's original sin, the primogenitalis tenebra of ignorance, the veil of avidya maya, and by many other names. If this idea is destroyed, all is shanti only.

Q.: How to give up this erroneous idea?

B.: Pay attention to what it is that you are asking for: you ask for a formula. You are told to abandon everything. You are asking, 'What is that by means of acquisition of which I can abandon everything?'. Is it not wholly absurd? You are being asked to abandon the dreadnought you are travelling upon and jump headlong into the middle of the raging sea. Your response is, 'Which shall I take to keep myself afloat- a dingi or a kisbi-ring?'. If you want to stay afloat in the dreadnought of samsara, you might simply opt to merely safely stay inside it. Whenever there are tempests you will be tossed about. If you want Liberation from the demon of mental attachment that is ever wont to 'tie down' your yearning soul to the stifling confines of samsara, allow the [operation of the] Guru's Grace to 'tie up' your legs with the anchor of vairagyam using the chains of abhyasa. Once your legs are securely bound with no chance at all of wriggling free, heave yourself overboard! Plunge into the ocean of the unalloyed bliss of Being! Dive deeper and deeper; the heavier your anchor is, the easier this would be. When you reach the ocean bed, prise open the oyster known as the hridaya-granthi; there, shining for joy, is the Pearl known as the Aathman! There, is it not easy?

Q.: In theory it sounds straight-forward. In practice, will anyone jump into the middle of the ocean?

B.: One whose anchor has become intolerably heavy would jump without a second thought.

Q.: How to intensify vairagyam, then?

B.: By refusing outright at the mental level to believe that you were born, will die one day, and are one and identical with this body. When the idea of one's mortality has become a persistent anathemous unacceptability, one is thereby automatically motivated to relentlessly undertake continuous and unintermittent search for the Real until it is Realised. This is the most expeditious way to Realise the Real. Many fools hear or read B.'s words and think, 'Very interesting... Perhaps some day I also shall Realise... Meanwhile, now, I wonder what I shall get to eat for dinner to-night?'. Rare is the man who, upon hearing or reading the words, 'You are currently dreaming. The body or mind is not your true Self. Realise your true, illimitable Self.', feels as though he has been set on fire. He verily is competent to Realise in his

incumbent lifetime. If kerosene is poured on a man's body and it is set alight, does he sit down to calmly think, 'Am I pre-destined to die out of the injuries caused by these burns? Or, am I going to escape death by putting out the flames? I wonder what means I might deploy in order so as to extinguish these flames... It all sounds so ridiculously complicated and difficult...'? Does he not dance around like a madman or roll round and round upon the earth in a crazed frenzy of pain? Likewise with Realisation; those who need it as badly as such a man, unfailingly and invariably successfully wrest it. When samsara or the idea of being a dehi becomes as intolerable as the scorching heat of fire, as excruciating as the ravenous licks of countless tongues of ferocious flame, then, and then alone, verily does affirm Bhagawan, actual Realisation is truly not far away from the aspirant. The others mount podiums and deliver laudable lectures on 'how to Realise the Self'. Very good. Let them. Remember Sri Ramakrishna's words: The citadel of God must be taken by storm!

Q.: These words make me uneasy. Why?

B.: The ego-self begins to see that he is not going to obtain any blissful experiences on this path; rather, he faces total annihilation, absolute extermination from which no return could ever be conceivable even in the realm of the imagination. So, he tries to use fear against you as a counter-attack. Pay no heed. Ruthlessly push on. Everytime a thought arises, ask yourself Who-am-I? and kill it. Make this habit so persistent that the mind gives up thinking. This is the way to the glorious kingdom of God, to Life Eternal and Immortal. If there is suffering along the way, let it be. Neither the apparent suffering nor the apparent sufferer is Real. Whereas, Reality, which you seek to reach, is quite Real. Therefore plod on! There are temptations and tribulations along the way, doubtless, as Bunyan elucidates in his Pilgrim's Progress. Remind yourself of the words of Mr. Frost: 'The woods are lovely, dark and deep, But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep.'. The ego must go. That is the only way to Peace-from-which-there-is-no-return.

P>S>

I am reminded of a line from another poem in this vein, that I came across in the months following the master's passage from the Earth: 'Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.' The circumstances under which I found this poem are quite extraordinary. It may not be out of place to narrate them here. After B.'s body [if at all, and if so to the extent, 'twud be meaningful to articulate such a ridiculous self-contradictory combination of words, Reality being always incorporeal] died, I became for a while quite inconsolable. One night I was crying into the crook of

my elbow, mumbling involuntarily, 'Iraiyanaarae! You have died without granting my blind eye the gift of Sight...'. Then I must have passed into sleep. The next thing I remember is that I am looking at B., who is seated on the window-sill of a classroom. His hands are pressed against the wall he has balanced the weight of his frame upon. Light pours in on him- golden light- from another window located far away; yet the sun is behind him; I see it some distance away beyond the window, above his head, regretting that the scheme of things has placed it above its venerated master dearest, bashfully trying to hide behind some clouds, knowing that it would only be moments before the clouds parted and the radiant golden form in all its splendour became available to behold again... He is smiling at me from the window-sill. His legs are dangling in the air, mildly rocking to and fro. I am seated on the floor in the padmasanam.

B.: Why are you crying?

G.: You have also left me, master. Why did you die? Now whom shall I turn to? I have lost faith in man a long time ago. He has no solution to the problem of death- except dying. You offered me immortality, master. I was too immature, I suppose, to take it. I pine for you now, day and night. But you died. Why did you die without Salvifying me?

B.: You mean the body that lies interred at Ramanasramam?

G.: Yes.

B.: That was only a dream.

G.: What about this?

B.: You tell me.

G.: This is also a dream. I am sure of it. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

G.: Where can I find you now, appa?

B.: I am in your Heart.

G.: How to reach it, appa?

B.: 8th May 1945.

G.: I do not understand.

B.: 8th May 1945.

G.: Yes. I did feel slight sadness to reflect that the conclusion of the harsh war had- all along- lain only in the defeat of the Axis. But what of it?

B.: 8th May 1945.

G.: Still I do not understand.

B.: 8th May 1945.

G.: Appa, I am no longer an aficionado of the funny-moustached man; long ago as instructed by you I burnt all-

B.: 8th May 1945.

G.: Surrender- pervasive, unconditional, absolute, uncompromising, total!  
That is the one and only way into the Kingdom of my appa's Sacred Heart!

B.: [laughing] சக்ரைகப் போடு போட்டான் போ !

G.: In sometime the scheduled teacher will come here. If they notice us here they will take us into the headmaster's room and cane us black and blue. Let us go back to Virupaksha cave.

B.: No, no, I am the Tamil teacher here.

G.: Where are the other students?

B.: They have gone for march-past and drill.

G.: If I do not attend they will tell Atthai and she will scold me. Shall I go before my truancy is observed?

B.: The headmaster is also my son. He will raise no objection. Appa has already informed him.

G.: Today what will you teach me in Tamil? Why did you not teach me in the ashram?

B.: I asked you to sit an hour everyday with Muruganar. [smiling merrily] Did you pay any attention to it?

G.: I want to be with Appa...

B.: If I teach, will you listen attentively?

G.: First I have a question.

B.: Ask away, then, my little boy...

G.: You say you are employed here as a teacher. Yet you are wearing only your usual koupeenam. Will not the children make fun of you? How come the school management permits it? The headmaster may be your devotee, but does not the fact consequentially place him in a situation all the more delicate?

B.: This is a school for children with special needs. Those who teach here have no definite form by or of themselves. They are avadhutas. They see nothing. The seer sees based on what he wants and requires to see. One child sees this dressed in the robes of an emperor, another dressed as a soldier, and so on.

G.: Which perception is correct?

B.: All.

G.: Why am I seeing B. like this? I want to see him in a dhoti.

B.: As you please. [is now swathed in a 4-cubit spotlessly white dhoti]

G.: [laughing] I wonder what those in the ashram will say, seeing this! I wonder how the sarvadhikari will react!

B.: [laughing] But now there is no ashram...

G.: But pooja for the mother's temple continues... I heard they are talking of resuming the veda-parayanam...

B.: The ashram is where Bhagawan is.

G.: Then where is B. my appa?

B.: You tell me.

G.: In the Heart. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

G.: Is this a school for mentally challenged children?

B.: Yes.

G.: Am I insane?

B.: Yes.

G.: How so?

B.: What-is-not is seen; what IS is not seen. You are in slumber always and to the Real- to me- your mind is reluctant to awake. Therefore it can be said that you are both blind and mentally ill.

G.: Is there no cure for me?

B.: Surely there is.

G.: What is it?

B.: I am the cure.

G.: I cannot reach out and embrace you, no matter how hard I strain. Yes.. the only way is...

B.: என்ன ?

G.: 8th May 1945. Am I correct?

B.: Absolutely. You can only watch helplessly as the Soviets intensify their indefatigable onward thrust towards Berlin from the East. You can do nothing to stop the British, United-states and other forces from advancing from the West. There will be a last major confrontation at the Ardennes. The defense of Berlin will be ugly and bloody. It will fail. Then the great master of chicanery and deception, who rose on this Earth in an apparent challenge to my power of Entropy or Randomness, will acknowledge his failiure to prevail against me and kill himself. Then the screen of darkness shall be lifted and Light alone shall prevail. Never again shall the defiance of Nationalsozialismus dominate the imagination of man's mind.

G.: But the war was over years back...

B.: Yes. The reference made to the war is allegorical... To win that war, the Russians advanced from the East and soldiers fighting for the English-speaking world from the West. To win this war I shall pull you from within and your thoughts of me will push you from without. When that war ended, her führer killed himself and Germany finally surrendered, realising peace after the spell of darkness lifted once and for all with the death of that grand illusionist. When this war ends, your ego shall kill himself and you shall finally surrender, Realising Peace once and for all with the death of that illusion-

causing conjuror of darkness. When that war ended the fate of the Swastika in Germany was doomed: she would never again rise over the Reichstag, never again flutter to invoke a corresponding spasm of joy from within the German heart. When this war ends, your "I" will never rise again. And so on. Yes; that war ended. This one is drawing to a close.

G.: May I know from B. the reason why Hitler's seductive charm worked so well? Dictators may come and go, but the குட்டிமீசைக்காரன் will be remembered forever...

B.: He was a Messiah of Darkness who projected himself to the masses as a mystical personality. The Gothic Nordo-teutonic Pruehnic mind is not satisfied with merely worshipping a lifeless God. He subconsciously demands personal contact with an entity whose existence is the subject-matter of direct, experiential, living proof. He craves for Mystic Union with God. The குட்டிமீசைக்காரன் has made use of this fact.

G.: The means for legitimate and fruitful satisfaction of that craving?

B.: Ajata-advaita.

G.: What should those do who find it too hard to stomach?

B.: There was published a book in the West known as The Infinite Way; the same may be perused as a preparatory measure.

G.: Sometimes I feel as though I am sunk in despondence. What should I do on those occasions?

The Tamil-ayya arose from his perch and made his way to the black-board. He picked up a tiny piece of chalk lying on the ground that would not have occurred to some other teacher to put to any use. He wrote on the board: Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

G.: What does it mean?

B.: It means that 'tis now time to execute 'the Final Solution to the ego-question'. Investigating 'Who-am-I?' [which is the same as self-surrender] is the one and only infallible brahmastra with which to unequivocally extirpate the poisonous ego once and for all. You complain of being afflicted with distraction. For whom is the distraction? Distractions should be encountered, conquered and obliterated with a fanatical, maniacal urge to break free from samsara. Every time such a distraction occurs to you, adamantly refuse to yield, but persistently ask yourself, 'To whom has this distraction presented itself?'. Browbeat the truculent mind into helpless submission and surrender. Even after reducing the ego to the level wherein one finds it pathetically whimpering, 'Enough, Lord, no more! Show mercy!', one must ruthlessly plough on. There is no possibility or scope for capitulation in this war. To use the same collection of words preferred and prized by your friend the குட்டிமீசைக்காரன், this is a vernichtungskrieg which must be waged

with fanatical brutality, maniacal savagery, and utmost severity and harshness. It is not subjugation of the thought-manufacturing faculty that is the goal, but its comprehensive and absolute annihilation. A single vritti or thought left will certainly necessitate rebirth. 'Samsara or being bound to the relativistic plane of existence [and thus being encumbered by the need to possess a body] is altogether unacceptable.'; understanding this clearly, one should, with the axe of vairagyam, kill thoughts as and when they occur, come what may. That should be the attitude: RAGE. Merely casually performing the sadhana will never do; one who does it casually and yet hopes that his half-baked efforts are going to be rewarded with success is simply deluding himself. Every pore of Sri Ramakrishna's skin bled profusely in consequence of the sadhanas he performed to attain God. Can anyone deny this? Arbeit macht frei. The Self cannot be discovered without effort. Here effort means adamant persistence in removal of obstacles to [the eternal revelation of] one's inherent, natural state of effortless stillness. Killing the ego is not an easy thing. It is no joke. It needs you to throw in everything you have: most importantly yourself. One must yearn and burn for Liberation. Then alone does the poisonous ego collapse.

G.: Is not 'Rage' anger, something which is to be avoided by the sadhaka?

B.: In this context, Rage means the burning desire to be set free from samsara-sagaram. It is to be understood as vairagyam.

G.: B. has said we are free here and now...

B.: Indeed the Self is free here and now. Are you He?

G.: No. I am the ego...

B.: Exactly.

G.: What about the one who asserts that he is the Self and therefore believes he is already free from all suffering?

B.: It is like the cat which died when it tried deploying a red-hot iron rod in an attempt to give itself decorative stripe-patterned markings on its back, wanting to emulate its distant relative, the tiger. Such a one is paving the way for his own complete mental derangement, nothing else. The Advaitic teaching of the Mahavakyas does not mean that the ego is Parabrahman. Sitting in the Hall you have listened to numerous explanations in the same vein. Why are you asking these questions now?

G.: The lines on the board- I find them poetically exquisite. B. should have written more poems in his lifetime.

B.: These lines do belong to a poem. The poem has not been written by me.

G.: Who, then?

B.: Ask your colleague Rengaswami.

G.: Will B. now commence his Tamil class for me?



B.: Oh! most surely. Now, pay careful attention to these words of the poet  
நல்லுருத்திரன் . He wrote on the board:

கொல் ஏற்றுக் கோடு அஞ்சுவானை மறுமையும்  
புல்லாளே ஆய மகள்.

அஞ்சார் கொலை ஏறு கொள்பவர் அல்லதை  
நெஞ்சு இலார் தோய்தற்கு அரிய உயிர் துறந்து  
நைவாரா ஆய மகள் தோள்

வளியா அறியா உயிர் காவல் கொண்டு  
நளிவாய் மருப்பு அஞ்சும் நெஞ்சினார் தோய்தற்கு  
எளியவோ ஆய மகள் தோள்

விலை வேண்டார் எம் இனத்து ஆயர் மகளிர்  
கொலை ஏற்றுக் கோட்டு இடைத் தாம் வீழ்வார் மார்பின்  
முலை இடைப் போலப் புகின்

G.: I cannot understand anything. Proficiency in Sangam-era Tamil is not my-

B.: [interrupting] See here.

For a time I lost myself in Bhagawan's eyes.

B.: [bringing me back by the sound of his sweetest voice] Now read.

To my astonishment, when I glanced at the board, the meaning of the text was  
to me clear as day! I was overjoyed at the miracle, and my exhilaration for a  
time left me speechless. When I recovered my voice-

G.: There is nothing that is possible of being said by me, appa... That such as  
I should be eligible to receive your wondrous Grace makes me feel  
tremendously ashamed...

B.: Is the message clear or not?

G.: But eruthazhuvuthal is a dangerous sport... Why would I- would B. have  
me participate in it? Besides, I have no plan of marrying any cow-herd girl...

B.: [laughing] Do you think, then, that I might be harbouring some such plan?!

G.: Doubtless there must be a subtle philosophical underpinning hidden within  
the verse...

B.: Yes. Tell me quickly. Has not Horace written, 'Dum loquimur, fugerit invida  
aetas: carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.'?

G.: I cannot discern it. I beg B. to enlighten me. I am anxious to know.

B.: The murderous horns of the bulls represent the twin, fatal, erroneous  
beliefs 'I am this body made up of flesh, blood, bone and sinew; or, I function  
from within it or in relation to it.' and 'What is known by me as the world is  
there even whilst I am not perceiving it; or, the world is objectively real in  
itself.'. The bull-tamer is the sadhaka or the jivatman. The cow-herd woman is  
Ajata-advaita.

G.: Now it is clear. Now I have one more question...

B.: [enthusiastically] கேட்டுத்தள்ளினால் போயிற்றடா குழந்தை!

G.: I am curious to know whether B. ever encountered the Orlock-chap again...

B.: [laughing] Is this the doubt?! Yes, he turned up a few months after your departure from the ashram.

G.: What did he say?

B.: He asked- 'Which is the best form of birth-control? Coitus interruptus or Condoms?'

G.: How did B. tackle him?

B.: Why don't you hazard a guess?

G.: "Mind-control is the best birth-control." Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

We both burst out laughing. Then, without warning, he advances toward me, now suddenly aged, weak and crippled. There is a bloody bandage on his left shoulder and a barely recognisable dilapidated form speaks in a barely recognisable frail enfeebled voice thus-

B.: [questioningly] 8th May 1945?

G.: I shall not let my father down. Forthwith I surrender- [screaming] 8th May 1945!

B.: Good. Let me take my leave, then... [smiling] I left the world on the same thithi as your parents, did you observe it?

G.: Appa, is this the important thing for discussion now? First we should try to procure some cure for your damaged body- No- Aiyaiyoe! Iraiyanarae! Not again- wait- please- please... Appa!

But it is too late. The aged form bursts into scarlet flame, blinding my eyes. When my normalcy of vision is restored, I grope about. There are diyas burning inside a thatched hut. I am standing at its entrance. There is a sign fastened above the open door-way which says, ' தயவுசெய்து பேசாது இருக்கவும் '. I stumble inside. A polished black lingam awaits me in the sparse illumination made available to my eyes by virtue of the diyas' dim, quivering projectiles of light. I burst into tears. Only this awaited me at the asramam, then. The kindly voice and twinkling eyes would greet me no more, but only this inert siva-lingam... I walk up to the lingam and extend outward my hand to caress its stony substance... The moment my fingers make contact, Lo! behold; Lord Aanjaneya has materialised in front of the lingam. I prostrate to him reverentially. He says: 'Pay no more attention to the Maharshi's physical form or deportment, or the fact of impossibility of future perception thereof by manner of deployment of the senses, but unfailingly follow your master's advice to find him in the Heart. Remember- when all else has forsaken you this instruction alone will not: 8th May 1945! 8th May 1945! 8th May 1945! The master's blessings are always with you! May you merge in

Him in this lifetime! Jai Sriram! Jai Sriram! Jai Sriram!' He vanishes. I awoke drenched in cold sweat, but feeling delighted. Every sun-bathed detail of this golden dream still remains etched in my memory. The first thing I did on the morning of that day was to visit the Connemara library. When I had rushed to the Sangam section, I pulled out random books and opened random pages in them; I could comprehend the contents with ease, as though this were a language I had been always well-acclimatised with! So, the master in the dream had really been quite the Sri Bhagawan Ramana himself, and not my brain imagining him! After this, I became a big aficionado of Shaivite Tamil-literature, visiting the library often for such books. I refrained from boasting to anyone about the newly-found ability; in the Maharshi's famous essay Nanar, he says, 'எவ்வளவுக்கெவ்வளவு தாழ்ந்து நடக்கிறோமோ அவ்வளவுக்கவ்வளவு நன்மையுண்டு.', and I want to remain a worthy child of the master. My next surprise on that day was at the Bar, from Rengaswami. In the afternoon he waddled his rotund body around to my whereabouts, to sit down by my side. With a serious face, he said: This time I have made a genuine attempt to write my own poem.

G.: [grinning] You mean, this time around, you have taken the utmost care- to loot from a most obscure and untraceable source?!

Re.: [jovially] Shut up, man. You people are envious of my literary merit. One day they are going to award me the Nobel prize for literature, and then you fellows can go and smear your faces with tar. Anyway, listen to this-

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

I was struck speechless with befuddled amazement. Rengaswami exclaimed triumphantly, 'Aha! Knew this masterpiece would strike you speechless! This is exactly what I expected!'

G.: Where did you pick up these lines? I am asking on account of a particular reason, not to have a laugh at your expense as is usually the case: please, I must know-

Re.: Why, nonsense, man! Of course it was me! You people have become so used to regarding me in poor light that when my natural talent finds expression, you all chide-

G.: Rengaswami, please- it is for a genuinely important reason- I must know-

Re.: Be glad I am not the kind that can be made to take offence so easily...

[rising to leave] Hallo, Raghurama! See my new poem; some supercilious persons have just had the raw nerve to ask me where I lifted it from...

He walked away in a huff. And that was that, until, some months later, I discovered, by accident, a typed copy of it addressed to some magazine, whose place of publication seemed to be near the Vatican; a carbon-copy to him was being scrutinised by a Caucasian seated near me at the Connemara. I made a mental note of the name of the sender, who had evidently been the writer of the poem: a Mr. D. Thomas. How this good piece of work had fallen into the hands of the master-plagiarist Rengaswami I am able verily not to divine. I am aware of his boastful claim to be maintaining voluminous correspondence with several great minds around the globe; he uses the ridiculous pen-name of Leopold Theobald Huxley. I think he acts as a clever switch-board, welcoming persons of eminence to send in their works to him and sending them that of others' disguised as his own. During the war, postal facilities and services were minimal; with regard to Europe, which was then reeling under the brutal terrors unleashed by the destructive German occupation, they were almost in suspension, and Rengaswami was at his wit's end. But even after the war, his correspondence, which I happened on one occasion to inspect unobtrusively, remains largely North-American. Europe seems to have quietly disappeared since the end of the war... When I accosted him about the 'Rage' poem-

Re.: [sheepishly] Yes, I do admit that was not a genuine piece... But look at this- it is from me, 100%, I really do swear to it:

Let me tell you the story of Carson McPosterior

Who south of the 49th was terribly feared

Greater than any man living or dead him before

And men quaked in fear of his quick-tempered .44

For he'd shoot-

I fled the spot. I never have managed to quite discover what precisely it was that the good Mr. Posterior would shoot; on this account I confess I have no regret.

S>M>

Q.: Does the Maharshi's ashram have a motto?

B.: Samaththuvam, Sahajathmanishtai, Soulabhyaam.

Q.: Democracy lays stress on individualism. The Marx-Engelsian model of civilisation, which is based on the principle of a stateless and classless society, delegitimises attribution of importance to individuals. It is obvious to me that the latter quadrates with B.'s teachings while the former does not. Am I correct?

G.: The Marx-Engelsian idea of Equality is no doubt noble. But when implementation of Marx-Engelsism is attempted to be brought about, what is the result? Communism, which is merely another form of capitalism in that it is state-owned capitalism. Does B. agree with my view?

B.: Perhaps... but what are we to say about such things?

S>M>

Q.: What sadhana shall I do to attain the Self?

B.: You want to do sadhana. That is the problem.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: The idea of performing sadhana arises to the one who longs for himself the fruit of the sadhana, but the ego cannot attain Liberation. The only useful thing it can do is to fade away. The Self or Reality alone is left.

Q.: Is sadhana not necessary to Realise the Self?

B.: The Self cannot perform any sadhana. Nothing but the Self exists. Who is going to perform sadhana?

Q.: B. is describing the Jivanmuktha's point of view. In my case there are 2 selves- the ego-self and the Brahman-Self. The former must be subsumed into the latter by means of engaging in rigorous sadhana. Am I correct?

B.: That is the mistake.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: The ego-self does not exist at all.

Q.: Not from my point of view: here, the ego or mind is very active and very real.

B.: Simply abandon the ego. Sadhana strengthens the sadhaka. It is inadvisable.

Q.: In the absence of sadhana how can the Self be Realised?

B.: By giving up everything. That is the import of Summa-iruththal.

Q.: If all that is required to Realise is that one merely needs to keep quiet without doing anything, Realisation should be child's play- it should be the easiest feat in the world to accomplish.

B.: Exactly.

Q.: In actual parlance, Realisation is found to be the most difficult. If it is the easiest thing, why do people find it the hardest?

B.: That is the great mystery...

Q.: But what is the explanation?

B.: Mental attachments and proclivities. The man on the Clapham omnibus finds himself unable to distinguish between Consciousness, which actually EXISTS, and the things of the world, which are merely mental-impressions. He imagines himself to be a subject beholding an objectively real world. Says he, 'But the world is so solid and stable...'. The idea of something called the world is ensconced and entrenched so steadfastly in his mind that he is quite unable to handle the truth- namely Ajata-advaita- when he hears the same. He laughs it all off as some kind of crazy joke. He has meandered so far away from the truth that, now, that very truth is strange, absurd and even frightening to him! What is to be done? The mind does not detach itself from its cherished objects- that is, mental impressions- so easily. It will not go down without a bloody fight. We must wage a war of total extermination against the mind: every time the tenacious mind wants to stray outward, with persistent obduracy pull it back in and fix it in the beingness of the Self. That is the only way. In good time, this shifting of attention should become spontaneous, instantaneous and unnecessary of being tended to with effort. Go on ploughing or digging in the manner aforesaid until subjective attention becomes not only effortless but also volitionless.

Q.: Then there will be Realisation?

B.: Then there will be no more talk of Realisation [or non-Realisation].

Q.: I am too weak to have this sort of determination...

B.: Then give up everything- including the aspiration to Realise- and keep quiet.

Q.: B. means I must acknowledge my failure in the quest?

B.: Give up also the one who has failed. Then this thought also will cease to bother you. Either gouge, pluck and tear everything out until only the root- namely, subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly- remains, or surrender unconditionally. These are the only 2 ways to Realise Peace.

S>M>

Q.: Those who have a great, insatiable taste or longing thirst for art, those who are profoundly moved by the intricate and subtle beauties of art: is it true

that they find it easier to introvert the mind?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Why so?

B.: Being moved by art renders the mind sensitive. Its gross-content burns up. But the intensity of the passion must be extreme... The idea is that the mind must NOT [be permitted to] peacefully rest content with the present state of Body-am-I consciousness. The Grace of the Guru or the company of a Jnani sparks off the commencement of a regular war within the mind between the 2 elements of sattvagunam and tamogunam. Really the battle is between satvas and tamas only; rajas is merely a form of manifestation of tamas. So, we are fighting against sleep. Sleep or oblivion is the worst enemy of man. Sleep is the anti-thesis of Realisation. Permanent destruction of sleep or nescience is Realisation.

Q.: Only a Jnani can dispense with sleep altogether.

B.: True. The sadhaka, excluding the neophyte, should try to restrict sleep to 6 hours; very gradually this may be reduced to 4, and then after yet more time has elapsed, 3, hours. It is possible provided the correct lifestyle and dietary patterns are followed. Needless to say it requires vairagyam. All changes introduced should be gradual. Any violent upheaval will toxify the mind and may kill the body. Suddenly trying to reach perfection men try to remain without sleep and food for long periods, imagining they are yogis. Retribution, bodily and mental, is swift and harsh; he is frightened off the spiritual-path forevermore; this is a duplicitous stratagem followed by the mind to prevent its own extinction.

Q.: I sleep for 10 hours a day, but still feel sleepy whilst I am awake.

B.: More sleep produces more craving for more sleep.

Q.: Yes, I observe it to be so. How to break the addiction to sleep?

B.: Change in lifestyle and diet.

Q.: Am I to give up my sybaritic and sedentary pattern of living?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Am I to give up my daily appetite for barbecued hogget?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Will it not be painful to give up these long-cherished habits?

B.: Yes!

Q.: How to avoid the pain?

B.: Do not think, 'I am feeling pain.'

Q.: Merely imagining pain to go away does not make it go away.

B.: You are not asked to imagine pain to go away. You are asked to cease imagining the presence of pain.

Q.: The body's pains are very real to me. I am not able to dismiss it away as fiction.

B.: Get rid of the root cause.

Q.: Which is?

B.: The idea that you are this body or are in it.

Q.: How to get rid of the idea?

B.: Formulas are so as for acquisition not discarding.

Q.: But what am I to do to be rid of misery?

B.: Doing is misery. Doing cannot get rid of misery. More doing brings more misery. Try non-doing. See what a refreshing change it brings.

Q.: Well, then, how to not do anything?

B.: [laughing] Can non-doing be accomplished by doing? If it were possible there would be no such thing as non-doing and therefore no possibility of Realisation. You have become so used to doing that when asked to put an end to it all, you ask how this is to be accomplished! Can non-doing be accomplished? Give up everything. Summa iru. That is non-doing.

Q.: Is Summa-iruththal the most efficacious means to Self-Realisation?

B.: It is Self-Realisation [itself].

Q.: Doing and non-doing in B.'s vocabulary refer to the mind alone; am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: The body is to be kept active in some worthy pursuit or the other, preferably one of an altruistic nature. Am I correct?

B.: Leave the body to its prarabdha and attend to yourself. One destined to work cannot keep idle. One destined to keep idle cannot find work. It is not in our hands at all.

Q.: May I be assured of B.'s blessings upon my endeavours?

B.: There cannot be any fruitful endeavour in the absence of Bhagawan's blessings.

Q.: Are my efforts fruitful or not?

B.: Do not bother with this question; it does not lead anywhere.

Q.: I want some support or encouragement that I am on the right track.

B.: If the mind remains simply AWARE, without being aware of anything, you are on the right track.

8th August, 1936

The aghori has informed B. that in a dream the previous night he had been summoned by the presiding Goddess at the Aadhipurishwarar Temple of Tiruvottriyure. He wants to go there and come back in a week. He solicits B.'s permission. B. shows his assent with his habitual winsome smile. The



aghori prostrates to the master and limps out of the Hall, right hand pointing a finger at the heavens as usual. I have never seen so much resolve and strength in so aged a figure. As B. does not judge by outward appearances, I think he estimates the spiritual worth of this grotesquely beautiful man to be singularly noteworthy.

S>M>

Q.: Sir, I have been wondering: if everything is an illusory appearance, are you atleast really there? Or, are you also a mere illusory appearance?

B.: The latter.

Q.: How can the Bhagawan be unreal?

B.: The Bhagawan is Real. The form you see before you is unreal.

S>M>

Q.: Does vairagyam necessitate physical inactivity?

B.: It is not physical inertia that is vairagyam, but mental indifference. One who has cultivated perfect vairagyam has Realised the Self. One with vairagyam has no interest in the affairs of the world; he participates in worldly activities if such be the prarabdha of his body, but without any genuine attachment. He cares nothing for the success or failure of his supposed endeavours. He does not imagine himself to be doing anything. He looks upon the world as a mere dream- including the body that 'others' think is he. Even if an axe were to sever his head off his body, or even if suddenly the sky were to crash down upon his head one day, his calmness cannot be brought to perturbation. Mind dead, he is now the formless Absolute, the one perfect Reality. Whether the body remains or not makes no difference to him; indeed he hardly pays any attention to the matter. There is a verse in srimad bhagavatam which says that just as a man who is drunk is not conscious of whether his upper cloth is present on his body or has slipped away from it, the Jnani is hardly conscious of his body.

Q.: I asked because I generally find sadhus, even able-bodied ones, unwilling to do any work, but merely begging to feed themselves.

B.: We cannot make any general rule about how a muktha-purusha might behave or act. Some seem to lead a householder's life, some to beg, others to cast away their bodies to rot in some inaccessible corner of the Earth, and so on. It is all left to the prarabdha of the body, but the muktha-purusha is not affected by the circumstances which the body is forced by its fate to undergo. He is quite lost in the Beyond.

Q.: Is vairagyam to be found in Jnanis only?

B.: The sadhaka madly struggles only to perfect his vairagyam. When it has become perfect it is known as Jnana.

Q.: According to the sacred books, God is everywhere. Why then is Mt. Arunachala the Cynosure of the Jnani's eye? Many seem to have come here down the ages, seeking esoteric wisdom and finding it, century after century...

B.: Physical proximity to this Hill- slowly and steadily but surely- introverts that mind- and that mind alone- which yearns to surrender but is unable to find the strength so to do... Why then do not all feel the effect? A crazed longing to escape from samsara and avoid rebirth is a sine qua non. A desire to wake up from this futile, barren and meaningless dream that is called 'world' must be present. Otherwise even Arunachala is helpless to Deliver[Salvify] you.

Suppose specks of sawdust or some red-chilli powder has fallen into your eyes. Until the pain subsides, will you think of anything else, or will your mind permit you to think of anything else? At that time, will it occur to you to ask 'Why has God permitted so much suffering to go on in the world?' or 'I wonder whether these chillies were cultivated in Guntoor, regard having been had to the fact that the burning sensation produced by them is so strong?' or any other question? No. Like a madman you will scream for water to rinse your eyes with. Likewise, Jnana is only for those who see samsara for what it actually is: a nightmare. One who is contented with samsara is not going to get anywhere, even if he sleeps in the shade of this mountain night and day.

Q.: Should I hate samsara?

B.: No. What is necessary is the deep, passionate longing to escape from it.

Q.: How can I cultivate this longing?

B.: Observe the world around you. Change is the only thing permanent. Frequently reflecting on the ephemeral nature of worldly things will make you see things in a radically different perspective from the man on the Clapham omnibus. Many who come here want Realisation. First make yourself clear about what[it is that] you DO NOT want. Then you can worry about what sadhana you ought to perform in order so as to obtain what[it is that] you want. Sadhana is not for acquisition of anything new. It is to make you give up everything that you yet have. In the end the man completely gives himself up. That is the zenith of vairagyam and that is Realisation.

9th August, 1936

Q.: B. has been fortunate enough to be blessed with Realisation at the tender age of 17. I am 57 years old and steeped in ignorance. Never once in my life have I failed to dutifully perform shalagrama-pooja everyday in the morning. Yet God does show me mercy and bless me with the coveted, precious state of Realisation.

B.: [laughing] What is so recherché about Realisation? It alone exists. People think it is far away and something very special. On the other hand, it is the

natural and most intimate state of your own being. True, it cannot be attained without humongous effort, but all the effort is made only by the mind, which never existed at all. The Self or Reality cannot make any effort. Thus, an illusory mind makes illusory effort and in the process undergoes all sorts of illusory travails and suffering; what of it? It is like the story of King Lavana in Yoga Vasishtam. The fictitious ego's fictitious sadhana is put to fictitious deployment so as to bring about the fictitious eradication of its fictitious enemy: namely itself. Everything is pure, impossible fiction, like the horns of a hare or the prescription for the strength of curvature of the corrective lenses worn by Santa-claus in his golden pince-nez. Really, there is no illusion. What is, is only THAT, which is supreme shanti. You say that Realisation is a coveted state. Once you have Realised, do you know what your first reaction will be? Not elation at having accomplished something exceedingly difficult, but self-ridicule! You will laugh at yourself for having tried sadhana after sadhana to arrive at THIS, which is the most self-evident or self-obvious sadhvasthu. You will laugh and laugh recalling everything that you now imagine yourself to be doing in order, according to you, to 'Realise the Real'. Whenever you hear anyone mentioning the term 'sadhana' you will feel like giggling, but remain composed lest someone should take offence. When the Sun of the Guru's Grace falls on the ego, it is blown away like a mountain of gunpowder upon which a tiny spark happens to fall from a huge volcanic eruption.

Q.: I want B.'s Grace to fall on me and explode my ignorance into pieces.

B.: B. is always giving his Grace. Mature ones apprehend it.

Q.: How to attain such maturity?

B.: Only by steadfastly introverting the mind by means of pursuing relentlessly the investigation, 'Who-am-I?' in the stages of both jagrat and swapna.

Perseverance is needed. President Jackson wanted to get rid of populous native communities from land he wanted used for Western civilisation. Do you think he begged and pleaded with the natives to move? Do you know what his attitude was? "Build a fire under them. When it gets hot enough, they'll move." So, the ego must be scorched mercilessly. We face a foe who will do anything to survive, whose resourcefulness in perfidy is matched only by his own cunningness in mendacity. We must be equally ruthless; else there is no hope of winning this war. Everytime a thought arises, unflinchingly take the mind back to the Self. Do it until the mind fades away out of inaction. That is Realisation.

Q.: Does B.'s grace operate only in the case of mature souls?

B.: Radio waves are everywhere in space. However, only one with a receiver tuned into the correct frequency can hear the broadcast.

Q.: What is the frequency to assimilate the Jnani's broadcast of peace and bliss?

B.: Mental quiescence.

Q.: It all seems to lead back into the same instruction: Keep the mind quiet.

B.: Quite so.

Q.: Can we use laeghiyams to quieten the mind? They are said to be effective in making the mind peaceful.

B.: It is no use.

Q.: Why so?

B.: Drugs may take you into euphoric states, but the effect conceals the natural, underlying state of pre-existing inherent bliss. Drugs produce exhilarating or ecstatic states of mental excitement or agitation, but are unable to replicate the absolute motionless bliss of the Aathman. The effect of drugs produces only more elaborate vrittis in the mind. On the other hand, extinction of vrittis is necessary to achieve Realisation. Drug-induced elation is inferior to the bliss of the Aathman because the former is made possible only by sustaining vrittis within the mind and therefore involves need for effort and volition, whereas the bliss into which the Jnani has been absorbed knows no possibility at all for effort or volition. The drug-user sips a drop of the ocean of nectarous bliss that is the Aathman and thinks he is fortunate to be enjoying such bliss; whereas the Jnani has irrevocably and irretrievably drowned and dissolved himself in that ocean, thereby becoming forever one with it. Who is more fortunate? When the immortal Kingdom of blissful Heaven awaits readily to devour him, will any fool look outside himself for happiness?

Q.: Such lofty and intricate philosophy can never be comprehended by the man on the Clapham omnibus.

B.: Never mind. Take care of yourself first. Then we can bother about the world. First come to the Light yourself. Then we may discuss how to go about showing light to the world. Is there anything to be gained in one blind man leading another? Both will stumble and fall if the task is attempted.

Q.: Shall I give up my shalagrama-pooja and come over to B.'s method of Aathma-vichara? For one who has converted into the Jnana-vichara marga, do customary rites and rituals- such as performance of tarpanam for departed ancestors- enjoined by the sacred books hold any meaning?

B.: There is no use in trying deliberately to throw anything away. What needs to go goes away of its own accord. When sufficient pakkuvam has blossomed in the sadhaka, the old habits drop off by themselves. If you try giving up your old habits upon a whim, they will, sooner or later, pounce upon you with redoubled vigour and assault you; then you will not know what to do. So, for the time being, you may pursue vichara together with your extant spiritual

practises. When you are no longer able to carry out any sadhana excepting the investigation Who-am-I?, then, the other sadhanas simply fade away automatically, without leaving any scope for the question, 'Shall I continue with these [other] practises or discard them?' to arise. So long as this question arises in you, thus long is it necessary to follow your incumbent customary rites, such as offering tarpanam to departed ancestors, performing sadhyavandanam, worshipping Ishwara by means of singing devotional songs, repetitively chanting any of his names, honouring his image through the exercise of மூர்த்தியுருவபூசித்தல், etc.. The time will come when this sort of indirect communion with God would satisfy him no more, for the bhakta's yearning heart would now want to directly experience God; then these practises are forgotten and the sadhana which reveals God as the author of one's own subjective awareness of being is undertaken. Mango-fruits may fall down ripe [from a tree]; or, they may be plucked out [of the tree] unripe and made to ripen by artificial means; which fruit is more tasty?

Q.: If the Real God is- in truth- actually formless, what about the claims made by those who proclaim that God has appeared to them in visions? Do the claims have any veracity or are they mere stories?

B.: God may appear before the devotee in a form that appeals to the latter and easily captivates his heart. This is not the finality. The purpose of the vision is to prepare the mind for introversion. Such visions may or may not appear; it all depends upon individual temperament. Visions do not necessarily imply that the sadhaka is in an advanced spiritual condition. Absence of visions does not necessarily imply that the sadhaka is in a retarded spiritual condition. For the sake of him who is habituated to living exclusively in the mind-constructed objective realm of name and form, God graciously assumes name and form himself and appears in front of such a one, if his longing for his chosen diety be strong enough. This is only a means to an end. The end is perfect introversion or Realisation. In the case of temperaments which attribute meaning or relevance to the gross world which is seen, exposure to such visions on the plane of gross phenomena is helpful in that it acts as a catalyst to speedily introvert the mind. The vision lingers strongly in his mind and it becomes one-pointed with repeated contemplation thereof; then he is taught to sink it in the Heart and lose himself there once and for all. That is Realisation.

Q.: I beg B. to reassure me- once and for all- that his Grace shall certainly help me to Realise in this lifetime. Only words to such an effect will set my agitated mind at rest.

B.: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

Q.: No doubt my sadhana shall be vigorous. Yet I want assurance that it shall ultimately be met with success.

B.: "...give, and it shall be given unto you... For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

S>M>

Q.: If this suffering world is some sort of joke, I find God's sense of humour distasteful- revolting, even.

B.: The world is not external to you. Because you imagine yourself to be confined to this body, such a thing called 'world' appears outside you. In truth, only you are there and there is nothing else.

Q.: If I am the formless Aathman, how and why did I come to be trapped within or confined to this body?

B.: Who complains that he is limited to a phenomenal body? Is the Aathman raising this complaint?

Q.: No; I am.

B.: Are you apart from the Aathman?

Q.: Yes; the Aathman is formless and perfect; I am confined to the form of this perishable body and therefore imperfect. Am I correct?

B.: Does the body bemoan the fact of its caducity?

Q.: No; I do.

B.: According to your own admission, you are neither the body nor the Aathman. Who, then, are you?

Q.: I am the intermediary entity, namely the individual soul or mind.

B.: How are you conscious of the mind's existence? Is the mind you or are you aware of it as something apart from you?

Q.: The mind seems to be the sentient life-force or stream of consciousness underlying my personality.

B.: Which is dependant on which for survival?

Q.: The mind's sentience or consciousness is the fuel for my personality to function...

B.: Among these two, which can be eliminated by you?

Q.: Consciousness seems to be a given force or current. All I can do is to avoid the personality by refusing to indulge in thoughts; for thoughts seem to constitute the personality.

B.: So, if there are no thoughts, there is no possibility of raising the question 'How and why did I come to be trapped within or confined to this body?' or any other question; is that correct?

Q.: No doubt in the thought-free state the question cannot possibly be raised; but the question- as such- remains! Will avoiding the question address it?

B.: The question supplies the answer as itself!

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: The thought 'I have a body.' is not a description of an independent situation. The body appears to exist ONLY by virtue and as a consequence solely of such thought.

Q.: So, it is the thought 'I have a body.' that is responsible for creating the false impression that I have a body, whereas in truth I have none. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: In that case, if I think, 'I have no body.', the body should disappear, but it does not disappear. Why is this so?

B.: Intensely thinking about the disappearance of the body does make it disappear; but acquisition of such worthless siddhis is not our objective. You were asked to remove the idea 'I have a body.' and keep quiet. Instead you remove that idea and in its place introduce the idea 'I have no body.'. Jnana is the disappearance of all ideas. 'All ideas must disappear.' is also an idea. Eschew that idea also and keep quiet.

Q.: How will day-to-day life go on in the absence of thoughts?

B.: Many times better than it is going on now.

Q.: Can we move or speak without thinking?

B.: Once the ego is burnt away in the crucible of Jnana, all actions become automatic.

Q.: This is the Jnani's point of view. Can it apply to an ajnani?

B.: Never mind Jnanis and ajnanis. Keep quiet and see whether your body's actions are not spontaneously guided by an unfathomable Higher Power.

Q.: Can the Higher Power be trusted to always act in accordance with my interest?

B.: He always does the right thing. What he does may or may not co-incide with your weltanschauung and your understanding of or preference for how things ought to go about or events ought to unfold. His actions may even seem unwise in your eye. What you should do is to close the eye of perception or judgement once and for all and open the eye of wisdom once and for all. Let the Master take care of the body and the circumstances, favourable or adversarial, that it is destined to face. You remain permanently submerged in the Heart and lose yourself there. Then it will not matter whether the body is drenched in rain or roasted in the sun or buried in the bowels of the earth; you remain unaffected, irrevocably and irretrievably lost in supreme shanti and not knowing anything apart therefrom.

Q.: Only a Jnani could be so indifferent to the body.

B.: Be a Jnani, then.

Q.: But it is said to be the hardest of all attainments.

B.: On the other hand, it is always your natural state.

Q.: If so why am I unaware of the same?

B.: Because you think you are unaware.

Q.: How to remedy the affliction?

B.: Stop thinking.

Q.: How is that done?

B.: Every time a thought arises, ask yourself, 'To whom has this thought arisen?' and then take the mind back to its origin, which is the primordial state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly.

Q.: The thought 'To whom has this thought arisen?' is also a thought.

B.: The stick which is used to stir a burning pyre- what is its ultimate fate?

Q.: Generally it is thrown into the pyre itself to burn.

B.: Exactly.

S>M>

Q.: Jesus said: "...verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." I heard B. say: "...belief or faith in God is not of any considerable importance...". Which statement to believe?

B.: This confusion arises because of the nomenclature employed. In fact there is no contradiction. If you are trying to persuade God into doing what you want Him to do, and believe that cajoling Him sufficiently will make Him yield to your stubborn demands, this selfish faith- faith of the avaricious intellect- is abhorrent; if you are credulous and guileless, and thus do not expect anything from God in return for your Love for Him, not even your own Salvification, this absence of motive or volition amounts to true faith- faith of unconditional Love of the heart- and will in due course Liberate you. Jesus is talking about the latter kind of faith; thus, Love is the only real faith. Love is God and Love is everything. The Jnani who has stripped himself nude has done so only out of Love which seeks no reward. The Jnani alone is acquainted with the loftiest peak of bhakti, which is permanent loss of oneself in the Beloved for the sake of unselfish Love; such is parabhakti.

Sri Ramakrishna has said that guileless Love is the one infallible means to Realise God. People struggle to surrender because they do not suffer from this burning Love, this intoxicating, obsessive, crazed[,infatuous, fanatical, maniacal] madness called Love. If you have this Love, absolute surrender comes automatically. What the sadhaka following the vichara-margam calls longing to escape from samsara the bhakta calls yearning Love for God. In either case the intensity must be such as to make one blind to anything else.



For such a one there can be no such thing as a distraction. So, really Jnana and Bhakti amount to one and the same மெய்ப்பொருள்.

Q.: What then is the role of tapas in bringing about Realisation?

B.: What do you suppose is tapas? Is it to sit with eyes closed without moving the body? Is it to sit in the padmasana with hands in chinmudra? Surrender is the real tapas. Listen to the following story-

Once upon a time there was an ascetic known as Kaushika. He always felt greatly proud of himself, since he felt he knew the intricacies of Vedanta in and out. He had left home to pursue study of the Scriptures and now he could confidently boast that he had mastered them all. One day, Kaushika was sitting under a tree, plunged in samadhi. Suddenly he found his concentration disturbed by a loud noise and he awoke from his samadhi. As he opened his eyes, he observed that on top of the tree sat a crane. The crane was making a loud noise and had thus disturbed the sage's intense austerities. The sage stared at the crane angrily. The poor crane burst into flames. Kaushika looked at the smoking, charred cadaver of the unfortunate bird lying beside him and felt sorry that he had done something so violent. Inwardly, however, he could not help feeling jubilantly proud of himself. His powers seemed to be able to inflict unlimited destruction. Merely using the power of his thought, he had slain a healthy bird. Kaushika got up from under the tree and went to a nearby village in order so as to solicit alms. He stood outside a house calling out for alms. In those days, an ascetic waiting outside the house was to be considered a priority; he had to be fed first, before a single inhabitant of the house could legitimately partake of his share in the food prepared for the family's consumption. The lady from the house was about to serve the waiting sage when her husband came home, tired and hungry. The lady turned her back to Kaushika after plaintively uttering the words, 'Please wait, oh! noble sage; I shall attend to my primary duties first and then come back to give you food.' Kaushika bristled with rage at the words of the lady. But the lady did not seem to pay any attention to his furious mood. She attended to her husband whilst the sage waited. By the time the lady finished attending to her aged husband's needs and came out to meet Kaushika, the sage was livid with rage for having been kept waiting on an empty stomach for so prolonged a duration of time. Beholding the ascetic's irate face, the lady laughed and shook her head. She said: 'Do you think I am a crane?'. Kaushika felt stunned and puzzled. There was no way this woman could possibly know what had transpired whilst he had been outside the village. He looked at the woman in befuddlement as she continued: 'You are supposed to be a sage, a man well-versed in Vedanta. You are no doubt under the deluded impression that you have mastered the scriptures. In my opinion, you still have to learn the true

meaning of what is written there! I am a wife and a mother. My first duty lies towards these people and not towards you. Only after serving them am I obliged to look after you.'. The sage listened dumbfounded also to these further words of wisdom from the woman: 'A mastery of the Scriptures is not necessary to lead a virtuous life. Also, those who have mastered the Scriptures seem only to show the trait of cruelty in unlimited measure. Can mere book-knowledge alone help in acquisition of the qualities of compassion and kindness toward all living beings? If you will tide over the ocean of samsara in this lifetime, you need to learn to control yourself. The crane sat on the tree above you and made some noise. So what if it disturbed your penance for a few minutes? A man who has truly understood the import of the Scriptures would know that none of these things could possibly affect his Real Self. Oh! foolish sannyasi, you still have a great very many things to learn!' Kaushika found that speech had failed his throat. The words uttered by this simple-looking woman had been brief yet pointed and powerful. Finally he managed to say: 'Oh! noble woman, please accept me as your disciple and teach me what I must know to escape from the sorrowful ocean of samsara!'. The woman smiled and said: 'Sir! I have lots of household chores to carry out day after day. I may not be the right person to teach you all these things. There resides a man by the name Darmavyada in the city of Mithila. Please go and talk to him. He may be able to teach you what you need to know!' Saying this the woman retreated into the house without paying any further attention to the ascetic. Kaushika for the first time in his life realized that he really did not know anything; at once he proceeded towards the city of Mithila. There Kaushika was in for a shock when he asked for the whereabouts of the hermit known as Darmavyada. Everyone in the city knew about a butcher called Darmavyada and the butcher was evidently a highly respected person in the city. They had never heard of any hermit known as Darmavyada. The only Darmavyada they knew of was the saintly butcher who lived in their midst. Upon hearing the words of the woman, Kaushika had spontaneously assumed that one recommended by so great a spiritual personality as that wise woman must needs be a hermit. Now he was confused. The man was a butcher and yet the people here spoke of him as if he were a divine person. Who was this man? Could this Darmavyada possibly be the Darmavyada the woman had mentioned? Could one learn anything of worth from a butcher, whose only role in society was habitual slaughter of life? Had the woman played some sort of trick upon him consequent to annoyance on her part with his short-tempered behaviour? Having come so far Kaushika decided to pay the butcher a visit, although he did not think anything good could come out of the visit. When he arrived at the address, which was outside the city-limits and

situated in a tract of land that was occupied exclusively by chandalas, Kaushika saw the man busily engaged outside his shop in carving out beef pieces and handing it over to customers. He was revolted and nauseated to behold the spectacle. Yet the butcher's face was glowing like the sun; such was its taejas that Kaushika wondered if it was the celestial sage Naradha in disguise. He overcame his initial feelings of repugnance towards the butcher and began feebly: 'Sir, I am-' The butcher nodded his head, saying: 'You must be the sage whom the lady sent. Please wait. I am serving my customers. I shall be able to tell you what you wish to know only after I finish my work.' Kaushika, who had been raised in an orthodox brahmin family in his childhood, was both repelled and enchanted by the man. The man was obviously a butcher. He killed cows and sold the flesh to people. His act was clearly against all shastric injunctions. However the man did not look- in the least bit- ashamed of what he was doing. His face shone with a strange light. It was the sort of light that Kaushika had heard emanated from a person who knew who he really was. Kaushika had no doubt that the butcher was an enlightened soul. Yet how could such a one take up- of all professions- butchery for a living? This time the sage waited patiently for hours, not wanting to repeat his earlier mistake. He watched while the butcher sold his entire stock of beef and closed shop for the day. Then the butcher walked back to his house taking the sage along with him. There the sage saw that the butcher had a family and that all of its members looked happy and well. The butcher's parents looked thrilled upon encountering the opportunity to feed the emaciated-looking sage and they, together with the butcher's wife, looked after the sage well. The butcher's children were well-mannered. The sage ate with the family. The food was simple and frugal, so to the point of sparsity. It consisted only of boiled wheat-grain and salt. After eating the food, the sage felt a strange sensation of warmth pass through his body. Then he suddenly remembered his own parents. He had ruthlessly abandoned them to pursue his goal of study of the sacred Scriptures. Thereafter he had never thought of them. What was his mother doing now? Kaushika said: 'Sir! Who really are you? What do you know about Emancipation from samsara? I think you are the only person in the whole world who knows the true meaning of the word Liberation. Please teach it unto me!' The butcher smiled. 'Every person who earnestly Loves God, surrenders his individuality to Him with all his heart, and at the same time performs his earthly duties efficaciously without allowing the ego to claim responsibility for the actions of the body is assured of Liberation in this very lifetime.' Kaushika said: 'Sir, you are a butcher! How can you take life? Is it not a heinous crime?' The butcher smiled. 'This is my profession. Before me, my parents and their parents have all been butchers. I am merely

engaging in my family profession. There is no shame in it. I do it as my duty. My parents, my wife and my children: these are my world and I do everything that I can do to keep them from wanting anything in life. I do everything within my capacity to keep them happy...' Kaushika felt a strange regret stirring in his heart. Suddenly his mother's sobbing pleas begging him not to leave the family come back to haunt him. Sadly he gazed at the butcher who was still speaking. 'A man who is totally in control of himself and does not let his emotions rule him is verily the man of true learning. A man who runs away from his responsibilities can never Realise the actual import underlying the word Kaivalyam. Only when you discharge your worldly duties without any flaw, can you begin to know the true meaning of Emancipation from samsara.' The butcher then gave Kaushika a full discourse on the Ajata-advaita philosophy and the supreme Aathma-vichara method of attaining enlightenment. By the time the butcher was finished, Kaushika had realized the grave crime he had committed in leaving his aged parents all alone at a time when they needed him most. He resolved then and there to make amends for his previous evil, selfish behaviour. He turned to the butcher who had set him on the right track and asked with incredulity in his voice, 'Sir! You are by far the greatest saint I have ever seen; why is it that you must happen to be a butcher? I cannot believe that you might, in this life or any other, have committed a crime that should now force you to have to engage in a sphere of activity which involves routine murder...' The butcher smiled. 'Son, in my previous life, I was a sannyasi who was well-read in the Scriptures. My best friend was a king, who was well-versed in the art of warfare and fond of the sport of hunting. From him I learned how to wield the bow and arrow, but never killed any beast, for my nature was too compassionate to allow me to do any such thing. I would accompany the king on his hunting-expeditions since he always wanted me by his side; for such was his affection for me. On one occasion as usual I went on such a trip with the king. The King killed a lot of animals in the forest and was about to return. Just then a huge wild boar caught his attention in a notorious manner; with its snout, it forcefully tossed some excreta lying in the ground high up into the air. The turds landed on the king's face and crown. The enraged king fired several shots at the fleeing animal, going behind it in hot pursuit. But mysteriously, not a single shot met its mark, although the king was a marksman par excellence. The king's horse became tired and he had exhausted his arrows. The king was of a delicate and sensitive mental temperament. If he did not at once avenge this insult to his honour, I knew he would resolutely end his life by ceasing to consume food and water. I could not stomach the thought of losing my dear friend, at that in such a tragic manner and for so trivial and silly a reason. Thus, to save

the king's honour, I borrowed his bow, picked up a blade of dried darbhai from the ground, charmed it with a special mantra, thereby converting it into a deadly arrow from which escape was impossible for ordinary mortals, took careful aim and fired. Just at that instant the boar leaped behind a huge anthill and revealing its true form as an asura, laughed loudly and vanished from sight. The fatal weapon penetrated the anthill and disappeared. I at once knew something had gone wrong. If the weapon had failed to kill, it would have returned to my hand. It had not killed the gleeful asura whose wont it seemed to play this prank on meditating sages and hunting kings alike. Whose life had it then taken? Was anyone living inside the anthill? Soon the hole made by the weapon gushed torrents of blood. I and my companion the king were horrified. We cleared the anthill away to reveal the sage Bhrigu Maharshi writhing in unbearable pain. We were struck with panic and did not know what to do. The weapon had not possessed the impossible power to kill a Brahmajnani before the end of his prarabdha had arrived; yet it had inflicted severe damage unto the unfortunate sage, for his left testicle had been severed off his body. The sage whose samadhi I had unwittingly disturbed by so grotesque a means now opened his eyes and cursed me. It was because of the curse of this pious sage that I was born as a butcher in this lifetime. My friend the king begged the sage to transfer the curse to him, saying it was for his sake that I had fired the arrow. I insisted that that should not be done, for I wanted not my friend to suffer any such perverse fate. I said that I would happily accept the curse. But the king was adamant. Witnessing the depth of our friendship from this behaviour, the sage was moved and said, "I cannot alter my words, since the words of a Brahmajnani are not his own but those from the tongue of Goddess Saraswati. But this much I can do for you. Your birth as a butcher will be your last birth, since you will Realise the knowledge of Brahman during your lifetime as a butcher. But this will hold good only if you lead the life of a grihastha and take good care of your family. I become annoyed when I hear the words of those mischief-mongers who propogate the view that one who leads the life of a householder cannot Realise the Absolute. To nullify their empty words, in your next birth you will be a butcher and a householder; yet you will manage to Realise your true Self. Your hands will carve out the flesh of bovines but your mind will be lost in Parabrahman. Remember to dwell where the notion of thannunarvu emerges from. This is my upadesha to you. If you constantly reflect on this now, in your next birth you will Realise the Absolute without any effort or volition on your part, and without having to go through the rigours of seeking out a competent master and learning the art of Brahma-vidya from him. Is this understood by you?". Without waiting for any reply, the noble sage then smiled at us, sprinkled

some of the flowing blood on our heads in benediction, and vanished from the spot. Thereafter, unnoticed by and unbeknownst to us at the time, a demoness by the name Dhushtāshayā had come in the guise of a crow and swallowed the severed testicle of the sage lying on the ground, in due course bearing the children who would later become the dreaded, infamous demon-twins, Rhambow and Karhambow. In my incumbent birth into this family of butchers, when I was 21 years old, my grandfather was stropping the cleaver used for butchering, against the grinding wheel. The sound the back-and-forth movement of the knife made against the wheel forcefully reminded me of the word 'A-ham, A-ham, A-ham...'. Immediately it struck me that the true meaning of this apparently simple word which was casually used in numerous conversations everyday was, in fact, patently elusive: it seemed an intractably profound ainigma. "I" knew many things, but did I know "I"? I wanted to explore the meaning of this thing called "I". I asked myself "Who am I?". The result I cannot communicate through words. It is a state of total, blissful nescience which is contaminated not in the least by the darkness of languor or sloth, but which abides timelessly as Life itself. Now I know nothing and do nothing. Everywhere and in everything I see only my Guru Bhagawan Sri Bhrgu Maharshi; yet I remain not to assert that I see. My son, your mind cannot comprehend this state. The Scriptures cannot unmask it for you. Only the Uncaused Grace of the Guru can reveal it...' Kaushika, who, struck spellbound and mumchance, had listened to the whole narrative without moving either eye-lid even once, now ventured to ask: 'Is this the state of Brahmajnana? Can I also attain it?' The butcher replied, 'Surely. When you meet your Sadhguru he will guide you to Light.' Kaushika looked at the butcher with great veneration and adulation in his eyes. He tearfully took leave of the butcher and went back to his aging parents. He served them dutifully till the end of their days.

Therefore, really all egoless or actorless action is comprised in tapas only. Ego lost, tapas is spontaneous, effortless and eternal. It is your natural state. Since you are now used to thinking thoughts, mind seems to be the natural state. It is not so.

Q.: If abandoning one's worldly duties and running away from home for the sake of the spiritual quest is wrong, Sri Maharshi is eminently culpable in such respect, if I may be pardoned for so blatantly pointing out the fact.

B.: Again the same question! The fact is this: Sri Maharshi did not leave home for the sake of any quest.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: Sri Maharshi was already that when he left home. He did not leave home as a sadhaka. He did not think, 'Let us run away from home. Let us go to

Tiruvannamalai and there engage in sadhana so that Brahmajnana may dawn.'

Q.: I recollect B. mentioning- some time back- that he Realised the Imperishable, Impersonal Self only upon having had darshan of the physical form of Mt. Arunachala.

B.: True, but it was not his own volition that drew him out of home and brought him here. Volition was extinguished on the day the thought occurred, 'Maraniththal yendraal yenna?'. [Thereafter it so happened that] some force or current dragged this body all the way from there to here.

Q.: So that is the meaning of 'Agam pugundhu eerthu un...' and 'Veedu vittu eerthula viduppukku...'?

B.: Quite so.

Q.: Why does not- in a similar manner- the same Lord Arunachaleshwara invite me also to renounce home and contemplate on the Aathman day and night, forsaking all other pursuits, so that I may speedily Realise the Impersonal Self? I also want to become a Jnani like Bhagawan. I am much inspired by him.

B.: It needs complete self-surrender.

Q.: What should I do to effect such self-surrender?

B.: Do not do anything. Give up everything and keep quiet. To surrender is to ABSOLUTELY cease to care [about anything]. This is mental renunciation.

Q.: What about physical renunciation?

B.: That depends upon the body's prarabdha. We have no say therein.

Q.: Suppose it is my body's prarabdha to renounce?

B.: Then this question would not arise.

Q.: How to know if God's Grace is being bestowed on me or not?

B.: Grace is always there. It does not need to fall from the sky. It is enough that you do not turn away from Grace. No special effort is needed to see: only do not close your eyes. Grace is constant. Aanmavae iravanadhu nijaswaroopam; Aanmavin nityapratyaksha sahaswayamprakasamae iraiyarul.

P>S>

For those who may not know, 'Asura' is a Sanskrit term, which is used to refer to one not belonging to the Aryan Race. It includes Jews, Assyrians, Dravidians, Gypsies, etc.. Despite vehement claims to the contrary, made by certain virulent sectarianesque interests that wish to divide and splinter Indian society on the basis of imaginary racial differences, in order so as to serve their own ulterior motives and clandestine ends, the term never carried any pejorative connotations. It is merely a description of objective fact, not a matter of subjective judgement. It is like saying, 'George is an obese

gourmand.': a passive observation of a self-evident fact. There is no question of belittling anyone- not in the least as regards the impossible case [for belittlement] of our good George!

10th August, 1936

Q.: Why do I find it so difficult to believe that the world is a dream?

B.: You need not believe in anything. Only give up all beliefs and ideas, including the belief that there is anything called the world, and remain as you are.

Q.: Here the world is- right before my eyes. I have never seen Aathman, God, etc.. Yet I am expected to cease to believe in the existence of the former so that I can Realise the truth of the latter.

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is it not unreasonable?

B.: It seems so because you are still attached to the things of the world. When vairagyam forces you to abandon these ancient attachments, you will be able to ignore the world quite effortlessly and easily.

Q.: How to develop vairagyam?

B.: To begin with, reflect on the ephemeral or fleeting nature of the things of the world, including your body that you now take to be yourself. Search for that which is abiding and intransient in all this insane drama that is called 'world'. Eventually you will observe that the appearances change but their substratum remains permanent. This is the beginning of wisdom.

S>M>

Q.: I have heard B. saying that his state remained unchanged from the day of his terrific tryst with the question of his own demise, when, out of a spirit of scientific inquisitiveness, he approximated the experience of death for himself. Yesterday he seemed to convey the opinion that his Realisation took place in Tiruvannamalai only. Which statement are we to believe?

B.: The ego-self or individual personalityhood died on the day of the experiment with death [ மரணத்துப் பரிசோதனை ]. As a result of the inexplicable [as to its cause of origination], intense fear of death which was experienced, the question arose, Maraniththal yendraal yenna? [More punctiliously 'What it is like to die?' than 'What is death?'.] With unfathomably great force the thought occurred, ' இந்த உடல் மரணிக்கிறது . அவசியம் செல்லவேண்டியது செல்கின்றது . போகட்டுமம் . ஆயினும் , ஒழியக்கூடியதெல்லாம் ஒழிந்தவிடத்து ஏதாவது மீந்து இருக்கிறதா ? ஆம் ; அவ்வாறு மீந்திருக்கும் ஏதோ ஒன்று , தனது சுய உணர்தலாலேயே தன்னை ஒளிர்த்துக் கொண்டு விளங்கி வருகிறது . சரரி . மீந்திருக்கும் இந்த வஸ்து



என்ன ? இதற்கும் எனக்கும் என்ன சம்பந்தம் ? நான் என்று அழைத்து கொண்டு வந்தது என்னவோ ஒழிந்துவிட்டது . எனிலும் - இப்பொழுதும் - ஏதோவொரு பொருள் இருப்பதை உணர்தல் சாத்தியமாக தான் இருந்து கொண்டு வருகிறது . இந்த பொருளோ நான் என்றோ அல்லது வேறு எதுவுமோ சொல்லவில்லை ; முழுமையான மௌன சுபஹுரனத்தில் ஓயாது பிரகாசித்துக் கொண்டு வருகிறது . ஆகையினால் நான் என்ற தத்துவத்தின் பொருள் இந்த ஸ்வயம்பிரகாஷமான உடன்பிரத்தியக்ஷமான அறிவு அல்லது தன்னுணர்வு தான் . இந்த ஓர் அறிவு மாத்திரமே மெய்யானது ! இந்த ஓர் அறிவு மாத்திரமே உள்ளது ! உள்ளதெல்லாம் யாவையோ அவற்றெல்லாம் இந்த ஓர் அறிவு மாத்திரமே [ தான் ]! இருக்கக்கூடியது எதுவோ அது இந்த ஓர் அறிவு மாத்திரமே [ தான் ]! உள்ளது [ எல்லாம் ] இந்த ஓர் அறிவு மாத்திரமே [ தான் ]! It was not a mere lifeless stream of thought but an active current of intensely alive realisation that surged through [me]. After this there was no "I" to think about anything: thus could arise no desire, no motive, no volition, no effort, no deliberation and no thought of being or non-being. This is the stage where the jivatman loses its hold over body and mind and abides as Pure Consciousness of Being. This is- extravagantly- called ' தன்னைத்தானறிதல் ' in Tamil and 'Self-Realisation' in English, but it is really the practical discovery- not any intellectual argument or conviction- that the [individual] self "I" cannot [ever] exist. It is called the sundering of the screen of avidya maya. This is the ego's final state- extinction. But this is not the Final State. There is the Beyond. That is the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani. No effort can reach It. Your sadhana can only take you to the state of denuded mind. Then there is the dead mind of the Jnani, which is like the burnt ash-skeleton of a rope waiting to be blown away by the next wind. When the Jnani's prarabdha is exhausted, this burnt cadaver is also swept away into nothingness, and Parabrahman alone remains undisturbed in supreme Peace. So far as you are concerned your effort stops at denuded mind. A denuded mind is not going to ask for anything, whether ஆத்மசாக்ஸ்ஹாத்காரம் , Liberation from the samsara-sagaram, Union with God, Brahmajnana or anything else.

Q.: So, such a denuded mind is eventually rewarded with Brahmajnana, for having patiently waited without asking for anything. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: The denuded mind does not wait for anything. Who is there to wait? All that remains is pure consciousness of which Parabrahman is the parent

entity[only from an exclusively theoretical point of view- adopted for the sake of bringing about clarity in elucidation- which hypothetically postulates Parabrahman in a position relative to such fictitious, localised pure consciousness; actually Parabrahman cannot know anything]. His reward is not any Jnana, but total destruction. Note that the Self cannot be aware of its egos- the ocean is not aware of its waves. Your frantic effort is only directed at removing your ignorant ignorance or illusory illusion. Reality is not affected by your effort and It does not know that any ego is suffering from the malady of illusion. You cannot reach the Master with the mind; if you subside as the specious mind, He stands revealed as your actual Self.

Q.: This whole  $\text{ശമാപഃശ്ചാസ്തം}$  of Jnana seems to be counter-intuitive. Should I deny the existence of my own self?

B.: Merely abstain from asserting it.

Q.: If I am really one and identical with Parabrahman, how can I be in ignorance of Him?

B.: Do you raise [such] complaints of ignorance in your deep slumber?

Q.: The jagrat and sushupthi states naturally differ.

B.: That is the mistake.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: What is in sushupthi is here and now also. Jagrat-swapna is a spurious addition or accretion.

Q.: So I am really always asleep. Only I do not know it and so think otherwise.

B.: Or always awake; it all amounts to the same thing.

Q.: Sleep means ignorance. Wakefulness is Jnana. That is my understanding.

B.: Understanding It means obstructing Its Realisation. Conceptual knowledge is a mighty enemy of Experiential knowledge. Remaining asleep to sensory and mental information is Jnana. Wakefulness to the world is perfect ignorance, for it is only a kind of torpor. Paying attention to the Self shining within as "I-I" is wisdom; paying attention to the phenomenal world without is deliration.

Q.: I am now stuck within this unholy excreta-synthesising machine called a human-body. Jnana will help me escape from it. Using Jnana I can learn to survive without a body. Even if I as this body perish, I as Brahman can survive the destruction unscathed. That is the purpose of inculcation of Jnana. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: All these are only your own mental concepts. The body does not resent its 'existence'. Brahman knows no body. What or who arises in-between to proclaim 'I have a body.'?

Q.: 'Tis the mind.

B.: Investigate the mind. Search for it. Try to find out what it is. Then it will disappear. Reality is left over as the residue. This is the way to Jnana.

Q.: It is a common observation that B. has journeyed to Tiruvannamalai using the same route as Tirujnanasambandar. Is the route of any special significance in bringing about Jnana? Hereafter, therefore, should I also come to this place following the same circuitous route?

B.: Ignoring what is essential, you want to do everything else.

Q.: In Narasimha Swami's biography of Sri Bhagawan, it is mentioned thus: [reads out from the popular biography of the master] "One of the characteristics of my Realised state was my change in attitude towards the Meenakshi Temple. Formerly I used to go there occasionally with friends to marvel at the splendid architecture and the awe-invoking sculptures. I would smear my head with sacred ash and my brow with vermilion. Then I would return home apparently unmoved. However, after Realising I went there almost every evening. I used to go alone and stand motionless for a long time before the image of Siva, Meenakshi, Nataraja or the Nayanmars. As I helplessly stood there, inconspicuously weeping tears of acute yearning to be drowned in the fathomless abyss of the Beyond, waves of emotion would engulf me, and these blissful waves plunged me repeatedly into the ambrosial womb of the Divine." Is it possible for one whose mind is benumbed by the force of Realisation to feel- much less be overwhelmed with- longing to unite with God?

B.: The tears were not consciously shed.

Q.: In my opinion, mental agitation is implied in the act of crying, since-

B.: Enough.

Q.: I was merely trying to enhance my knowledge about Bhagawan, whom I sincerely venerate as belonging to the brotherhood of India's ancient-

B.: Enough. Never mind Bhagawan. Better worry about yourself.

Q.: Kindly pardon me if I have happened to cause offence; my motive was not to-

B.: Keep quiet, man.

S>M>

The Venetian Shylock asks about the Maltesian Barabas-

Q.: In Secret India, Mr. Brunton writes:

"The power to think, which has hitherto been a matter for merely ordinary pride, now becomes a thing from which to escape, for I perceive with startling clarity that I have been its unconscious captive. There follows the sudden desire to stand outside the intellect and just be. I want to dive into a place deeper than thought. I yearn to know what it will feel like to deliver myself from

the constant bondage of the brain, but to do so with all my attention awake and alert; yet, how does one manage to divorce oneself from the age-old tyranny of thoughts? I remember that the Maharshi has never suggested that I should attempt to force the stoppage of thinking. "Trace thought to its place of origin," is his reiterated counsel, "watch for the real self to reveal itself, and then your thoughts will die down of their own accord." So, feeling that I have found the birthplace of thinking, I let go of the powerfully positive attitude which has brought my attention to this point and surrender myself to complete passivity, yet still keeping as intently watchful as a snake of its prey. This poised condition reigns until I discover the correctness of the sage's prophecy. The waves of thought naturally begin to diminish. The workings of logical rational sense drop towards zero point. The strangest sensation I have experienced till now grips me. Time seems to reel dizzily as the antennas of my rapidly growing intuition begin to reach out into the unknown. The reports of my bodily senses are no longer heard, felt, remembered. I know that at any moment I shall be standing outside things, on the very edge of the world's secret. Finally it happens. Thought is extinguished like a snuffed candle. The intellect withdraws into its real ground, that is, consciousness working unhindered by thoughts. I perceive, what I have suspected for some time and what the Maharshi has confidently affirmed, that the mind takes its rise in a transcendental source. The brain has passed into a state of complete suspension, as it does in deep sleep, yet there is not the slightest loss of consciousness. I remain perfectly calm and fully aware of who I am and what is occurring. Yet my sense of awareness has been drawn out of the narrow confines of the separate personality; it has turned into something sublimely all-embracing. Self still exists, but it is a changed, radiant self. For something that is far superior to the unimportant personality which was I, some deeper, diviner being rises into consciousness and becomes me. With it arrives an amazing new sense of absolute freedom, for thought is like a loom-shuttle which is always going to and fro, and to be freed from its tyrannical motion is to step out of prison into the open air. I, the new I, rest in the lap of an ineffable, sacred ecstasy; yesterday's bitter memories and tomorrow's anxious cares have disappeared completely. I have attained a divine liberty and an almost indescribable felicity. My arms embrace all creation with profound sympathy, for I understand in the deepest possible way that to know all is not merely to pardon all, but to love all. My heart is remoulded in rapture."

From this account, can we conclude that Mr. Brunton experienced Nirvikalpa samadhi, during the moments which form the constituent subject-matter of the description contained in the above passage?

B.: What does Mr. Hurst's description seem to be suggestive of? He has written from the point of view of his own weltanschauung; what are we to say about it? Many want to know, 'What did he actually experience? Was it anything of worth?'. What is the bankable criterion for determination of the answer? Was there an experiencer present or available to witness the experience or not? Here, by the writer's own admission[through his words], yes. So, it cannot be the perfect, imperishable, uncaused state of non-duality.

Q.: Mr. Brunton merely felt a commonplace sense of agreeable happiness, then? I am not pressing B. with this question out of idle curiosity. I am just finishing some correspondence with him. It just occurred to me that if his experience has not been adequate to secure Realisation unto him, I think we ought to help him by gently letting him acquaint himself of the fact.

B.: What he experienced might have been the bliss of savikalpa samadhi. But let us not worry about others. Others can take care of themselves. Mr. Jerome K. Jerome has wisely observed, "We drink one another's health and spoil our own.". Let us rescue ourselves from the traitorous quagmire of samsara first; only then shall we acquire the competence to help 'others', if any. One blind man cannot lead another. If anything of the sort is attempted, both suffer a hefty fall. Jesus said: "Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?" Let Paul Bruntons and Saul Gruntons take care of themselves. Our pre-eminent duty is to help ourselves foremost. Let us do that first.

Thereafter if these other questions arise we can tackle them then, not now.

Q.: I asked out of an altruistic attitude of helpfulness...

B.: One who has not managed to save his own soul cannot render assistance in the Delivery of another. Jesus said: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

And thus, dissuaded and disheartened from helping his brother, the most notorious Jew of Venice shrank back crestfallen.

P>S>

If only such an unshakeably inveterate sense of blood-based identity and filial spirit of bonding had- for an instant even- prevailed amongst the people of India 3 years ago, as we observe- not without quiet envy- to always be the case amongst these children of Israel, India could have remained whole! Alas! she has cloven herself in 2 for the unrewarding and infructuous cause of religion!

S>M>

Q.: What is the purpose of life?

B.: It is to discover the correct answer to this question.

Q.: What is the correct answer?

B.: Life.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: Life does not question its own purpose. It has no questions to ask. It has no complaint to raise. It has no grudge to bear. Therefore it is in perpetual peace. You, on the other hand, seem to lack peace; that is why you are raising these questions evidently. So, if you make yourself indistinguishable and inseparable from Life, no more questions about Life or anything else will arise so as to throw you into the agonific marsh of inner tumult and perturbation. Thus, you will remain in Peace. So, the purpose of life is to subsume your life into Life so that torments such as this question cease to afflict you. Then you will abide as Life or Peace itself. Thus, the purpose of life is Life.

Q.: I find B.'s words cryptic.

B.: Go around the Hill today evening. You will find the peace you are looking for.

Q.: I shall do as advised unto. Is this Hill God?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is not everything God?

B.: All parts of your body- evenly- are made up substantially only of the elements Oxygen, Carbon, Hydrogen and Nitrogen. Can you use the anus for eating and the mouth for excreting?

Q.: [laughs impertinently] So far I have not tried the novel proposition... So this mountain has a special function to play in the spiritual destiny of the world or mankind?

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: Does this mountain bestow Jnana upon those who think of Him but once?

B.: Atleast eventually.

Q.: What is the covenant to be followed in order to win Jnana-siddhi from this mountain?

B.: Poorna-shranagathi.

Q.: It means?

B.: Totally cease to care about anything. Let happen what may. What comes let come. What goes let go. See what remains.

Q.: You are- in effect- asking me to throw away my life, sir.

B.: Yes. "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Q.: [again the same insolent laugh] May I know why I am being expected to want to lose my life for your sake? I assure B. that my mental faculties are quite sound, despite coming here.

B.: One who wants Immortality must perish therein.

Q.: Then what is the point of Immortality?

B.: Immortality is already immortal. Your mortality is the obstacle to Realisation of the same. Kill that mortality and Immortality shines forth.

Q.: How to do this?

B.: By following the investigation 'Who am I?'. Its import is not verbally or mentally articulating the question, but is only this: "You say 'I am'. Find out who 'is'. Find the source of thought. Stay there once and for all."

Q.: Practically, how is to be done?

B.: Every time the recalcitrant mind strays away after a thought, resolutely drag it back to its native state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly. That is all. It is as simple as that.

Q.: If I adamantly pursue this practise, can I also become a Brahmajnani?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is this the speediest and most efficacious technique for acheiving Brahmajnana?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Are you sure about everything you are saying?

B.: Yes!

Q.: How long does it take to become a Brahmajnani by using this technique?

B.: Are you not going to determinedly do it regardless of whether you obtain-or-not- any answer to this question?

Q.: [after some time] Absolutely... But- nevertheless- I wish to know the answer.

B.: [no further response]

11th August, 1936

Q.: Who created the cosmos and why?

B.: Your mind has created it because it finds itself unable to remain still.

Q.: Am I then correct in supposing that a world created by the mind can as well be destroyed by the mind? Is this not a logically valid inference to have arrived at? If the mind has had the power to create the world, it should also carry the power to destroy it; but does it possess this power?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Please tell me how I can destroy the entire world.

B.: 'Tis simple- dive deeper and deeper into the mind until you lose yourself completely and irretrievably at its source.

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between knowledge of the Aathman and other sorts of knowledge?

B.: There is no knower or [process of] knowing in the former. [Aspects of] knowledge other than Aathmajnana are merely knots in or modifications of pure consciousness.

Q.: How did knots happen to form themselves in pure consciousness?

B.: Because of the primogenitalis tenebra of ignorance, namely the aham-vritti or the primordial-mental-modification, which arrogantly asserts "I". Because of this I-thought it is possible for other thoughts to arise. The I-thought is the root of the ego.

Q.: How did the I-thought arise from pure consciousness? According to B., pure consciousness was originally uncontaminated and unsullied by thought. Later on the I-thought arose from it and from this primary thought other thoughts began to emerge. Pure consciousness thus became polluted with the faculty of thought. How and why has all this come to transpire? In my humble opinion, it would have been far better if the I-thought had never arisen at all from pure consciousness, so that pure consciousness could have remained as such forever without ever having had to undergo vitiation by the mischievous faculty of thought-manufacture-and-sustenance, namely the mind. Am I correct?

B.: Do you feel any thoughts arising during the state of deep slumber?

Q.: No. But my question was-

B.: The state of sushupthi proves that ignorance cannot taint the Self. Why? If ignorance were a real phenomenon- on a par with the Self- it should be able to taint the Self always. But in sleep there is no ignorance. Thus, this ignorance is illusory ignorance. In other words, the pollution you speak of is merely an appearance. It is not real. What is unreal cannot exist. In fact the Self remains always without the illusory upadhi of mind. Any observation to the contrary is merely a lifeless, self-contained, illusory appearance which actually has no power to thwart or even reach the Self. In sleep this appearance of ignorance is temporarily destroyed. In the sahaja-stithi of the Jnani it is annihilated once and for all. Illusion cannot taint the Self. The Self knows no illusion. Can the self-luminous sun know darkness?

Q.: How can sleep be placed on a par with Jnana? Sleep is ignorance. Am I correct?

B.: There is full awareness in 'sleep' and total ignorance on 'waking'. Sleep is simple nescience. There are no objects to be seen. Thus it is really wisdom. The most intense bliss experienced by the man on the Clapham omnibus is



that of sleep. Be it a king or beggar, everyone covets sleep and nobody can do without it. Why is it so? Because sleep is a state of unshakeable shanti.

Q.: Then sleeping is the desired state!

B.: [In your present condition,] you cannot remain asleep forever. Your ancient tendencies will bring you back to a 'world'. Destruction of these proclivities of the mind causes Realisation, which is conscious sleep.

Q.: Sleep and Realisation are said to be polar opposites. How can they be placed on the same footing?

B.: It was never suggested that they are the same thing. Although 'tis true that the war for Realisation goes on principally between slothfulness[sleepiness] and alertness[wakefulness], your experience of the Self [as something apart therefrom] is strongest and most intense in sushupthi. So, sleep is ignorance undoubtedly, but it is simple ignorance; thus, direct cognition of the Self is made possible in that state. Sushupthi is beyond the mind. It is the closest you can come to appreciating the meaning of the state of no-mind whilst still in the dark bondage of samsara. The yogi may have some experience of nirvikalpa samadhi to guide his understanding of the state of no-mind. The man on the Clapham omnibus learns about this state only by using sleep as the example.

Q.: I do not remember having experienced the state of Self in my slumber.

B.: This objection is not raised in slumber. Why?

Q.: There is no mind available to raise it. Am I correct?

B.: Yes. Now there is a mind. The mind cannot remember that state which prevailed in its own absence. So it says, 'I do not know what happened to me in sleep.'. When you now raise the objection, 'I do not remember...', it is your mind that is saying this. Naturally the mind cannot know or remember the state of sleep. The sushupthi state is beyond the mind.

Q.: What happens to the soul within the body when it dies? Does it enter into another body?

B.: The memories are stored in the brain. They perish. But the tendencies are carried forward, for they continue still to obscure the light of the Heart. This explanation is not from the point of view of paramarthika sathyam; its genuinity is therefore relative. Really there cannot be any ignorance for the Self, and the Self alone really exists. So, there is actually no such thing as ignorance. Ignorance is altogether impossible.

Q.: My everyday experience does not tally with this lofty teaching. Truly speaking, it is a fact that I am an ajnani. Perhaps relentless sadhana will enlighten me one day, but until such time I remain cloaked in the darkness of ignorance. Am I correct?

B.: That is the mistake.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: Acknowledging the presence of either knowledge or ignorance is a definite handicap. Ideas prevent introversion of mind. Relinquish them.

Q.: In my case is not my present ignorance an undeniable fact?

B.: Ask yourself whose ignorance it is. First pursue this vichara to its successful conclusion. Thereafter if any ignorance remains, we may discuss the same then, if need be, and not now.

Q.: How [is one] to find the purpose of life?

B.: The purpose of your [individual] life lies in losing that life in the Higher Cause.

Q.: Why bring about something and then endeavour to lose the same?

B.: Exactly. So, be as you are.

S>M>

Q.: Has anyone succeeded in winning the admiration of Maharshi himself?

B.: Oh! yes.

Q.: Who?

B.: You.

Q.: [face superciliously lights up with pompous joy, but manages to modestly utter] How can that be? I am a spectacularly worthless creature. Even after years of repeatedly visiting the sacred soil of Tiruvannamalai, I remain an unenlightened person.

B.: That is it.

Q.: I do not understand. I am good for nothing. What is there for the great Maharshi to admire in me?

B.: The tenacity and perseverance of your ego. This weak creature came here and he was conquered and vanquished in a trice. You have managed to hold out for so long against the infinitely mighty power of Arunachala. Still you continue to fight. You seem indefatigable. How strong you are, especially compared to this poltroon who gave up without a fight as soon as he merely heard the name of this mountain! Entirely admirable. What immense strength and endurance characterise your person! Even the gods envy you for it...

[laughs]

Q.: [crestfallen] Oh! I see; Maharshi is making fun of me...

B.: [laughing] Oh! no. It is no easy feat to persist in this arul-poerattum. To untiringly wage war against Lord Arunachala Himself is no joke. He is intent upon devouring your soul, but you have managed to hold out for so long against him and still vigorously continue to resist him. I surrendered or fell conquered the moment I heard the name. My weakness is proverbial. But see your strength! From the heavens the devas are watching you wonder-struck

for it, thinking, 'Why, here is a man who seems a challenge unto the might of the Lord Himself!'

Q.: Ultimately I shall lose of course?

B.: Yes, it is a mere question of time in your case. Once the jaws of the tiger have clamped down upon the goat's head, there is no return to life for the goat. Some goats wisely see the futility of fighting such an incalculably massively-powerful enemy and quickly stop struggling after one or two vain escapes to break free; then the tiger at once twists his jaws so that the other animal's neck snaps and his agony meets an expedited end. Other goats go on struggling until the point in time arrives wherein loss of blood finally results in unconsciousness. In these latter cases also it is within the tiger's power to bring the goat's suffering to a prompt end, but since the goat wants to play for sometime he also does not mind the good fun. After all, the goat does not seem to mind his own pain, and is perhaps enjoying it; why then should he, the tiger? Maybe it is the goat's cherished last wish to play-act at escaping; why deny it unto the poor doomed creature? Whichever kind of goat he might happen to be, once his head has entered the tiger's mouth his fate is sealed. Some take longer to die than others; it is [obviously] immaterial since the end is the same for all trapped goats: annihilation. It must be admitted that this tiger is very choosy in selecting his prey; but once he has selected, that is the certain beginning of the inevitable end...

S>M>

Q.: I find the parable fascinating. Dying in the jaws of the tiger means Realisation! Am I correct?!

B.: Yes.

Q.: The goat is the ego. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: The tiger is the Guru's glance of Grace, as mentioned in B.'s Nanar? essay in the following words: "புலிவாயிற் பட்டது எவ்வாறு திரும்பாதோ, அவ்வாறே குருவினருட்பார்வையிற் பட்டவர்கள் அவரால் ரக்ஷிக்கப்படுவரே யன்றி யொருக்காலும் கைவிடப்படார்..." Am I correct?

B.: What was now elucidated was the specific Redeeming-power of Arunachala.

Q.: I want to be marked out as prey.

B.: Come around this Hill as often as you possibly can. That is enough.

S>M>

Q.: In the autobiographical narrative Les 120 Journées de Sodome, the Marquess Sade describes acts of unthinkable cruelty which have been purportedly carried out by him sincerely for the cause of art, atleast so

according to the motives therefor subtly suggested by the text of the work. Can it be pardonable to harm another for the cause of art? Do not such acts invite sin, even supposing they had been done in good faith for the genuine cause of art? Can such depraved acts constitute art? Can one cause injury to fellow man and call it art?

B.: The art worthiest of indulgence in, the loftiest art, is the art of unselfish Love. Other arts might tend to lead astray.

S>M>

Q.: What is Liberation?

B.: According to you what is it?

Q.: Union with God. But what worries me is that, if one ought to take into proper consideration the opinion of scholars learned in the ancient Vedic philosophy, one seems necessarily to have to accept or believe what the Ajata-advaita doctrine says: that God does not exist in the state of Jnana. So, is ultimately even God a myth or illusion? Is it foolish to believe in the existence of God? The state of Jnana B. is in: is it then a Godless state?

B.: In Jnana there is God and God alone.

Q.: But He is formless?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What about the Vedantins who say that in the final state, even God is discovered to be a myth or illusion?

B.: The personal god who creates, sustains and dissolves the world is certainly unreal. There is no world in the experience of Jnana. So there is no need for anyone to bring it about, look after it and finally extinguish it. The Jnani knows by direct experience that creation is not actually possible. However, God is certainly Real. He alone is. To know this by one's own wisdom-insight is the state of Liberation. Complete and irrevocable bondage to God is known as Liberation. The Liberated-one is in perpetual bondage to God and he can never escape; his bondage is so strong that he himself is quite irretrievably lost in that to which he is bound and is thus really no more.

Q.: How to develop this wisdom-insight which facilitates Liberation?

B.: Keep the Inner-eye fully open always.

Q.: The Inner-eye mentioned by B. refer to the Sahasraram. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: Aghakkann means the mind only.

Q.: How can that be? Is the mind not said to be an obstacle to Realisation? Should the mind not be killed before the Self is revealed? Is that not B.'s teaching?

B.: When the Inner-eye is open to a minute extent, it functions as the thinking mind, which ignores the Self supporting it, and believes itself to be living within an objectively real world, in the gross form of a perishable body made up of physical matter. When it is fully-closed, you call it sleep. Opened completely it is the Self. You may imagine it to be the aperture of a camera-obscura: when closed there is darkness, when a pin-point is rendered open images are obtained, when the pin-point is expanded so as to make it slightly larger in diameter[so, circumference] the images lose their sharpness, when the pin-point is gashed into a slit there is a narrow shaft of light, and finally when the slit is torn asunder fully there is flooding with unlimited light. Likewise with the mind. The mind is really an eye or aperture. All have this eye. The Jnani has it fully open always, but not because he is trying to keep it open. In him the possibility of its closure has ceased once and for all. It is like tearing down the barrier in which the pin-hole was originally incised. On the other hand the sadhaka has to make effort to keep the aperture that is his mind open. When he has become habituated to the state of it remaining always fully open, and does not require expenditure of effort or application of volition to keep it open anymore, the Beyond tears down the barrier in which the aperture is incised, ruining the possibility of its closure permanently. This is the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani.

S>M>

Q.: How is one to bring the rebellious ego under control?

B.: Pay no attention to the subversive ego and its unruly activities. See only the light behind it which illumines the ego; try to remain at the source of this light. If only you would scorch the ego by ignoring it, you would be free. Take no notice of the truculent ego and its various misdemeanors. The existence of the ego should not be accepted. If you attribute any importance to the ego by means of acknowledging its existence, you will become inextricably trapped in its vicious grip of [samsaric] bondage. Neither the existence of the ego nor its non-existence should be acknowledged; these or any other, the presence of vrittis in the mind causes the ego to become further tumid and strengthened. The tightrope-walker does not look beneath him whilst he is performing his act; he stares straight ahead.

Q.: Why am I uncomfortable with the fact of my mortality?

B.: Because in truth you are immortal, whereas circumstances foist on you the illusory idea that you are a finite creature bound by the woes of samsara and thus subject to destruction; these circumstances are merely imaginary mental creations or arbitrary mental conceptualisations.

Q.: What is the cause for restlessness of mind?

B.: Craving for rest or shanti. Many a man on the Clapham omnibus is fed-up with activity and wants rest. He thinks resting the body will bring him happiness, but it is found to be not so. How then is rest obtained? "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Merging permanently in God is therefore the supremely efficacious means of obtaining rest. Eventually everyone discovers the futility of activity and returns to the source. Activity leads only to more activity and therefore more mental agitation. Only absence of activity yields shanti. Here activity refers to mental movement or the emergence of the mind from its source. Action performed with the mind is not only pointless but also painful, because it requires one to deviate from the natural state of unlimited bliss; realising this, only the mature or ripe mind understands the futility of action and relentlessly searches for a way to relinquish it once and for all. Action or creation is needless war against the natural force of Randomness or Entropy- war that you can never possibly finally win. Man is born and, taking himself to be the body, throughout life makes continuous and dogged effort- to educate himself, earn money, raise a family, and become a respected name in society; in the end, in the twinkle of an eye, he leaves everything behind- what has taken him decades of painful unwavering effort to accumulate- and goes to the smashanam without knowing anything. Is there any point in it? People do not ask this question unto themselves because they see no choice in the matter; I was born, they say, and therefore shall invariably have to thresh it[my life] out. But this is the grand secret- man does have a choice. You can undo your birth and escape from the need for ceaselessly swimming against the tide or current in the boundaryless ocean of Randomness or Entropy into the midst of which you find yourself cast; the mundane life is one long continuous painful struggle against this oceanic adversary whom it is impossible to even lay a scratch upon, but whom you know is going to conquer you in the end, for death awaits all but the unborn; you can opt not to foolishly participate in a war that you know cannot be won. How to opt out? Stop swimming and drown! This is not death, but awakening into true life. Once you cease to pretend you are apart from this ocean, a finite creature swimming on the ocean's surface, struggling to stay afloat amidst its merciless waves, you realise you are- in fact- the ocean itself! Your identity as the ocean never really suffered any impairment even when you pretended to be something apart from the ocean. Drown as an imaginary mortal- for whom death is anyway certain- who with strenuous effort is painfully struggling to swim about on the surface of the ocean. Awaken into immortality as the ocean itself. Stop swimming. Cease to struggle. Drown once and for all and be done with it. 'Let go.' is the secret of Realisation. By drowning yourself in pure consciousness beyond possibility for revival or

resuscitation, you will Realise that imperishable Immortality which is verily your inherent nature. 'Oh! ye inheritors of Immortal Bliss!' is how the Shvaetashvatara Upanishad chooses to address you. The bards of the Temple of Jerusalem sung, 'Ye are gods.'. 'Give up the ego and awaken to your true Immortal Self.' is the message of the ancient sages of the world. Those who pay no heed to this priceless wisdom go on swimming in it, imagining they are going to reach the shore one day; but it is not going to happen, for Entropy is a shoreless ocean. There is no possibility of 'landing' anywhere. You may swim about so much that you reach back where you started, but you would not know this because a shoreless ocean seems the same no matter seen wherever from. Let the sensible man consider which is better- waging a vain war against the indomitably powerful, fathomlessly potent force of Randomness or Entropy, or quietly surrendering to it? Can you prevail against Entropy? Entropy is Nature herself or Ishwara himself. Breakdown of order is the manner after which events proceed inevitably in the world. If you leave a loaf of bread out in the open it automatically decomposes into the elements. But if you want to make a loaf of bread, you must plant the wheat-grain, cultivate the crop, harvest it, thresh it, winnow it, grind it into flour, prepare the dough, leaven it, and finally bake it. Nobody has heard of bread automatically springing forth from the soil. We therefore see that disintegration[order to chaos] is inherent and spontaneously effective in nature, whereas creation[chaos to order] must be brought about by means of intense and prolonged expenditure of laborious effort. Destruction is automatic, but creation needs application of effort. Why? It means nature has a message for man. The fact that anything and everything belonging to the realm of physical matter is steadily moving toward entropisation[disintegration] as time progresses shows that nature is trying to convey unto man the message, 'Surrender.'. If one would simply surrender unconditionally, he is freed from all karma in a single stroke; on the other hand, the man on the Clapham omnibus, who would prefer to pointlessly go on swimming rather than to drown once and be done with it, must endure perennially the burden of the obligation to trouble himself always with the constant necessity for struggle by way of incessant expenditure of effort. Man's mind seeks permanence in forms and shapes, but is met only with disappointment. If he will seek the Aathman his rightful craving for permanence will be satisfied, but this he is reluctant to do. Instead, despite knowing that these are transitory, he clings on to forms and shapes and when they are lost he becomes despondent. Whose fault then is man's misery? Can it be God's fault? God is filled with bliss without beginning or end. It is you who remove yourself from

him, move away from him and then complain of misery. Quietly merge into God and then see if there is any such thing as misery.

S>M>

Q.: In the United-states, near the site of the 1893 Chicago World-fair, a Dr. Holmes allegedly secretly murdered over 400 innocent individuals in the basement of a hotel built over a subterranean labyrinthine system of hidden tunnels and passageways. The sadistic doctor seems to have tortured his victims in many gruesome ways, including drugging them, blind-folding them, handcuffing them in the back, placing them in a remote corner of a tunnel, and allowing some liquid to stream noisily in a remote end of some other tunnel. Desperate with thirst, the victim would gravitate toward the sound, but when he eagerly touched it with his lips, he would howl with pain, for it would be not water but sulphuric acid. Through a metal-pipe leading up to his room, the doctor would listen to the screams of his unfortunate victims and cackle with glee. He seems to have trapped hundreds of visitors who checked into his hotel to see the World-fair, and victimised them in such grotesque ways. A sixth of his victims seem to have been infants and children. Eventually he was convicted upon the sole indictment of having murdered his business partner and sentenced to death. My question is- why should God permit horrors like this to go on amidst his creation?

B.: Because if creation were possible exclusively of containing pleasant circumstances and events, the desire to transcend it would never arise in you.

Q.: Aa-ha! Straight from the horse's mouth! So, all the unpleasantness and suffering has been introduced on purpose by the Creator, so that people become dissatisfied with the world and begin to seek out some means of permanently escaping from it, and therefore turn to your solipsistic philosophy for a remedy. That is what Mr. Bhagawan is trying to say- yes? Am I correct in having described Mr. Bhagawan's exposition of God's design of the world, accurately?

B.: Admirably correct.

Q.: What kind of a God is He who makes his own people suffer? How is He then different from the sadistic Dr. Holmes?

B.: If at all He has motives, rest assured they are benign. He wants people to permanently escape from all sorrow and suffering. If this is to happen, man must become disgusted with worldly life, for only then will his mind abandon its grip over it. How to make the worldly life lose its charm and appeal?

Bombard him with more and more suffering until he decides once and for all that he has had enough to do with the world. Then he will turn toward the Self automatically.



Q.: I understand that the self that is being referred to here is what the Hindus call the Aathman. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: According to your scriptures, this is the Impersonal essence that is said to pervade everything; this is said to be the substratum of spirit underlying the world of gross matter. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: I understand that I have fallen from the Supreme and must retrace my steps back to this original source. But why at all in the first place make the self of man fall from its primordial high state, the Aathman?

B.: Does the Self lament, 'Alas! I have fallen from my natural state.'? The Self is not raising any complaint about anything. He is in Silence always. It is you who say that there is suffering and misery. So, find out for whom there is suffering or misery.

Q.: So there are 2 selves- one, the self of spirit which abides as the Impersonal Aathman; and two, the self which, being compartmentalisable into the id, the ego and the super-ego, operates on the level of the individual mind and is referred to as the personality. The first is a sort of intangible energy and being absolute does not have an environment. The latter lives in the world and is subject to its various sufferings. Is my understanding of Mr. Bhagawan's theory of selfhood correct?

B.: There is a subtle flaw in it.

Q.: And what might that be, sir?

B.: It is correct from the point of view of the individual self only. So far as the Absolute is concerned He alone is. The ocean is not aware of its waves. Similarly the Self is not aware of its egos.

Q.: What about my experience of the world and my individuality? Are they an illusion?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What has brought about the illusion?

B.: It is an impossible question.

Q.: Why so?

B.: It is an oxymoronic question. Since ignorance [the sum total of the individual and everything he perceives, understands, remembers and believes himself to know] is an illusion, it is unreal. What is unreal or imaginary is fictitious; it does not exist at all. If or when something does not exist, how can we find an answer to the question, 'How did this non-existent thing arise forth into existence?'? The question sounds silly. So, illusion, being- naturally-illusory, never arose. Even to say 'Illusion is not.' is a tautology. You cannot form a single non-tautological sentence using the word 'illusion'. And since

everything is an illusion, the only language that is meaningful is that of Silence.

Q.: The world looks pretty real to me.

B.: To whom?

Q.: To me, I said. I can only speak for my experience.

B.: What is this "I" you speak of?

Q.: So, if I want to know the Truth, I must pursue the investigation, 'Who am I??'

B.: Yes.

Q.: Uptill when should the investigation be carried out?

B.: Till it becomes actually impossible to pursue it any further.

S>M>

Q.: If I stay at the root of the mind or abide as pure consciousness, will I Realise the Self?

B.: The question shows that the arbitrary mental conceptualisation, 'Realising the Self', is still present in the mind. Staying in the root of the mind should be a matter of course; it must be the natural state. On the other hand, you are trying to deliberately do it so that you can thereby gain the reward you call 'Self-Realisation'. Can it work? No. Stillness cannot be reached with the mind. Water cannot be made dry water. Subside as the mind and Stillness alone is left over. People want to know how this may be done. It cannot be done because doing is the anti-thesis of it. J.K. has said- 'Total negation is the essence of the positive.' Do not do anything with the mind. That is Realisation. Doing cannot bring about non-doing; absence of doing is known as non-doing. Non-doing is not an exotic variety of doing; it is simply not doing. Abstinence from or relinquishment of thought is not a positive act. It should therefore not require to be attended to with effort or volition. If there is any effort or volition involved you are still stuck in the realm of doing. The transition from the realm of doing to that of non-doing should be a natural collapse. It is pointless if forced.

Q.: What then shall I do?

B.: Do nothing- rather, do not do anything.

Q.: All this philosophy goes above my head. Yet I want to Realise the Self in this lifetime.

B.: Come around this Hill whenever and as often as you possibly can.

Q.: What is the significance of climbing the Hill?

B.: No. Come around it.

S>M>

Q.: If I pay uninterrupted attention to the sense or feeling of I-am-ness without allowing thoughts to intervene, can I Realise?

B.: It is a round-about method.

Q.: Why so?

B.: It falsely presumes or presupposes the existence of the one who makes the sadhana.

Q.: Then what is the direct method?

B.: Only the investigation, 'Who am I?'

Q.: Here also there is a sadhaka.

B.: No.

Q.: How so? There is the one who asks, 'Who am I?'

B.: The one who asks 'Who am I?' emerges only when thoughts emerge.

Otherwise the mind is left in its native state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly. This is the crucial aspect which sets apart the method of Jnana-vichara from sadhanas. That is why the vichara is the Brahmastra: the [existence of the] ego is denied right from the beginning. Any method not being vichara or ananya-sharanagathi retains an imaginary entity called the sadhaka; therefore it is powerless to bring about the final state of Realisation. Realisation is an art- the art of letting go of everything. Let go of everything and finally let go of yourself also. Then, what remains is the Self.

Q.: I cannot so easily let go of everything as suggested by Bhagawan, because my family will raise objections if I try to renounce the world.

B.: There is no need to leave home. Discard the contents of the mind and thus throw the faculty of mind away. That is real renunciation. Physical renunciation will make you think, 'I have renounced everything.'; nothing could be more dangerous. Here we practise only mental renunciation.

Q.: So that is why B. has not started an Order of monks at the ashram. Recently I was wondering what the reason might be...

B.: Yes. "Truth is a pathless land." Have you read the speech J.K. made whilst dissolving the Order?

Q.: No. But is Sri Krishnamurti also a Self-Realised sage like Bhagawan?

B.: Yes.

Then B. asked the attendant to hand him a particular file from the book-case in the Hall. The master opened the file- as usual casually at the right page- and held it out to the interpreter, asking the man to read out the pages indicated by him to the Hall. I later noted down the contents of the transcript from the file for my reference:

August 3, 1929

We are going to discuss this morning the dissolution of the Order of the Star. Many people will be delighted, and others will be rather sad. It is a question neither for rejoicing nor for sadness, because it is inevitable, as I am going to

explain. "You may remember the story of how the devil and a friend of his were walking down the street, when they saw ahead of them a man stoop down and pick up something from the ground, look at it, and put it away in his pocket. The friend said to the devil, "What did that man pick up?" "He picked up a piece of Truth," said the devil. "That is a very bad business for you, then," said his friend. "Oh, not at all," the devil replied, "I am going to let him organize it."

I maintain that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. That is my point of view, and I adhere to that absolutely and unconditionally. Truth, being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organized; nor should any organization be formed to lead or to coerce people along any particular path. If you first understand that, then you will see how impossible it is to organize a belief. A belief is purely an individual matter, and you cannot and must not organize it. If you do, it becomes dead, crystallized; it becomes a creed, a sect, a religion, to be imposed on others. This is what everyone throughout the world is attempting to do. Truth is narrowed down and made a plaything for those who are weak, for those who are only momentarily discontented. Truth cannot be brought down, rather the individual must make the effort to ascend to it. You cannot bring the mountain-top to the valley. If you would attain to the mountain-top you must pass through the valley, climb the steeps, unafraid of the dangerous precipices.

So that is the first reason, from my point of view, why the Order of the Star should be dissolved. In spite of this, you will probably form other Orders, you will continue to belong to other organizations searching for Truth. I do not want to belong to any organization of a spiritual kind, please understand this. I would make use of an organization which would take me to London, for example; this is quite a different kind of organization, merely mechanical, like the post or the telegraph. I would use a motor car or a steamship to travel, these are only physical mechanisms which have nothing whatever to do with spirituality. Again, I maintain that no organization can lead man to spirituality. If an organization be created for this purpose, it becomes a crutch, a weakness, a bondage, and must cripple the individual, and prevent him from growing, from establishing his uniqueness, which lies in the discovery for himself of that absolute, unconditioned Truth. So that is another reason why I have decided, as I happen to be the Head of the Order, to dissolve it. No one has persuaded me to this decision. "This is no magnificent deed, because I do not want followers, and I mean this. The moment you follow someone you cease to follow Truth. I am not concerned whether you pay attention to what I say or not. I want to do a certain thing in the world and I am going to do it with

unwavering concentration. I am concerning myself with only one essential thing: to set man free. I desire to free him from all cages, from all fears, and not to found religions, new sects, nor to establish new theories and new philosophies. Then you will naturally ask me why I go the world over, continually speaking. I will tell you for what reason I do this: not because I desire a following, not because I desire a special group of special disciples. (How men love to be different from their fellow-men, however ridiculous, absurd and trivial their distinctions may be! I do not want to encourage that absurdity.) I have no disciples, no apostles, either on earth or in the realm of spirituality. "Nor is it the lure of money, nor the desire to live a comfortable life, which attracts me. If I wanted to lead a comfortable life I would not come to a Camp or live in a damp country! I am speaking frankly because I want this settled once and for all. I do not want these childish discussions year after year.

One newspaper reporter, who interviewed me, considered it a magnificent act to dissolve an organization in which there were thousands and thousands of members. To him it was a great act because, he said: "What will you do afterwards, how will you live? You will have no following, people will no longer listen to you." If there are only five people who will listen, who will live, who have their faces turned towards eternity, it will be sufficient. Of what use is it to have thousands who do not understand, who are fully embalmed in prejudice, who do not want the new, but would rather translate the new to suit their own sterile, stagnant selves? If I speak strongly, please do not misunderstand me, it is not through lack of compassion. If you go to a surgeon for an operation, is it not kindness on his part to operate even if he cause you pain? So, in like manner, if I speak straightly, it is not through lack of real affection—on the contrary.

As I have said, I have only one purpose: to make man free, to urge him towards freedom, to help him to break away from all limitations, for that alone will give him eternal happiness, will give him the unconditioned realization of the self.

Because I am free, unconditioned, whole—not the part, not the relative, but the whole Truth that is eternal—I desire those, who seek to understand me to be free; not to follow me, not to make out of me a cage which will become a religion, a sect. Rather should they be free from all fears—from the fear of religion, from the fear of salvation, from the fear of spirituality, from the fear of love, from the fear of death, from the fear of life itself. As an artist paints a picture because he takes delight in that painting, because it is his self-expression, his glory, his well-being, so I do this and not because I want anything from anyone. "You are accustomed to authority, or to the atmosphere

of authority, which you think will lead you to spirituality. You think and hope that another can, by his extraordinary powers--a miracle--transport you to this realm of eternal freedom which is Happiness. Your whole outlook on life is based on that authority.

You have listened to me for three years now, without any change taking place except in the few. Now analyze what I am saying, be critical, so that you may understand thoroughly, fundamentally. When you look for an authority to lead you to spirituality, you are bound automatically to build an organization around that authority. By the very creation of that organization, which, you think, will help this authority to lead you to spirituality, you are held in a cage.

If I talk frankly, please remember that I do so, not out of harshness, not out of cruelty, not out of the enthusiasm of my purpose, but because I want you to understand what I am saying. That is the reason why you are here, and it would be a waste of time if I did not explain clearly, decisively, my point of view. "For eighteen years you have been preparing for this event, for the Coming of the World Teacher. For eighteen years you have organized, you have looked for someone who would give a new delight to your hearts and minds, who would transform your whole life, who would give you a new understanding; for someone who would raise you to a new plane of life, who would give you a new encouragement, who would set you free--and now look what is happening! Consider, reason with yourselves, and discover in what way that belief has made you different--not with the superficial difference of the wearing of a badge, which is trivial, absurd. In what manner has such a belief swept away all the unessential things of life? That is the only way to judge: in what way are you freer, greater, more dangerous to every Society which is based on the false and the unessential? In what way have the members of this organization of the Star become different? "As I said, you have been preparing for eighteen years for me. I do not care if you believe that I am the World-Teacher or not. That is of very little importance. Since you belong to the organization of the Order of the Star, you have given your sympathy, your energy, acknowledging that Krishnamurti is the World-Teacher-- partially or wholly: wholly for those who are really seeking, only partially for those who are satisfied with their own half-truths.

You have been preparing for eighteen years, and look how many difficulties there are in the way of your understanding, how many complications, how many trivial things. Your prejudices, your fears, your authorities, your churches new and old--all these, I maintain, are a barrier to understanding. I cannot make myself clearer than this. I do not want you to agree with me, I do not want you to follow me, I want you to understand what I am saying. "This understanding is necessary because your belief has not transformed you but

only complicated you, and because you are not willing to face things as they are. You want to have your own gods—new gods instead of the old, new religions instead of the old, new forms instead of the old—all equally valueless, all barriers, all limitations, all crutches. Instead of old spiritual distinctions you have new spiritual distinctions, instead of old worships you have new worships. You are all depending for your spirituality on someone else, for your happiness on someone else, for your enlightenment on someone else; and although you have been preparing for me for eighteen years, when I say all these things are unnecessary, when I say that you must put them all away and look within yourselves for the enlightenment, for the glory, for the purification, and for the incorruptibility of the self, not one of you is willing to do it. There may be a few, but very, very few. So why have an organization? Why have false, hypocritical people following me, the embodiment of Truth? Please remember that I am not saying something harsh or unkind, but we have reached a situation when you must face things as they are. I said last year that I would not compromise. Very few listened to me then. This year I have made it absolutely clear. I do not know how many thousands throughout the world—members of the Order—have been preparing for me for eighteen years, and yet now they are not willing to listen unconditionally, wholly, to what I say.

As I said before, my purpose is to make men unconditionally free, for I maintain that the only spirituality is the incorruptibility of the self which is eternal, is the harmony between reason and love. This is the absolute, unconditioned Truth which is Life itself. I want therefore to set man free, rejoicing as the bird in the clear sky, unburdened, independent, ecstatic in that freedom. And I, for whom you have been preparing for eighteen years, now say that you must be free of all these things, free from your complications, your entanglements. For this you need not have an organization based on spiritual belief. Why have an organization for five or ten people in the world who understand, who are struggling, who have put aside all trivial things? And for the weak people, there can be no organization to help them to find the Truth, because Truth is in everyone; it is not far, it is not near; it is eternally there.

Organizations cannot make you free. No man from outside can make you free; nor can organized worship, nor the immolation of yourselves for a cause, make you free; nor can forming yourselves into an organization, nor throwing yourselves into works, make you free. You use a typewriter to write letters, but you do not put it on an altar and worship it. But that is what you are doing when organizations become your chief concern.

How many members are there in it?” That is the first question I am asked by

all newspaper reporters. "How many followers have you? By their number we shall judge whether what you say is true or false." I do not know how many there are. I am not concerned with that. As I said, if there were even one man who had been set free, that were enough.

Again, you have the idea that only certain people hold the key to the Kingdom of Happiness. No one holds it. No one has the authority to hold that key. That key is your own self, and in the development and the purification and in the incorruptibility of that self alone is the Kingdom of Eternity.

So you will see how absurd is the whole structure that you have built, looking for external help, depending on others for your comfort, for your happiness, for your strength. These can only be found within yourselves.

You are accustomed to being told how far you have advanced, what is your spiritual status. How childish! Who but yourself can tell you if you are beautiful or ugly within? Who but yourself can tell you if you are incorruptible? You are not serious in these things.

But those who really desire to understand, who are looking to find that which is eternal, without beginning and without an end, will walk together with a greater intensity, will be a danger to everything that is unessential, to unrealities, to shadows. And they will concentrate, they will become the flame, because they understand. Such a body we must create, and that is my purpose. Because of that real understanding there will be true friendship. Because of that true friendship—which you do not seem to know—there will be real cooperation on the part of each one. And this not because of authority, not because of salvation, not because of immolation for a cause, but because you really understand, and hence are capable of living in the eternal. This is a greater thing than all pleasure, than all sacrifice.

So these are some of the reasons why, after careful consideration for two years, I have made this decision. It is not from a momentary impulse. I have not been persuaded to it by anyone. I am not persuaded in such things. For two years I have been thinking about this, slowly, carefully, patiently, and I have now decided to disband the Order, as I happen to be its Head. You can form other organizations and expect someone else. With that I am not concerned, nor with creating new cages, new decorations for those cages. My only concern is to set men absolutely, unconditionally free.

12th August, 1936

G.: Yesterday night, following the conclusion of a late-evening conversation with Chadwick, I went near Palakoththu to relieve myself. There I met a sadhu and started conversing with him. Suddenly he produced a hefty quantity of bhang and demanded that I chew it. I was reluctant but he was insistent. I



warily complied and shortly thereafter B. came there, his left hand wielding his cane and the right holding his kamandalam. Walking by the side of him was Hitler. Both were chattering and chortling about something. Presently both saw me, smilingly paused for a moment, and then, in a spontaneous outburst, simultaneously exploded with laughter. First I prostrated myself before B. and then the Führer. Then the following conversation took place:

G.: [saluting] Heil mein Führer!

H.: Vergiss nie dass Nationalsozialismus die ausschließliche Erlösung des Geistes ist!

G.: Ja, mein Führer!

B.: Your Führer has been kind enough to offer me employment in his Schutzstaffel-Totenkopfverbände. Shall I go, Gajapathi?

G.: Only if I may accompany you, Iraiyanarae. I cannot live without you. You know it well.

B.: Then Muruganar, Chadwick and others in the ashram also will want to come. How are we to find the means to transport so many people? Also, the nature of the work awaiting us there may not suit your palate...

G.: I know you will never leave Arunachala.

B.: You are right. Gracious and gallant though it is, I can only decline Herr Hitler's compassionately eleemosynary offer.

G.: Cinque Ports, navigated by Alexander Selkirk, bore the dockyard's identification-number **MDC352-VLXD05-IIVL32**. Since the ship brought about- as a direct consequence of its condition of debilitation- a turn of circumstance wherein he had to become a castaway, there must be something singularly unlucky about the number. Does B. agree with me?

B.: Never mind unlucky numbers or plucky flounders. Our tenure on the Earth is a finite and fleeting one. It must be deployed exclusively toward attainment of Self-Realisation. Otherwise we shall have to be reborn and begin the journey all over again.

G.: I am trying the vichara method, master. But what can I do? 'Tis exceedingly hard. Vita brevis, ars longa, occasio praeceps, experimentum periculosum, iudicium difficile. Some people seem to manage to Realise easily, with almost no effort. I wonder how they are able to do it.

B.: Possunt quia posse videntur.

G.: I am atleast better off than those ignorant fools who have no idea that the world is a dream, and are imagining it to be objectively real... Should B. not laud me for the fact instead of upbraiding me for inefficacious progress in sadhana?

B.: Bonitas non est pessimis esse meliorem.

G.: Somehow or the other in this very life I want Salvation through Bhagawan's Grace.

H.: Betrachten du dieses: wenn der Nationalsozialismus längere Zeit geherrscht hat, wird man sich etwas anderes gar nicht mehr denken können!

B.: "and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Then both held hands and vanished in a blaze of eye-scorching golden luminosity. The next thing I remember is waking up in my room today morning. What does it all mean? Did B. really come to Palakoththu yesterday night? Was it all a mere hallucination?

B.: Even the B. who is seated on this Sofa, to whom you now believe yourself to be talking, is equally a hallucination. Anything seen cannot be Real. Look for the Self of the seer; in Him alone is Reality to be found.

G.: Is my Love for Bhagawan Real?

B.: When that Love has become devoid of any object upon which to focus its attention, it is the Self.

S>M>

Q.: The terms Aham-sphurana and Sahaja-asamprajnatha-samadhi are synonymous. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: Sometime after a fire is lit underneath a pot containing water, only an empty pot will be left. Yet, the [space inside the] pot is always vulnerable to being filled-up again. If the pot is smashed into pieces, it is quite ruined and there can be no scope any more for depositing anything into it. Sphurana indicates that the exhaustive emptying of the contents of the pot is nearing completion. Sphurana involves not merely a clear[clarity in the sense of bereftitude of obscuration by mental activity, proclivity or other modification] state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly; it also evokes a response from the Deep; therefore we may say that it encompasses a transcendental aspect; even so, it is yet a state of subtle duality. Duality ceases only after the mind has been irredeemably destroyed. Continuous and unbroken inherence in the sphurana is possible only after the ego has finally

surrendered. One who is in such a state of egolessness alone is eligible to awaken into Jnana; such an egoless one cannot want Jnana and neither can he want anything else; this is why it is said that those who want Jnana do not get it. So when Jnana finally dawns it makes no difference to the sadhaka. Jnana shines forth only well after the ego has been finally given up.

Q.: The fire underneath the pot is the Guru's Grace. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: The pot is the mind. Is that not so?

B.: Yes.

Q.: The contents of the pot are vrittis of the mind. Have I not made a correct observation?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Can the pot be smashed whilst its contents are yet to be boiled away?

B.: 'Tis usually impossible. It is not safe for destruction to be suddenly forced upon the mind. The mind must wane and wane and only after it has been reduced into an infinitesimally tiny speck that is incapable of offering any resistance is it finally destroyed by the Self. A motor-car is going at an enormously high speed. If it suddenly encounters a large and heavy obstacle round the bend of a corner, what will happen?

Q.: The occupants of the motor-car will all be killed.

B.: If the driver had applied brakes slowly and steadily over some distance prior and reduced the speed before the obstacle had to be encountered?

Q.: Nothing will happen to them.

B.: Likewise with the mind. For countless births your mental habits have been cherished by you. They will not go down without a fight. The fight does involve pain. Pain is inevitable. Also, these habits will not disappear overnight; do not expect them to vanish all of a sudden. You will need the patience of the bird that inadvertently laid its eggs in mid-flight whilst gliding over the ocean, and then, being unable to dive into the water as far down as the ocean-bed, kept furiously flapping its wings over the surface of the waves, in the hope that one day the effort might make the ocean dry up and reveal her young ones.

Q.: It is absurd. How can the bird's effort succeed?

B.: Saying 'I shall reach the Self with the mind.' is just as ridiculous.

Q.: But how then shall I attain Jnana? Seeing B.'s noble and saintly countenance, I am also inspired to become a Jnani like him. Is the ambition immoral?

B.: If you will have Realisation you must be prepared to irrevocably relinquish everything you think you have including yourself first and foremost. Every last thing precious in your sight shall have to be given up. What is being spoken of here does not amount to advice to physically remove yourself from your

incumbent surroundings. What actually matters is that the mind must be insulated and isolated from its familiar worlds of sense-perceptions and intellect-fabricated-labyrinths, and whisked away into the Heart.

Q.: How then shall I cultivate detachment towards the world?

B.: It is non-attachment that is needed, not detachment, which is merely attachment to the perceived virtue of non-attachment or aversion to the perceived vice of attachment; to be non-attached implies to be non-detached also. Absence of modification-of-mind is the one and only genuine non-attachment.

Q.: If I give up my fondness for the things of the world, if I mentally give up everything I think I own or cherish, will Jnana be bestowed upon me in return?

B.: In return, you may or may not obtain Jnana: the matter rests at the discretion of the mercy of the Higher Power. In giving up everything, you must give up also your ambition for Jnana. Then this question also cannot arise.

Q.: These are harsh terms.

B.: Yes. But did anybody hold a dagger to your throat and force you to Realise? The honest fact is, those who go crazy with the pain of samsara invariably and inevitably Realise. When the mundane existence has become altogether intolerable and even inconceivable, then Realisation is not far away. If samsara is still acceptable or reckonable to you, will it be possible for you to Realise? One who does not recognise the blatantly self-evident truth that samsara is a curse, not a blessing: can he Realise? There are those who clearly see the patently poisonous nature of samsara; Realisation comes to them in a trice. Others go on discussing, 'I wonder what sadhana I shall perform to Realise the Self? Shall I practise Sri Ramana Bhagawan's technique to Realise or Sri Aurobindo Gose's technique?' and so on. If a piece of live-coal falls into your hand, will your first instinct be to drop it, or to ponder 'Now, I wonder if this is charcoal, peat or coke...'? Yet men manage to hold on pertinaciously to samsara- how? Because the glove of avidya maya shields the man from the whole of the impact of the pain. If he felt the pain at its unmitigated, full impact, he would drop the excruciation-causing belligerent at once, and Reality would be deprived of its fictitious complementarious-counterpart, Maya. Since the pain seems prima facie manageable, and to alternate with so-called pleasures, which, unbeknownst to him, are also of the nature of doing and therefore only pain in disguise, man deceives himself into believing that by holding on the glowing piece of coal with which he has been forcibly thrust, he is fulfilling a heroic, enjoyable challenge called life, as a reward for which he is going to avail for himself the emolument he calls pleasure. Thus, the man on the Clapham omnibus, although he may imagine himself to be comfortably off, lives in pain all the time, ignoring his true nature

of Absolute Bliss. Man is led to the belief that samsara is somehow 'manageable'; for this reason he never really makes any effort to break out of it. When the Guru's Grace commences to plunge into operation, the glove of ignorance begins to rupture. Then that fortunate one who is earmarked for total destruction in his incumbent lifetime begins to suffer like never before. His old stance concerning samsara tries to convince him that these bad circumstances are only passing clouds of bad weather, and that soon matters would improve; but no signs of improvement arrive. Meanwhile, the rupture in the glove has become larger; his hand is squirming with the unbearably scorching blaze of what he had once fondly regarded as a 'challenge'. Finally just as the glove is sundered he sees the pointlessness of offering any more resistance and disgustedly throws away the glowing ember known as samsara. This is the secret of how Guru's Grace brings about Realisation: he does not bring about Realisation from anywhere; he merely removes the obstacles to it by hastening the devotee's ardent surrender. Even prior to the latter's present birth, the benign and compassionate Sadhguru carries out an artful selection from the devotee's karma, to bring about in that very lifetime the Liberation of the innocent, child-like devotee who has placed the entirety of his trust in Him, so as to make him surrender heart and soul, mind and body at His feet; thus by the dint of merciless and brutal bombardment of his life with misfortune and misfortune only, he brings him to His feet totally by implanting in him strong aversion to and disgust for samsara. The Sadhguru takes the liberty to adopt this radical approach only in the case of those devotees who have completely placed their lives in His care. To others, he courteously says, 'Please carry on with your sadhana.' and then keeps quiet. Know that if the Sadhguru has decided to grant Liberation to a devotee, even Brahma is powerless to raise any objection. The one fail-proof way to obtain Liberation therefore is to win the grace of the Sadhguru.

Q.: [shedding emotional tears] Yes, I am now prepared to renounce samsara completely. Please do with me as you like. Please introduce misfortune in my life if necessary. I shall not resent it. I want to Realise somehow in this very lifetime. I am prepared to pay any price. Let everything I have ever considered my own be burnt and reduced into smouldering ashes. Let me die as a leper. But oh! pray, let me have Realisation in this lifetime!

The man was given some water to drink by B.'s attendant and soon he calmed down. B. smiled but did not say anything.

13th August, 1936

Q.: It is said that this Hill bestows Liberation at the mere thought thereof. Can it be true?

B.: Yes. Constantly thinking of this Hill does to the mind what ingestion of prussic acid does to the body. Unto those who opine themselves to be too weak to either investigate 'Who-am-I?' or surrender unconditionally, and who are not in a position to engage in circumambulation of this Hill on account of decrepitude or debility, the practise of mental visualisation of the form of this Hill may be suggested. It steadily introverts the mind and leads to Realisation.

Q.: Can repetition of the name Rama bring about Realisation?

B.: Provided you call upon Rama with yearning. Mechanical repetition of the name is useless. God cannot be deceived. He knows whether there is Love in the heart or not.

S>M>

Q.: How can I know whether Sri Ramana Maharshi's Realisation is perfect or not?

B.: Never mind Ramana Maharshi, whoever he might be. First tackle and solve the question of your own Realisation.

S>M>

Q.: Vedantic literature proclaims the world to be 'anirvachaniyam'. What is the reason and what is the implication?

B.: 'The horse's horn is straight.'; 'No, it is curved.'; which is the வாது that is correct?

Q.: How can a horse have a horn?

B.: Exactly.

Q.: I do not understand.

B. seemed uninterested in furnishing further clarification; Chadwick reflectively said, 'B. means that the world is a fictitious entity...'

Q.: But I see it, don't I, sir?

C.: Yes, but... I don't know. According to B. the world is a dream.

Q.: Do you subscribe to this ridiculous idea, sir?

C.: B. speaks out of his own experience. I agree the idea seems counter-intuitive. But B. knows what he is talking about.

Q.: In a dream it would all be one's own imagination. Here do we not corroborate each-other's experience? For instance, B. is seated on this Sofa. Do you not see him just as well as I do? Why are we having the same dream, then?

C.: I have questioned B. on this point. He says that everything is a grand, comprehensive illusion... So, all this, including you, is only my dream. 'Tis likewise in your case and every other case... I remember some months back an Irishman came here. He read out the following anecdote to the Hall from some English magazine: Once upon a time an essay-writing task was faced by students who were being examined for their Fellowship at the All Souls

College, Oxford, which institution is, so proclaimed the magazine aforesaid, renowned for making its students confront all sorts of impossible questions. The subject of their examination on that day was solipsism. All were nervously awaiting their question-paper, but none arrived. Their professor walked in, held up his usual chair before them, and said, 'My dear chaps, you will write an essay upon this exceedingly commonplace chair.'. The attendees were flummoxed, but nevertheless began furiously writing- all except one. The professor kept shooting curious glances at him, but that boy never bothered even to extract his quill from its case. When the allotted time came to an end, everyone handed in their papers, quite a few amongst them staggering in bulkiness. The idler was asked why he had chosen to write nothing. He smiled and said simply: 'Chair? What chair?'. The professor laughed, shook his head and left the room, tottering under the weight of the sagging mass of papers gathered in his hands. When the results were released, only one candidate had passed the solipsism examination: the idler who had never written anything! The professor explained to his astonished students the reason: "All of you have written about the chair. Most of you have explained that the chair is a projection of your own mind. Yet, all of you have failed because you saw a chair where there was none. This is a solipsism examination. I asked you to write about a chair. A solipsist sees no objects; wherever he looks he sees only his own mind. So, there was nothing to write about because the chair never existed except as an idea in your own minds. By writing about the chair as though it were something existing independently of your perception thereof, you have betrayed you are yet to understand the true spirit of the solipsist-doctrine. You could have written merely 'I do not see a chair; I see an idea called myself interacting with an idea called a chair.' and you would have passed; yet this simple thought has occurred to none. This bright lad here did nothing at all and yet he has passed. Why? He is verily a true solipsist, for he sees nothing. When asked to scrutinise an object he insists that he sees no object but only an idea or mental-impression pretending to be an object..."

Q.: I do not understand the point you endeavour to make, sir...

C.: According to B. we see objects because we think we see them. If we turn the mind inwards, we shall stop seeing objects and remain in peace as the Self. Am I correct, Bhagawan?

B. smiled agreeably but did not say anything in response.

Q.: I still maintain that the argument that the world is a dream does not sound plausible to me. Dreams are chaotic. The world proceeds in an orderly fashion.

B.: People see order in this world for the same reason they see a rabbit in the moon. Herr Rorschach has observed that when a pattern is generated by

means of splashing ink on the leaf of a notebook and pressing it closed, it is recognised by different people as representing different things. Each mind conjures its own world to see.

Q.: Events in a dream take place spontaneously and randomly. Here we find robustly established cause-consequence relationships. The world follows laws of physics but in a dream there are none.

B.: Cause-consequence relationships, intellectual conclusions amounting to inferences of how objects behave and function, laws of physics, and so on are all only in your mind. The mind projects the world out of itself, then makes these observations and is now raising this doubt in you. Everything you think you know is only a tiny knot in the fathomless subtle space of pure consciousness. The sum total of all objective knowledge that you believe you possess is like a tiny bubble in the froth of a brief wave on an infinitely vast, shoreless ocean. Your actual identity lies with this ocean of Unmoving Consciousness.

Q.: If I am mistakenly imagining myself to be a physical body whilst I have none in truth, what is to explain the presence of this body that I now find myself inextricably bound to? How do I move beyond the illusion of this mistaken identity and Realise what I really am?

B.: The body did not announce its existence to you. Neither did the world. These appearances are able to seemingly exist because your mind is extroverted. Really you were never anything but your actual Self. The principal knot in pure consciousness, which is said to act as the cause for obscuration or eveilment of its Revelation, serves as the basis to sustain all other knots. This principal knot is the aham-vritti and may be known as the primogenitalis-tenebra or original sin of ignorance. The other knots constitute man's objective knowledge, including his idea that he is a **மடாலுடனம்**, a physical entity made of gross matter living in an objectively real world, his ideas concerning how the objects of the world function, etc.. The aham-vritti's shadow-like illusory existence exists through-out all the 3 states experienced by it. The man on the Clapham omnibus permits himself to be limited by the aham vritti and therefore thinks he is a person inhabiting or occupying a body; he points to the birth of the body and says he was born; he forsees the eventual death of his body and says he is going to die; he is quite out of touch with his real nature. On the other hand, the Jnani has ripped apart his aham vritti and is therefore one with the Absolute. It is enough that the aham vritti be dislodged; the whole superstructure of ideas enveloping the Real, like the pernicious water-hyacinth choking a water-body, collapses and dissolves into nothingness. No activity of the aham vritti can detonate the aham vritti. The one and only way to do it is to remain mentally silent without the least effort or



volition. The Varahu Upanishad says that the way to Realisation is through Shubheccha, Vicharana, Tanumanasi, Sattvapatti, Asamshakti, Padarthabhavana, and Turiyathita; the classification is purely intellectual and nothing more. Being still without a vestige of effort, volition or other mental activity is Realisation. Stillness is not something to be thought about or understood. Practise it by means of assiduously taking the mind back to its point of origination every time a thought arises. This should be done until the time arrives when only the primal, natural state of thought-free, effort-free and volition-free Pure Consciousness of Being remains. This is known as the manonischalam or manonivritti state. One in this state cannot possibly feel any want, much less aspire for or anticipate Jnana; he has been reduced to and thus abides as simple consciousness to which volition, effort or thought is altogether alien. It is then that the Deep pulls the mind into Itself and there destroys it once and for all. This is known as the state of manonasham; it is the sahaja-stithi of the Jnani. There is-not anything beyond it. How to go about it all? Ruthlessly tear everything out until only the root remains. Then even this root will decay and wither off of its own accord. It needs vairagyam; without the discovery of the true poisonous nature of samsara, Realisation is impossible. Can people who are busy with blindly chasing after the pleasures of the life of mundanity Realise?

Q.: Should I renounce the world, then?

B.: Yes. By renouncing the mind, you will renounce the world.

Q.: What about leaving home?

B.: The mind discards its old garb and adorns itself with what you call as gherua. Instead of imagining yourself to be a householder you are going to imagine yourself to be a renunciate. You wish to jump from one bondage into another, more dangerous one. Is that of any use? Were you asked to present the mind with a fresh set of ideas in lieu of its existing one? Demolish once and for all the mind's superstructure of illusory ideas [that is responsible for exercising sovereignty over the dominion of the bondage-causing faculty of imagination] and be at peace forever.

Q.: I have heard and understood what B. is telling me. Yet I become uncomfortable of mind when I reflect that the world is a dream.

B.: Do not think about the world. Do not think about anything. Do not think at all. Languor and cerebration are the arch-enemies of Realisation, which is shanti without beginning or end. To think is un wisdom.

Q.: Am I to ignore the question of the world's reality and concentrate on turning my mind towards the Self?

B.: Yes.

Q.: But I wish to know if the world is real or not.

B.: Are you real?

Q.: Yes.

B.: How do you know?

Q.: Because I exist.

B.: When the world also satisfies this criterion it may also be called real.

Q.: I see the world and thus opine myself entitled to believe in its existence. Is it wrong?

B.: Do you see the difference?

Q.: What difference?

B.: Of yourself, you say 'I exist.'. But when it comes to the world, you have to depend upon perception, observation, cognition, belief and so on to assert its existence. Thus the former is real Existence and the latter is implied existence which is imaginary or fictitious. Failure to understand what is Real is the root cause of all misery in man's life. What IS alone is Real.

Q.: So only Consciousness is Real?

B.: Your experience of pure consciousness is confined to spatial and temporal constraints or limitations. It is merely a reflected consciousness. Staring at the Sun's reflection in a jar of water cannot compare with the experience of being the Sun itself.

Q.: I want to be the Sun. Please tell me what I should do.

B.: If you want to shine like the Sun, first burn like it. Never stray away from pure consciousness.

Q.: But B. said what I can possibly experience is only a reflected consciousness...

B.: Yes. Hold on to the origin of the reflection steadfastly; neither effort, volition, motive nor any other chitta-vritti should contaminate your abidance in the source of the aham vritti. Abide as pure consciousness as a matter of course. Then the medium of reflection will shatter and Reality will shine.

Q.: Many try. Few succeed. B. knows it. Will he admit the fact?

B.: If among your umpteen other concerns Realisation is one trifling concern, can you succeed? There are those who go crazy for It. Their thirst for Truth is so strong that they throw away the ego in one stroke. Others want sadhana to do. How is it possible in the case of some persons that there is strength to abandon the ego in a single stroke? Is it luck? Is it God's partiality? Never. It is vairagyam that is the reason.

Q.: What is vairagyam? Is it strength of mind?

B.: No. It is weakness. The mind which has cultivated intense vairagyam has made itself too weak to resist the pull of the Self from within. It is magnetised and drawn inward to face its own irrevocable ruin.

Q.: I do not understand what vairagyam means. Please clarify the same.

B.: Vairagyam is really mental derailment. Mental derailment means the total loss of belief in the objective reality of the world. Thoroughly disgusted with the ephemeral or transitory nature of the things of the world, the mind searches for some enduring பொருள் அல்லது வஸ்து which can be regarded as permanent. It[the mind] finds what it is looking for in the doctrine of Ajata-advaita. Then it[the mind] looks upon the distractions of the world- the same ones which were earlier considered to yield pleasure- with horror. Earlier it[the mind] wanted to indulge in the joys the world apparently had to offer, because quite genuinely it believed in the fact of its own existence. Now it[the mind] is told the truth that it does not exist at all, but it finds the relative fact of its own apparent existence incapable of being denied, because such mirage-like existence [alone] forms the subject matter of its incumbent, quotidian experience. So it[the mind] is torn between the relative truth of its own illusory existence and the Absolute Truth heard of from the wise. The maniacal desire is thus born to depart once and for all from the realm of illusion and somehow reach the Real, and it[the mind] desperately tries to escape from samsara. Sri Ramakrishna has said that such a one sees his family members who treat him with love as poisonous snakes. Jesus said: He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. There are temperaments which cannot tolerate the idea of living in the darkness of illusion once they come to know that the mind and its experiences are not real. They are called kritopasakas or paripakvis. They require no sadhana or discipline to follow. Since such minds find the prospect of illusion agonisingly unbearable, we may thus say that the constitution of the psyche in such cases is already aligned or tuned for efforts directed at bringing about mental self-destruction. So, supreme unwillingness to remain in samsara may be called vairagyam.

Q.: Only some minds are endowed with the temperament of intolerance toward illusion. Why? Is this not unjust on God's part?

B.: No. Those who are willing to continue in samsara do so. Those who yearn with all their might to break out of it also succeed. Each one gets what he wants. Where is injustice, etc.?

Q.: What about those stuck in the middle? Trisanku's purgatory seems to be their certain lot...

B.: [laughing] Yes, that is the problem. Having burnt the mind in the flame of self-awareness beyond a certain critical extent, you may not be able to continue your lifestyle of old. On the other hand, you know not what further to do to make good your escape from samsara. That is why the Guru's helping hand is necessary.

Q.: I am aware that B. does not give initiation. In this brutally wicked world filled with all sorts of fraudsters, scoundrels and criminals posing as holy men, where can I go for a Guru?

B.: Now Spirituality is a dispensable part of your life; when your life becomes a dispensable part of Spirituality, God will automatically fulfill your need for a Guru. There is no need to ask him for this and that. He knows your requirements. At the right time they will be met automatically. There is no need to run from pillar to post looking for Mukthi. Only surrender to Him without reserve and Mukthi is assured here and now.

Q.: Will God really give me Mukthi in this lifetime?

B.: All are given. How many take?

S>M>

Q.: In the essay Who-am-I?, Sri B. has written, "...jagam thoenrumboedhu swaroopam thoenradhu; swaroopam thoenrumboedhu jagam thoenradhu." On the other hand, I see him in a body; he sees the world just as we all do... I do not doubt that B. is a Mahanubhavar. Of course he is one. I am asking only to satisfy my inquisitiveness. If it is wrong, please exculpate me.

B.: [smiling] Did B. say he has a body? Did he say "I am seeing a world."?

Q.: I see B.'s body. He is talking to me now. I form part of the world. Therefore he sees the world. Am I wrong?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Why so, pray?

B.: B. is the Real. For him, there is no seeing but only Absolute Being. What you see is merely your own mind-made fiction.

Q.: If so, B. corroborates the fiction created by my mind! He is now talking to me! So, there is reciprocity: he sees me and I see him. Am I wrong?

B.: Yes. The B. you see is also the handiwork of your own imagination.

Q.: How can that be? Can B. himself be unreal?

B.: B. the Real alone is Real. The B. you see is certainly unreal.

Q.: Who is the Real Bhagawan then?

B.: Your Self.

S>M>

Q.: People are always harassing me incessantly. What am I to do?

B.: Merely keep quiet. Kaduveli-siddhar has sung:

வைதோரைக் கூடவை யாதே : - இந்த  
வையம் முழுதும் பொய்த்தாலும் பொய்யாதே  
வெய்ய வினைகள் செய்யாதே - கல்லை  
வீணிற் பறவைகள் மீதி லெய்யாதே .

Q.: But I suffer when people maltreat or harass me. What is the remedy?

B.: What is the remedy? You also harass yourself incessantly. That is the only remedy. Then you will become so acclimatised to undergoing harassment that when it is not forthcoming from people, you will feel shocked and disappointed. If subjection to bombardment with harassment has become the habitual state of the mind, Realisation is not far away.

S>M>

Q.: The principle which passively witnesses the 3 states is the Self. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: There is nothing available for the Self to witness.

Q.: Then who witnesses the 3 states?

B.: Who is saying that he witnesses them?

Q.: I. But who am I?

B.: Have you come here to examine me? You must discover who you are.

Q.: I do not know.

B.: Who says that he does not know?

Q.: All roads lead to Rome. All conversations with B. lead to 'Who-am-I?'

B.: Yes. Everything else is just worthless chaff.

S>M>

Q.: When I remain without thinking, the subjective consciousness which is then experienced by me is the Self. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: If the state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly prevails in the mind instead of mental activity, then the person is said to be in the manonischalam or manonivritti state. But this is not the Finality, which is the unreachable Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani. First the state of absence of interest in the thought-stream must become permanent. Escaping from the ego is possible only by ignoring it or denying it any attention. Slow-starvation is the way to put the ego to death. Then the original state of the mind, the nivritti state, is gained. Here the sadhaka has no say in anything anymore; hereafter has he no further role to play. When the time comes, the Beyond, which has by now taken over completely, absorbs him quietly. This is the dawn of Jnana imperturbable.

Q.: It sounds like an account of a spirit possessing a man!

B.: Absorption in Spirit is the purpose.

S>M>

Q.: What is the purpose of having taken birth in the vehicle of a human-body?

B.: மனதை மெய்யகப்படுத்துதல். [Spiritualisation of the mind; its dissolution in the Real.]

Q.: What does it mean?

B.: It is the mind which is the sixth-organ or third-eye of man. This organ is not one which aids sensory perception. To open this eye is the goal of man's birth into this [species].

Q.: What is the name of this organ?

B.: Hridayapundarikham.

Q.: Is it not another name for the sahasraram?

B.: No.

Q.: Where is it located in the body?

B. asked the attendant to extract from the book-case a new, slender volume titled Sri Ramanarin Geethai, which seemed to be an ashram publication. He asked the questioner to peruse certain specific segments out thereof.

After some time further questions were asked of B.:

Q.: These shlokas say:

'The locus from which thoughts of embodied beings originate is said to be the Heart.'

'This Heart is located on the right-hand side of the chest; therefrom light pounces through the sushumna to the sahasraram.'

'Through giving up the habit of showing compassion toward the body, and discarding the intellectual-conviction 'Body am I.', one should in a single direction investigate, " How to become a Viveki by means of making the nadis dance? " '

'This dance of the nadis will separate the Aathman from the nadis. Then, by means of confining the Aathman to the amritha-nadi alone, we must make it shine.'

Still I do not understand how to open the heart-eye.

B.: Only by the investigation 'Who am I?'

Q.: Am I to give myself to understand that B.'s vichara method is a foolproof means to open the heart-eye?

B.: Yes. Vichara makes the mind completely nescient. The mind then becomes as a photographic silver-plate completely exposed to the sun; no matter how long you expose such a plate to mercuric-vapour, no image is possible of being obtained. A mind which continuously inheres in the beingness of the Self loses the ability to form sensory impressions. It is then awake to the Self alone and asleep to the world of sense-perceptions. Such a one may be surrounded by countless fascinating objects day and night, yet really he sees or registers nothing. Sri Krishna Paramathma is said to have fathered 161080 children, but when the dead infant born to Uttatra was to be

revived by the touch of an akanda-brahmachari, none, not even Shuka, dared to touch the child. The பரமபுத்திரன் calmly walked over to the body of the lifeless infant and touched it. The effect of Ashwattama's mighty Brahmashironamaka-astra, which is said to have the ruinous capability to annihilate the 14 worlds without leaving behind the slightest residue, became inutile. Such is the power of the Jnani's incessant, involuntary mouna-tapas.

Q.: If loss of the ability to form sensory impressions is Jnana, then sleeping persons are Jnanis.

B.: Sleep is simple nescience. On the other hand, in the case of one who practises jagrat-sushupthi, the senses are kept alert but inactive. The mind is awake to the realisation of its own self-conscious existence but motionless.

Q.: One whose mind is in this motionless state is a Jnani. Am I correct?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: Even the subtle mind must be dissolved and lost in Kaivalyam. If the mind is not altogether destroyed, rebirth is inevitable.

Q.: Is the heart-eye always open in the Jnani?

B.: Yes. The granthi obscuring its Revelation has been sundered once and for all.

Q.: Can this eye be opened and closed at will?

B.: The Jnani has no option to close it.

Q.: What is the power wielded by one who knows how to open this eye?

B.: He has discovered the Elixir of Immortality.

Q.: By investigating 'Who am I?', can I also develop the ability to open my third eye?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: Like Sri Krishna B. also must revive the dead. Then the world will acknowledge his greatness.

B.: Tackle the root of the problem. Death is only the effect. What is the cause? Birth. If we can avoid birth, there will be no need to worry about death. So, let us first try to escape from birth. Then death is taken care of automatically.

Q.: I am already born. What can I possibly do about it?

B.: The Real you were never born. Realise it.

Q.: By means of asking myself 'Who-am-I'?

B.: Exactly.

S>M>

Q.: How to avoid fear and sopor whilst practising vichara?

B.: Only by asking yourself whom they affect.

Q.: Always the same panacea.

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that Jnanis are mad persons. Are you mad?

B.: Oh! yes. Better be insanely happy rather than sanely unhappy.

S>M>

Q.: May I ask a question?

B.: Yes.

Q.: I have read about the Ajata-advaita philosophy. I heard this is the school of doctrine taught by Sri Bhagawan. What is the basis for saying that the world is an illusion? If everything is an illusion, is Lord Shiva also then an illusion? But B. has written hymns in praise of Lord Shiva! Can God Himself be unreal? Is it not a disturbing idea? Will B. kindly clarify this point for me?

B.: Let Lord Shiva Himself supply the needful clarification for you.

So saying, the master got up and fetched a heavy tome from the book-case. With the flick of a finger he knocked down the book from its place in the rack, and caught it open at the right page even as it was falling in mid-air. Then he deposited the same in the lap of the visitor. 'Read this aloud.' The young man was, however, evidently unable to pick up the nerve to read coherently in the midst of so many people, especially in the immediate vicinity of Bhagawan, whom he seemed to look up at with eyes wide in awe. B. observed the boy's jittery stammer, and held out his hand for the book, saying cheerfully, 'கோடுப்பீராக இங்கே அதனை'. I must here make the observation that when B. reads out Sanskrit verse, it feels and sounds as though Vedavyasa himself is doing so. It makes one wonder what a miracle it is that a Rishi from the era of Vedic India should actually live in our midst today. I ruminates as to how many know that the world actually contains such a rare gem; after the publication of Mr. Brunton's Secret India, I muse to myself, many around the globe, as evidenced by the fact that- almost invariably since the time of my arrival here- thrice a week a new Caucasian face shows up at the ashram; and not all come for Brahmajnana or to even intellectually acquaint themselves with the doctrine of Ajata-advaita taught by the master. What is the reason for the fascination? The person of the Sage himself! He possesses and exudes an invisible magnetic charm that cannot fail to mesmerise the sensitive heart. I feel fortunate to be captivated by his dizzying aura. I wonder how many like me have already been trapped in his unrelenting net of Grace by his charismatic persona... The idea of beholding a Vedic Rishi in the flesh excites the curiosity of people. So far one has read about Rishis only in mythological fables. Yet here he is, in the flesh and blood, living amongst us mortals! Anyone who has heard him but once will agree that B.'s divine voice and euphonious melody in giving animated life to the words



of poet-saints can never be forgotten. His mere presence guarantees peace, but his cadence whilst reading out poetic works brings incomparable solace to restless minds. I am sure that if I had eyes that could peep into the heavens, I would now see the devas pausing in their work[if at all devas have any work to do; I imagine they would usually be spending their time sporting about with members of the opposite sex] to listen to the master reading aloud-

☒ Brahmaadhikaani bhuthaani svanithyaani varaananae dhrishtam yath sarva maethath cha nashvaram vidhi bhamini.

☒ Eakaha anaekathuamaa pannoe nirgunoehi gunaanvithaha svajyothsnayaa yoe vibhaathi parajyothsnaan vithaha abhavath.

☒ Svathanthraha parathanthraha cha thvayaa dhaevi krithoe hyaham sarva karthri cha prakrithihi mahaamaayaa thvamaevahi.

☒ Maayaamayam kritham idham cha jagath samagram sarvaathmanaahi vidhrutham parayaasva bhuddhayaa sarvaathmabihi sukrihibihi paramaathmathaavaihi samsatthakamaathmani ganaihi parivaeshtithahacha.

☒ Thvam hi vai prakrithihi sookshmaa rajaha sathva thamoe mayi vyaapaaradakshaa sathatham sugunaa nirgunaapicha.

☒ Sarvaeshaamiha bhoothaanaamahamaathmaa sumadhyamae nirvikaari nireehashcha bhakthaechchoepaatthavigrahaha.

It was quite a spectacle to see the master reading out these Vedantic proclamations made by Shiva himself. I have no doubt that everyone in the Hall at the time saw only Shiva speaking.

Q.: Yes, it is clear by B.'s Grace.

B.: Good.

Q.: But now another doubt has arisen in the mind.

B.: [smiling] What is it?

Q.: I am not interested in swaroopa-vicharanai. I am a bhakta. I want only bhakti. Shiva is manifested here in the glorious form of Arunachala. Does Lord Arunachala-shiva accept only the Jnana-margam or does He accept Bhakti also?

B.: Again let us request Him to answer your question. [resumes reading]

☒ Yadhaa yadhaa vipatthihi bhakthaanaam bhavathi kvachith thadha thadha haraamyashu thathkshanaath sarvashaha sadhaa.

☒ Bhakthoujnanaena bhedhoehi thath karthuhu sarvadhaha sukham vijnaanam na bhavathyaeva sathi bhakthi viroedhinaha.

☒ Krithvaadhaeadhikam thasya preethyai sarvam thadharpanam nirvaahaayacha shoonyathvam yathadhaathmasamarpanam.

☒ Throuloekyae bhakthi sadhrushaha pantha naasthi sukhaavahaha chathur yugaeshu dhavaeshi kalou thu suvishaeshathaha.

☒ Kalou thu jnaanavairaagyou vridhdharoopou niruthsavou graahakaabhavathoe dhaevi jaathou jarjarathaa mathi.

☒ Kalou prathyaksha phaladha bhakthihi sarvayugaeshvapi thathprabhaavaadhaham nithyam thadhvashowe naathra samshayaha.

☒ Kim bhahoothkaena dhaevaeshi bhakthaadheenaha sadha hyaham thathkarthuhu purushasyaathi vashagoe naathra samshayaha.

[laughing] And you ask me whether Arunachala will accept your bhakti! Look at the radical statements He has made!

A few pair of eyes in the Hall had become moist; the assurances read out by Bhagawan conveyed the distinct impression that he was saying those words himself, rather than had merely read out the preserved words uttered by some other Messiah of the Spirit. Even as these words were being uttered by him, I felt a warm glow of the master's tender compassion gently descend into my body. It rejuvenated and reinvigorated my Love for the master and arighted my forlornous lassitude of spirit, an infelicitous condition that has of-late been haunting my soul. When the master finished pronouncing these candescent statements of divine reassurance, I had only one thought in mind: would I not stay trapped at the feet of this God- this lovely, enchanting God- forever?

P>S>

Even today many think that the Maharshi was a cold impersonalist or rationalist in the method by which he exhorted man to approach the Truth. His True face of Love is not known to all. Actually He IS nothing but Love.

S>M>

G.: [trying to sound plaintive] The shloka seems to cast serious aspersions upon B.'s teachings...

B.: [laughing] [assuming an ersatz dejected expression, pressing tip of right index finger against right nostril, other fingers clutching chin, dome of forehead slanted forwards toward the malapert questioner, right condylus-humerus not inhumourously perched upon right iliac-crest] Yes, my Father has sabotaged my teaching! What can I do?!

G.: [trying not to giggle] But, Bhagawan, I meant it as a serious question...

B.: Remember: Secundum fidem vestram fiat vobis. Each man believes his is the only right path.

G.: Yet, I remember, sometime back, Chadwick mentioned to me that B. has once said, "All roads lead to Rome. Yet, on reaching Rome, you must needs pass through the Arx Capitolina so as to reach the Senatuis Curiam. Likewise, you may pursue other paths till a certain stage of maturity is reached, but thereafter only the Vichara-margam will take you to the Goal."

B.: That is true, but the true bhakta melts his individuality beyond possibility for redemption in the crucible of unconditional Love for the Divine;

unconditional Love, ananya-sharanagathi and vichara are all really the same. The point is to persist in the sadhana until neither effort nor volition is required anymore to sustain it. The stage must be reached when effort or volition is no longer possible; thus the sadhana, now automatic or extemporaneous, has become impossible of being stopped; then one finds- to one's profound amusement- that all this while he has been calling his natural state as 'sadhana' and making effort to 'attain' it!

S>M>

Q.: Vichara involves logic. Bhakti involves love. How can the 2 co-incide?

B.: The Self is pure Love only. Vichara keeps away the not-Love. Bhakti invokes Love. Both lead to the same end: complete effacement of the ego's root-cause, the aham-vritti.

S>M>

Q.: I want B. to suggest some easy sadhana for me so that I may speedily Realise the Self.

B.: [no response]

Q.: Is it only the vichara method?

B.: [no response]

Q.: இந்த உலகம் வெறும் ஒரு கணவாமேனம்? இது என்ன அபத்தம்? இதை நான் நம்ப வேண்டுமா? நடக்கிறதை பேசுங்களேன், சுவாமி .

B.: அதேதான் . [That is the sadhana you asked for!]

Q.: எது ?

B.: நடக்கிறதை பேசுகிறேன் !

Q.: ஒன்றும் விளங்கவில்லையே ...

B.: மலையை சுற்றி ' நடக்கிறதை [ பற்றி ] பேசினேன் '!

S>M>

Q.: Can siddhis be obtained by the method 'Who-am-I'?

B.: There are other sadhanas with which to acquire swapna-siddhis. Vichara is for bringing about Jnana-siddhi.

Q.: Jnanis wield all sorts of siddhis. How is it made possible?

B.: He does not do anything. All sorts of things are attributed to him. He cannot leave the perfect peace of inactivity. He cannot control his body's activity or inactivity.

Q.: But we hear elders say that the Jnani's power is superior to that of God Himself.

B.: For the Jnani there is no God or Devil. There is only the one Aathman, which is himself. Whatever powers people might believe he possesses, it is from the onlooker's point of view only. He has no knowledge of what is going on in the outer-world.

Q.: We see his body living and moving in the world.

B.: He is sleep-walking.

Q.: So really Bhagawan is sound asleep all the time. And for this, people are praising him as a great Jnani! He should be called Kumbhakarna-bhagawan.

B.: [laughing] சக்ரைப் போடு போட்டான் போ !

Q.: Can development of siddhis- such as levitation and telepathy- occur as an incidental or unintended consequence of vichara?

B.: Whatever be your intention, and whether you have any or none, vichara does not produce siddhis. The technique cannot cause exacerbation of ignorance.

Q.: One hears of people engaging in vichara developing such powers.

B.: It must be because some other practises would have been carried on side-by-side.

Q.: Is it dangerous to try vichara together with [such] other methods?

B.: Not dangerous but perhaps useless.

S>M>

Q.: I feel pain above the navel whilst doing vichara. It is real, physical pain. What is the reason and what is the remedy?

B.: Mental introversion is said to cause churning of the nadis. That could be the reason. There is no end to the number of places in the body where pain may be felt. You might do what is needed to make the pain subside if its cause be physical, but pay no attention to it. Keep on adamantly pursuing the vichara, no matter what happens. Everything will come aright in the end. The mind is like a child spoilt by excessive pampering. Pay even the slightest attention to him and soon you will not be able to do any other work. Ignore him completely and he will manage himself successfully somehow.

S>M>

Q.: Is God aware of mankind's suffering? Does he know how we are all suffering because he has created a world full of inequalities?

B.: God cannot know anything. He is totally nescient.

Q.: How can that be? Is not God Omniscient?

B.: Omniscience has no connection with objective knowledge. It means remaining Self-aware.

Q.: How can something be hidden from God's knowledge?

B.: Consider- if God were to know anything, would He be [worthy of being called] God?

Q.: I do not understand what B. is trying to tell me.

B.: Him from whom there can be something apart cannot be called God. If God knows anything, it means there is something apart from Him for Him to know. If He knows everything, it means He is completely impotent; would you

call such a creature God? No. So, that which is aware but altogether ignorant- even of such awareness- alone can be called God. He alone is verily bliss unfathomable.

S>M>

Q.: Since everything is an illusion, can I dispense with sandhyavandanam and pithrutharpanam? Do rituals not become meaningless if, according to the proclamation of the Ajata-advaita doctrine, the world is merely a passing dream?

B.: Why use Vedanta as an excuse for avoiding your nithya-karma?

Q.: But it is all illusory according to Bhagawan.

B.: Suppose your house crashed down into the earth in the middle of the night- how would you react?

Q.: What?! Why, yes! It is one of my persistent worries. It is an old place; I was putting-off renovation for as long as we could possibly manage with the existing structure... Now it seems B. is precognising that the house might suddenly collapse at any time. I had better forthwith ask the family members to move out as soon as possible... I thank B. for the timely warning!

B.: [laughing] See how flustered you have become! Why? Everything is an illusion- is that not so? Does not Ajata-advaita say so? Then why bother about anything?

Q.: [laughs] Oh! சிக்கிக்கொண்டேனே !

B.: The fact is, it is not your natural conviction that the world is a dream. You want to misuse the Ajata-advaita doctrine by selectively applying it in situations where you want to escape from performing your legitimate duties. This is flagrant abuse of Vedanta. Give up this notorious trick, which seems to have become fashionable nowadays. If the world is genuinely experienced by you as a mere dream, even if the sky falls on your head you would keep quiet. Until you reach this conviction naturally- as the fruit of immediate first-hand experience rather than as a result of acquisition of book-knowledge- continue with your worldly duties. Can Vedanta be cited as the reason why a man should try to run away from his duties? Vedanta did not ask you to abandon worldly responsibilities, but to fulfill them without falsely imagining yourself to be the doer. It is a double crime to first try to escape from one's legitimate duties, and then deposit the blame on Vedanta's head! Did Vedanta come and tell you, 'Don't worry. You can shirk all your duties and lead a lethargic life. I approve of such a course of action.'? The purpose of Vedanta is to enable man to Realise his true nature of Spirit. This is how people are misusing it. What a strange world.

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between Kundalini-shakti and Aathman?

B.: There is no difference.

Q.: But Kundalini-shakti is confined to the body. Moreover, Aathman is dormant or latent energy whereas Kundalini-shakti is of the nature of activity. How can these be the same?

B.: You confine yourself to the body and then complain that Kundalini-shakti is to be found in the body only. Really it is everywhere. Sakti or Maya is said to be the active or creative side of Aathman or Reality. But this is only from the relativistic point of view of those whose hridhaya-granthi still holds fast. Actually there can be no such thing as creation. The motionless Aathman cannot give birth [to any movement whatever].

S>M>

Q.: What is B.'s opinion regarding the Montagu–Chelmsford reforms which were introduced by His Majesty's Government some years back? Many of B.'s countrymen are disgruntled with them. And of the legislation passed in parliament last year laying down the framework for conversion of India into a Federation in the near-future? Will B.'s countrymen welcome the move? Does B.?

B.: [no response]

Q.: Shall I give myself to understand that B. does not concern himself with political matters?

B.: As pleases you. [However it may please you to understand, accordingly may you understand.]

Q.: Which is better- Free-market Capitalism or Centrally-planned Communism?

B.: Not to get involved in such debates is better.

Q.: What does B. think about the growing clamour in Germany for the unification of Austria into the German-homeland? In the first page of his political manifesto, the Führer writes boldly, 'Deutschösterreich muß wieder zurück zum großen deutschen Mutterlande...!'

B.: Ask the Germans and the Austrians.

Q.: How would they know what B.'s opinion is?

B.: How would B. know what their opinion is?

Q.: B. was asked for his own opinion.

B.: His opinion? For peace to dawn, the mind must merge in the Heart. Once this unification has been achieved, we may proceed to bother ourselves with other unifications then if need be.

Q.: It is allright from the point of view of the individual. I am asking about the political environment.

B.: Do it first and see. If the question is still able to arise we may tackle it then.

Q.: According to the philosophy of 'Blut und Boden' developed by the Germans, returning to Rural values would lead to perfect peace of mind or mental serenity. Does B. agree with the Germans?

G.: Living in the lap of Mother Nature can of course be expected to produce harmonious vibrations in the mind, and-

Without moving his head, B. quietly rotated his eyeballs in my direction and fixed his gaze on me out of the corner of his eyes. I fell silent at once.

B.: Are you made out of matter or spirit? Resolve this question first. If you are made of matter, you need blood and soil to survive. If you are spirit there is only spirit.

Q.: Perhaps I am a combination of the two.

B.: Find out what you are.

Q.: What is B.'s standpoint?

B.: The books say that there is never anything called matter, that all is spirit only. This is the explanation given to those who raise the question. So far as the Jnani is concerned, this explanation does not hold good. For him there is no 'all' to meaningfully consider. He abides as the One, whether you call it Spirit or anything else.

Q.: How did creation come about?

B.: Do you stand apart from creation that you should ask this question? To solve the riddle you must yourself first transcend creation. That is the only way. Then you will know creation is impossible. How to reach this state? Only by investigating 'Who am I?'

Q.: Is it true that eventually all reach B.'s exalted state of divine wisdom?

B.: Fui quod es, eris quod sum.

Q.: Since the publication of Mr. Brunton's best-selling book Secret India, B. attracts curiosity-seekers and followers from all over the world. Does he see himself as the Messiah of the modern age? What is the secret underlying the hypnotic charm with which he spellbinds people from all over this vast Globe?

B.: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice..."

Q.: Does B. personally take charge of the lives of his devotees?

B.: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

Q.: Yet not all feel B.'s magical Grace. Why? Whose fault is it?

B.: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep..."

Q.: I cannot stay in this jungle hermitage until doomsday; yet, I want to become your devotee, too. What should I do to become one?

B.: "...know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him."

14th August 1936

Today when I entered the Hall as usual well before sun-rise, a large langoor [monkey with black face, pointed crest and long tail positioned in such a manner as to resemble the shape of the alphabet 'S'] tried to enter after me. I tried to drive it away, but it evaded me, rushed inside, took a single leap and landed squarely on B.'s knees. B. was taken by surprise, not alarm; 'Dei Chellappaa!' he exclaimed affectionately. I approached the Sofa with the intention of prompting it to leave, but the master with an indication of the hand stopped me. 'எப்படியடா இருக்கிறாய்? பார்த்து எவ்வளவு நாள் ஆயிற்றடா! குழந்தைகளெல்லாம் செளக்கியம்தானே?' said the master lovingly. The monkey chattered something in response. 'ஆமடா. நான் ஏதோ பெரிய மஹரிஷியாம். என்னை இந்த கூண்டுக்குள் தள்ளி அடைத்து வைத்து கைதியாகவேயாக்கிவிட்டார்களடா. ஓயாது சிறைவாசம் தான் என் தலையெழுத்துப் போல் இருக்கிறது. ஆனால் இங்கு வந்து எல்லோரும் என்னிடம் வெகுமரியாதையுடன் கேட்பது என்னவோ, 'சுவாமி, ஸ்வதந்திரமடைவதெவ்வாறு?' என்று தான். பார்த்தாயாடா செல்லப்பா வேடிக்கையை...! நீயாவது ஸ்வதந்திரமாக இருக்கிற வழியைப் பார்த்துக்கொண்டுபோ... அது போகட்டும், சபரி தாத்தா எப்படி இருக்கிறார்?' The monkey screeched a little and fell silent. To my horror, the master erupted into a violent fulmination of tears. 'ஐயோ! இப்படி பரிதாபத்திர்க்கு உறிய அனாதை ஆகி விட்டேனே!' he burst out. My eyes also flowed with tears, upon seeing the master so pronouncedly writhing with grief, although I could not make crest or tail of the situation. The langoor was also silently streaming tears down its cheeks. The master, chest heaving with emotion, gently wiped the tears off the langoor's cheeks- then the langoor did the same to the master! It was a soul-stirring sight, and it will remain etched in my memory till I draw my last breath. The langoor put its arms around the master's torso and hugged itself unto him. The Maharshi did not try to brush the animal away. On the contrary, he deposited his left arm around its furry body, and placed his right palm upon its furry crest. Both closed their eyes. At that moment there was a palpable explosion of ineffable peace in the Hall, and I also closed my eyes. When I opened them again, the Maharshi was staring into vacant space in front of him as usual. There was no sign of anyone else, except some persons peacefully slumbering in the back of the Hall. I wondered whether I had dreamed the furry fellow who had just paid a visit. Just at that moment B. met my eyes and said graciously with a sweet smile, 'His grandfather would visit me regularly when I was living on the ashram on the Hill. He would always



bring for me large quantities of murungakkeerai, carrying it for me with great difficulty in one sinewy hand, since the other had to be deployed to traverse the climb up the Hill. Where he plucked the leaves from I don't know, but since one does not notice any drumstick trees growing on the Hill, it must have been from somewhere in the town. Every week he would turn up once or twice with a small branch swathed with the nutritious leaves, and affectionately present it to me. I would chew some of the raw leaves with relish and give the rest to someone in the ashram to cook the next day. He was an extraordinarily intelligent creature. Once whilst sitting I was leaning against a tree outside the ashram, because days of continuous fever had made the body weak. When he came he noticed it at once, because it was not my usual posture. He walked up to me, carried out his diagnosis by touching my neck with his paw and then quickly went away, his usual gift of leaves abandoned on the ground in his haste. One day later he returned with a sizeable quantity of bark extracted from the vaagai maram. I could not contain my tears on seeing his bruised hands, which were shimmering with droplets of blood. It is not easy to extract the needed quality of bark from that tree, because if the inner-face of the bark has been long exposed to the air, its curative properties are rendered void. So, loose chunks of bark found on the tree, which may be easily dislodged, cannot be utilised. So, the poor fellow must have searched all over Arunachala for an oblong piece of stone which would help him to spall off fresh bark from the tree; again, as to where and how he found a vaagai maram I have no idea; maybe he searched all over the Hill for these like Hanuman did whilst while trying to identify the Sanjeevani plant on the Dronagiri; with such a stone he has struck forcefully against the tree until[B.'s voice quivered and choked at this point] enough quantity of the bark could be obtained, not minding the resultant chafing of his hands... [here the master's voice broke and he became profusely lachrymose once more]' G.: It seems the langoor gave himself to assume that the bark of that tree would be effective in treating fever...

B.: Oh! yes. How he knew I cannot begin to fathom. Man thinks he is the cleverest creature on the Earth... You should have seen that கண்கொள்ளாகாத்ஈ as the poor simian walked in hugging the precious bark strips in both his hands, which were glistening with globules of blood. The creature avoided meeting my eyes presently, because then he also would start crying and become distracted from what he had come to do; he set to work without ado; he patiently ground the bark strips into a powdery consistency by unflaggingly smashing them with rocks. Ayyasamy was there and he could not believe his eyes! Now the devoted simian looked imploringly at me and screeched, gesticulating animatedly to the preparation he had

made for me. I gathered up the shivered wood lying on the ground and chewed some of it. In a matter of a few hours I felt better. The fact is, even my mother had not noticed the fact that the body was burning with fever...

G.: I don't think B. himself would have noticed were it not for the langoor...

B.: [laughs] Absolutely correct!

G.: Does this fellow's exploits [saagasangal] end here?!

B.: Oh! no. I bandaged his hands with strips of rag soaked in a boiling solution containing crushed neem-leaf and grated turmeric-rhizome. After that I kept him with me for a few days. I did not want him to go out looking for food until his hands had perfectly healed. He stayed in the ashram for more than a week. He was not eager to stay, and wanted to bring me his usual drumstick-tree leaves. But I would have none of it. He was a strange simian; he would not mingle with anyone but me; when others of his own kind tried to interact with him he bared his teeth and growled at them, driving them away; if he were to starve who would come to his rescue? So I kept him by my side for about 10 days... During this time a small boy brought pomegranate-fruits for the ashram one day. He brought a dozen fruits; in those days the ashram was not very crowded, and so on that day, afternoon and night, each person got about 2/3rds-a-fruit to eat... The boy had come with his family to watch the upcoming deepam festival. Someone had told him there was a swami living on the Hill, and egged on by curiosity he had paid this visit. On seeing me he became choked with some strange emotion. First he tried to contain himself and act normally. He sang for us Endaro Mahanubhavulu from the Pancharathnakkritis. We happily sat around him, my physician-langoor included, and listened, eating the fruit he had brought for us; since he was a small boy, the thought did not occur to us that he might construe it as disrespect[that his audience should be engaging in eating at his concert]. At one point, when I tried to eat my portion of the fruit, my physician-langoor grabbed it from my hand. I thought he wanted to eat it and let go. But his motives were not so sordid. Apparently, keenly watching the singing boy, I had been about to put into my mouth a piece of fruit which was blackened with rot. Would my physician-langoor allow it?! Thereafter he minutely scrutinised each and every மாதுளம்முத்து before handing it to me. He knew that I disliked wastage; the blackened arils he consumed himself! Seeing the creature meticulously checking each and every aril before handing it over to me, the boy could perform no more and abruptly burst into tears, saying, 'Rama, Rama, Rama....'. Easwarasamy asked him why he was crying. The reply was: 'When such candidates are also waiting for Salvation, what chance do I stand?' Then he addressed me: "Oh! Rama, today I am fortunate to have your darshan! If today were to be the last day of my life, I would die with a

contented- nay, joyful- heart!" Everyone was dumbfounded to hear such lofty words from such a small boy, perhaps 20 years old. Ayyasamy asked the boy whether he had momentarily seen B.'s form as that of Lord Rama. 'Why momentarily!', answered the boy, 'Even now I see only Rama in Bhagawan. The moment I saw Sahabari in the form of this monkey giving the fruit to Rama in the form of this koupeena-clad ascetic, I recognised the truth!' Then he wept for some time and my mother tried to console him, saying, "Don't cry, don't cry...'. Perumal said: 'Hereafter this monkey's name is Shabari.'. Easwarasamy objected on the ground that this was not a female monkey. I said: "Let him be Shabarigirisan.". Shabarigirisan then gave an approving screech and pressed his head on my feet, astonishing everyone. As evening came the boy showed reluctance to leave. Suddenly, just after dusk, he approached me quietly and asked me permission to renounce his family then and there and throw in his lot with me once and for all. If his family came there in search of him he would hide himself on a stout branch of the nearest tree and the swami must say 'You are mistaken. No such person has ever come here.'. If the swami did not grant him his heart's desire immediately, he would wait there, without food or water, until, a few days hence, the time arrived for the deepam to be lit at the top of the Hill, and then, as it was being lit, he would throw himself into the cauldron as an oblation unto Lord Shiva. The boy did not mean to cause trouble. He would have been my age when I came here, or a few years older. On seeing me something happened to him. Had it been a Caucasian who had come, by this time 25 journals dedicated to mysticism, theosophy, etc. would have carried the account; the title would perhaps be [laughing, reeling off the words in English] 'My experience of Inner Awakening with an arcane Mystic at the Hill of the Holy Beacon in Southern India, which by means of deployment of the efficacious vehicle of the Platonic Cup of Lethe has brought about blessedness of the spirit profoundly ecstatic and பிதற்றல் and உளறல் and அர்த்தமில்லாத் தனம்'. But this poor boy was a foolish simpleton like me. He had no conceptual knowledge with which to apprehend what he was feeling. Unbeknownst to himself, his heart yearned to break free from Mâyâ, but he did not know anything about Avidyâ-mâyâ or Parithakmyâ-châyâ. All he understood was that he wanted to 'escape from the banausic' and 'go to God's Realm'... Such souls are rare to come-by...

G.: How did B. tackle the boy?

B.: What could I do? I merely kept quiet. Already night had fallen. Perumal, Ayyasamy and Easwarasamy persuaded him to eat something and gradually coaxed him into divulging details regarding his person. He was one Vishwanatha Aiyer from Maharajapuram. He was undergoing training in

sangeetham but although proficiency in it came to him without toil, he was becoming disinterested for no apparent reason. Now upon seeing B., he had decided that he wanted to lead the life of a renunciate. Again he fell at these feet and insistently asked that he should be initiated into sannyasa by means of bestowal of hasta-diksha by Bhagawan. Otherwise he would not get up from the floor; nor would he relinquish his grasp over B.'s blessed feet; for he was certain that these feet would surely lead him to the eternal abode of Lord Shiva. It occurred to me at the time to say this: 'Imagine what your mother's face would look like when she learns that she is never going to see you again.' Everyone was stunned by the words, including myself. The boy withdrew as though stung by a scorpion. My mother silently shed tears. The others were rendered speechless. I was not talking much at the time, but now had somehow said something unusually forceful. I got up and walked out of the ashram. I sat near one of the trees outside. The boy followed me but did not dare approach too close. He seemed to be in a great dilemma over something, and was walking to and fro like a cat which has just given birth to its litter. Finally he came over to me and spoke in a beleaguered tone thus: 'If before the rise of the Sun, you exhibit some miraculous feat, I will accept it as the will of Rama that I should return to my mother. Otherwise all my original plans shall remain unchanged.' Then he laid himself down on a slab juxtaposed a few cubits away from the tree I was sitting in front of. My mother ventured outside despite the late hour and tried to persuade him to use some mattresses to lie down upon, since as the night progressed the slab would grow cold. The boy seemed in no condition to listen. My mother pleaded with me to intercede on her behalf, but I sat like a carving of stone. Then she cursed her fate and went inside. The others in the ashram knew I barely slept at night, and were not surprised. In fact, I would make a show of lying down before my mother, and afterwards emerge from the ashram and roam around freely on the Hill. None dared inform her of the fact, although they sometimes asked me whether they could accompany me...

G.: [smilingly] Did B. ever permit them to accompany him on these night-time wanderings, or his trysts with Arunachala?

B.: [laughing] டேய் குசம்புக்காரப்பயலே! ஒருநாள் என்னிடம் நீ பலமாக வாங்கத்தானடா போகிறாய்! பார்த்துக்கொண்டே இரேன்!

G.: [trying hard not to laugh] Oh! I am sorry; I merely-

B.: ஓஹோ! ஆஹா! பிரமாதமான நடிப்பு! But what is wrong in what you have said? A thrilling shock of awe and joy deluges me everytime I am reminded of Arunachala. He is my Mother, my Father, my Sadhguru, my Jehovah Sanctus Unus, my Lord[Yejamaan]...and[smiling down at me] ...yes-

my Führer! He is my All. He is my Iraiyanar. What I am to you He is to me. He is the Sole Sacred Love of my otherwise petty, useless life. I Love him so much that I have lost myself in Him for good. He alone IS. I am not...

A noble expression of such unfathomable immenseness of ecstasy is writ on his face as he utters these words that I forget to breathe. In an instant the thought occurs to me that at the moment of death, I may forget my name and my identity, but I shall never be able to succeed in forgetting this face, this beautiful face, that is bathed in light from the Deep Beyond, this frightening, terrible face, that is contorted with all the fury of divine, mad Love, this insane face, that indicates the existence of a seductive, fatally charming dimension of depth to the mind of man, one it has hitherto been loathe to explore, but upon having beheld this wondrous sight is tempted to plunge head-first into, throwing caution and sanity to the wind as he had done...

B.: [turning to face me with a kind smile] Outwardly, to the Vedantist, the Jnani may say, 'There is only one Self, and that encompasses the Guru, the pupil and all the cosmic manifestation. The appearance of multiplicity is a delusion. Thus there is nothing to love or hate.'. There is no infidelity in his words. Truth which is not Absolute Truth must be adapted to the temperament of the listener- else the words turn out to be infructuous. The Vedantist is told so because so far as he is concerned, what he hears should be logically coherent and consistent. He wants a theory or basis which he may rely upon or out of which he may function. One thus far used to working from inside of intellection or structure exclusively cannot all at once accept 'ex nihilo nihil fit'. Since knowledge, not-Reality or creation is simply impossible, anything may happen, or not-happen, or both at once in the relativistic world of space and time. Truth cannot be spoken because in that state there is none present alongside Him to speak it. So, everything is a gigantic lie- even the words you are hearing now. J.K. has said, 'The description of the thing is not the thing.'. But if you tell this to the man on the Clapham omnibus, he will say, 'But how can B. be capable of uttering a lie?'. When B. is silent he is being Truthful. Everything he utters is only a lie- even these words. [in English]Within this "PHANTASMAGORIC-DYNAMISM CONTINGENT INTERMINABLE FLUX" which "is-NOT", anything may "not-BE". Thus, what you presently hear and see need not tally with ideas you have formulated and pickled away safely inside your brain. Inwardly, yes, the Jnani Loves. His Love is non-dual Love. It is the Self Itself.

G.: So the Self can be attained not only by Jnana-vichara, but by unselfish Love also?

B.: Yes. The Enlightened-one simply Loved his Jnana-guru to the point where he melted into his Love, and then again melted as [that] Love itself into his

Jnana-guru, so that only the Jnana-guru, who is Love beyond the reach of imagination, remains. Know that the Jnana-siddha alone knows the true meaning of Love. If you thou shalt covet this Love, oh! child, give up everything and turn Within. Give yourself up to the Unknown, for he is Unknowable. You cannot reach Him. Surrender quietly to Him and becoming prey unto Him, be DEVoured by Him. This wisdom. This is shanti. This is everything.

G.: The idea 'ex nihilo nihil fit' is used by the Greeks in the sense that the principle of causation must be correct. They say that effect can come only from cause.

B.: I meant it in the opposite sense- the literal sense.

Chadwick: [entering the Hall and bowing] Has he begun to discuss Greek philosophy again, B.?

B.: [smiling] If we don't pamper his mind, who will?

G.: If told, 'Everything is an illusion.', people may find it disturbing...

B.: Thus they are told, 'Find your Self.' or 'Gnothi seauton.'. Actually saying 'Everything is an illusion.' or 'There is no anything.' is more meaningful. Strictly speaking, 'Know thyself.' is absurd. The Self has nothing to know. It cannot be known by anything. People may say, 'B. teaches that the Self is Self-aware, or that the Self knows Itself.' It is not correct. Knowledge implies vritti. There are no vrittis in the Self. It is Purity Itself. The Self does not need to know Itself, because it is Knowledge Itself. It cannot know Itself or anything else, because it is in Motionless Timeless Realisation of Actionless Reality, which is Itself; therefore it is Nescience Itself. Yet the Self transcends Knowledge and Nescience. Nothing can know the Self, because there is nothing besides it; therefore there is no such thing as not-Self. That day on which man awakens into Living Realisation of the fact that knowledge of the not-Self or nescience of the Self is impossible is the day on which he awakens into his true imperishable nature of Immortality. This teaching alone is verily the nectarous ambrosia which rouses man from the sleep of his illusory mortality.

Chadwick was swimming in tears by the time B. had finished enunciating these words.

G.: While the teaching sounds simple, practising the state of effortless-and-volitionless-thoughtlessness does not seem to be so easy...

B.: The biggest tragedy is that people, instead of giving up everything, think that by doing some practise they are going to go somewhere or attain something. If everything is thrown away, only Jnana remains. Supposing you want to make space inside a room- how do you go about it? Hurl away the useless objects taking up space in the room- as simple as that. There is no question of importing space from elsewhere. If all ideas or vrittis[mental

modifications or conceptualisations] are thrown away or given up, only the Self remains. If you are able to realise the truth that what you are giving up is indubitably more obnoxious than the egesta in your intestines and what you gain is indubitably worthier than your life in this ephemeral body, you will be able to give up everything in your mind one, neat, simple stroke; to such a one Jnana comes in a trice; then what awaits is only the Kingdom of Heaven from which there is no return possible.

Chadwick: We are unable to develop the conviction that the world is worthless or mirage-like- that is the problem.

B.: There is no need for any [new] convictions to be cultivated. Give up even your existing convictions.

C.: The conviction that the world is unreal can be used to combat the conviction that the world is real.

B.: [laughing] Oh! Is that so? Have you heard the story of the monkey that kept chasing its own tail?

C.: No.

B.: You would not have, and you cannot. Why? Because the story is yet to conclude. The monkey started at the beginning of Krita-yugam. Still he is going on.

C.: He must be a very energetic monkey. B. must have fed him peanuts with his own hands... [All 3 of us laugh.]

G.: What is the analogy?

B.: That will be the perverse fate of one who endeavours to counteract concepts with concepts. The fetid odour of concept-gas can be eliminated only by diverting the gas away from the mind-room. Instead, some want to release into their own originally odour-free, pristine and blemishless mental environment more and more poisonous, odious concept-gases, thinking, 'Aahaa! This concept-gas will fight [all] the previous one[s]!'. If this should keep on happening, as it does indeed in the case of many unfortunate beings on this Earth, what will the result be? [laughs] Will not everyone suffocate unto death? What has caused the absurd mentality which prompts man to go on releasing one mephitic concept-gas after another? HE HAS FORGOTTEN THE BLISS OF HIS ORIGINAL ODOUR-FREE ENVIRONMENT. He thinks being surrounded with the miasmatic fumes of his own concept-gas is his natural state. When it has all become patently and obviously unmanageable, he goes to a charlatan, who says unto him: 'Sir! Be certain that your anxieties end with today. What I have with me is the most precious concept-gas in the world, released by the Self-Realised Sages of the Himalayas. Here I have captured it in this arekanüß-coloured bottle. You are indeed fortunate that you have met with me today, sir, have not the least doubt about it. Forthwith take

this invaluable gas into your room and release the same. Then you will come back and thank me till your mouth aches.' Delighted, the man rushes back into his noisome room and with tremendous eagerness does as told. What is the result? He ends up burning his nostrils. He thinks his delicate nostrils are to blame and thus harbours no ambition to pick any quarrel with the charlatan. What does he do next? Go to another charlatan. This time the gas has been released by the Sages of the Vidhya Hills. And then another- perhaps this time the Podhigai Hills. And so on and so forth. Finally he decides these foreign gases are only making his room more olid, and, abjectly resigning himself to his miserable fate of having to put up with his putrid mental environment, gives up hunting after newer and newer exotic nocuous concept-gases to release. Then a friend of him chances to meet him and asks why he should look so despondent, whereupon the man confesses unto him his malodorous problem. 'Oh! Is this all?', says the other, 'Don't worry. I know just the thing to set you aright. In the Arunachala Hill there is one koupeenadhâri-swami; he-'. The next moment the vexed man catches hold of his friend by the scruff of the neck and shouts wrathfully into the alarmed man's face, 'I shall have no more of it, I tell you. It is all a grand fraud; I realised the fact just some time prior. ALL GAS STINKS.'. 'Pray, do not enrage yourself, my good man.', says the calm friend, shaking himself free from the first man's irate grip, 'This swami will neither demand any money from you nor will he give you any gas to release.' 'Then what is he a swami for?' 'He never announced himself as a swami. People understand him to be this or that depending upon their individual tempraments of mind. I am sure you will benefit by visiting him...' The man reluctantly makes the trip, telling himself, 'At any rate I don't have anything to fear from possibility of disappointment, since this time I have no expectations. What is probably going to happen is this: he will try to sell me a bottle of his gas, and I shall refuse to buy it and come away peacefully, after telling him, "Thank you very much for the kind offer, sir, but you see, my nostrils have been assaulted with enough gas for this one lifetime.". If he tries to persuade me [into making a purchase] I shall slap him and run away from the place.'. When he puts his difficulty before the koupeenadhâri-swami, he expects to as usual be handed with a bottle of concept-gas and demanded money, but the swami, being no gas-releaser, merely decorously says, 'Open the windows.'. The man is stunned. Can it really be that simple?, he wonders. For a time the man is reluctant to give up the rancid odours to which he has been for a long time now acclimatised. Then he begins to yearn for the odour-free state. Finally he abandons altogether his penchant for concept-gases and throws the windows open as per the advice of the koupeenadhâri-swami of Arunachala Hill. Then



sweet, fresh air, which he has not experienced in [his] living memory, bursts into the room and he dances for ecstatic joy. He remembers all his various exploits with the different charlatans he had encountered and enjoys a hearty laugh at his own expense...

Chadwick is unable to contain himself. He has already collapsed against the wall of the Hall in laughter at hearing B.'s 'gas-analogy'. His paroxysmic convulsions, which are yet to abate, are now observed with a curious eye by early inmates and visitors trickling into the Hall. 'Shoo! Shoo!' says B., smiling and putting a finger to his lips. Chadwick- with difficulty- manages to straighten himself up. He wipes away the tears trickling down his cheeks and tries to look serious.

G.: Concept-gas stands for vrittis, the bottles stand for instructions on sadhana, releasing them in one's room means trying to practise any mental activity as sadhana, and opening the windows is summa iruththal. Am I correct?

C.: Hey, boy! Isn't it obvious?

G.: I still want to make sure. So I am corroborating my understanding with Bhagawan. What does B. say?

B.: Yes. Also, the reluctance to abandon one's age-old mental predilections is exclusively the handiwork of-

But at that moment the brahmins enter the Hall. It is time for the chanting of the vedas. For now the conversation is at an end.

S>M>

A curious, altogether ridiculous personality has arrived at the ashram bedizened in a three-piece suit, a beaver hat, and an ascot-cravat. In this weather, his skin ought to catch fire; I wonder how it still seems to be intact. He carries an ebony cane mounted with a miniature bronze roaring-lion's-head. He is attracting curious glances everywhere. Apparently the sarvadhikari had fallen down in a fit of fright upon first seeing the man and his cane. Thinking he must be polite to his hosts, he is taking off his hat whenever he meets anyone in the ashram, with the result that people here have come to the conclusion that some madman has been let loose upon them. Thinking they are going to be attacked, everyone runs away from him as soon as he is spotted. His head is abnormally large and looks like a gigantic ostrich-egg. The rest of his body is malnourished and thin. He sports a completely bald head and a pencil-moustache. A comical goatee adds the finishing touches to the eccentricity of his appearance. Bizarrely, his protuberant eyes look hilariously tragic- they convey the impression of a man who is unable to take himself seriously, but has always longed to. He entered the Hall and bowed low to B., hat clasped in hand tucked against tummy,

monocle dangling in the air and all. B. seemed to survey him with quiet interest. He introduced himself, with Chadwick acting as his interpreter. His name is Mons. Pierre Géant but he is known as "L'affolé néant" by his friends. He comes all the way from the Republic of Grandliban[formerly part of Turkey; a descendant since the conclusion of the Great War]. He was always intrested in Mysticism and the prospect of experiencing a personal union with God Almighty. In 1896 had arrived a turning point in his life: he met Swami Vivekananda in England. Vivekananda had recommended unto him study of his Guru's life, as well as of Vedanta. Then the Distraught One had engrossed himself in Sri Sri Ramakrishna and Vedanta for years. Sri Ramakrishna's experiences thrilled him to the core and he wanted them replicated in his own case. Just when he was feeling hopelessly dejected and agitated that Ramakrishna was in the flesh no more, Paul Brunton's book was read out to him, quite casually, by an English-speaking friend; and the "Maharishee" therein interested him profusely. So he had come straightaway in a steamer, the next available one. He had questions for Bhagawan.

Q.: Is your teaching the same as Sri Ramakrishna's?

B.: Absolutely.

Q.: If I-am-God is the Truth, does it not amount to arrogance?

B.: It does not mean you- as you incumbently imagine yourself to be- are God. It means, God is the Real "I".

Q.: There is a self which is co-eval with the personality and attaches itself to the body. This is known as the mind. Then there is the Parabrahman mentioned in the Vedanta. This is known as the Impersonal Essence of man. Which is my true self? Can I have more than one self?

B.: The mind is a phantom. In the Impersonal Essence the mind is nowhere to be found.

Q.: How to reach it?

B.: There is nobody there to reach it. Thus there is no reaching it. Subside and let the Light shine forth. Subside as the mind and shine as the Self.

Q.: Practically what is the method for it?

B.: The investigation, 'Who-am-I?'

Q.: But this investigation also is made with mind only.

B.: It commences no doubt in the mind. It ends in no-mind.

B. asked C. to read out Who-am-I? to him in French. This was done and the creature listened carefully, cocking his huge head against a meagre shoulder, so that his left ear should be better exposed to the sounds emanating from Chadwick's lips. Presently he extracted a small ear-trumpet from the folds of his laborious clothes and grooved the ear-piece of the same into his left ear.

The bell of the contraption was positioned to face C.'s direction. B. looked at the surprised faces in the Hall and laughed. Presently-

Q.: What is the authority for saying that the world is a dream? Where is the proof, I mean?

B.: Did you exist in sleep?

Q.: Yes.

B.: Do you exist now?

Q.: Yes.

B.: Then what is the difference[in the 2 states]?

Q.: I am not aware of my body and world [in sleep].

B.: Being aware of the body and world is called dreaming. Remain unaware of them now also. That verily is Jnana or Reality. This alone is the state of true wakefulness.

Q.: But how can we call this world a dream?

B.: Why not?

Q.: There are so many people on the Earth. If it is a dream, whose dream might it be?

B.: Yours.

Q.: But why pick me out specifically? For instance it may even be the dream of the amiable Mons. Chadwick here.

B.: Only you are there.

Q.: What about you, then, sir?

B.: No, I am not here or there. I AM. There is no here or there or anywhere. I AM THAT I AM.

Q.: I comprehend not.

B.: Evidence produced by the sensory organs is merely mental in nature. All knowledge of diversity is fictitious mental information. Your Being is Real. There is nothing else.

Q.: I want proof.

B.: If proof is given to you, how will you be able to believe it?

Q.: I comprehend not.

B.: The proof given to you, if any, is also going to be mere mental information only.

Q.: What can be believed, then, as true?

B.: Whatever is believed is false only. Truth is in Being only.

Q.: How to attain this Being?

B.: By giving up the idea that there could be anything to be attained and all other ideas.

Q.: Practically, how can I go about it?

B.: Investigate 'Who-am-I?'

Q.: Will repetition of sacred syllables not be helpful? Do not the sacred incantations of your religion hold some sort of latent spiritual power? By unlocking this power or energy can we not reach the state of Enlightenment?

B.: You have been appraised of the direct method.

Q.: The others are by-lanes or diversions?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Should food restrictions be followed by a seeker after Enlightenment? Can I eat pork?

B.: Try to thrive on grain and fruit.

Q.: Can the investigation of 'Who-am-I?' be done in your presence only? If I do it at, say, Nantes, would I be able to succeed in Enlightening myself? Is your physical presence needed? In order so as to bring about a successful outcome to the practise, I mean?

B.: It is the mind that matters. If the mind is kept steadily poised in introversion, such questions cannot arise even.

Q.: Is worship of, or even belief in, a personal God permissible?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Does it not thwart one's progress toward Enlightenment?

B.: When you become ripe enough, you will no longer feel that it is you who are praying.

Q.: Is philanthropy a distraction or ought one to try to help the suffering world?

B.: It varies according to the temperament of the individual's psyche.

Q.: I see. What about my case?

B.: When you see suffering, what thought first crosses your mind?

Q.: "I wish God had created a world in which there was no suffering."

B.: Those destined to help think- impetuously- "Let me see what I can do here...".

Q.: Is there any need to officially renounce my affirmed affiliation into the La Rochelle Temple?

B.: No.

Q.: Occasionally I become frightened when my health takes a turn for the worse. How to remain free from such fears?

B.: You already know that for this perishable body made of the elements, destruction is certain one day. Why crib over the inevitable?

Q.: But how do I keep fear at bay?

B.: By not identifying the Self with the body or mind.

Q.: But how to get rid of such erroneous identification?

B.: Only by relentless pursuit of the investigation, 'Who am I?'

Then the Distraught One proudly produced a gift for B.- a small tin box which rattled. B. opened it and smiled.

Q.: [beaming happily] They are roasted seeds belonging to the St. Ignatius fruit- fruits produced by the tree Strychnos ignatius! Very difficult to obtain ever since the War, sir! Specially procured for your consumption, if I may be permitted to say so, sir!

S>M>

An unbalanced looking youngster strongly reeking of intoxicant-influence stepped close to the Sofa and began in belligerent tones:

Q.: I am a rationalist and a materialist. How can I be expected to believe in God, Aathman, etc.?

B.: Did I beg of you that you believe in God or Aathman? Did anybody ask you to come here?

Q.: Why has everybody placed you on a pedestal and why are all worshipping you? I do not see anything great in you. Why are you considered so special? What is the proof that you are established in the Transcendental consciousness?

B.: [laughing] ஔஔஔஔ !

The attendants dragged him away and threw him out; furious, he tried to rush back inside, but was thwarted by them. He shouted through the window, 'You are spoiling the life of these innocent people, who have have abandoned all and everything for your sake and have come away to you... They have laid their lives at your feet but you are rewarding them by forcing them all to become sanniyasis and abandon their families... For this you are surely going to hell... Mark my words... Here you can shield yourself with these goons and escape from me, but there I shall be waiting for you, remember... I am going first...' The attendants finally managed to tear his hands away from the window's craticula-work and marched him off. The master made the wry observation, 'I tried to run away 3 times; on all the 3 occasions God has foiled my plans. What can I do? I did not ask for all this.'

Chadwick: Nobody blames B. for anything. The boy evidently suffers from some psychopathological anomaly...

G.: Oh! no; he was drunk. Maybe he drank some பனைக்கள் before coming here...

B.: What do you suppose is wrong with பனைக்கள் ?

G.: Is it not arrack a hootch?

B.: பனைக்கள் is not arrack. To obtain arrack from பனைக்கள் you must leave the same to ferment overnight and then carry out distillation ere it turns sour. பனைக்கள் is the name given to the drink made from unfermented பதநீர் , crushed ginger paste and powdered cardamom seeds. Often tiny quantities of gypsum salt are added to the பதநீர் to ensure it does not become fermented... பனைக்கள் is a delicious drink. It

is reported to have many health benefits. Nayana once told me that by adding a small amount of crushed nux-vomica seeds it can be used as a medicine for ulcer and other gastroenterological complications. When Subbiah Mudaliar of Karaikkal first came to see me he brought me the drink in a வெங்கலச்சொம்பு . I have no idea where he procured it or how he managed to bring it there without spilling it. Since it was a very hot day, the drink had somewhat soured, but if I did not drink it he would become disappointed with the swami; so I gulped it down. After prostrating to me he said, 'Swami, I feel peace of mind in your presence.' I thought of telling him, 'Yes, but next time you may obtain it free of cost...' but kept quiet. [laughs]

Q.: He has now settled in Tiruvannamalai itself with his mother and wife; is that not so?

B.: For a time he stayed with them in a rented house near the temple, feeding sadhus he found there. Then he became disgusted with everything and took sannyasam at the திருப்பனந்தாளாதீனம். Occasionally he will come here, prostrate to me and go away. He is a pious soul. Once he told me that he saw a leper-sadhu near the Ammani Ammal gopuram who was weak and decrepit. People tended to avoid him because of the foul smell coming off his body. Also, due to age, he had lost grip over his bowel-movements and would pass stool-motions every now and then without any control. So, nobody came near him. As he was staring at him in pity, Seshadri-swamigal, who was passing by, seems to have uttered the remark, ' இவரை கவனித்துக்கொண்டு ஆவது உனது கர்மாவை போக்கிக்கொள். இது உனக்கு வாய்த்திருக்கும் ஓரறியவாய்ப்பு. இதையும் நமுவவிட்டாயேயானால் கடைசியில் உனக்கும் இதே கதி தான் நேரிட வேண்டி வரும்து. '. The terrified Mudaliar fell at his feet and asked to be saved from any such terrible plight. Then Seshadri-swamigal has told him, 'Take him to your house and attend to him as though he were your newborn first son.'. The Mudaliar tried to comply but the two women in the house were not pleased with the idea. He came up the Hill to ask me what should be done. It did not occur to me to say anything and so I kept quiet. Palanisamy suggested that there was an dilapidated mantapam opposite the simha-theertham and this might be used to nurse the sadhu. The Mudaliar asked me if the suggestion might be implemented and I agreed. Then the Mudaliar thanked us and went away. He took care of the leper-sadhu day and night for 108 days, keeping his body clean, feeding him, changing his clothes, etc.. On the morning of the 109th day, the sadhu, who had hitherto been silent, asked the astonished Mudaliar whether he wanted lukeega-punyam or aanmiga-punyam for having taken care of him for so long. The Mudaliar replied that having taken care of him was [in itself] the greatest punyam that had fructified

in his life uptill that point in time. The sadhu then laughed and expired moments later. The Mudaliar took the assistance of a few men and buried him somewhere opposite the Yama-theertham. The next day he received news that as a result of negligence on the part of those he had placed incharge of his land-holdings in Karaikkal, the crop had become excessively stagnated in water and thus unfit for further cultivation. He felt betrayed and revulsion toward the worldly life. Quietly he decided then and there to become a thambiran-swami. Some time later he came to me when he could find me alone and told me what he was going to do. I agreed. He said, 'Hereafter B. has the responsibility to safeguard my mother as his mother and Kamakshi as his sister; I can become a sannyasi only if he agrees to become a grihastha for my sake in this manner!'. I laughed and kept quiet. But he wanted an assurance from me that they would not suffer on account of his departure. He felt that if somehow he could push his family members into my charge, thereafter he would be free to pursue the care-free life of a wandering sannyasi. He tried to extract an affirmation from me, but I would not say anything. Then he became desperate. He rushed out, and in a few minutes brought some yerukkai leaves, held their stalks together and squeezed to cause the sap to gush out. Before anything could be done he pressed the white extravasation against [the iris of] his right eye[-ball]. He howled and flailed in pain whilst I washed his eye with water. Then he said, 'Will you agree or shall I desiccate the other eye also? Certainly the yerukkai shrub has many more leaves.' I responded with the words, 'Kannappa, nirkka!'. He was overjoyed and said, 'B. agrees to take charge of them?', whereupon I responded saying, 'Sari, sari, poe.'. Then he caught hold of my feet, wept incessantly and said he was sorry to have put me to the inconvenience, but had seen no way out save this. 'Since B. has said Sari twice, I am sure both my mother and wife are going to attain Mukthi...' sobbed he. Then he prostrated repeatedly and left to board the train to Kumbakonam. Even today pattima or Kamakshi daily bring something here [for me to eat].

Q.: It is only some பழையது.

B.: Keep quiet. What do you know about பழையது? When I came here it was the first bikshai I obtained. I ate it with great relish. There is nothing to compare with பழையது in all the 14 worlds. I have no appetite for all the tasty dishes prepared in the ashram kitchen now. But the thought of that first bikshai of pungent பழையது I received makes my tongue water even now. There was no pickle [available with which to render the preparation more palatable]; only some salt had been sprinkled, and some meagre streaks of ஆவக்காயெண்ணெய் were drifting about on top. Yet it thrilled me... பழையது is good for health.

Q.: It is said to induce sopor, which is detrimental to sadhana.

B.: அப்படி யாரும் சொல்லி இங்கு கேட்டதில்லை. இது தங்களது சொந்த சரக்கு போல் தெரிகின்றதே...

Q.: Did B. tell Mudaliar-pattima and her daughter-in-law about the extent to which the man has troubled himself to secure their welfare in B.'s hands? Will they not feel happy to know?

B.: Keep quiet. Should all minds pursue only your angle of thinking?

Q.: If I also desiccate my eye with poisonous plant-sap, will B. give me Mukthi?

B.: [laughs] Why should we resort to all these toilsome gimmicks? B. is always ready to give Mukthi to one and all. How many are willing to take it?

Q.: I am willing, here and now.

B.: Then surrender unconditionally to Me.

Q.: Done. Now give me Mukthi.

B.: What did you say?

Q.: I have surrendered unconditionally to Bhagawan. Now he must give me Mukthi.

B.: If you have really surrendered everything to me, including your "I", then who is raising this demand or putting forth any other question?

S>M>

Q.: The Mudaliar took care of the leper dutifully. He seems to have been rewarded with calamity only.

B.: We want to judge everything with the intellect. Who are we to judge? Should a candle be used as a yardstick for measuring the amount of light emitted by the Sun?

Q.: So, if God introduces calamity in my life, it is for my ultimate good only?

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: Is undergoing all sorts of hardship in life really sadhana, then?

B.: If the suffering is undergone without pointlessly burdening oneself with the attitude 'I am suffering.', yes.

S>M>

Q.: In the experience of the Sahaja-stithi, does the Jnani lose God also?

B.: Ishwara is the last unreal form to go.

Q.: Is God worth losing?

B.: Give up the imaginary god and be absorbed by the Real One.

S>M>

Q.: B. mentioned a herbal concoction for curing gastroenterological maladies. This is the age of science. Can we still believe roots and shoots will cure us? Is it all not mere superstition?



B.: We believe we know the truth; what is the actual position? We think we know something[;] that [something] we believe to be the truth. The other man thinks likewise.

Q.: Unbiased scientific experiments have- time and again- confirmed that these so-called alternative systems of medicine are only good as 'placebo's. Allowing these ridiculous, antediluvian practises of superstition to continue amounts to misleading the public. B. should lend his voice against them.

B.: Who is to pass judgement on whom, and with what? Can the ruler used to measure cloth be used to weigh flour? Can the scale used to weigh flour be used to measure the temperature of a body? There are no common objective yardsticks which can be used across everything. Everything is in the hands of the mind. Using the mind you seemingly live in space and time as a finite mortal with name, form and [objective] knowledge clouding your vision as upadhis. By keeping that same mind incessantly in a state of alert stillness, you become- or rather discover yourself to be- the Uncaused Absolute. So, it is upto you whether-

Q.: [suddenly getting up and rushing out of the Hall, screaming at the top of his lungs] அய்யய்யோ ! ரமணர் அறுக்காரமித்து விட்டார் !  
என்னை காப்பாத்துங்கள் ! என்னை காப்பாத்துங்கள் !  
ஐயோ ! யாராவது என்னை காப்பாத்துங்களேன் !

For a moment everyone in the Hall including B. is stunned into speechless silence. Then just when everyone begins to wear a severe expression on their faces, a sweet sound is heard in the Hall: Sri Bhagawan's laugh! He laughed and laughed and laughed- for a full quarter of an hour! Tears streamed down his cheeks, but he seemed unable to stop. His delicate frame almost toppled off the Sofa. Everyone was smiling at the beautiful sight. Someone remarked, 'Sri Bhagawan's laughter is just like Lord Krishna's.'. Then he said, 'I feel for B.'s sorry plight...'

B.: Yes. If a mouni starts speaking, this is what will happen. What- Then the master froze, looking at the boy. An expression of the purest incredulous wonder bloomed on that lovely face. Now this boy also promptly scarpered. The master's lips and cheeks slowly, quiveringly, began to expand outward in a steadily-widening smile. His eye-brows began to steadily rise and his eyes grow wider. His body was quaking and wobbling. It was like watching a cauldron of milk about to boil, or the tip of a lit fuse of a stick of explosive about to reach the body thereof- Anytime now- And there she goooes! Presently everyone could almost feel the Hall shaking. The master's head was thrown back and he was thumping his fist into the Sofa, the entirety of his frame cavorting to and fro. The sarvadhikari peeped in anxiously, but the sight of his disquieted face only provoked the master further. Even the Distraught

One, who had been all along enjoying an unobtrusive, cosy siesta at the back of the Hall, stared in some surprise with his bulbous eyes at the spectacle.

When B. finally subsided-

B.: Gajapathi, if Narasimha Swami were here with us now he would include such incidents in my biography... Do you not think readers would be greatly benefitted?!

G.: What of it? We can always write to him and ask him to come here. Is he going to mind adding a new chapter to the book? Or is he going to ignore B.'s command to come?

B.: Pogattum vidu...

Q.: Who were those boys?

G.: We would occasionally play this trick in college. With a sincerely straight face, we would ask someone to talk about or explain something; earnestly the other person would also reel off his rigmarole; just when we sensed he was really making an effort to comprehensibly put forth his most seminal point and to ensure he was being understood thereupon, we would pull his leg like this...

Shylock: It seems like a rude thing to do, if my opinion be solicited.

I thought of retorting, 'Pray, sir, is this atrocity greater than everything you do in The Merchant of Venice?', but he would probably respond saying, 'Why are you asking me instead of Shakespeare, Oh! gentle gentile?'; and so, I kept quiet.

Shylock: The other boy was also planning the same thing, wasn't he?

B.: Yes, I nearly swallowed the second bait also, but managed to catch myself just in the nick of time. They were in it together, smart chaps!

G.: They seem to speak English well. They must be college-going students from somewhere...

S.: What is the message B. expects us to learn from this incident- if any?

B.: Laugh at yourself often. You will be surprised at the peace it brings.

Q.: [to the Hall] Yes, look, those boys must have come from Madras. I think it is they who have left behind this Anandha Vigadan...

B. is handed the Anandha Vigadan; he begins to peruse the same when somebody wants to ask a question:

Q.: The Jnani is said to have tejomaya roopam. I see B.'s body as a bhootha shareeram only. I cannot see his phosphorescence. Why? What offence have I committed?

B.: If you want to see such things, you could easily content yourself with shining ultraviolet light on some zinc sulfide and be done with it. But the fact is, Aathman is not a physical light that can be seen. It is the non-dual experience of Being.

Q.: Can I obtain this experience by thinking, 'I am Aathman.'?

B.: Which is your favourite sweet?

Q.: Jilebi.

B.: Which do you prefer- thinking about eating jilebi or eating jilebi?

Q.: The latter. Why, have they prepared it in the ashram kitchen today?! Oh! I must have stared into the face of a fox today morning!

B.: [laughing] No, no. The example was given to you to make you understand that Aathman is not something to be thought about or pondered over by the intellect. It is meant to be experienced first-hand.

Q.: They say that B.'s proximity gives rise to this experience. But I do not feel anything.

B.: Aathman is always felt. Only you think to the contrary. Otherwise do you deny the fact that you exist now? If you deny it then who is doing the denial?

Q.: Aathman is unknown to me. It is something exotic and esoteric.

B.: Oh! no. It is the natural state. It is here and now. Only we have grown used to ignoring it and attending to other things.

S>M>

Q.: War, famine, disease and what not ravage and terrorise people all the time in this world. B. is saying that it is all a dream. Is it not an affront unto those who are undergoing such suffering?

B.: When a sufferer remains suffering is inevitable. Get rid of the suffering ego and there will be no suffering. It is to persuade you into giving up the false ego that suffering has been introduced in this world.

Q.: Why create an ego and then destroy it? How did the ego arise?

B.: The answer is to find out whose ego it is.

Q.: What is the Guru's role in bringing about Enlightenment?

B.: To destroy everything you think you know about yourself and the world. 'SVAAHAA' is the role of the Guru. He does not create the Aathman for you. He merely removes the non-existent obstacles to it.

Q.: How can something that is non-existent be removed? What is B. talking about?

B.: Not-Self discovers itself to be non-existent and disappears, sundering the curtain of Illusion once and for all. This is brought about by Guru's Grace.

S>M>

Q.: What happens to the Jnani after his body dies?

B.: Whatever is happening now.

Q.: What is happening now?

B.: Nothing.

Q.: God is said to be Antharyâminaha. If that were the case we should find it easy to know him.

B.: If you give up all other mental pursuits, you will be able to Realise Him easily.

Q.: If everything is pre-destined what is the point in making effort?

B.: We do not know what our destiny is going to be.

Q.: I have heard that according to B.'s teaching there is no re-incarnation. So, if, after putting in a lifetime's worth of effort, I discover that I am not destined to Realise- what then?

B. smiled at the man, turned to Chadwick and said, 'When you first came to me last year, you showed me a book your father had presented to you when you were yet a boy: do you remember it?'

C.: Oh! yes. Father and son by Edmund Gosse. I showed B. the inspiring quotes I had jotted down upon the end-papers. I recollect that they were the words of Mr. Roosevelt, the United-states president...

B.: May I ask that you now read out those words [for the Hall]?

C.: Oh! surely. Please permit that I fetch the book.

Presently-

It is hard to fail, but it is worse to never have tried to succeed. In this life we get nothing save by effort.

We cannot sit huddled within our own borders and avow ourselves merely an assemblage of well-to-do hucksters who care nothing for what happens beyond.

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly...

Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat.

Q.: So, I am to go on trying, without paying a single thought to whether or not there is going to be any worthwhile result?

B.: Exactly.

S>M>

Q.: How to escape from karma?

B.: You are already free from karma. Only the body is affected by it. Do not identify yourself with the body and do not imagine it to be your body. Then there is no karma.

Q.: But it is my body!

B.: You are bodiless.

Q.: See this body. Is it not there?

B.: The body did not announce its presence[existence] to you. Did it? It is you who identify yourself with it and get into trouble.

Q.: How to escape from the bodily awareness?

B.: Only by investigating, 'Who am I?'

S>M>

Chadwick: I hear from G. that whilst residing on the superstructure built for him on the Hill, B. would never sleep at nights. Can a Jnani dispense with sleep altogether, then? Will not his health suffer- from the bodily perspective, I mean?

B.: Those who are bound by any bodily perspective might need to bother about the question.

The Distraught One["L'affolé néant"]: Is there no need for Jnanis to sleep, then?

B.: He sleeps without waking or is in waking without sleeping. The states of the body do not affect him. If there is a mind you need sleep. Sleeping is for one for whom there is waking and who thinks 'I have woken from sleep.'. You may say that the Jnani is always sleeping or always waking. It is all the same.

D.O.: His actual state is called turiya; is that not so?

B.: No, no. It is the Sahaja-stithi. Turiya is the name given to the manonischalam state. Jnana is the Beyond itself. There is no reaching it. It cannot be experienced in a dualistic state. 'Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.' If one is in Jnana it means that the mind has already been annihilated. Your localised sense of subjective consciousness is not the Self. It is a mere reflection of the Self. What the man on the Clapham omnibus experiences is only a reflected ray from that dimensionless and fathomless Self-effulgent Sun. It is the difference between staring at the image of the Sun reflected on a cauldron filled with water and being the Sun himself.

D.O.: But turiya is said to be the final state.

B.: Subsidence of the ego is as far as the ego can go. This state of non-ego is the final state for the ego. Jnana is only in manonasham. You need not worry about such things. If the ego is lost everything ends there; thereafter you have nothing to do and no role to play in anything; everything is automatically taken

care of by the Beyond. All we need to do is to lose the ego. The rest is automatic.

D.O.: 'Who am I?' is the way to lose the ego. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

C.: I wonder what B. would have been doing on his night-time wanderings on Arunachala...

G.: Or rather, with Arunachala!

B.: I remember particularly Perumal wanted to know this- those days he would be very fond of me, and tackle me on all sorts of matters, straight to my face, if he happened to be dissatisfied with something... Now he is causing the sarvadhikari to pass bowel-motions 8 times a day, poor fellow... [All 3 of us laugh. The D.O. does not understand anything but manages to produce a polite smile.] Perumal, Easwarasamy, Ayyasamy and others- all wanted to accompany me in my night-time wanderings of the Hill. They expressed their wish several times.

C.: And what did B. say?

B.: [no response]

C.: He just kept quiet?

B.: Yes.

G.: But what was B. doing in the night? Was it pradikshina of the Hill?

B.: Not pradikshina. I would be in the bosom of the Hill only. I particularly used to enjoy going on amnavasyas... Now everything is finished. The swami must be at their complete beck and call. If "Bhagawan" is absent from this accursed Sofa for 2 minutes, the DSP of North Arcot will be alerted. If the absence is for 5 minutes, a telegram will be sent to the CM of Madras. What! It has gone beyond 10 minutes! How abominable! Make an urgent telephone-call to Linlithgow himself! And some people go away from here envying me! Fancy! [laughs]

G.: How did B. find his way about during amnavasya?

B.: When the "I" has gone, the Eye opens. Then there is no possibility of any other sight.

G.: May we obtain a reply from B. for the query of what he used to do on the Hill at night?

B.: [no response]

P>S>

Let the good reader not infuriate himself. I took the liberty to talk to B. as though I was his equal not out of disrespect or contempt, but Love. Really I could not help feeling like his son when in his presence. My manner was thus unavoidable, and I could not control the same. I may be asked how I dared to take such liberties with the great saint; should my manner not have been

more respectfully reserved? Sir, if I were doing something morally inappropriate the master himself would have alerted me to the fact. People who erred in his presence invariably had their mistakes pointed out to them. And why would I hesitate to be cordial with him? Who have I but he?

15th August, 1936

Q.: How did B. finally persuade that boy, Vishwanatha Aiyer, to return home?

B.: I did not. On that night when he was sleeping outside the ashram, I was sitting some distance away from the boy when I noticed that Shabarigirisan was sitting blissfully alone on the roof of the ashram, staring at the full moon in great contentment. When I looked at him, the langoor leaped down, pressed some ginger shoots into my hands and took them back; then he climbed back and was for sometime ingesting them. Then he did something nobody will believe. He came near us, poised himself on the floor in the Bakāsanam, and softly began whistling[or screeching], perfectly, the tune corresponding to 'Endaro Mahanubhavulu...'. The boy sat bolt upright. When he saw what was happening, he burst into tears and caught hold of my feet. 'Oh! Rama, you have saved me from the great sin of unfairly deserting my delicate mother. If I had done so hell would surely have been my miserable lot. But Oh! compassionate Rama, by showing me this miracle through Lord Hanuman, you have saved me from such a perverse fate! Rama! I will ever remain a bond-slave to your blessed feet! Please bless me! I shall never think of running away again! Oh! Rama, I surrender myself at your holy feet! Please bless me!' Shabarigirisan went away with a satisfied grimace. The next morning the boy returned to town as soon as the sun peeped into the sky, without even tarrying to take any food.

G.: How did B. get the simian to sing?

B.: I have got nothing to do with it. There is some Mysterious Power in this place which defies all possibility of understanding. Each one gets what he deserves here. The mature ones obtain Emancipation.

G.: But then how did he suddenly render the tune? Did he possess any yogic-siddhis?

B.: He was really an extraordinary fellow in countless ways. Other monkeys would eat the lice on their bodies, but Shabarigirisan would gingerly pick them up and set them on a tree-branch. He was certainly spiritually inclined; there cannot be any doubt about it...

G.: When did B. see the singer-boy again?

B.: Never. They say he has become a regular singer now. But yesterday-where is that Anandha Vigadan?

The master rose from his perch and began to rummage at the contents of the book-case. At length he said, 'Well, somebody seems to have taken it away.' and returned to his couch.

G.: Why, did it contain anything on B.? Shall I go to down and buy a copy for the ashram?

B.: Oh! no. This was an old issue. I was casually skimming through it last night. In one article the humorist Kalki has made fun of a cinematographic-picture released last year called 'Bhakta Nandanar'...

G.: Nandanar is the saint Tirunalaipovar, is that not so?

B.: Yes. But this picture is not based on the traditional account in the Periyapuram. Evidently, they have alerted themselves to the likelihood of facing a social backlash if one belonging to the panchamabandham were to be depicted as entering a fire and emerging therefrom as a brahmin. So, they have ignored the account in the Periyapuram and wisely opted to base the script on the கதாகாலட்சேபம் Nandanar Saritthiram written by Bharati, which presents an egalitarian version of the story... Otherwise it would be classed as incendiary material and someone might try to stall the exhibition of the film, by means of approaching the judiciary or by 'direct confrontational' means... [laughs]

G.: Yes, I have heard that Subrahmanya Bharati was a crusader against untouchability...

B.: [laughs] If you go outside and tell someone that Nandanar Saritthiram was written by Subrahmanya Bharati, you will be laughed at at! Thank goodness you are showing your all gimmicks only to me, and are reserved with others...!

G.: Oh! B. must pardon me...

B.: The கதாகாலட்சேபம் seems to introduce an additional character to Nandanar's story, that of a brahmin in whose fields Nandanar was supposedly employed. சேக்கிழார் does not mention it. In the picture, it seems, this character was played by Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Aiyer. It appears to be the same person whom Shabarigirisan rescued from sannayasa. Kalki pokes fun at his performance in the article...

G.: He has found the time to perform for cinematographic-pictures. Why not come to the ashram to pay a B. a visit?

B.: [sternly] Keep quiet. இதுதான் பிடிக்கிறதில்லை. உனக்கு ரொம்ப எல்லாம் தெரியுமோ? You have been told time and again not to judge [by external appearances]. This is how men lose their peace of mind.

G.: Oh! Sorry, very sorry...

B.: Parava illai. In future do not formulate judgements upon others. We have no right to judge anyone. There is a Supreme Judge for all. Leave the judging to him.



G.: Yes... I comply, certainly. Are there any more interesting incidents concerning Shabarigirisan?

B.: Oh! yes, many. We could go on talking throughout the year...

G.: B. has mentioned other monkeys like nondi-payyan that were petted by him whilst he was staying on the Hill-ashram. Did Shabari condescend to mingle with them?

B.: I told you, he was aloof. Other monkeys, whether common ones or langoors, used to avoid him. They seemed to hold him in awe or reverence. Nayana used to say that in many places in the scriptures, it has been mentioned that an advanced tapasvin can be identified by the brilliant tejas on his face. The Bible also mentions it: '...Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.' '...behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.'

G.: Yes, everyone sees it in Bhagawan...

B.: [laughs] Is B. a tapasvin? For whose Deliverance shall B. do tapas, since he sees only the bliss of Liberation everywhere?

G.: So, according to B., there are no ajnanis anywhere?

B.: The Jnani sees no one as ajnani. All are only Jnanis in his sight. Why? Because the Self is pure Jnana and nothing else. The Jnani cannot know anything apart from the Self.

G.: But the langoor has a black face. Can it shine?

B.: [laughing] Charcoal is black. Does it not glow red when incandescent? Tejas is not physical. It is the feeling of peace; it is freedom from thought-waves, that the man on the Clapham omnibus finds himself continually harangued by.

G.: It must be on account of B.'s positive influence that the langoor developed such an exalted spiritual status... Did B. teach him Aathma-vidya?

B.: He was no stranger to it himself. Once he came there whilst பிள்ளைவாள் had come to visit me. Perumal was also sitting close-by. பிள்ளைவாள் thought to ask me, 'Can the belief that there is no such thing as "I" be allowed to flourish within the mind or does that also occlude Realisation?'. I said, 'If the discovery that there is no such thing as "I" is to be made, the mind must be made nude. So, all vrittis, including the belief you have mentioned, must be relinquished.'. Apparently on hearing this Shabarigirisan made his spine erect, closed his eyes and lapsed into kevala kumbhaka for some time. Perumal remarked, 'See, he has gone into samadhi! This monkey is the Ramana Maharshi amongst monkeys!' and we all laughed. Those days we would have good fun everyday. There was no ashram, sofa, etc.. Now all this property has come in and I am trapped...! [laughs]

S>M>

Q.: The secret plans hatched by the International Jewish community to bring about domination of the entire world in the hands of the Jew, have been laid bare to the English-speaking world, 2 years ago, in the publication titled, 'The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, translated by Victor E. Marsden.'. Speaking with reference to this notorious document, Mr. Henry Ford in 1921 said: 'The only statement I care to make about the Protocols is that they fit in with what is going on. They are 16 years old, and have fitted the world situation up to this time. THEY FIT IT NOW.'. It is now 15 years since Mr. Ford made this observation, and I am terrified to find that the exact same words apply today also, if one merely substituted the number 31 in place of the number 16. It seems that there is no way to possibly keep the Jewish menace under check. Of course Germany has wisely woken up to the threat and is taking active steps to address the grievous danger, but when will the rest of the world wake up? Surely we must do something. Else these demons will gobble up the whole world. More than a 100 years ago, Voltaire has had the admirably uncanny wisdom to observe thus: '...we find in the Jew only an ignorant and barbarous people, who have long united the most sordid avarice with the most detestable superstition and the most invincible hatred for every people by whom they are so kindly tolerated and so affectionately enriched.' It is even said that they are planning to unleash another Great War upon the world, deadlier and bloodier than the last one. And who can forget who it was who clamoured for the Crucifixion of our Lord? All considered, sir, what is your plan to rescue the world from the tyrannical grip of Judeo-Bolshevism? I thought to myself, 'Poor chap! There is one such demon in this very ashram, one whose many acrimonies invited the obloquy and opprobrium of Shakespeare himself... Their infiltration has indeed reached this far... Like a fool, without knowing this you belatedly talk of taking measures against them...'

B.: [after quietly listening to the homily] Were it not for our Lord's Crucifixion, would your salvation through His blood be possible today?

The poor Caucasian was dumbfounded!

Just at that moment the Shylock energetically entered the Hall and bowed to the master. B. smiled at him graciously, and he unsuspectingly smiled back, brightly flashing his teeth, saying, 'Oh! Has B. already heard about it? Yes, the poor fellow is going behind their backs, begging them to return it...'

Then that Elder of Zion turned to me and said: 'Boy, did you hear? The monkeys have marauded the Frenchman's hat...'

G.: They have, sir, have they, now?

Callously inconsiderate of them how!

Alas by reflection upon the brutality

Of their behaviour considered in totality  
And of their deeds knavish, execrable  
Am I left knackered and in pain insufferable!

S.: Oh! Good skill. Who inspires you?

G.: [unthinkingly] The Merchant of Venice...

S.: What?

G.: I meant Shakespeare, sir...

S.: I see... But he is a playwright, not a poet... But I also have read The Merchant of Venice...

G.: Indeed, sir?

S.: Oh, yes. Found Shylock's characterisation particularly terrifying...

G.: I readily agree, sir...

S.: [extending his hand] We seem to have a lot of common interests, then...

G.: [not taking it] Oh! I wouldn't know about that, sir... I am the paltriest exiguousness there can be, sir... I do candidly admit that, for me, world domination and subjugation has never exactly been a top priority...

S.: [blinking] I din't catch that last bit, sorry?

G.: Oh! never mind, sir...

B. is quietly chortling.

S>M>

Q.: What is B. opinion on Illusion?

B.: Illusion is illusory.

Q.: How did illusion arise?

B.: Whose illusion?

Q.: Then why does ignorance exist?

B.: Whose ignorance?

S>M>

Q.: Dostoyevsky said: 'Pain and suffering are always inevitable for a large intelligence and a deep heart. The really great men must, I think, have great sadness on earth.' Does B. agree?

B.: There is some wisdom in the words. When you have seen enough to bring you round to the truth that everything you set your heart after must perish one day, you finally realise the arrant futility of the transient bodily existence. This intellectual awakening is accompanied by pain. It is either deeply thinking souls or deeply devoted souls who thus see the futility of samsara and search intensely for a way to give it all up. Since they do not wilfully stay on earth[,as do those who remain here for the purpose of basking in the ephemeral bounties and fugacious pleasures which alone she is capable of offering], but stay only to find a means to never to have to return to it, they stay here without feeling any attraction toward mundane sources of happiness. Such

souls are burning with great vairagyam to shatter the bonds of samsara. So, the great struggle is inevitable. The mind will not go down without a fight.

Don't forget that Dostoyevsky has also said in the same book: 'The darker the night, the brighter the stars; the deeper the grief, the closer is God!'

G.: My favourite quote from him is: '...the more I love mankind as a whole, the less I love man in particular.'

S>M>

Q.: Some say Dostoyevsky had nothing but contempt for humanity and its unprepossessing sufferings. Is it so?

B.: Ask him.

Q.: Does God exist?

B.: Ask him.

Q.: Do you exist?

B.: No. Only you exist.

S>M>

Q.: Everything is doubtless going on according to God's design. Is that not so?

B.: Yes.

Q.: It is not actually possible for anyone to act in a way that is at non-conformity with God's predestination for the world. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then what is the difference between the way Hitler rules over Germany and God rules over the world? Both seem to be crazy tyrants, who want to permit utterly no scope to prevail for man to be free.

B.: Atleast the former has made it plainly clear that his regime would be a dictatorship. One may say that God is worse. His dictatorship is insidious and subtle. Not all are permitted by Him to awaken to the truth that they are under His dictatorship. To many He does not reveal that they are under His dictatorship; nor does He allow them to make the discovery; they go on thinking that they are an individual person who has free-will, choices to make, options to evaluate, etc., etc.. Fortunate is the man who is allowed to make the discovery, or unto whom it is revealed, that he is living under God's dictatorship and that nothing can defy the same. He merges in the Supreme Dictator and thus becomes free from all dictatorship, earthly or otherwise. Those who want 'freedom', on the other hand, can remain under the bondage of His total dictatorship, although the fact remains unbeknownst to them and they imagine themselves to be 'free'.

Q.: God seems to be cruel and evil, then, if He should be a dictator...

B.: But He is giving you the option to merge in Him. If you do not utilise the same, can the fault be His? He is blemishless and pure. "Quoniam suavis est

Dominus." It is you who put up a pretence of being an entity divorced from Him. Where should the fault lie?

Q.: So if I retain my individuality, being subject to His dictatorship is altogether unavoidable and inevitable?

B.: Exactly. So, the only way to become free is to lose your freedom and become His slave.

Q.: I may offer my individuality as a sacrifice to Him and thus transcend all dictatorship. Otherwise I may content myself with being dictated by Him quite absolutely. Only these 2 choices exist. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: So, from a higher standpoint, free-will is just a joke?

B.: Yes.

Q.: So, then, really- we are all living in Hitler's Germany!

B.: [laughs] Yes. Heil Stille Des Herzens!

Q.: What is this new phrase? Is it the Ramanagruß?!

B.: [smiling] Do you like it?

Q.: Yes. May I use it?

B.: Should you wish so, certainly!

P>S>

During the Master's lifetime, the practise existed in the ashram for devotees to send in letters asking for all manners and varieties of things. Most begged for the Maharshi's blessings in their endeavours, and specifically would mention that the sheet carrying the reply be sanctified by his hallowed touch. Many wrote wanting their prayers or wishes to be fulfilled. Others solicited clarification on doctrinal points. Yet other epistles carried doubts raised regarding practise. Sri Bhagawan was not in the habit of answering letters. An intelligent brahmin attached to the ashram was in the habit of attending to the last 2 varieties of correspondence. Invariably almost letters written in European tongues would fall into his hands to be tackled appropriately. He would write and read out his replies to the Master. When I was maintaining these diaries, I would them down after a natural, syndicated fashion; thus in this book, you behold amalgamated and mingled the content of these letters together with questions asked directly in the Hall. This need not alarm my gentle reader. While it is true that the replies were drafted by another, the master listened to them with great keenness, and if he wanted any modifications, deletions or additions to be made, he indicated so at once. He did not mind delivering a rap on the knuckles to the man should B. in the slightest feel that there was any correction or other alteration required to be made. So, in substance, the answers given in the letters are also his words. Thus at the time of writing these diaries it never occurred to me to create a

split on the basis of what would merely be a theoretical consideration exclusively. Now, whilst compiling this work, it occurs to me suddenly that certain readers might be anxious for such a bifurcation to be available from the text. I have neither the resource nor the resourcefulness to re-type this manuscript ab-initio; thus I have resorted to the following strategy: as to that part of this manuscript which falls on or before this date [of the diary-entry], a separate sheet has been attached specifying the identification-numbers of those pages and paragraphs which embody content that- to the best of my memory- represents the master's 'indirect words', if one may so put it; and as to that part thereof which falls after, I am using an alternate type-basket of the font-variety Clarendon to mark out, as facilitated to be determined by an optimal capability of the faculty of my memory, distinctly such 'indirect words', whereas the rest of the matter is typed out as usual in the font-variety Frakturschrift. Generally, a sizeable portion of B.'s long, lecture-like pronouncements herein are from the brahmin who was at the time incharge of the 'doctrinal and foreign correspondence departments' of the ashram. In truth, I am taking so much trouble to make this bifurcation discernable, only to satisfy a chance whim of any Ramana-devotee who might happen to have to be able to tell. Actually it is all thoroughly unnecessary, as far as my opinion goes; not a single letter could leave the ashram without the master's express imprimatur; and the master was not the sort to show neglect in any matter. The brahmin was quite an educated fellow and had a brilliant insight into the Maharshi's teachings, and frequently acted as his interpreter unto Caucasian visitors. Above all, he seems to have been personally selected by the master himself for the correspondence-management task in the doing of which he engaged himself; that ought to say the final word upon the matter.

BLUTKEIM's Note: What you are reading is the content of text files- plain text files processed in Wordstar. There is no font information available with me. No trace was found of the separate identification sheet mentioned above.

16th August, 1936

D.O.: The monkeys have bitten my hat, defeacated inside it, and thrown it in the steps of the water-tank yonder... [eyes filled with tears] I purchased it in England- my maiden trip to England- for a handsomely pricey sum. I have not harmed the monkeys. Why have they done this to me? Why, oh! why should God be so cruel to me? Oh! the hat had a lustrous silk-lining; what a perverse fate the precious little thing has met at the hands of these audacious devils! B. merely laughed.

The poor wretch indeed looked so thoroughly miserable that an onlooker from a distance might gauge that he had just lost a son.

Chadwick somehow calmed him down.

B.: [after some time] சாமான்களை துலைத்ததையடுத்து இவ்வளவு சங்கடம் இவருக்கூ . நம்மையே துலைத்துக்கொள்வதே ஞானம் . Everyone wants Jnana. Who is willing to get rid of himself?

S>M>

Q.: In Talks with Ramana Maharshi, it is said: 'Realisation or Jnana is always a vritti. There is a distinction between vritti-jnana or Realisation and Swaroopā the Real. Swaroopā is Jnana itself; it is Consciousness. Swaroopā is Sath-chit which is omnipresent. It is always there Self-attained. When you Realise it, the Realisation is called vritti-jnana. It is only with reference to your existence that you talk of Realisation or Jnana. Therefore, when we talk of Jnana, we always mean vritti-jnana and not Swaroopā Jnana, for Swaroopā itself is Jnana or Consciousness always.' I find this completely baffling. Would B. please explain it to me?

B.: When the mind ceases to take any interest in the objective world and remains volitionlessly and effortlessly in its nativistic, primeval state of pure beingness, it is vritti-jnana; one may be said to have reached the state of vritti-jnana only if and when his mind remains so not as the result of any motive or objective but because of the fact that now it does not know anything else. The mind, which was earlier consciousness obnubilated by a labyrinthine network of vrittis, is now reduced into simple consciousness of being to which effort or objective is altogether alien. Then there is no question of straining oneself to remain still. Stillness is now the natural state. This is manonivritti. In this state there is nothing available to deflect one's attention away from subjective awareness. The mind remains transfixed at the point of its origin. The light of "I-I" can be clearly felt to be shining. It is called aham sphurana. Since this state is not brought about by means of expenditure of any mental effort, but rather on account of subsidence of mind, some books say that it is a transcendental state.

Q.: Is that the state of the Jnani?

B.: No. When, even the rarefied mind is destroyed in the Beyond, it is the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani. But you need not worry about all this. It is unnecessary. It is enough to lose the ego. Thereafter everything is automatic.

Q.: Receiving updesha from the Guru is necessary before one commences sadhana. Am I correct?

B.: Upadesha means to return something to its original position. Return the mind to the Heart.

Q.: Will B. give me hashta diksha so that I can be assured of his divine Grace?

B.: There are 3 types of initiation- dhrik, sparisha, and kurma.

Q.: Which is followed at this ashram by Sri B.?

B.: The 3rd one.

Q.: Which one carries maximum efficaciousness?

B.: The 3rd one.

Q.: Will it suffice for obtaining saktipada?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: I believe in B.'s teaching that the world is a mere dream. Yet, the temptations of the world distract me. Why?

B.: There is no need to believe in this or that. A belief is a chitta-vritti. Remaining free from vrittis is our natural state.

Q.: How shall I get rid of temptation?

B.: Investigate who it is that feels perturbed by temptation.

Q.: I feel despondent. When am I going to Realise the Self and become a Jnani like B.?

B.: There is really no such action as Realising. Once the unreal has completely faded or withered away, the Real alone remains. People talk of Realising the Self. Who is there to Realise the Self? Is 1 self going to Realise another? Can there be anything apart from or besides the Self? What is needed is to unrealise the not-Self. Then the Self alone remains.

S>M>

Q: Yesterday night Sri B. came to me in a dream. He told me, 'If you are feeling lazy to come around this Hill, how can you hope to Realise?'. Was it my own imagination only? Did B. use his astral body to communicate with me in my dream?

B. smiled but made no response.

17th August, 1936

Q.: What is the ordinal position of this birth of mine? How many times have I been born before? Is there any abhyasa by means of which this information may be elicited?

B.: Each time the mind leaves its source, birth takes place. You are verily born every time your mind is extroverted. The beginning of the chain of birth and death cannot be traced, because it is purely mental or imaginary.

Q.: So that is the meaning of 'mudiyadikana mudi'.

B.: Yes.

Q.: They say karma is the reason why I have obtained a body. Is it so?

B.: Karma is jadam. Karma's potency or jurisdiction is over the karta only. Leave the karta to his fate. You escape into the realm of Reality.



Q.: But my current birth has already taken place. In this birth, which is a foregone occurrence, it is inevitable, therefore, that I should experience the fruits of my pending karma. Otherwise is B. suggesting that it is possible for the past to be altered?

B.: Taking yourself to be the body you are asking this question. People think they are made up of gross matter whilst the truth is that they are spirit only. What is birth? It is extroversion of mind. People think birth means commencement of existence. On the other hand, it is assumption of limitation. Even now you are bodiless, but imagine otherwise.

Q.: But does not B. see this body of mine that is seated in front of him? How can he say it does not exist?

B.: What you call your body is nothing but thought. In deep slumber there are no thoughts and thus no body. The body is only an idea.

Q.: In that case, if such idea is given up I ought to become bodiless. In actual practise that is not found to be so.

B.: When ignorance has been completely destroyed in the light of Self-knowledge[Siva-jnana], it is no longer possible to assert that one has a body.

Q.: But yet it would remain. Suppose I deny that my body exists, such denial on my part is not going to make the body vanish. I may ignore my body, but still the body would remain.

B.: You are still talking from the vantage point of bodily-association. You first merge in your source, never to rise therefrom again. Thereafter it will matter nothing whether the body remains or perishes.

Q.: That is Jnani's point of view.

B.: Verily all are Jnanis only. Only to discover the fact is not so easy. Man is acclimatised to identifying himself with body and mind. When told to let go he is frightened because he thinks he will lose himself [thereby]. Realisation is simply the art of letting go of everything [or emptying the mind of all of its contents].

Q.: After relinquishing everything, what remains?

B.: Even to say, 'I have relinquished everything.' requires an "I" so to say. Complete abdication of the ego means even this cannot be said.

Q.: Is Jnana a state of nothingness or nihility, then?

B.: From your present state no understanding about it can be correct. The only way to know is to lose yourself in it.

Q.: Although the theory that there is one impersonal essence underlying all of creation sounds simple, to actually Realise this essence as [being one and identical with] my own Self seems to be as difficult as extracting milk from the horns of a buffalo.

B.: It is so because you are still attached to the things of the world. Once craving for mundane pleasures has faded away, and all ideas associating the Self with this or that have evaporated, Realisation will be as easy as extracting milk from coconuts.

Q.: But how am I to get rid of these pestilential ideas? That is the problem.

B.: You are looking for a formula. There is none. To acquire something a formula might be required. To relinquish there can be no formula. Just let go.

Q.: I am too weak to follow this advice. I beg for B.'s Grace to descend on me so that I am guided to the goal without any difficulty.

B.: Strength is needed only for doing something with the mind. According to you, you are weak. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." So, give up everything and keep quiet. Surely this cannot be difficult?

Q.: Some find it easier than others. Why?

B.: 'Death to the ego.' should be the attitude. When the tempest of samsara becomes too onerous, you will dread it as a poisonous serpent and madly try to run away from it. Then the question of, 'How shall I give up attachments? What formula shall I follow so that I develop the strength to eschew temptation for worldly pleasures?' will not arise. If a bellicose king cobra is chasing you, will you sit down at the spot, take out a sheet of paper and pencil from your pocket, and plan your escape route? Or will you skedaddle from the place as quickly as your legs carry you, rushing away like a madman? If you see samsara for what it really is, be assured that Realisation is round the corner. You can never get the man on the Clapham omnibus to readily recognise the truth about samsara. 'Oh! But life is a mixture of joys and sorrows...', he would say. For that precise reason the mundane life as ensconced in the bodily existence is pure agony. Happiness must be totally absolute. Else it cannot be called happiness. Your real nature is bliss without beginning or end. Samsara apparently traps you in a perishable body, and reduces you into a finite creature. Can we permit ourselves to be afflicted with such poison? Where is the question then of temptation? Samsara is the deadliest poison there can be. Will any fool feel temptation to drink this poison and be caught up in the torturous ocean of births and deaths? Agappaei-siddhar has sung:

தன்னையறியவேணும் அகப்பேய்

சாராமற்சாரவேணும்

பின்னையறிவதெல்லாம் அகப்பேய்

பேயறிவாகுமடீ .

பிச்சையெடுத்தாலும் அகப்பேய்

பிறவிதொலையாதே

இச்சையற்றவிடம் அகப்பேய்

எம்மிறைகண்டாயே .

பொய்யென்றுசொல்லாதே அகப்பேய்

போக்குவரத்துதானே

மெய்யென்றுசொன்னவர்கள் அகப்பேய்

வீடுபெறலாமே .

Jesus said: "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." What does it mean? One who cherishes the idea of his relative existence [or one who prefers to believe his identity to be one with the form of a body] will not succeed in retaining it forever, because death is certain for what took birth. If, on the other hand, you abandon the ego-self and thus lose yourself in the Real, you will find yourself to BE Immortal. In the Real there is no birth nor death. However powerful he may be, even an emperor has to face some trouble or the other from time to time. But the Jnani who has mercilessly forsook his mind to be destroyed in the Real has no cares, no worries and no karma. He alone verily has inherited the Kingdom of Heaven, from which no return is possible. You ask for Grace. Grace is not something outside you. The Self is Grace. Grace is always there. It is not something to be acquired. All that is necessary is that you should surrender yourself to it.

Q.: Does sharanagathi lead to Realisation?

B.: Sharanagathi is Realisation.

S>M>

Q.: According to B. the Self is the one and only Real entity, and the world is a myth. Is that not so?

B.: Yes.

Q.: So, if no such thing as the world ever existed at all, then I really- already- have no problems at all...

B.: Exactly.

Q.: But my experience is that I see a world outside me. How to account for the same?

B.: The seer is fictitious. What is seen partakes of the nature of the seer [thereof]. What you see is thus pure fiction.

Q.: I understand this. But the question arises still- why should a fictitious seer see a fictitious world? If everything is fiction, why all this fiction?

B.: Fiction does not profess its existence. Did fiction come before you and say, 'Here I am.'? Fiction is only your own imagination.

Q.: How did that imagination arise?

B.: Unto whom has it arisen?

18th August, 1936

Q.: If the theological pronouncements of the Christians are to be believed, we are all born mired in sin. Is the doctrine of original sin correct?

B.: What is born is born only in sin. The Unborn is sinless; therefore He is never born. Birth into samsara is the harbinger of agony. In fact you are the one original Absolute. But apparently you have now assumed limitations and taken on the form of this perishable body. Your true Self knows neither beginning nor end. But now you seemingly were born and shall die. Why?

Q.: I don't know.

B.: Find out.

Q.: If I surrender my life to the Almighty, can I remain carefree thereafter?

B.: One who has surrendered would not raise this question or any other question. Surrender is not a means to an end. Something that involves 'doing' cannot be surrender. Give up everything and stop caring for anything [on the mental plane]- that is surrender. Some, when asked to surrender, reply, 'Done, swami. Now, when am I going to Realise the Self?'. It is absurd. To surrender is to abandon even the fundamental or primary arbitrary-mental-conceptualisation[vritti], the aham vritti. If you are yourself not there, who is going to raise doubts or questions? After true surrender, only Silence remains.

S>M>

Q.: What is the crux of B.'s teachings?

B.: You say I am; find out who is. Find the source of thought; stay there once and for all.

Q.: How do I know that this whole thing about Self-Realisation isn't just one big scam?

B.: That is just what it is.

Q.: What?! Then why are you running this ashram and misguiding people?

B.: I am not running any ashram. People come here and ask how the Self is to be Realised. They are told something and they go away contented for the time being. Inasmuch as I know there cannot be anything to form the subject-matter of Realisation. The Self is always in Realisation. The Sun cannot know darkness. There is nothing besides the Self to Realise the Self. There are not 2 Selves, so that they may Realise each other. So, who is to Realise what? If everything [including the renouncer foremost] is abandoned, the Self stands Revealed. But people will not understand this and want to 'Realise the Self'. What can I do? How to Realise that alone which is Real? Can you impart reality to Reality? Is it not ridiculous? All that is possible to do is to unrealise the not-Self. Then the Self alone remains.

S>M>

Q.: எனக்கு உயிர் கொடு என்று நானா கேட்டது? நான் ஏன் பிறந்தேன்? என் அனுமதி பெறாமல் என்னை எப்படி படைக்கலாம்? அது அநீதியல்லவா, தவறல்லவா?

B.: [laughs] சபாஷ்! ஆமாம், தங்களுக்கு எத்தனைக் குழந்தைகள்?

Q.: 3. ஏன்?

B.: அவர்களது அனுமதியை பெற்றுக்கொண்டுதான் அவர்களையிந்த உலககத்தினுள் கொண்டு வந்தீரோ?

The poor man is dumbfounded.

S>M>

Q.: According to Bhagawan the inevitability of predestination is incommutably unequivocal. This pronouncement seems to be severely discouraging for sadhakas. If what is destined to happen alone is going to happen, what is the point in performing any sadhana? It may be that I am simply destined not to Realise at all.

B.: Do you know what your destiny has in store for you?

Q.: No.

B.: Are you capable of knowing it beforehand?

Q.: No.

B.: [smiling] Continue with your sadhana.

Q.: What is the use in it, if I am destined to not Realise?

B.: If it is going to turn out to be useless, let it. What does it matter? The effort is only made by the ego, which is ab-initio non-existent or fictitious. What is Real cannot make any effort. When you do at last Realise- even then all this effort [that you are talking about] can only ever be described as a waste, for you will then find that to discover the most self-obvious and self-evident natural state, you have expended effort! Just how ridiculous the idea of sadhana is you will see only then.

Q.: So, according to B., ultimately the ego's mirage-like existence is, on the whole, just a complete waste?

B.: Yes. But do not take B.'s word for it. Ascertain the truth of the fact for yourself, exclusively by means of relying upon your own insight into the matter. Why should you depend upon the opinion of others? Opinions obtained from others will also go as they came.

Q.: But I trust in B.'s words.

B.: Only one's own Experience can Reveal the Truth. The blossoming or revelation of the light of Truth from within can only be the result of one's opening one's own eye of wisdom. Others can only show you the way. The horse can only be led to the pond.

Q.: Faith in the Guru's words is enough to lead to Deliverance, say the books.

B.: Yes, but you must act upon the words. Can the Guru's Grace act as a substitute for our own effort? Some reassure themselves with the notion that their Guru takes care of them come what may. Then they remain indolent. The Guru is [himself] used as an excuse for not making any effort. Some believe that when the apposite time arrives, the Guru will Himself call them and hand over their Realisation to them on a platter. The Guru cannot spoon-feed you with Realisation. I have shown the way. It is upto you to do the rest.

Q.: But I am a weak creature...

B.: No. Weakness is only an idea or thought. Swami Vivekananda said: 'Whatever you think that you will be. If you think yourself weak, weak you will be; if you think yourself strong, strong you will be.' So, if you think nothing, your ego will be reduced to nothing. People imagine themselves to be weak because it conveniently allows them to be indolent. This pretended weakness is used as an excuse for remaining idle. Idleness is the anti-thesis of stillness. Idleness is sopor or torpor. Stillness is motionless alertness. Who said you are weak? The fact is, you never realise how strong you are until the option of being weak has been taken away from you already. When it is no longer open to you to imagine that you are weak, strong is the only way to BE. Struggle madly until you strike the Light within. Sri Ramakrishna said: 'The citadel of the Kingdom of God must be seized by storm.'

Q.: I wish to have darshan of Bhagawan more frequently. But my work commitments make it impossible.

B.: That alone is the actual darshan of the Real Bhagawan which is the consciousness that survives the extinction of all thought. This true B. always shines within the heart as "I-I". Ignoring Him, why go in search of other Bhagawans? Bhagawans which are seen are mere passing shadows. Chasing after them leads only to disappointment and vexation. Anything seen cannot be Real. That Bhagawan who is the underlying substratum constituting the seer, the objects seen by him and the process of intellection facilitating such spurious sight alone is the B. which is worthy of being pursued. For darshan of this B. alone ought you to crave.

Q.: How am I to have darshan of this Bhagawan?

B.: By plunging yourself[as the mind] in the Heart and never returning therefrom.

S>M>

Q.: I also want to Realise the Self and become a Jnani like Sri Bhagawan. What should I do?

B.: Do not do anything. Step aside and permit the Light to Shine.

Q.: I do not understand what I should do to Realise the Self.

B.: Summa Iru. It means, 'Remain naturally without thinking.'

Q.: As distinct from suppression or control of thought?

B.: Yes.

Q.: In my case effort is needed to remain without thinking.

B.: That is the problem.

Q.: How am I to reach the state wherein I am able to effortlessly remain in the state of absence of thoughts?

B.: Only by pursuing the investigation 'Who-am-I?'

Q.: How long to investigate?

B.: Until investigation is no-longer possible.

Q.: If I am able to effortlessly remain in the state wherein there are no thoughts, can I also become a Jnani?

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: God's Grace is said to be necessary for it.

B.: Yes.

Q.: How to win God's Grace?

B.: Only by relentlessly pursuing the investigation.

Q.: Is not everything predetermined?

B.: That argument is not meant to be used to justify anticipation of failure.

Q.: So long as the idea or belief 'The world is real.' is sustained within the mind, vichara will yield no benefit. Am I correct?

B.: Yes. But the vichara itself will progressively facilitate you to see the truth.

Q.: Is it belief in the objective reality of the world that is preventing me from Realising?

B.: Not only that idea, all arbitrary-mental-conceptualisations[vrittis] must be eradicated from the mind before there can be any possibility of Realisation.

Q.: Why so?

B.: Vrittis [mental modifications or arbitrary-mental-conceptualisations] act as water in a cauldron which reflects the Sun as an image upon its surface.

Thoroughly empty the cauldron. That is the nivritti state of mind. When the cauldron has been toppled and broken into pieces, chance of reflection- any further- is permanently ruined. This is the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani.

B. then turned to the attendant and asked him to pick out a certain volume of the Bengali work Sri Ramakrishna Kathamritha. But that gentleman could not succeed in identifying the same from the book-case. B. himself retrieved the same and presently read out for the Hall in Tamil:

One attains the state of Brahmajnana when the mind has been destroyed. When the mind disappears and the ego has scarpared without leaving behind the least residue, that which was repeating I,I is discovered to have always been non-existent. It is possible to reach this state through bhakti or jnana. The Jnana-anveshaka considers the world

as a mere dream or hallucination. Once perception of the world has ceased, only the 'I-Consciousness' remains. Imagine that there are 10 cauldrons filled with water. They all reflect the Sun. Now, totally how many suns do you see?

A Devotee- Ten reflected suns and the one true Sun.

Sri Ramakrishna- Imagine now that one of these cauldrons shatters into pieces. Now how many suns do you see?

The Devotee- Nine reflected suns and the one true Sun.

Sri Ramakrishna- Well, supposing that nine cauldrons are broken, how many suns would you see?

The Devotee- One reflected image of the sun and the one true Sun.

Sri Ramakrishna- What remains after the last cauldron is broken?

The Devotee- The one true Sun.

Sri Ramakrishna — No. No words can possibly describe what remains. It is what really IS. When there is no reflected sun, how can you tell that there is the real sun? In the state of samadhi the 'I' vanishes. What a man experiences then cannot be expressed through ideas when he comes down to a lower plane.

Q.: Is Bhagawan now talking to us from a lower plane, then?

B.: Sri Ramakrishna is describing nirvikalpa samadhi. In the Sahaja-stithi there is no lower plane or higher plane.

Q.: The example befuddles me. The Sun is never obscured by its reflection on any number of surfaces. Reflections of the Sun do not affect the Sun itself in any way.

B.: Exactly.

Q.: But the Self is obscured by the ego.

B.: Did the Self complain of being obscured by the ego?

Q.: So bondage is a fact only from the ego's point of view.

B.: Quite so.

Q.: In that case how did the ego arise?

B.: Whose ego?

Q.: Mine. But who am I?

B.: Find out.

19th August, 1936

Q.: Is the world a dream?

B.: As you want it to be, so it is. One who sees it as a dream may escape rebirth. Others remain ignorant of their true nature and keep wandering around in illusion. But really it makes no difference. Either way you are always the Self.



Q.: Then why is Sri Ramana asking me to Realise the Self?

B.: He never asked anyone anything.

Q.: Is materialisation of objects possible for a Jnani? Can he handle fire without hurting himself?

B.: What is the use of these tricks? They do not bring Salvification. On the other hand, they may make bondage more dense.

S>M>

Q.: I have been coming to B.'s Hall for the past few days. I derive great peace of mind from listening to his words.

B.: Peace is Within. Do not foist it on the environment. The environment is a mental construct. It is imaginary.

Q.: Oh! B.'s usual 'Everything is an illusion.' teaching. I think it should be experienced rather than believed in. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Was I born or not? This body was born, but I am not it. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What I am is not a matter for conceptual knowledge or intellectual understanding but direct experience. Am I correct?

B.: [smiling] Yes.

Q.: Does surrender mean not doing anything?

B.: Surrender is not indolence. It means reduction of the mind into simple consciousness.

S>M>

D.O.: I heard that a Sanskrit scholar initiated B. into his order of monks and gave him the name Ramana Maharshi. How can a mere scholar, whose knowledge after all is confined to the realm of the intellect and who himself lacks the Transcendental-consciousness that an Enlightened-being would have, canonise and name the great Bhagawan himself? It sounds absurd to me. Why did B. agree to receive his name from an ordinary mortal being? Does it not mar the sanctity of his Supreme-state? Does it not amount to an insult for the Absolute Being Himself to have a name conferred upon Him by a mere mortal being?

B.: Have you come all the way from Ribeuville only to ask questions of this sort?

D.O.: I am only trying to learn more about Bhagawan and his life of extraordinary penance.

B.: First know the Bhagawan within.

D.O.: What is the significance of visiting Benares?

B.: You are now standing in Benares.

D.O.: By means of practising severe austerities B. has brought down the spiritual power of Benares into this place. Is my supposition correct?

B.: There is no Benares greater than Tiruvannamalai. What you fail to lose here cannot be lost anywhere else. In the end everyone must come [only] to Arunachala.

S>M>

Chadwick: It seems some days back B. told Mr. Cohen that dairy products must be avoided if one wants to make expedited progress in sadhana. Would the advice apply to me also?

B.: Dairy foods are not as bad as flesh foods. But the real avadhuta will avoid them.

C.: Should I give them up?

B.: Not immediately. But gradually try to learn to thrive on grain and fruit. Stick to one grain- experiment and see which interferes least with mental tranquility. Some find wheat suitable, others rice, others flint-corn and so on and so forth. Likewise select a fruit which will be available throughout the year [irrespective of variation in climatic conditions or any other factor]. Consistency is the key. Also, the pattern of consumption must be in small quantities, ingested in even time-intervals throughout the day. Condiments, spices, etc. are best avoided. Salt will do. Such ideas cannot be imposed in an ashram. People will want sambhar, curry, etc.. The man on the Clapham omnibus has classified his food-intake on the basis of 'Breakfast', 'Lunch' and so forth. If asked to abandon these ideas and eat a handful every so-often the idea will not appeal to him. He will begin to imagine himself to be starving if, corresponding to his mental concepts of 'Breakfast', 'Lunch' and so forth, something is not eaten by his mouth at those mentally manufactured occasions. But dumping the stomach with too much food at a single stroke will cause drowsiness. It also causes one to doze off during day-time, which is deadly. Even here many sleep during the day. It is a poisonous habit.

C.: I am puzzled to receive this advice from B., because when I first came here he told me, 'We must not make a fuss about wanting this or that in particular. We must quietly eat whatever is available for consumption. Eat whatever falls on your plate without paying any attention to it. In vichara-sadhana what matters foremost is only frugality of mind.'

B.: Were you able to follow that advice?

C.: No. That is why I again solicit B.'s guidance upon the matter.

B.: Eating a variety of food-articles, consuming spices, etc. may either discombobulate or sedate the mind. It is not for all. Some are not comfortable with it. So, now try to stick to grain and fruit.

C.: But will I have to stop taking meals with Bhagawan?

B.: Devotion is to remain merged in the Self. If the ashram diet is wrecking havoc with your mind it is better to give it up.

C.: But not infrequently B. himself lends a hand in one cooking procedure or another. It is divine food. How can I turn away from it? Besides, I want to have my meal along with Bhagawan.

B.: I have said what I have to say.

S>M>

G.: What B. has told the Major: is it applicable for him alone or all sadhakas?

B.: For the neophyte such restrictions might be useful. But it is all for beginners only. When the illusion of free-will is rescinded, this question and all questions[including questions appurtenant to dietary considerations] are taken out of your hands. Once you are established in the nivritti state of mind, even if you manage to swallow a woolly elephant whole it would not be possible to stir[revive] the mind into movement. [laughs] In that state it is not possible for questions to arise. To whom are they to arise? But why are you asking this question? You eat nothing at the ashram...

S>M>

D.O.: It is said that in addition to common salt, one ought also to consume calcium chloride, potassium chloride and magnesium chloride for maintaining optimal health of the body. Does B. agree with me?

B.: Oh! Is that so? Is it enough? But be wary of yourself. One day you might want to try eating barium chloride!

S>M>

Q.: Kant says, 'Reality in the pure conception of the understanding, is that which corresponds to a sensation in general; consequently is that, the conception whereof indicates, in itself, a being in time. Negation is that, the conception of which represents a non-being in [in time]. The opposition of both occurs therefore in the difference of the same time, as filled or void.'. Is he right?

B.: What can be conceived of is not Reality. It is not possible for us to discuss Reality. Reality is quite the Beyond.

Q.: B. exhorts all to investigate "Who am I?". Does he know who he is?

B.: No, he does not. Loss of the vipareetajnana of "I" is the goal.

Q.: I comprehend not.

B.: Realisation is nothing to be gained afresh. The Self is already here and now, but adumbrated by illusory ignorance. When such ignorance tries to find out its own nature, it vanishes and the Self alone is left to Shine Eternally as the residue. To the Realised One there never was any ignorance. So, investigating 'Who-am-I?' does not lead to acquisition of any knowledge appertaining to who you really are; it destroys the existing wrong notion of

who you are, that you are incumbently harbouring within the mind. When the vichara has completed this destruction in entirety, what is left is the Self. There is no such thing as the Self knowing itself. Knowledge is a vritti[mental modification]. The Self is free from vrittis. 'Know thyself.', therefore, is meaningless. 'Forget thyself.' would be more relevant, or 'Abandon thyself once and for all.'. Mental activity cannot bring about peace. Abandon the mind for good and what is left is peace only and peace eternal- peace from which there is no return possible.

Q.: It is quite tempting. But how to do it?

B.: Only by the investigation, 'Who am I?'.  
S>M>

Q.: Is it true that the perceived object exists only because of the existence of the perceiving subject?

B.: All these are your mental concepts. The One Existence alone is Real- what IS, is only THAT.

Q.: How shall I Realise It?

B.: Only by the investigation, 'Who am I?'.  
  
20th August, 1936

D.O.: Why is Jnana so hard to attain?

B.: It is the natural state and therefore always attained. You are unable to give yourself up to it- that is the problem. If the man on the Clapham omnibus is told 'Everything you think you know is false, or total fiction.' will it be palatable to him? The difficulty does not lie with Jnana. The difficulty lies in giving up vipareetajnana or objective knowledge. You hold fast to the things[objects] of the world, to concepts, ideas, memories and every other kind of vritti. Then you complain that Jnana is difficult. Can Jnana be difficult? Is there any effort in that state, so that it may be difficult? Jnana is the easiest of all accomplishments. To accomplish anything else, you need to put in effort; you need to do something; but Jnana dawns in the absolute absence of effort. Therefore there cannot be anything easier than Jnana. Can you suggest something easier than giving up everything? Just capsize the pot; this leads automatically to Jnana.

D.O.: Then why do not all get it?

B.: They are attached to the contents of their pot.

D.O.: How to get rid of the attachment?

B.: Look at the contents closely. You will find poison and only poison. Then you will not hesitate to capsize the pot. Renouncing all attachment in a single stroke comes easily for those who had in the past developed a passionate, single-minded obsession with any one particular ideal.

D.O.: The pot is the mind. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

D.O.: The contents are memories- or are they opinions?

B.: All chitta-vrittis [arbitrary-mental-conceptualisations].

D.O.: Some seem to be destined for Realisation and they succeed at it somehow and anyhow. Others fail no matter what they do. 'Tis unfair, sir.

B.: Those who actually stand in need of it obtain it, or rather lose themselves in It. If the option of straying after the things of the world is still available to the mind, will it succeed in turning inward? The mind seeks out objects to engage itself with because it is still under the impression that those objects facilitate it to experience happiness. Once objects are recognised as the harbinger of agony, the mind naturally closes itself to the possibility of chasing after them. The faculty of objectification, which makes perception of gross matter possible, is seen for what it really is- a painful disease- only when comprehension of the poisonous nature of samsara has dawned upon the mind. Can one who finds the worldly existence yet tolerable or acceptable lose himself in the One? "...where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.", it is said in the Bible. One who wants Realisation to the exclusion of everything else soon assimilates that perfect depth of vairagyam where even that desire is eschewed. Then what remains is the Self.

D.O.: It is said that surrender is easier than the vichara method.

B.: Surrender is not merely saying, 'I surrender.'. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit...": that is the attitude. You can have no more cares after your surrender. All your cares are now His. Such is surrender. That is bhakti.

D.O.: Some people benefit from listening to B.'s teachings. Others do not. Why? B.'s Grace is equally shining on all.

B.: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." One who is burning with the desire to be set free from samsara will catch hold of the vichara and not let go until he is totally destroyed. Others hear the teaching for sometime and then begin to think of other things. One who is desperate to escape from the venomous entrapment that is samsara will use every last ounce of strength and resourcefulness he has to try to fight his way to the Light. He will never think of anything else. It is like a man who has been doused in kerosene and set ablaze trying to find a water-body to fall into, or one whose head has been pressed underneath water trying to rise to the surface to breathe. Others think that by doing an hour of sadhana everyday, one day they are going to 'Realise the Self'.

D.O.: If I surrender completely, then I am no longer responsible for my own Deliverance. Am I correct? Can I remain free from all responsibility after surrendering?

B.: Having surrendered once and for all there can no more question of duty or responsibility; however, this does not mean that one remains indolent. The activities for effectuation of which the body has come into manifestation will have to be performed, whether you like it or not. So far as the body is concerned, its prarabdha cannot be escaped. As for you, you are always free. Do not confound yourself with the body; remain without the bodily identification or any other identification. Be as you ARE.

D.O.: Liberation is said to be impossible until and unless karma has been wiped out completely.

B.: Yes. Eradicating the karta is the only way to get rid of karma.

D.O.: Who is competent and who is not competent to commence practice of the investigation 'Who-am-I'? What qualifications are needed to practise it?

Q.: Anyone may take it up. As mentioned, those with intense vairagya or those who are burning with desperation to escape from samsara will make rapid advancement in crushing the ego into submission. But [even in other cases] the vichara will [itself gradually] inculcate the needed vairagya if done persistently.

D.O.: Will the investigation 'Who-am-I?' alone suffice for Realisation? As a preliminary practice, may I not try pranayama or a few elementary hatha yoga postures?

B.: Other practises are meant for those who cannot otherwise still [quiesce] the mind.

D.O.: Mons. Chadwick here tells me that walking around this Hill is a potent spiritual practice. Is it so? May I try it?

B.: Yes.

Chadwick, the Distraught One, myself, the Elder of Zion, the foreign-correspondence brahmin and a woman from the kitchen all went for Giripradakshina that evening. [The woman has received news about the illness of some family member back at her place. She came and cried to Bhagawan; whereupon the master himself has graciously made this suggestion.] The brahmin, a school-master, narrated many interesting anecdotes concerning Bhagawan. Evidently he had known Bhagawan right from childhood. He would visit the Maharshi at the Virupaksha-cave everyday, carrying boiled ground-nuts for the master to eat. On one occasion, he neglected to take anything, and stood penitently before the master. The master kindly said, 'It is all right. You have brought yourself. That is necessary and sufficient in itself.'. The brahmin's voice had become hoarse with emotion. He recalled many ecstatic visions of B. that he had been blessed with. When we arrived near the temple it was already very late. Only one woman was selling some சீத்தாப்பழம் by the light of a street lamp. We purchased

some as offering for Bhagawan and continued our circumambulation of the sacred Hill.

21st August, 1936

Q.: I have heard about Bhagawan's teachings, but I cannot say that I am entirely convinced. Is the world merely my hallucination? Don't other people see it too?

B.: The world is like the 12-inch barrel 11mm revolver commissioned with Colt's Arms Company by the playwright Sergeant Buntline to present as gifts to his friends, mentioned in the pseudo-biographical narrative 'Frontier Marshal': it really never was. So there is no point in addressing the question of whether it is real or not. Since such a thing is not at all there how can the question be raised? The other people whom you see are components of the deceptive invention called objectivity, that is churned out by your own mind. In Reality such a thing as world is not to be found at all.

Q.: My experience is that I see a world around me with people in it.

B.: Investigate into yourself as to whose experience it is. Who experiences this world? Find the answer. Then Reality Reveals Himself of His own accord.

S>M>

Q.: People often report that in Bhagawan's auspicious presence they have obtained an experience of the Self. Are they merely trying to draw attention to themselves and making themselves look big in the eyes of other people? Is there any truth in or genuinity to such claims?

B.: No. The utmost that can be experienced is total introversion of mind. After that experiencing is impossible because the experiencer will not be there. The expression 'experience of the Self' is an oxymoron. Do we have 2 Selves, one with which to experience and the other to constitute the subject-matter of experience? There is no duality in the Self. There is no such thing as undergoing or obtaining an 'experience of the Self'. He is always alone. You can never reach Him, no matter how great you might imagine yourself to be. Experiencing the Self as It IS is impossible- non-duality cannot be procured within the framework of duality. What people are trying to say is that they experienced for a few moments the state of manonischalam, where there are neither thoughts, nor effort to remain without thinking, nor volition to remain in the state of absence of thought, but only pure consciousness of Being. This they mistake to be the Self. Feeling the warmth of sunshine on your skin and being the Sun itself are certainly mutually different and cannot meaningfully be placed on the same footing. The localised, individual experience of pure consciousness of Being, which alone forms the datum of the jivatman's experience, is only one tiny reflected ray from that fathomlessly mighty

boundaryless Sun which verily the Self is. As He truly IS He cannot be experienced at all. The one thing possible is to be devoured by Him once and for all. For that you should surrender yourself unconditionally. Then you are absorbed by the Higher Power automatically.

Q.: I have tried to surrender- but the ego again raises his head.

B.: Yes, that will happen. Nevertheless- do not feel discouraged. Go on trying to completely surrender until your surrender is perfect.

Q.: How to tell whether perfect surrender has been achieved by me or not?

B.: The mind is irrevocably reduced into the nivritti state. No doubts, questions or perturbations arise. External shapes, events and circumstances are viewed as irrelevant shadow-figures playing about on a screen, including one's own body.

S>M>

Q.: I have heard Bhagawan saying that in order so as to Realise the Immortal Self, one must either investigate the question of 'Who am I?' or unconditionally surrender oneself to the Higher Power. My question is: are vichara and surrender mutually exclusive- or can they be practised together?

B.: Yes, certainly- it is decidedly advantageous to practise both at once.

Speaking with regard to functionality, in fact, aside from the nomenclature employed, there is no actual difference or distinctivity between these [2] approaches: the one leads to the other and the other to the one.

S>M>

Q.: [quietly] Is it true that the paradoxical, secret reason behind the German Chancellor's aversion toward Jewish persons and homosexuals is that he himself is a Jew and a homosexual?

B.: [laughing] What a luridously exotic idea!

S>M>

Q.: Annamaya kosha, Pranamaya kosha, Manomaya kosha, Vignanamaya kosha and Anandamaya kosha are said to be the sheaths that cover the Self or Aathman. It stands to reason that, since the ego is said to reside in the Vignanamaya kosha, if the ego is killed, only that kosha is destroyed. So, how can killing the ego result in the death of the mind, which, logically speaking, should be capable of being accomplished only if all the 5 koshas are annihilated?

B.: You cannot kill the mind by your own efforts. If the ego is gone, Realisation or Jnana results naturally. One who has reached the nivritti state of mind, never to leave it, may be said to have killed the ego; getting rid of yourself in this fashion is as far as you possibly can go. Thereafter the Beyond takes over and you have no role to play in what happens or does not happen. So, obliterating the ego is necessary and sufficient for Jnana. You need not worry



about killing the mind; it is not in our hands. As for the koshas, that framework has been elucidated only for the purpose of intellectual analysis or disquisition. Really the mind is only one: either it sees itself diversified as the world and jivatman, or it Sees Itself; in the former case we call it the thinking mind and the latter the quiescent mind; that is all the difference there is. The quiescent mind cannot survive for long and soon it dissolves itself in the Self like a salt doll in the ocean; this is Jnana. Once the ego is lost further effort is impossible and Jnana is- if perhaps not immediate- totally inevitable.

S>M>

Q.: What is the secret of Love for God?

B.: To Love- unconditionally, passionately, insanely.

Q.: Is the world a dream? Is it unreal?

B.: It is according to how you want it to be.

Q.: I comprehend not.

B.: 'World' is one arbitrary mental conceptualisation. 'Reality' is another. The question of something called 'world' being something called 'real'- or not- is yet another. What is actual Reality is not contingent upon conceptualisation; it really IS. Your question could have an answer if entities known as 'world' or 'something being real' could possibly exist- but can they? All that can exist is Existence alone. That which IS, alone is and alone could ever BE; and that which IS, is alone always. So, there is no world and no such thing as any gross-form being real: therefore the question you ask does not arise at all. Still, people say that this truth cannot be understood by them. So, various doctrines are concocted according to the tastes of different individuals. One man says that he is a materialist and that he sees a real world. Another says that he is a solipsist and that he sees merely a projection of his own mind whenever he beholds a world. Both points of view are absurd. So, having deviated from the truth, any explanation can be fabricated according to the whims and fancies of one's palate. The truth, however, is only One: nasatho vidhyatae bhavo nabhavo vidhyatae sataha.

Q.: So, in Bhagawan's view, no such thing as the world could possibly exist?

B.: That is correct- but do not believe this. Live It; BE It.

Q.: What is the difference between the ignorant and the Enlightened?

B.: Do you believe yourself to exist?

Q.: Of course.

B.: That is the difference.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: In addition to actually existing, you also needlessly believe yourself to exist. The Jnani has no vrittis available into which to channel consciousness and therefore he cannot possibly believe in anything. So, he merely IS. The

Jnani is nude whilst you are adorned with accoutrements: that is the difference.

Q.: The statement seems to be true with regard to the physical plane also!

B.: [laughs]

Q.: Despite all the clarifications I am availing from Bhagawan, I am- quite often- tortured by repeated doubts. What am I to do? What is the remedy?

B.: If you are there, doubts can arise. Recall the state of deep sleep- did you raise any doubts then? Surrender yourself without reserve; then, who could be still left to raise doubts?

Q.: What is the difference between surrender, summa-irutthal and asking oneself 'Who am I'?

B.: The state of summa-irutthal or absolute surrender- in other words, complete relinquishment or extirpation of the ego or aham vritti- is not any sadhana, but the goal itself, because it implies that manonivritti is now the sadhaka's natural state of mind, from which there is no possibility of him reviving, resuscitating or recrudescing. One who has permanently shaken off the clutches of the ego finds that his mind has been reduced into simple, pure consciousness of Being to which volition or effort is altogether alien; he cannot return from that state because there is nobody in that state to desire or cause anything to happen. Manonivritti is the lakshyam of vichara, not Jnana. Jnana means the Sahaja-stithi; it is not in our hands. Once the nivritti state has been reached, we have reached the end of the road of sadhana; in that state there is nobody left to desire for Jnana or anticipate the same. The nivritti state is as far as you can go; the Sahaja-stithi is left to the Beyond. As for sadhana, it may be to investigate 'Who am I?' or to try to completely surrender. Attempting to completely surrender is known as partial surrender. Partial surrender is sadhana, whereas complete surrender is another name for Jnana or Emancipation.

Q.: Is the manonivritti state- once reached- permanent?

B.: If surrender was really absolute, then all vasanas are given up in one stroke and no further identification [with the ego] is possible. Otherwise sooner or later the sadhaka falls from the [manonivritti] state and his ego takes control of his mind again.

Q.: How do I surrender absolutely?

B.: Keep trying so to do. Absolute surrender may be impossible in the beginning but partial surrender is certainly possible for all; in due course of time, partial surrender leads to complete surrender.

Q.: If the nivritti state has been reached, is Jnana assured?

B.: One irrevocably established in that state would not ask this question- or any other question.

Q.: I am not- thus do I ask.

B.: The sankalapa 'I must attain Jnana.' is an obstacle to Jnana. If you do not give it up, how can you ever meaningfully hope to reach the nivritti state, to which desire or idea-formulation is totally alien?

Q.: I will have no incentive to engage in sadhana unless I feel assured that Jnana is awaiting me at the end. If I do not feel certain that the nivritti state is going to endow me with Jnana, why would I strive to reach and abide in it?

B.: This is the mistake.

Q.: I do not understand what B. is trying to say. What mistake am I committing?

B.: You are working with a goal in mind. Am I correct?

Q.: Yes. Jnana- i.e., Self-Realisation is my goal. I want to reach the same state that I find B. to be in always.

B.: Yes- this is the mistake.

Q.: B. is saying that I am ineligible for Jnana, perhaps. Maybe, although excessively ambitious, I am too weak to actually reach the Supreme State.

B.: That is not what I was trying to say.

Q.: What then?

B.: You should not work with any goal in mind. Remain in the natural state naturally. One's remaining in the natural state should be a matter of course; it should not be contaminated by volition or ambition; for so long as these are there, you are still tainted by mental conditioning. Only perfect absence of mental conditioning yields perfect peace.

Q.: How to remain in the natural state or nivritti state without wanting to remain therein?

B.: Remaining in the nivritti state without wanting to remain therein and without making effort to remain therein is the only way to Jnana; it is certainly possible- nay, easy- for one whose vairagya has reached climactic pitch.

Q.: How to cultivate vairagya, then?

B.: Only by investigating 'Who am I?' relentlessly- or by trying to unconditionally surrender relentlessly.

Q.: Is the vichara done by means of focusing our concentration or faculty of attention upon the right-side of the chest?

B.: There is no nexus between these 2 practises. The one is different from the other and the other is different from the one.

Q.: Which one leads to Jnana?

B.: Vichara.

Q.: What about the practice of focusing our concentration or faculty of attention upon the right-side of the chest? Is it useless?

B.: Why do you say that it is useless? It leads to concentration of mind. For those who lack the wherewithal to engage in vichara or surrender themselves totally, practises such as japa, pranayama, concentrating on the right-side of the chest, gazing at the light emitted by a lamp in an otherwise dark room, hatha yoga, kundalini yoga, and so on and so forth are suggested; for the one who can investigate or surrender these are not necessary.

Q.: When visitors come into Bhagawan's physical proximity, what should they do to derive from his potent, sacred presence maximum spiritual benefit?

B.: They should not do anything.

Q.: I comprehend not.

B.: 'Keep the mind poised in alert stillness.' is the import underlying the utterance 'Do not do anything.'

Q.: How is that done?

B.: Again only by means of vichara.

Q.: Ultimately, the thing called "I"- does it exist or not?

B.: Why are you asking me? Find out.

Q.: Why does Bhagawan not wish to share his discovery with me?

B.: Each one must discover Truth for himself. The lotus of the Heart must bloom from within. Realisation cannot be shared; the Jnani's proximity can act as a catalyst- nothing more. If Jnana were something outside you it could be handed over to you on a golden platter.

Q.: Bhagawan forcibly liberated his mother- I have heard. To a Jnani all are equal. The compassion shown by you to your mother- please show it to me also.

B.: I am not withholding anything from you. Those who are ready, get It- even if they want not It.

Q.: I am trying to surrender- but how do I go about it?

B.: To surrender is to abandon the absurd idea that there is a 'you' which is capable of 'doing'.

Q.: Practically what am I to do?

B.: Kill the ego by completely handing over responsibility for your life to the Lord, by realizing your arrant helplessness in anything and everything, by feeling all the time: 'Not I, but Thou, O my Lord!', by giving up all sense of 'I' and 'mine' and by completely leaving it to the Lord to do what and as he likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as genuine so long as the sadhaka wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is Love of God for the sake of such Love and for nothing else, not even for the sake of Emancipation. Allow the feeling 'I am helpless by myself, whereas God is utterly omnipotent; other than throwing myself completely upon Him there is no means of safety available to me.' to become an unshakeable conviction.

Thus gradually develop the stance of mind that God alone exists and the ego does not matter. This stratagem also leads to the same goal of manonivritti.

S>M>

Q.: What is the proof that the state of Jnana exists?

B.: You state during sleep.

Q.: To me sleep is a mere blank.

B.: You say so now but not whilst sleeping.

Q.: Naturally. During sleep I was unaware of myself.

B.: No. During sleep you were perfectly aware- so much so that you do not recollect it now.

Q.: What is the proof?

B.: It is according to the weltanschauung of each one. If you are convinced that materialism is the only truth, remain so. What is the harm in it? To each his own.

S>M>

Q.: What is the meaning of saying that one's mind is to be collected at one point in order so as for Jnana to dawn? I have heard Bhagawan saying so.

B.: The mind now sees itself diversified as the cosmos which is spectated by a jivatman; turned inwards it discovers itself to be the Self. The mind itself is one and the same mind. Turned outwards it is tossed about by samsara; turned inwards it is God Himself.

S>M>

Q.: What were Bhagawan's feelings when he first heard about the place called Tiruvannamalai or the Hill called Arunachala?

B.: I had no idea that such a realm existed on Earth. I was under the impression it was located in some other universe.

Q.: And his feelings when he first arrived here?

Chadwick: Whitman's words are echoing through my mind:

I have travelled a long way merely to look on you to touch you,

For I could not die till I once looked upon you,

For I fear that I might afterward lose you.

B.: When this reached here, there was nobody left to feel, 'Ah! We have arrived[ வந்து சேர்ந்துவிட்டோம் ]!'.  
Q.: Did Bhagawan not go into the presence of Lord Arunachalaeshwara and joyously announce, 'Father, finally I have arrived here, to attain everlasting union with thee!?' The incident is recorded in Sri Narasimha Swamy's biography of Bhagawan, I seem to remember.

B.: All that was automatic. After the experiment with death at Madurai, where I emulated a corpse to find out the meaning of death, a Higher Power took hold of me and I am uptill this day entirely in Its grasp. The imitation of a corpse

B.: All that was automatic. After the experiment with death at Madurai, where I emulated a corpse to find out the meaning of death, a Higher Power took hold of me and I am uptill this day entirely in Its grasp. The imitation of a corpse

was the last and final act of volition on my part. After that everything that happened has been automatic. I had and have no role in anything that transpired or is transpiring afterwards.

Q.: This transfusion of spiritual energy, or awakening of dormant or latent spiritual potency, is called saktipada- am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How is it that, uniquely in Bhagawan's case, saktipada has descended without a Guru's assistance?

B.: Who said there was no Guru?

Q.: Then, Seshadri Swamigal must have- perhaps involuntarily- been the Guru for Bhagawan: am I correct?

B.: Should Guru always be only an anthropomorphic form? Have you not read of the story of Dattathraeya?

Q.: Bhagawan also had the same 24 Gurus?

B.: Bhagawan's Guru is One.

Q.: Who is he?

B.: [meekly points through the window]

Q.: Is it the Hill Arunchala?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Why does Bhagawan never leave Tiruvannamalai? Is the prospect of parting from Arunachala too much for him to stomach?

B.: Let it be thought of so[ அப்படியே வைத்துக்கொள்ளலாம் ]- but in fact no parting is possible.

A fair Malayali gentleman [later I got to know his name was Mr. Nambiar] who was seated near the window spoke: I am reminded of the following lines by Mr. Lewis Carroll-

O day of tears! Whence comes this spectre grim,

Parting, like Death's cold river, souls that love?

Is not he bound to thee, as thou to him,

By vows, unwhispered here, yet heard above?

S>M>

Q.: I am suffering from oesophageal cancer. The doctors do not have anything enthusiastic to say about my case. Bhagawan is my last and only hope now. I have come to Sri Ramanasramam with a hopeful heart, thinking that Bhagawan will surely help and save me.

B.: [smiles graciously but does not otherwise respond]

S>M>

Q.: I am a voracious devotee of Sri Raghavaendra Swamy. Every year for the aradhanamahotsavam I go to Mantralayam and circumambulate the sacred Brindavanam 108 times. Yet my life is full of calamities and melancholia. For

all my devotion Swamy rewards me only with more and more adversities. What am I to do? Where am I going wrong? It is my observation that atheists and materialists are leading a happy life, whereas pious people like myself are made to suffer endless agony. What is the reason for it? Can it be that the entity called God is by nature cruel and sadistic?

B.: What the Guru does he does with your best interests in mind only. Do not judge Him and do not set store by external appearances. Things may eventually turn out differently from how they appear at present. All you need to do is to trust in the Guru. The Guru alone can save you from the torment of samsara. Samsarae akshayasagarae prakruthithogade sadha dhustarae sarvavadhyajalagrahairanupamaihi kamadhibhangakulae nanavibhramadhuhu bhramaemitha bhayasthoemadhiphae nothkatae dhukhothkrushtavishae samudhrae guro mam magna roopam sadha.

Q.: [in a voice convoluted with viscous emotion] I have the feeling that my Guru Sri Raghavaendra Swamy has let me down, ever since my only son, the sole apple of my eye, died in an accident last year. I remember when he was born the first thing his mother said was, 'He looks just like Lord Krishna. I feel like looking at his face all day long...'; but when the body came home we could not bear to see the mangled face of our precious son. For no fault of his, he had been crushed beneath the wheels of a rogue bogie that has run loose from the end of a train parked at the railway junction of Coonoor hill-station. He had gone there together with his newly-married wife. Next month my daughter-in-law will deliver a child. If the child asks, 'Where is my father?', what am I to say? Oh Raghavaendra! What have you done? [falls to the floor sobbing]

B.: [after a few minutes, in a quiet voice] Your son has not gone anywhere.

Q.: B. means that I can still see him through a seance? Does B. then agree to kindly oblige me by teaching me to conduct a seance-session? Or will I have to join the Blavatskians to learn how to do it?

B.: Seances may help you to see an image of your son for a few minutes or hours.

Q.: Is B. then going to resurrect my son?! Oh joy!

B.: Your son has never left you. His body has been irrevocably reduced into its constituent elements. His Spirit is still with you. The loss of the body is inevitable one day and therefore is not to be mourned over. Seek the Spirit and discover that nothing was ever lost.

Q.: How to make contact with my son's spirit?

B.: There is only one Spirit. Your own Spirit is your son's Spirit also.

Q.: How can I see this Spirit?

B.: Only by Being It. The Spirit cannot be objectified. It lies in the realm of subjective consciousness.

Q.: Is this Spirit the Aathman that Vedanta talks about?

B.: Yes: but theoretical conceptualisations of it cannot bring about peace of mind. Instead of reading and talking about the Aathman, BE It. Then the wrong idea 'My son has left me.' or 'My son has ceased to exist.' will not arise.

Q.: Is it actual truth that my son is comprised in the Aathman, although he is in fact dead and gone?

B.: The soul or Aathman is the same for all. To satisfy the curiosity of the neophyte, often it is said that the agglomeration of body, intellect and mind is only an external covering or sheath obnubilating the Aathman; thus through such instruction he understands that these are not his Self. The actual truth is that there cannot be anything apart from the Aathman. Your son is imperishable and so are you. Realise It.

Q.: Practically what can I do to attain peace of mind?

B.: Investigate 'Who am I?' or surrender your cares and worries to Sri Raghavaendrar. How do you say that it was an accident that claimed your son's life? Ishwara knows no accident. He is always deliberate. Everything in His design has a purpose and a reason. Whatever happens or forbears, happens or forbears for the best. Only we do not have the requisite maturity of psyche to accept and acknowledge this fact.

Q.: What is the reason my son was recalled to God at an age of merely 35?

B.: It is not open to us to question Him regarding His motives. Can we permit ourselves to sit in judgement over Him?

Q.: What are we to do, then, when God introduces such gigantic catastrophes in our lives?

B.: Accept it.

Q.: Impossible.

B.: That is where your problem lies. When God gives you good things, you accept it, but you reject the bad. This sort of discriminatory behaviour should not be used with God. You are not purchasing vegetables. Accept with a joyful heart whatever God chooses to give. Then see if you have peace of mind or not. Thank Him for whatever it is that happens in your life: good or otherwise. Feel thankful for everything. Then, only automatic acceptance will remain; this is Bliss.

Q.: This philosophy is too lofty for me to adopt in practise. As human beings, we are acclimatised or conditioned to celebrate or cherish the good and repudiate or condemn the evil.

B.: Yes- evil is not lurking outside of you; your own mental conditioning is the root of all evil. Get rid of it, and thereby permit Peace to reign forevermore



undisturbed in your heart.

Q.: But how am I to do this?

B.: By investigating 'Who am I?'

Q.: Always the same panacea!

B.: Yes.

S>M>

A few hours after the kannadiga left, Chadwick, who had informed himself as to the details of B.'s conversation in Kannadam with him from the foreign-correspondence brahmin[P>S> I faintly recollect his name to be T .K.

Sugunaesha Aiyyer; he was addressed as TKS by everyone in the ashram] whilst B. had gone for his usual walk on the Hill, [resulting in myself, the Elder of Zion and others listening enraptured to the latter's lucid explanation,]

addressed Bhagawan thus- 'Bhagawan on a former occasion has said that God is Random in His behaviour. To that gentleman who lost his son, he has said that God is deliberate in His behaviour. Which explanation is correct?'

B.: Both are correct.

C.: How can that be?

B.: It depends upon your point of view. Actually there is nothing but rock and dust upon the moon, but some men see a rabbit in it, others an old woman's wrinkled face, still others a toad, and so on and so forth. Likewise nothing could possibly ever happen in Reality, but people see patterns in it. Reality is in fact incapable of manifestaion- i.e., it remains always unmanifest. However, this explanation may not be liked by all. Therefore, when the man on the Clapham omnibus sees one imaginary pattern called Ishwara, he must be reassured that the patterns called 'events occurring in the phenomenal world' are under the control of Ishwara the primordial pattern; otherwise he feels restless. Ishwara's actions are random to those who have abandoned the ego, because to them there is no such thing as just and unjust: who then would be left to judge morality? Unto those who cling to the ego, we have got to say that God always does the best thing under the circumstances, etc.; otherwise they will not be able to calm themselves.

C.: When Bhagawan means that Ishwara is unreal, he means to say that the personal aspect of God is imaginary. Am I correct?

B.: The Self alone exists and is Real. There is nothing besides the Self. If Ishwara or God be Real, why does he not shine forth in your sleep? Ask God to appear before you in the state of deep slumber and check [if it is at all possible that such a thing could ever happen].

C.: I see creation around me. What is the rationale behind saying that the Self never entered into the manifest phase? Has not the Self become all this? Is not everything made of the Self?

B.: There are no 2 realities, form and substance. Since you now imagine yourself to be with form, it is possible for this question to arise. Substance alone IS.

C.: But substance either may remain unmanifest or it may enter the manifest phase- surely there is a distinction?

B.: Not from the point of view of Substance Itself.

C.: How can that be? I have heard Bhagawan give the example of gold and ornaments made of gold.

B.: Yes- the ornaments are already gold, they were never anything but.

C.: A liquid pool of molten gold is in substance the same as ornaments made of gold; yet the description of the external state varies.

B.: The atomic composition of the gold molecules remain unchanged irrespective of temperature. Whether you are moving around or stationary, you are always the same you.

C.: So the Self is not aware of whether it is in the manifest or unmanifest phase?

B.: I have just said that there cannot be anything called manifestation.

C.: But I see manifestation all around me, everywhere!

B.: There now is an "I" that sees the fiction it creates for itself to see. In deep slumber there is nothing to be seen because there is no "I" available to imagine anything.

C.: How do I get rid of all this imaginary stuff and awaken into Reality? Is it only by asking myself "Who am I?"?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: Sir Isaac Newton conveys unto us his opinion regarding God in the essay Scholium Generale, found in the work Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica written by him, in the following words: [reads out from an aged, heavy-looking tome]

Elegantissima haecce solis, planetarum & cometarum compages non nisi consilio & dominio entis intelligentis & potentis oriri potuit. Hic omnia regit non ut anima mundi, sed ut universorum dominus. Et propter dominium suum, dominus deus dici solet. Nam deus est vox relativa & ad servos refertur: & deitas est dominatio dei, non in corpus proprium, uti sentiunt quibus deus est anima mundi, sed in servos. Deus summus est ens aeternum, infinitum, absolute perfectum: sed ens utcunque perfectum sine dominio non est dominus deus. Dicimus enim deus meus, deus vester, deus Israelis, deus deorum, & dominus dominorum: sed non dicimus aeternus meus, aeternus vester, aeternus Israelis, aeternus deorum; non

dicimus infinitus meus, vel perfectus meus. Hae appellationes relationem non habent ad servos. Vox deus passim significat dominum: sed omnis dominus non est deus. Dominatio entis spiritualis deum constituit, vera verum, summa summum, ficta fictum. Et ex dominatione vera sequitur deum verum esse vivum, intelligentem & potentem; ex reliquis perfectionibus summum esse, vel summe perfectum. Aeternus est & infinitus, omnipotens & omnisciens, id est, durat ab aeterno in aeternum, & adest ab infinito in infinitum: omnia regit; & omnia cognoscit, quae fiunt aut fieri possunt. Non est aeternitas & infinitas, sed aeternus & infinitus; non est duratio & spatium, sed durat & adest. Durat semper, & adest ubique, & existendo semper & ubique, durationem & spatium constituit. Cum unaquaque spatii particula sit semper, & unumquodque durationis indivisibile momentum ubique, certe rerum omnium fabricator ac dominus non eritnumquam, nusquam. Omnis anima sentiens diversis temporibus, & in diversis sensuum, & motuum organis eadem est persona indivisibilis. Partes dantur successivae in duratione, coexistentes in spatio, neutrae in persona hominis seu principio ejus cogitante; & multo minus in substantia cogitante dei. Omnis homo, quatenus res sentiens, est unus & idem homo durante vita sua in omnibus & singulis sensuum organis. Deus est unus & idem deus semper & ubique. Omnipraesens est non per virtutem solam, sed etiam per substantiam: nam virtus sine substantia subsistere non potest. In ipso continentur & moventur universa, sed sine mutua passione. Deus nihil patitur ex corporum motibus: illa nullam sentiunt resistantiam ex omnipraesentia dei. Deum summum necessario existere in consesso est: Et eadem necessitate semper est & ubique. Unde etiam totus est sui similis, totus oculus, totus auris, totus cerebrum, totus brachium, totus vis sentiendi, intelligendi, & agendi, sed more minime humano, more minime corporeo, more nobis prorsus incognito. Ut caecus non habet ideam colorum, sic nos ideam non habemus modorum, quibus deus sapientissimus sentit & intelligit omnia. Corpore omni & figura corporea prorsus destituitur, ideoque videri non potest, nec audiri, nec tangi, nec sub specie rei alicujus corporei coli debet. Ideas habemus attributorum ejus, sed quid sit rei alicujus substantia minime cognoscimus. Videmus tantum corporum figuras & colores, audimus tantum sonos, tangimus tantum superficies externas, olfacimus odores solos, & gustamus sapes: intimas substantias nullo sensu, nulla actione reflexa cognoscimus; & multo minus ideam

habemus substantiae dei. Hunc cognoscimus solummodo per proprietates ejus & attributa, & per sapientissimas & optimas rerum structuras & causas finales, & admiramur ob perfectiones; veneramur autem & colimus ob dominium. Colimus enim ut servi, & deus sine dominio, providentia, & causis finalibus nihil aliud est quam fatum & natura. A caeca necessitate metaphysica, quae utique eadem est semper & ubique, nulla oritur rerum variatio. Tota rerum conditarum pro locis ac temporibus diversitas, ab ideis & voluntate entis necessario existentis solummodo oriri potuit. Dicitur autem deus per allegoriam videre, audire, loqui, ridere, amare, odio habere, cupere, dare, accipere, gaudere, irasci, pugnare, fabricare, condere, construere. Nam sermo omnis de deo a rebus humanis per similitudinem aliquam desumitur, non perfectam quidem, sed aliqualem tamen.

What is Bhagawan's opinion regarding these words?

B.: Yes- he admits that God is extra-corporeal; but I would go even farther and say that there is no such thing as the corporeal, and that Spirit alone exists.

Q.: Such a radical, absolutist idea is not compatible with the experience we obtain through our sensory organs everyday.

B.: True. However, who sees that which he calls corporeal? Ask yourself that. The apparent presence of physical matter or gross objects is revealed by the sensory organs- to whom?

Q.: I have always understood my self to be synonymous with the mind.

B.: What do you mean by the term 'mind'?

Q.: Thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, ideas, hopes, frustrations, values and value-judgements, opinions, beliefs, ambitions, aspirations and so on and so forth.

B.: All these pertain to whom- or are whose?

Q.: Well, mine...; but who am I? Why are we going around in circles?!

B.: All these pertain to an arbitrary mental conceptualisation called "I". In Vedantic terminology this is known as aham vritti. Since this root thought exists, it is possible for other thoughts to arise. Explore and find out what this root thought is. You will find it a myth. The Real Self is left as the Imperishable Residue. There is really nothing by name 'mind'. Do not believe what I am saying- that is absurd; it is like asking, if twice the logarithm of x with base (-1) were to equal 1, then what might the value of x be? Believing that there is no such thing as "I" is nonsensical- who then harbours that belief? Thus, there is no such thing as believing in Truth. Truth can never be believed. Do not attempt to believe Truth. Know it.

Experience it. Live it. Do not form yet another conceptual niche within the mind, where you imagine to and delude yourself that you Live Truth.

Actually do Live It.

Q.: But how?

B.: Abandon the ego once and for all. It cannot be done by 'doing'.

Remain without the feeling or thought "I".

Q.: So the thing called "I" does not really exist at all?

B.: That is correct, but actually find out for yourself. Ajata-advaita cannot be learnt by means of acquisition of conceptual knowledge. It is to be Lived, not learnt.

Q.: Why should 'Who am I?' be regarded as the only means to discovering Truth?

B.: Because all other forms of practice presuppose the existence of "I" the practiser- who, in actual fact, could never exist. If you start out on a wrong trajectory to begin with, how can you ever arrive at Truth?

Q.: I have heard that you are a fatalist. Is it true?

B.: Yes. According to the man on the Clapham omnibus, free will and freedom are synonymous. It is not so. Only mindlessness is actual freedom.

Q.: Well then, if everything is predestined, what is the point in making any effort?

B.: Destiny affects the extroverted mind only.

Q.: So if I ask myself and investigate into the question 'Who am I?', I shall be able to win over my foreordained destiny?

B.: Undoubtedly.

S>M>

Q.: The Manifesto of the Communist Party, authored by Marx and Engels, says: "All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority." Does Bhagawan agree that Marx-Engelsian Ideal is a unique way, the one and only pragmatic way, to reform our present-day morally corrupt, selfish society? And, in Bhagawan's opinion how likely is it that an uprising of the proletariat could take place in India, which lies oppressed under the manacles of the jati system? Does Bhagawan identify himself with the proletariat?

B.: [no response]

The young man went on in this way for some time, talking by turns in cajoling and overbearing fashion. Finally-

B.: [suddenly] Where are are your parents? Are you living with them?

The young man seemed abashed and stunned; he made to say nothing.

B.: Why are you keeping quiet? Answer me! Are you afraid to tell the truth?

Q.: I am not afraid of anything. How can you say that I am afraid of you? And why would I be afraid? You are after all an uneducated fellow. As for my parents, they are elderly people. Who will take care of them? I have left them with relatives on my mother's side, near Thiruvanaikkaval. With my wife and son I have come away to Vellore for my job. These are modern times; one must be modern in one's outlook...

B.: [rather severely] Oh! Is that so? First take care of your parents; then we may take care of society, the jati system, the Proletariat, the Bourgeoisie, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and what not.

The youth got up promptly and fled away. Bhagawan laughed heartily.

S>M>

Q.: If a man fails to Realise the Self in his incumbent lifetime, is it true that ultimately he has only himself to blame- or can we say that destiny must have been the reason?

B.: The former. How can you blame destiny for your failure? It is absurd. The Self is ever willing, ready,- even eager- to consume you, if only you would surrender to Him without reserve- unconditionally. If, instead of giving up everything, and unequivocally permitting yourself to be joyfully devoured stock lock and barrel, you would prefer to cling on to miserable fiction, whose blatant fault is it? Why blame something else for what is our own asinine obduracy? Is it not meaningless?

S>M>

Q.: Prophet Mani, I heard, has said: "It is incumbent upon him who will enter into the Faith that he sees that he is able to subdue lust and avarice, to leave off the eating of all kinds of flesh, the consumption of intoxicants, and the indulgence in fulfillment of the carnal craving for coitus, and to withhold himself from what is injurious in consequence of pretentiousness and hypocrisy; if he is thus fit, he may enter into the Faith; but if not let him abstain from entering. However, if he loves the Faith, but is not able to repress sensuality and avarice, yet he may make himself serviceable for the maintenance of the Truthful, and may compensate for his deeds of iniquity perpetrated in the days by-gone through the use of opportunities wherein he is enabled to wholly give himself up to noble activity, righteousness of thought, speech and conduct, zealous prayer and pious humiliation; for this should certainly suffice him in this transitory world, and also in the future eternal world of God." Does this covenant apply to Bhagawan's creed also?

B.: Bhagawan has no creed; however, no. Those who consider themselves abusers, criminals and sinners may also enter here. Here the doors are closed to none. Grace is never denied to anybody. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Q.: If all receive Grace in equally abundant measure, what then is the point in so carefully leading a virtuous life? One might as well have humongous fun indulging in Sin upto one's heart's content...; but perhaps Bhagawan is going to feed me with the ludicrous rigmarole that the wicked go to 'hell'!

B.: Heaven and hell are not anywhere outside you. The unruly mind is hell, whilst the quiescent mind is heaven. It is really left to you exclusively where you want to stay. As for Sin, as you sow, so you reap. You can never escape the consequences of Sin- you will have to face the harvest invariably. True, Grace is available equally to the sinner too: but much suffering awaits him before he can finally turn towards It and merge himself in It once and for all. They say that Chitraguptan never falls asleep.

Q.: Who is he?

B. asked Mr. TKS, who was in the Hall, to explain to the Caucasian, which was done.

S>M>

Q.: May I know what is the significance of Ramanamasmaranam?

B.: Ra is the Self. Ma is the aham vritti. As one goes on thinking Rama, Rama, ma disappears and Ra alone remains. That is Realisation or Jnana.

Q.: Which is better- oral repetition or mental invocation?

B.: The latter.

S>M>

Q.: The Jnani is said to permanently abide in the state of thaejomayam. I see no light emanating from Bhagawan's body. I infer that the reason for my inability to perceive Bhagawan's phosphorescence is nothing but my own ignorant outlook. Am I correct?

B.: Yes, but the light is not physical. Self-awareness is said to be self-luminous because it does not depend upon anything for its existence. The Self has no environment that it can interact with. It alone IS and It is ALONE.

Q.: Would it not feel lonely?

B.: That might happen only if the thought 'I am alone.' could possibly present itself. There are no vrittis in the Self; therefore, how can thoughts occur to Him?

S>M>

Q.: [scrupulously juxtaposing himself close to the Sofa and whispering] I have spent several months carefully analysing B.'s horoscope. Bhagawan will shed his mortal coil precisely on 2. Feb. 1943, at 7:30 PM.

B.: Oh! Is that so?

Q.: [evidently disheartened at own failure to draw out a more inquisitive reaction] Does not the news distress Bhagawan?

B.: No, it disappoints him.

Q.: What! But why?!

B.: He hoped to leave sooner...

S>M>

Q.: Does completely unconditional surrender imply that desire for Emancipation or Self-Realisation also should be relinquished?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Does completely unconditional surrender imply that the aspiration to merge, attain union or become one with God also should be given up?

B.: Yes.

Q.: So far as the vichara method is concerned, may the ambition for Realisation, or the desire to reach the state of oneness with God, remain?

B.: So far as the vichara method is concerned, as soon as thoughts appurtenant to such ideas arise, or any other thought arises, investigate to whom it has arisen.

Q.: Is not desire to merge with God in itself an indication of at least rudimental spiritual maturity or puissance?

B.: The quest may begin with such desire. All desire must be routed out before there could be any possibility for Realisation. Desire is alien to your natural state.

S>M>

Q.: I heard that Bhagawan told Sri Narasimha Swamy that a certain avaesam[disquiescence] brought him from Madurai to Tiruvannamalai. What is this avaesam? Was it brought about by a subconscious desire on Bhagawan's part to Realise the Immortal Self?

B.: There was no desire of any sort. Some Higher Power swallowed me up wholly and I was helplessly in Its grasp altogether.

Q.: Doubtless that Higher Power is naught but God himself; that being so, how can He be partial[in the sense§inequitable] in dispensing His Grace?



I also want to be devoured by this same Higher Power and reach Bhagawan's same lofty state. Please tell me what I must do.

B.: Surrender yourself unconditionally to the Higher Power; leave everything unto Him.

Q.: Who will then win bread for my family, if I should not do anything at all?

B.: You think it is you who are doing the tasks, quotidian or otherwise, done by the body. Surrender and see. You will discover that everything has always been automatic, and that only you had been thinking otherwise. Free will is only an erroneous idea concocted by one's faculty of imagination.

S>M>

Q.: Which is the more pragmatic approach- eliminating thoughts one by one or straightaway investigating into what the aham vritti is?

B.: Suppose you want to get rid of a virulently poisonous tree. Will you pluck off the leaves one by one? Will you saw through the trunk? OR- will you dig up the earth, uncover the roots, soak them in kerosene, and set them on fire? By the time you pluck and throw away 2 leaves, 200 would have grown elsewhere on the tree. If the trunk is lopped off, new shoots will emerge from the surviving roots. There is only one way to escape from the misery of samsara once and for all- see who this "I" am[or what this "I" is].

S>M>

Q.: How is the mind to be eradicated?

B.: There is actually no such thing [called mind]. Because thoughts occur, we give to the point of their origin a name known as mind. The surest way to get rid of the mind is to look continuously at it- in unintermittent fashion; then you find it was never there. On a dimly lit pathway, we think somebody is standing beside us and are startled with fright; if we look closely, all we find is a lamp-post. If you run away in fear, every lamp-post on the street will cause you trouble, and there will be no end to your terror. Look carefully, on the other hand, and the problem is solved once and for all, then and there. [One's] mind is merely a mistaken notion. Attempting to control or subdue the mind is useless; a second mistaken notion cannot eliminate the original; it can only worsen your incumbent confusion. If you want to eliminate the mind, simply go on looking at it; this is all that is needed.

Q.: Is the world real?

B.: Its substance alone is Real.

Q.: What is that substance?

B.: The Self.

S>M>

It is well past midnight, but since I am feeling inexplicably feverish I have not returned to my lodgings near the temple today. The Hall is dark and quiet; the only sound found to be embellishing the electrifying silence permeating this hallowed Temple of the Presence is the gentle breathing of the young men sleeping at the back of the Hall. The master is as usual seated upright upon the Sofa, his eyes as unimpressionable and starry as ever. These lustrous eyes are brightly lit with a light that is not of this world. I am reminded of the words of the Christ: "My kingdom is not of this world...". These wonderful eyes ostensibly belong to a human, but the Immortal-being which gazes through and out of them is clearly inhuman. One look into those eyes is enough to convey the truth that this man is really not here at all, that he has been devoured without trace by the Beyond, that he is quite, quite lost in that unfathomably supreme Divinity, perpetually elusive to sensory perception, which man is wont to call God... In this duration of merely 7 weeks or so, I reflect in joyously surprised contemplation, how much he has altered me for the better, hopelessly incorrigible wastrel that I was... Peering into those fathomlessly deep eyes, I remember with wry bemusement how petty my life's concerns had been before meeting him. Precisely at that moment, unexpectedly, a deluge of loving gratitude for everything he is and everything he has done for me suddenly bursts through my mind, like raging water exploding out of a pulverised reservoir whose inundation far beyond capacity has resulted in its utter collapse. I am racked and convulsed with silent, helpless sobs. Those great orbs slowly turn and look at me, as though just then registering my presence. A smile of enchanting sweetness gently comes to play on the Maharshi's lips. "You know I do not deserve your Grace, master. Why then give it to me? Is that not wrong?", I ask him from within my mind. The master laughs like a child and says softly, "The redeeming power of Love alone makes one worthy of Grace. If you have a heart that knows to truly Love, be assured that you have the instrument in your hands with which to win over Emancipation. Love alone is the കൂലപ്പാത with which to prise open the terrifically strong knot of the Heart.". The words make the hairs all over my body stand on end; a thrill of sheer, ecstatic joy runs up my spine, and I shudder involuntarily. My body trembles and shivers with the strain of maintaining continual eye-contact; but I am unable to resist the temptation to go on looking, for here is an ocean of supreme, sovereign Serenity, and immersion in her blissful waters provides my beleaguered,

wearied soul with nonpareil refreshment and rejuvenation that is verily "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding". For the first time, I understand practically, as an insight, the meaning of the master's oft-repeated maxim, "You may imagine to yourself that you have parted from God, but know that He never parts from you." Then, without warning, a spasm of pain crossed my abdomen and moments later I lay supine on the floor, whimpering in alarm. The master said, "Do not be discomposed. That which has been aimed at the head: let it carry the turban away. You may collect some thiruneer from the Mathrubuteshwarar shrine. Dissolve a small quantity in water and drink it whenever you have this sort of trouble [affliction of the gastroenterological system]. Also, you may resume chanting Hanuman chalisa." I did not ask how he knew; I am now convinced that the body on the couch before me is simply a mask or vehicle for God Himself to guide me, and: he is Himself that God. Before I lost my parents and in consequence also my faith in God, I would meticulously follow my mother's instruction to chant Hanuman chalisa before going to sleep. Hanuman was the only diety I would worship as a child. Whilst I lived with my parents in Tiruppathur, I would- everyday without fail- visit a nearby temple which had a small shrine of Hanuman in it. On weekdays I would, all the while chanting, "Buddhirbalam yasho dhairyam nirbhayatvam arogatam ajathyam vak patutvam cha hanumat smaranadbhavaet. Asadhya sadhaka svamin asadhya thava kimvadharama dhoota krupasindho mathkaryam sadhyaprabbo. Manojavam marothathulya vaegam jithaendriyam buddhimatham varishtam vathathmajam vanarayoota mukhyam shrirama dhootam sharanam prapadye.", circumambulate the shrine 27 times; on weekends 108. Once a year we would go to the Hanuman temple at Namakkal. The day my parents died, I grabbed the little book from which my mother painstakingly taught me to utter the hymn Hanuman chalisa, and ferociously tore it up. Then, after dark, I unobtrusively slipped away from home for a few minutes, went to an unlit corner of the temple wall, and urinated on it, quietly saying under my breath, "You Satanic, primitive monkey, how grandiloquently you have rewarded me for worshipping you..." On that day when I was 15 God was banished from my mind; He returned, I think, the moment the master's gaze fell on me for the first time. I rose from the floor, prostrated before Bhagawan, who was smiling for some reason, and struggling with the pain sawing through my abdomen, I clutched my stomach and rushed to the tomb of Bhagawan's mother. It was pitch dark. To add to my misery, I was suddenly attacked, without provocation! A noose made out of prickly jute fibre fell over my

head and about my neck; although the person holding the rope made no effort to tighten it to the point of strangulation, but merely held it firmly in, apparently, an attempt to ensure that I was rendered incapable of locomotion and thus of making myself scarce, the immediate thought that occurred to my agitated, panicked mind at the time was that I was being garotted from behind by some murderous ruffian. Not to be outdone, as I was struggling to throw off the rope, I simultaneously reached behind me, grabbed some hair, and pulled it fro in a yanking movement. There was a howl of pain and the grip over my throat was relinquished. Just as I finally managed to throw off the rope and turn around, some persons rushed there, with cycle-Pillai in the midst of them holding up a glowing Tilley lamp. Both astonished, me and the miffed sarvadhikari stared at each other for the entire span of a minute. Then we both laughed, and the men also smiled. 'Adei badava rascal!' said the sarvadhikari genially, 'for 1/16th of a second, my heart stopped beating! But what are you doing at this hour here?' I explained to him my condition. He sympathised with me, and himself brought some sacred ash for me, which I put in my mouth. Then all dispersed and I went back to the Hall, to catch some sleep for the remaining hours of night. Bhagawan, towel draped over chest, was emerging from the Hall, going to attend to his early-morning kitchen duties as usual. I told him what had happened, and he walked away laughing heartily. Before lying down to sleep, I remembered: ஜய ஹனுமானஞானகுண ஸாகர ஜய கபீச்திகுலோக உஜாகர ... etc.. Half-way into my mental chanting, the pain vanished altogether. I do not think it will ever return again; nor do I intend to ever give up my habit of chanting this hymn before going to bed.

P>S>

I was right in my guess concerning the efficacy of the master's prescription. My afflictions of the gastroenterological system, particularly of the liver, never returned, although they were highly serious at one point of time. Yet, since I am one who feels that if at all I have erred the error must have been one on the side of caution, a tiny packet containing thiruneer from the master's mother's tomb is always to be found on my person. As for the hymn hanuman chalisa, till date I chant it before retiring to bed.

Gentle reader, the sarvadhikari was not trying to murder his suspected robber! The pressure applied was only moderate, and its object was not effectuation of estrangement of life from the body of one understood as being a prospecting burglar but rather merely to eliminate possibility of resistance from my side and pin me down to the ground. The sarvadhikari

was always on the edge concerning the question of the ashram's safety, haunted as he perennially was by the fear that thieves might happen to maraud it yet again; the ashram has been robbed more than once in the past. As to how somebody could have the heart to attack this hallowed ground, I have quite no idea. Human behaviour can often be bafflingly inexplicable. I heard that not long after Sri Bhagawan died, some miscreants tried to set fire to the ashram; these were not strangers but persons well known to the ashram, and had on occasion interacted with the master even! Whilst discussing the problem of evil, the master would usually opine that evil was only in the eye of the beholder, and that it was the mischief-mongering mind that permitted man to call one occurrence evil and another good. While the man on the Clapham omnibus may not find this a palatable or pragmatically serviceable piece of advice, devotees of Bhagawan will doubtless be able to cognise its worth. Cycle-pillai is a nickname for an employee of the ashram, whose actual name is Ramasamy. The funny nickname was given to him because, apart from his other duties, day in and day out he always fetched things for the ashram from town, travelling to and fro on a bicycle, even if it was solely to purchase the tiniest needle. I have heard he is a great devotee of Bhagawan. He even today lives in Tiruvannamalai, I think, perhaps serving the handful still living in the abandoned ashram, reliving memories of the Maharshi.

22nd August, 1936

Q.: Is it possible to read others' thoughts?

B.: First find out whether there are any others.

Q.: There being no others is the standpoint of the Jnani. On the other hand, I am only an ajnani.

B.: How do you know that you are an ajnani?

Q.: I am a limited being who does not have the Transcendental consciousness that a Jnani would have.

B.: Are you aware of the limitation whilst in deep slumber?

Q.: No- but I am aware of it now.

B.: How strange that awareness should be talking about awareness of unawareness, instead of naturally remaining as mere awareness.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: The person now raising doubts and questions is a spurious addition on top of pure consciousness, made up of nothing but that very consciousness but falsely assuming a pretended, fictitious identity apart from it[, called "I"].

Q.: Are all ajnanis only pretending to be ajnanis, then?

B.: Undoubtedly.

S>M>

Q.: I want to obtain Aathmasakshatkaram. I request Bhagawan to help me.

B.: Aathman is already and always in Sakshatkaram. Nothing but Aathman exists. Who then wants Sakshatkaram?

Q.: I am clueless. Somehow Sri Bhagawan must help me to get It. Whom else could I turn to? Sri Bhagawan and Sri Aurobindo are the last of the Vedic rishis left in the world. Sri Aurobindo has withdrawn himself into seclusive isolation and it is certainly not easy to get to see him. It is Bhagawan who therefore must help me to obtain Emancipation, by hook or by crook. I pray that B. must take pity on me.

B.: The Self alone could ever BE and He always IS; your ignorance or otherwise of the Self cannot affect the Self. The individual self cannot Realise the Self. If the ego or mind is discovered to be incapable of sustentation, all that is left is the Self exclusively. From the perspective of their present limited state, people call this state Realisation. In fact there is nothing new in It. If the mind is abandoned or surrendered, automatically the Self shines Revealed.

Q.: I am a simpleton. I cannot understand all this obtuse philosophy. I can only pray for God's Grace.

B.: [smiling] Yes. Go around the Hill today evening. Everything will come aright in the end.

S>M>

A Caucasian from Germany seated himself close to the Sofa and read out in stilted fashion from a book as follows, pronouncing English with evident difficulty- "The prevailing lack of true race consciousness in contemporary Europe is probably due to the fact that every important nation there is at present organized in such a manner as to possess in large proportions representatives of at least two of the fundamental European subspecies of man and of all manner of crosses between them. In France to-day, as was the case with Caesar's Gaul, 3 heterogeneous races divide the nation in unequal proportions. In the future, however, with an increased knowledge of the correct definition of true human races and types and with a recognition of the immutability of fundamental racial characters and of the perilous, perverse results of mixed breeding, far more value will be attached to racial in contrast to national or linguistic affinities. In marital relations the consciousness of race will also play a much larger part than at present. When in due

course of time it becomes thoroughly understood that the children of mixed marriages between contrasted races belong to the lower type, the importance of transmitting in unimpaired purity the blood inheritance of ages will be appreciated at its full value and to bring half-breeds into the world will be regarded as a social and racial crime of the first magnitude. The laws against miscegenation must be greatly extended in scope, and enforced with the utmost severity and harshness if the biological purity of the blood of the superior races is to be maintained unmaimed." Then he asked the master-

Q.: Do you agree with Mr. Grant's opinion as heard elucidated just now, sir? Is it not true that miscegenation is posing a vital threat to the purity of the Aryan blood in Europe? In India, of course, all is safe, I presume. Yes; here no Brahmana would even think of marrying one who was not a Brahmana... Don't you agree, sir, that the 'Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre' passed by the German government last year was a step in the correct direction, to put an end to the deadly menace of miscegenation, which threatens to corrupt the Aryan blood irrevocably? Is not our very existence contingent upon the continuance of the Aryan Bloodline?

B.: Our Existence is never contingent upon anything. It is perfectly Absolute.

S>M>

Q.: Both Sri Aurobindo and Nietzsche talk about the Übermensch. Who is this Superman? What is Sri Bhagawan's opinion concerning the matter?

B.: The Superman may not turn out to be anything more than solely a biological conception[, based on the idea of evolution as embodied in the Darwinian theory of natural selection of advantageous heritable traits]. The Elder of Zion now joined the conversation, and told the Hall, 'Selection does not have always to be based on heritage of traits only. Nature may choose other, radical ways if she wants to. Listen to this, please-'. Some nitid United-states based periodical clutched in hand, he now proceeded to read out as follows:- It is said that once upon a time gigantic reptiles roamed the Earth, being masters of land, sea and air. An apocalyptic event must have occurred, say those in the know, which must have resulted in the extirpation of these creatures from the face of the earth. If such event had not occurred, say they, it would not have been possible for the evolutionary processes which have given birth to man to take place. So, for man to emerge, these gigantic reptiles have been done away with by the scheme of nature. Likewise, to make it possible for Nietzsche's Superman to emerge, man as we know him today might have

to perish, and nature might come up with some scheme to this effect in the distant future, and implement the same forcibly, so that the next cycle of life on the Earth might spring forth. Admittedly, all this is mere conjecture, but if such an extinction event were to be implemented so as to occur on the Earth, man would not be consulted as to its execution, anymore than the huge lizards walking the Earth so many thousands of years ago were asked whether they would consider disappearing so that the way could be paved for man to come to originate.

S>M>

Q.: In the work 'The Inequality of human races', authored by Mons. Arthur de Gobineau, the theory is propounded that man is divisible into 3 distinct grades, as follows in the ascending order of extent of bestialisation found in each variety: the white, yellow and black. An excellent English translation of the work by Mr. Adrian Collins was published by Heinemann in 1915. Has anybody read it here?

Chadwick: One way or the other the Superman seems to be a biological conception as pointed out by Bhagawan. Indian philosophy, on the other hand, teaches that man is essentially spirit. Whether our bodies are black, white or anything else, Bhagawan teaches that all of us are in truth Spirit and nothing but that. Isn't that so, Bhagawan?

The master merely smiled.

Q.: But how can we ignore the all-important question of race? In his work 'The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century', Mr. Chamberlain, I remember vividly, says: 'The races of mankind are markedly different in the nature and also in the extent of their gifts, and the Germanic races belong to the most highly gifted group, the group usually termed Aryan.'

E.Z.: I believe that race is merely an intellectual construct fashioned by man, so as to bolster his feeling of security in being with people whom he wants to believe share something in common with him beyond language and culture: something innate and intimate found in all their bodies, something inalienable and inviolable found in all their blood; other than as such imaginary vehicle which caters to this fundamental psychological need which most seem to have, how does race actually exist in nature's design- does it?

Q.: Of course it does, Mr.-?

E.Z.: Cohen, it is, sir, thank you.

Q.: Yes, you see, Mr. Cohen, race is quite real, I assure you. Mr. Chamberlain, I remember, has written in that book that just as we are able to infer the dissimilarity of human individuals on the basis of their physiognomy, so the dissimilarity of human races could be read in the



structure of their bones, the colour of their skin, their muscular system, the formation of their skull and so forth. He goes on to add that there is perhaps not a single anatomical fact upon which race has not impressed its special distinguishing stamp. Moreover, you see, racial distinctions usually correspond, cohere with mental ones. Birds of a feather flock together.

C.: Hey, mister, where's the proof that the Germans are so special, eh? The man now proceeded to extract a book from his weather-beaten portmanteau-case. I caught a glimpse of title: 'Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts'.

Q.: See how beautifully the accomplishments of the Germanic peoples are summarised here, sir!

He then read out proudly: Er umschiffte die ganze Erde; er entdeckte Millionen Welten; er grub in tropischer Sonnenhitze uralte, längst vergessene Städte aus; er forschte nach Dichtungen, nach sagenhaften Burgen; er entzifferte mit unsagbarer Mühe Papyrusrollen, Hieroglyphen und Tonscherbeninschriften, er untersuchte tausendjährigen Mörtel und Steine auf ihre Bestandteile; er lernte alle Sprachen der Welt; er lebte unter Buschmännern, Indianern, Chinesen und formte sich ein mannigfaches Bild der Völkerseelen Er sah Technik, Industrie, Philosophie, Moral, Kunst und Religion aus Anfängen verschiedenster Art zu Werken unterschiedlicher Natur heranwachsen: er begriff Persönlichkeit, weil er selbst eine war. Er faßte das Tun der Völker als Tat auf, das heißt als geformte seelische Kraft, als Ausdruck eines eigenartigen Innern. Er hatte nicht nur Interesse dafür, daß Menschen so oder so gedacht und gehandelt hatten, sondern erruhtenichteter, alsbiserdieinneren Kräfte, diedazuführten, wenigstens ahnen gelernt hatte.

Upon having beheld the blank, uncomprehending expression on his face, I translated these words to the best of my ability for Chadwick. The Caucasian gazed at me in some astonishment; but before he could say anything to me-

C.: All just vain boast, sir, sorry am I to say. Do you know- the Sun never sets over His Majesty's Empire! Germany lost even what tiny land she used to have by way of colonial holdings, consequent to the [Great] War.

Q.: Not for long! The Führer is the leader Heaven has sent us to restore lost pride and honour to Mother Germania! Soon the Swastika shall flutter high above all the Earth!

C.: [gleefully] Oh! Hitler's fan, are you? Well, well, then, here's a bit of news for you to munch on- Cohen here is a JEW! A JEW! A JEW!

Q.: [with an expression of horror utter and unadulterated, turning to the Shylock] Is it true, sir? A mischling, perhaps?

E.Z.: [smiling bemusedly] Yes, true. No, I am fully Jewish- but by religion. In fact I helped found the Association of Hebrew Theosophists at Adyar, established during the 1925 Congress. But actually, I am from Bashra- The Caucasian simply had not listened beyond the initial affirmations. Looking seriously agitated, he snatched up his portmanteau-case and quickly got up. Almost whimpering, he plaintively asked the master, 'Why are you allowing it, sir?'. B. smiled but made no response.

Q.: The Jew is a criminal, sir: you are omniscient, you know it well. He cannot be reformed; parasitical exploitation of nation after nation of hard-working peoples is a trait written in his blood. Now his pernicious grip has extended itself into India also! Alas! I wonder when the Jewish menace shall be rid off the Earth...! Farewell, Maharshi! And cover the well in your ashram- Jews are known to poison wells. Good-bye, sirs!

And with a smile in Chadwick's direction, a wave in mine, a wrathful scowl in the Shylock's and a deep respectful bow in Bhagawan's, he left the Hall forthwith. I never saw him again.

S>M>

Q.: B. said that the Superman might be only a biological idea.

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is it not necessary to perfect the body before perfecting the soul?

B.: The body is not apart from the soul. The body is merely an appearance in the soul. Only the soul really exists.

Q.: Is it not then a question of ourselves evolving from matter, into spirit? Is that not what the term 'Realisation' denotes?

B.: You were never anything but Spirit.

Q.: But I now find myself in a body. I do not mean to say that I am one with the body, but rather that I am, or that my soul is, sheathed within it.

B.: The experience of world and body consciousness is a cogent, cohesive illusion, elegantly, artfully engineered expressly to deceive you into thinking that it is objectively real. There is no such thing as objective reality. Everything depends upon the one subject only- you. Anything seen cannot be real. Reality is that alone which actually IS.

Q.: But I am seeing you in a physical world, sir. I gather you have already escaped fully from all illusion. How is it then that you still see a world?

B.: I see no world.

Q.: Here I fail to maintain pace in my understanding. Don't you see the couch you are sitting on, sir? Don't you hear me talking to you right now?

B.: The body on the couch undergoes these experiences. I am not connected with it in the slightest.

Q.: Where are you then, sir, if not inside the body I am seeing before me?

B.: The Jnani's abode is the Beyond. He abides as Parabrahman or Jnana Itself. If others see a body and mistakenly associate him with it, that would not affect his state. It requires an aham vritti to be able to confuse as being that of your own the actions performed by the body. There are no vrittis in Jnana.

Q.: I am reminded of Goethe's words: "Everything is simpler than we can think, and at the same time more complicated than we can comprehend."

B.: Where is the complication in remaining as the Self? Only thinking produces complications.

Q.: If the world is an illusion, who has masterminded the illusion- and why?

B.: Ishwara. Karma.

Q.: If karma is exhausted, will the illusion vanish?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How then to get rid of karma?

B.: By investigating into who the karta is.

S>M>

Q.: How to get supreme Happiness?

B.: Verily, he alone obtains supreme Happiness who has [absolutely] nothing [left] to lose- not even himself.

Q.: Can I attain Jnana whilst remaining amidst the woes of samsara? Or shall I also run away from my family like Bhagawan and go into some secluded forest to practise tapas?

B.: Certainly. Samsara is really just the mind. Remain without mind; this is the true import of tapas; this tapas can be performed anywhere. Leaving one's house may bring about difficulties far greater than one had bargained for. There is no unique merit in abandoning the house; instead abandon the mind.

Q.: But Bhagawan said there must be nothing to lose.

B.: The remark was made with reference to the mind. The mind must be thoroughly denuded of its contents and then itself abandoned altogether so as for Jnana to dawn. Light the fire of vairagya under the pot of the mind. Scoop out and throw away the now liquefied [or rarefied] contents of the pot, being [an amalgam of] ishtasankalpas, poorvasamskaras, vishayavasanas and other vrittis. Then topple [off] the empty pot irrevocably so that nothing further can be added inside. The emptied pot is the manonivritti state. The toppled pot is the sashwatamanonivritti

state. The Sahaja-stithi or Jnana is breaking of the pot. That you cannot do.

Q.: Who will do it, then?

B.: Bhagawan will do it.

Q.: Oh! Bhagawan's promise of Grace finds me at a loss for words [with which] to express my gratitude. But I still say that if I remain in the house attachments will continue to haunt me.

B.: In the forest they will become more and more intense on account of the shock of parting from the objects associated with them.

Q.: What am I to do then?

B.: Tackle attachments or desires with the vichara 'Who am I?'

Q.: The same brahmastra!

B.: The brahmastra atleast may be possibly recalled under exceedingly rare circumstances. Verily, the vichara 'Who am I?' is a Brahmashironamaka-asthra from which not even the tiniest wisp of ignorance can escape utter annihilation; but [so as] for [successfully wielding] this [astra known as atma-vichara] Guru's Grace is necessary.

Q.: How to earn Guru's Grace?

B.: Again only by relentlessly carrying on with the vichara.

S>M>

Q.: I am doing vichara for the past 10 years. I see no results. What am I doing wrong?

B.: Since you still have an option to remain apart from the Self, it becomes possible for this question to arise; go on with the vichara and one day suddenly this option will disappear. Then Jnana is [found to be] inevitable and automatic.

Q.: How to make sexual lust to subside and disappear?

B.: Investigate who feels it or becomes aware of it.

Q.: It sounds hard to accomplish.

B.: Renounce the idea of difficulty also. What else is to be done? There is no other way. Yatho yatho nischarati manashchanchalamasthiram thathasthato niyamyaitadhathmanyaeva vasham nayaet. We cannot afford to be re-born: can we?

Q.: No. I shall tackle the mind by vichara as suggested by Bhagawan. I only pray for B.'s Grace to descend upon me in full, unmitigated measure.

B.: The more the mind is introverted, the more Grace it receives. In the end only Grace remains.

Q.: I hope Bhagawan is always with me, although physically I might be hundreds of miles away.

B.: [smiling] Samoham sarvabhootaeshu na mae dhvaeshyoesti na priyaha yae bhajanti thumam bhaktya mayi thae thaeshu chapyaham.

S>M>

Q.: According to Bhagawan the doctrine of Ajata-advaita is best summarised in the Vedas in which verse or verses?

B.: Na marthyurasidhstham na tharhi na rathraya ahna asithprakaethaha anidhavatam savadhaya thadhaekam thasmath dhanyananaparaha kimchanasa. Thama asita thamasa goozlmagre aprakaetam salilam sarvamyadhama thuchyenabhvapihitam yadhasita thapasasthanmahina jayathaikama. Kamasthadhagre samavarthathadhi manasoraethaha parathamam yadhasitha satho bandhumasati niravindana hardi parathishyakavayo manisha. Koe adhda vaedha kaihapara voechathakuta ajathakuta iyamvisrishtaha arvagadhaeva asya visarjanaenata kovaedhayathababhoova. Iyam visrishtaryata ababhoova yadhivadadhe yadhi vana yo asyadhyakshaha paramaevayomanaso andagavaeda yadhi va navaeda.

Q.: But here creation is mentioned as having taken place.

B.: No. What is said is that it is not possible to know anything about the origin or cause of creation; this is stated to be the case even with Ishwara. The implication is that creation is mythical, like the horn of a horse. There cannot be any knowledge of what is not; otherwise we may say that mythical knowledge produces a mythical knower so that he [in turn] can serve as its radix [-i.e., as the fons et origo for such delusory knowledge]. However we may choose to word it, Reality is what IS, and there cannot be anything else.

Q.: How then did man's ignorance originally arise?

B.: Investigate into the question of who the one is who claims to be afflicted with ignorance. Who is it who complains of being ignorant? Redress the question of the nescient, and the question of nescience will take care of itself.

S>M>

Q.: To Realise the Self is it necessary to go into ekanthavasam?

B.: There is only one true ekanthavasam: that is the mindless state.

Q.: At the time of death, the Jnani vanishes in a blazing column of crimson light, and does not leave behind a gross body as a cadaver. Am I correct?

B.: It is not possible to formulate any general rule concerning the matter. He may or may not leave behind a body at the time of death. His experience is that he already has no body. Others take him to be the body. He himself does not make that mistake.

S>M>

Q.: Can a man's body survive the loss of the aham vritti?

B.: Yes.

23rd August, 1936

Today morning when I entered the Hall, Sri Bhagawan smiled at me sweetly like a child and handed unto me a letter, saying, ' உனக்கு இது

பிடிக்கும்த் , பாரேன்த் !'. Piqued, I unfolded it and read it. It was from a Mons. Alfred E. Sorensen, and ran thus- [reproduced from memory]

Oh! Master of the Formidable Mountain! I was earlier like a filthy pig, consuming with eager relish the turds excreted by the sensory organs. I came with a restless mind to scrutinise your authenticity, but the moment your eyes fell on me, I became motionless like you, for you graciously annihilated my arrogant headucation and immersed me in my own intrinsic innerstand of absolute Being, which in truth is only You. I kiss the dust of your ravishing feet everyday, for by drowning me once and for all in the unfathomable ocean of exultation which is verily You, you have devoured my traitorous mind forever. Now I live only as Love-of-you. I have happily lost myself in You, who are Love Itself. Never ever will the miseries of the world manage to trace me out again, for I see only Lovely You in them. When your omniscient eyes bored into mine and said 'THERE IS NO ANYTHING.', my Heart tugged from within, and, knowing it was You who was calling, I meekly followed. There I was rendered NAUGHT; now I am NOT. Now I roam around the universe like an unbridled wild-animal, knowing not what I am doing or why. Now all I know is You in which there is no me. My master has been kind enough to send word through Mr. Hurst that he regards me as a Sahaja-jnani or natural mystic. But my joy is in knowing that this ugly form- which I once considered as one with myself- has found a place in my hallowed Master's memory! Although now there is no question of anything remaining apart from my Master, my heart aches to set eyes upon his physical frame again. May Sri Bhagawan expeditiously fulfill my wish! [Valediction:] Bhagawan's Love

G.: Who is this man?

B.: He came here earlier this year, perhaps at Mr. Brunton's invitation.

G.: B. took one look at him, and he attained the Final State?!

B.: [twinkling] B. does not know anything. Why, is the allure of Jnana tempting you?! [laughs]

G.: Oh! no. The moment I came here and B. looked at me, I forgot myself...

Now I remember only Bhagawan, who is already a Jnani. So for whom am I to ask Jnana?

B.: The secret of Jnana is bhakti. Unselfish Love is the key which throws open the Gate of the Heart once and for all. Long and yearn for Him fervently not so that He may destroy your ignorance, but merely because such Love is possible[to you]. Wild, motiveless, intransigent, fathomless, insane Love is Jnana Itself. One alone who knows so to madly Love has fulfilled the purpose of human birth; he need not be born again. The Loveless ones repeatedly come back to the miasmatic ocean of samsara to suffer more and more.

G.: To everyone who comes here B. recommends vichara only.

B.: Vichara is a means to eliminate ignorance, which obnubilates Love from Shining forth. Love is the Self Itself. Love cannot be practised as a sadhana. All that is possible is to surrender to it. There is no such thing as inculcation of Love. Love is already there. It alone IS. All that is needed on your part is to give up thought, which makes you imagine yourself to be apart from Love, and so merge in Love. Then there is only Love, which is bliss beyond imagination. To one who has discovered the ecstatic joy of volitionless Love, sadhana is a laughable absurdity. Unto those who solicit justifications, we may say that such Love blossoms only in souls which have perfected their sadhanas in previous births.

G.: But among sadhanas vichara is the best?

B.: Undoubtedly.

S>M>

Q.: It cannot be denied that the attitude of the man on the Clapham omnibus is chiefly centered around temporal goals. What shall be done to persuade man to abandon his materialistic outlook, which brings him only misery?

B.: Each views a world of his own mental creation, for which he then attempts to obtain corroboration from 'others' seen by him within that same world. Is it not absurd? Everything is according to the seer only. Whether materialistic or spiritual, it is all only in your own mind. Each one fancies his own set of mental concepts, and then sees the world by their aid. Let your standpoint become that of Jnana and then the world will be found to be not apart from the Self. Drishtin jnanamayim kritva pashyaet Brahmamayam jagat. So, the question is one of outlook. Make your outlook inward-bent and the world will be found to be neither this nor that, but indistinguishable from bliss. As for the world's misery, you need not worry about the same. The Creator knows how best to take care of His creations. You need not assume His role. Let us tackle our own problems first and foremost. If you are incompetent even to solve your own problems, where are you going to solve others'?

Q.: How best shall I secure my future and provide for old-age?

B.: Take care of the present the future will take care of itself.

Q.: Only my present effort is going to secure a congenial old age for me. Should I not make effort in the present to ensure that the future is agreeable? But B. would have me keep still...

B.: Unto whom has this doubt arisen? Who is it that wants a course of action to follow in the present? First find the doubter. If you hold on to the doubter all your doubts will disappear. Having lost the natural state of abidance in the Self you now find yourself perturbed by all sorts of thoughts and doubts. A world is seen, one imagines oneself to be within it and there is anxiety for the future. If only you would incessantly inhere in the Self, all your confusion will vanish.

Q.: But how to do this?

B.: To hunt down or attain something which is external to you, a formula can be prescribed. But you are yourself always the Self. Do you doubt the existence of your own Self?

Q.: No. Yet, I want to learn how to Realise the Self.

B.: By practice. Just as water is obtained by boring a well, so also shall you Realise the Self by the quest of vichara.

Q.: Some find water readily. Others go on struggling but there is no success.

B.: Do you not already see moisture shimmering on the surface? You are hazily aware of the Self. Pursue It with unflagging perseverance. When personal effort is no longer possible the Self shines forth.

Q.: How to train the mind to look within?

B.: Only by incessant practice. The mind is an intelligent phase which is quite capable of rendering itself motionless, thus bringing about its own destruction, so that Self shines.

Q.: How to destroy the mind?

B.: Water cannot be made dry water. Seek the Self. Then it is discovered that there was no such thing as mind; neither does any discoverer remain to manufacture the assertion, 'I have discovered my Self.'

S>M>

Q.: Each one finds a different sadhana to suit him best. Which shall I undertake? What would I find suitable in my case? I request B. to guide me, please.

B.: Always the same question. First you pretend to be apart from the Self. And then, imagining you have strayed away from the Self, you ask for sadhana to 'do', with the idea that by means of doing thereof, you may retrace your steps back to the Self. Will the stratagem work? No. Why? Because to begin with the entire super-structure of ideas was wrong- an absurdity. Can anyone leave his Self? Is it not ridiculous? BE-ing the Self Itself, how can you leave it? So, what is to be done is simply this: There is now a spurious "I" which is



sitting on top of the Real Self. Since it is imaginary it cannot be destroyed; it is like trying to drink mirage-water or eat painted-fruits. The only way to escape from it is to closely scrutinise it. Then alone can you see that it was never there at all. You may go on beating the snake you see in the twilight. Will the snake die? No. The rope jumps about because you are delivering blows upon it, and so you become even more agitated and frightened, thinking that a venomous snake is rearing to attack you, and thus beat it all the more ferociously, determined to kill it at all costs so that your life may cease to be in peril, and as a result it twitches even more vigorously and so on in an endless vicious cycle. It is completely impossible to kill the snake because there is no snake. Lay your club aside, stare at the 'snake' quietly for some time, laugh at your own stupidity if you feel like so, and then go your way. This is Realisation. All the various so-called sadhanas really perpetuate bondage. They deepen your fatuous conviction that ignorance is something real, to be destroyed, after which you will go to some sort of heavenly state. You will go on striking at a rope, and grumble to everyone you meet, "Look at how strong my adversary is. Even after beating him so long, he will not die, but keeps rearing up at me. I wonder when this snake is finally going to die. Alas! how cruel is the good God unto me! To Ramana Maharshi alone He has granted Realisation in a trice, but when it comes to me, He is sorely testing my patience...". Whose fault then is suffering? Can it be God's fault?

Q.: So, I am really free here and now?

B.: Yes- only remain without thinking, effortlessly and volitionlessly so.

Q.: Impossible.

B.: That is why the investigation 'Who-am-I?' is advised.

24th August, 1936

D.O.: [tearfully] I am definitely ashamed to admit it, but I was having doubts about whether B. is my Guru or not. Yesterday night the Lord Jesus Himself came in my dream. He put my all my misgivings to rest. He reassured me that indeed B. is my Guru. This is the conversation that took place between myself and the Lord in my dream.

The D.O. then handed over to Chadwick a notebook filled with shaky scribbles in French. For a time the Major seemed to peruse it with interest. Then his eyes grew round with disbelief, and his face turned slightly white. He let the notebook fall to the ground and turned to accost the Frenchman. Soon the Frenchman's smiling face become distorted with rage, and both, fists raised and all, were jabbering loudly away at each other, unintelligible to the rest of us. B. sat as unmoved as ever. Finally an emotional Chadwick turned to B. and said in a shaking voice, 'Bhagawan, please, please, please let us throw

out this horrific fiend from the ashram. He seems sympathetic to the German cause of persecuting the Jewish community. My own opinion of him is that he is dangerously mentally unstable.' The D.O. also turned to B. and delivered a long homily, but with Chadwick refusing to translate a word, nobody could understand a thing. Finally the Frenchman spat at Chadwick's feet, bowed low to the master, and stormed out of the Hall. I never saw him again. The abandoned notebook lay forgotten in a corner, until the master himself went to it and picked it up. He dropped it on Chadwick's knees. The now cheerless Major, who, almost as a matter of scrupulous rule, was invariably to be found in good spirits, looked doleful and forlorn as he sat near the Sofa, with his chin humourlessly tucked betwixt his knees. When the notebook fell on him, he looked up at Bhagawan with a lugubrious face and said: 'Lost my damned temper again, I s'pose... Darn it!'

B.: பரவா இல்லை . போக போக சரியாகிவிடும . Now read out the notebook. Bhagawan wants to hear.

C.: But- its very offensive- and- and... outright disgusting! Mr. Cohen is also sitting here.

The Elder of Zion: It is alright. If B. asks us to do something it must have a purpose.

B.: You may start reading.

And so Chadwick had no choice in the matter; he read out in English from the French, improvising on the translation as he went, whilst the master listened attentively:

Q.: Oh! Lovely Master Jesus, how may I know my true Self?

Jesus Christ: You stand atop it. Scarper!

Q.: My Lord, my soul is lost in darkness. I beg you to bring it into the Light. When, Oh! blessed Light of Love, shall I gain admission into the Kingdom of the Father? I fear that I shall be lost in this mad world of men for good.

J.: Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Q.: But I am impatient to reach the Kingdom of Heaven forthwith.

J.: It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

Q.: Master, I worry incessantly that my Union with you might come never to pass. Please tell me how I am to reach you.

J.: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Q.: I do Love you so, beloved master. Blessed master, please tell me how I can attain you.

J.: Pray without ceasing.

Q.: Master, in the contemporary world, there are many people purporting to teach the word of God. May they be trusted, master?

J.: Beware, for many are the charlatans who shall profess under my name; they are the emissaries of Satan! They shall burn down villages, rape children, sodomise the elderly, tear out the entrails of women and devour them with glee, and persuade man to follow after their example; most iniquitously of all, they shall proclaim themselves to be my followers, and they shall scream out into the world that it is my bidding that they carry out! I asked then and ask now of man one thing only: that you Love me sincerely and truly and completely with all your little, pious heart. That is enough; I shall myself carry my loving children into the Kingdom of my Father. He who would carry no Love for me in his heart, but would talk about me to fellow man, forges for himself, inch by painstaking inch, chains of steel that would bind him, irrevocably, to the most putrid nook in all of Hell! The hypocrite who would charge a fee from his fellow man for propagating my message of Love earns my wrath as surely as my Sacrifice upon the Cross shall Redeem the Loving soul! If you Love me, and Love me only, and love me so much that you take no thought for anything else, then surely shall I enfold you in my embrace and take you to the Kingdom of my Father in Heaven. There we shall rejoice together for all of Eternity! He that would ask of you wages for spreading the message of Spirit verily perpetrates the most dire blasphemy unto my Love. That instant he solicits of you, 'I shall explain unto you the message of Love of our Redeemer; but how many coins shall you reward me with?', may you divine unto yourself, with certainty, that an emissary of Satan has spread out his poisonous net for you to fall in. He that would talk of lofty matters, but is hateful, spiteful, vengeful and cruel; he that would pretend that he brings unto you the gift of Salvation from the Kingdom of my Father in Heaven, but burns with greed to seize your possessions and lustfully enjoy your body; he that assures you he has arrived to impart unto you my gift of Salvation, but speaks in scornful disparagement of my Love; he who talks much, but who has no Love himself; he who would cause you to think much, but who does not awaken Love for me in your heart; he who brings you not peace, but terror; he who feels no compassion, but laughs with enjoyment upon

beholding the suffering of the world; he who would not content himself with frugal manner of the earthly life, but would covet all the riches of the world; wretched he that, being steeply mired in sin, shall falsely proclaim of himself, 'I and my Father are One.'; he that shall not be the friend of all creatures on the Earth, but that shall torment them, abuse them, flagellate them and relish in their agony- him may you recognise to be the foremost among the emissaries of Satan. The emissary of Satan shall pour words of comfort in your ears. He shall offer you all the riches in this world and countless other worlds. In return he shall solicit access to your soul. He is wont to cast the spell of sopor upon your soul, and whilst you are asleep, carry it away to his Evil Empire of Darkness! Oh! child, pay him no heed, although he pretends to you to be my emissary! I have no emissaries, for here I am in you always, should you only care to Love me from within the heart! I have sent my apostles into the world not that you quarrel over their words, but that you learn of me as the Love Supreme of your life! Verily do I say unto you, he that Loveth me above all else, he that cherisheth me in the heart as the sole Beauty of his life, him I shall Deliver, him alone shall I take to Eternal Life! But woe betide the man who is deceived by the words of the emissaries of Satan! He who would lend his ear to the emissary of Satan- to rot in the deepest depths of Hell forevermore would be his fate irredeemable!

Q.: Master, in my incumbent life, I have accepted the Nude-sage of the Unapproachable-mountain to be my master. Have I erred?

J.: No. Just as I teach now from this mountain, so too shall that noble saint in his time teach from his mountainous abode. Just as I leave behind no lineage, so too shall he none. Just as charlatans, acting under the command of Satan, abuse and blaspheme my name and rain down woe on man, so too shall they his. Just as, mulcting my name, atrocities are perpetrated by the emissaries of Satan, who will stop at nothing in persecuting the innocent, so too shall there his. Know that when the emperor NeferkaRe who ruled over the land of Mizraim yielded to the call of Satan and committed sodomy with his general, his blasphemy prompted a response of fury from the angels of Heaven, and a missile of rock and ice, bedazzling all earthly beings with its twin blazing trails of light, one the colour of the Genista-flower and the other the Chicorée-flower, was seen shooting across the sky by denizens of the Earth, and they pondered frightenedly at the marvellous sight, suspecting that my Father's

Righteous wrath was aroused. Now I tell you this- when that same missile is seen by the beings of the Earth again, that is the day on which the emissaries of Satan shall have had assembled together in the land of the white-headed eagle, and be planning how best to rain down Satan's fire and fury upon the Earth. Would say the first emissary, 'Let us use weapons of fire to kill man.'. Would say another, 'No, fire can be quenched by water. Let us use water.'. Would say the third, 'No, water can be dried by wind. Let us use wind.' And so forth would they go on squabbling amongst themselves. And then, the first-born son of Satan, Beelzebub, would appear. He would say, 'In the age where man has learnt to split the atom, he cannot be killed by using physical weapons, for he has now great expertise over manipulating the realm of matter.'. And then, the second-born son of Satan, Mephistopheles, would appear. He would say, 'Man today is vulnerable to being attacked only in the realm of mind. Let us destroy him there.'. And then there would be an unholy blue effulgence in the ether and a filthy odour in the air. Out would step Satan himself! He would say gleefully, "My children, it is true that now man's only remaining vulnerability is the mind. Listen to my plan carefully. From age to age, the Light of Truth is handed down by Saints to mankind. It is not given to the capability of our power to destroy it. But this we can do and we shall do- let us teach him to scrutinise it through the intellect! The Lantern of the Blissful Joy of God's Love, which is so loathe to us, cannot be destroyed by us. Let us teach man to loathe it just as we do. Then he will never look at it! This is perpetual death, for the man that never looks at this Light lives in perennial suffering, which he undergoes ad infinitum! Let us teach man to obscure this blissful Love in the cloak of intellectual understanding, so that he thinks, 'Ah! What a beautiful glowing cloak I have made! Great indeed verily am I!' and befools himself again and again, never Realising the Truth for all of Eternity! With this elegant plan, I have been fooling generation after generation of man, cheating him out of his rightful inheritance of unfathomably deep happiness and ineffably intense bliss! By this cunning plan of mine, man now thinks he is a mortal, finite being! Time and again God sends down his messengers and time and again we obscure the message; for this is our natural role in the scheme of things. When the Son of God came down to the Earth to give Salvation to man, I persuaded the Jew- always my ready instrument, indeed my willing, acquiescent agent- to persecute him and pique him and perturb him

in all sorts of ways, for I was determined that his mission on Earth must not succeed. The Jew- verily one of our own in heart- obeyed my enunciation, overwhelmed with joy at the opportunity to plunge mankind in darkness once and for all. The Christ was crucified, and I was delighted. When his limbs were being broken with clubs, I danced around madly, with froth foaming out of my mouth, delirious with pleasure. When thorns of iron penetrated his skull, I was shaking with ecstasy. When he was nailed into the cross, a loud peal of laughter escaped my lips. When a spear was driven into his side, I jumped up and down for joy. Finally when his limp, ruined body was taken down, the once proud, upright head lolling down like the broken stalk of a flower, I and my Jewish companions spat in contempt at the sky, intending it to be an insult unto God Almighty in Heaven. But curiously, our spittle only landed in our own faces, and then we suspected something had gone wrong. Alas, our suspicions were not unfounded! On the third day he arose as new and unscathed as ever, and blessed his followers. Then he vanished into the sky. I bit off the tip of my tail in rage, and the Jew broke off his horns in frustration, which uptill that day had been his chief distinguishing feature. Then I asked the Jew, 'Brother, how shall we devils now know who is a gentile and who a Jew? How may we find you, that we may hire you for our many destructive engagements, directed, as usual, at bringing grief to man?'. The Jew responded at once, 'Brother, why should locating us be so arduous? Wherever and whenever something bad has happened, look around the corner, and surely we shall be there.' Then we hatched a new plot to ensure that man did not inherit what unto him was legitimately due- the Kingdom of Heaven. The precious legacy of the Christ could not be destroyed, but man could be taught to examine it with the faculty of his intellect. Thus the teaching of the Christ would become useless; man would no longer be able to use it, to practise it; he would know not how. Thus, I asked the Jew to subtly and artfully introduce various intellectual distinctions pertaining to the person of the Christ himself, so that his teachings of Light should slowly fade away from prominence. To my delight, the Jew succeeded as though he were an evil-spell cast out of my own twisted pitchfork! One man talked about Anomoeanism. Another talked about Socinianism. Everyone babbled nonsense- no one Loved; none practised! None became ecstatic with joy at the thought of God. Here and there some divined the Truth by paying attention to what he had actually said, but that

could not be helped. By and large I had withheld man from his rightful inheritance. Greatly satisfied and relieved, I went to sleep. Centuries later, I am now rudely awakened, my children. Once again man is on the verge of waking up to the Light. We must fight tooth-and-nail to ensure that man does not discover his true, Immortal nature. The teachings of the Nude-sage of the Unapproachable-mountain with rapidity gains acceptance everywhere; as usual the recourse of arrantly destroying them is not made available unto us. So, let us deploy the stratagem that works with admirable flawlessness everytime: let us destroy man by making him conceptualise and intellectualise the Truth; for then surely it is lost to him forever! Again and again he shall be born, suffer countless agonies and die, not knowing the blatant truth of his own Immortality! We shall sleep peacefully again! To such end, this is what I require you to do..." And then Satan would beckon each devil present in the gathering to come; he would whisper something in each one's left ear and then embrace him tightly. The moment this were to happen, each devil would transform into a healthy, cheerful looking human-being of either sex, inwardly as iniquitous and malevolent as always but as a decoy wearing on the lips the most winsome and charming smile. Beelzebub would change into a woman with white hair and sparkling teeth. Mephistopheles would become a stout man with thick fists. After all transformations would be complete, Satan would screech, 'Fellow demons! I have informed you each of the nature of your mission. Pollute the mind of man! May darkness forever obscure the blissful Light of Truth! May man never wake up to his true nature of immortal Spirit, that we, the enemies of Light, may remain immersed always in the dark joy of sleep! Millions of our Jewish brethen await to aid you in your dark deed. Disperse, and Devilspeed!'. All would eagerly leave to revenge themselves upon man, whom they hated; but Beelzebub and Mephistopheles would stand puzzled. Beelzebub would say in a small, sad voice, 'Father, are we to obtain no mission to execute, that we may joyously inflict pain and suffering upon man? For our heart craves and yearns to crack open his skull, eat the stuff of his brain, and finally seizing his soul, torture it till the end of time.'. Satan would say thus, "My children, you two have a highly specialised mission to execute. It is not enough that man be superficially deceived. He must be systematically, thoroughly defrauded, for many a one amongst him is deep-thinking in nature. If we do not swindle him perfectly, he shall

discover the fact that he is being swindled. Therefore, go down to the earth and announce unto the humans that you are husband and wife. The Nude-sage of the Unapproachable-mountain left behind no heir to fill his papcy. But man in his credulity knows this not. This then is what you shall do: approach an old, trusting devotee of the Nude-sage, who lives north-east of the Vindhya-hills. Already some of our Jewish accomplices are living with him, laying the foundation for his ruin. When you go you will find everything ready for you. He is a pure, innocent man- therefore a most obliging and co-operative victim. Unto him spin some tragic yarn, so that his delicate heart melts for you in sympathy. Then he will accept you into his fold. Next you must fabricate and gradually promulgate a pretension, spurious but purporting to be true, that you are the exclusive inheritors of his spiritual lineage. This achieved, the time has come to send the old man to his grave, for if he were to further live the accomplishment of our dread purpose would not come to pass. Our Jewish friends have occupied houses throughout the street where he lives. Once you have given the signal, each one shall invite the old man over to partake of luncheon at his house, every day of the week. The kindness of his heart shall not permit him to refuse. When he is eating, take care to have agglomerated upon his plate all manners of sweetmeats. He cannot discard what is deposited upon his plate, and must needs eat it, for in concordance and acquiescence with the injunction of his master, he shall abhor waste. Being a creature of the Spirit, he shall easily divine your plan; but yet he would not resist your attempt to despoil his body of life; for depredation of life from his body shall in no way affect the Truth of his Transcendental Existence. Everyday you shall smilingly heap sweetmeats upon his plate, and he shall smilingly eat them. And so all his blood shall turn into sugar, and he shall die this same year. Then shall you both announce unto the world that you are the only surviving torch-bearers of the spiritual legacy of the Nude-sage of the Unapproachable-mountain. In other lands you might not be believed. But in the land of the white-headed eagle, which has fallen completely into the hands of the Jew, man shall be unsuspecting and gullible, for the Jew has utterly seized control of his mind, and now commands servile obedience from him. Thus the pair of you, assisted by the Jew, shall tour throughout the land of the white-headed eagle, and, pretending to be the legitimate torch-bearers of that great master's spiritual legacy, present the teachings of the Nude-sage in perverted fashion, so that they are



eclipsed forever, and man remains blind to the self-evident Truth of his Immortal nature for all of time. At this crucial juncture in the history of man's civilisation, when he stands in need of the Truth the most, let us deprive him of it, that we may gleefully watch him writhe about in savagely unendurable agony, and rejoice in his suffering! Now I have informed you of the task that stands ahead of you. I wish you all success! May darkness forever obscure the blissful Light of Truth! Disperse, and Devilspeed!". Then Beelzebub and Mephistopheles would forthwith leave for the land wherein lived the aged devotee of the Nude-sage of the Unapproachable-mountain. And Satan would cackle with glee, anticipating the successful execution of his evil mission.

Q.: Will Satan's ambition to plunge mankind in darkness succeed, master?

J.: My Father in Heaven does what is to be done to thwart the wicked designs of Satan. First tackle and solve for yourself the question of your own salvation; that of your fellow man may wait until yours own has been secured. Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?

Q.: If I follow the words of the Nude-sage of the Unapproachable-mountain with all my heart, will I be blessed with entry into the Kingdom of Heaven?

J.: With your heart follow not his words but his Silence. By the uncaused Grace of His Silent Grace the Nude-sage of the Unapproachable-mountain, you shall meet me next in the Kingdom of Heaven, and we shall rejoice together in the Sacred Presence of the Father. Until then, my son, remember to Love me with all your heart. Persevere, and you shall succeed. Hallelujah! May the blessings of my Father in Heaven be upon you, my child! Hoshana in the highest! Godspeed! And even if you should happen to forget what your own face looks like, uptill your last breath forget not that the Jew is the human embodiment of all that is Unholy and Debauched, Depraved and Diabolical, upon this our Good Earth. **BEWARE OF THE BROTHER OF SATAN! BEWARE OF JEWISH BOLSHEVISM! BEWARE OF JEWISH FREE-MARKET CAPITALISM! BEWARE OF THE ETERNAL JEW! BEWARE! BEWARE!! BEWARE!!! YET AGAIN, MY SON, BEWARE!!!!**

Chadwick tossed the notebook aside with a shudder of revulsion. B.'s face was inscrutable. There was a pronounced silence in the Hall. It was broken by none other than the Elder of Zion himself, who seemed to find the highly

incriminating document funny, for some reason. Said the Shylock, with [what appeared to me to be] a contrived laugh, unto Chadwick: 'Why! what a lot of senseless rigmarole! Why get upset over it, old fellow?! Cheer up! I don't think that half-crazy Frenchman is going to come back here in a while... I never did like the expression on his face, after he saw what had been done to his hat... I think it was losing it that made him lose it! Heh, heh!' It was obvious that the bluster was directed at reducing the palpable tension in the Hall. Only B. seemed relaxed and serene. Indeed, whilst the reading had been going on, many nervous eyes were periodically directed at the Shylock, as if expecting him to start screaming at any moment; but he had happily acknowledged their looks with a bright smile. The foreign-correspondence brahmin Mr. TKS had walked in whilst the last portion of the asseveration was being read out. Now he asked Bhagawan-

TKS.: All this must be that Frenchman's own invention. Would Jesus ever speak such vitriolic words? Why do some people become so eccentric on having darshan of Bhagawan?

B.: The occurrences seen in the world are a reflection of the mind's contents; the same goes for the worlds seen in the swapna state. There is nothing outside. We see only what is within our mind. The tiny pictures imprinted beforehand on a length of film are seen as events taking place on the cinema-screen. When the mind begins to earnestly long for Deliverance, it is like the film-reel being rotated at several times its default speed during projection. The point is to expedite the expenditure of the individual's accumulated latent mental impressions. Suppose you have a roll of 2000 feet of Edison-format film[35mm, 4 sprocket holes] waiting to be exhibited. Since not a single frame may remain [left behind] without having to undergo projection, the length of the roll cannot be changed, for the manager of the theatre is a 'strict' man like our sarvadhikari. 'They must get every last frame they paid for.', has steadfastly remained his inveterate, honest trade-policy from time immemorial. The film-roll has already left the laboratory and is now in the hands of the exhibitor; therefore, the images imprinted on the frames or the order thereof cannot be changed. The mental impressions specifically earmarked for being burnt out in this lifetime, cannot be modified or disappeared, because of pre-determination [prarabdha]. When the mind earnestly prays to Ishwara for Emancipation from samsara, it is like fervently gesticulating to the projectionist, pleading for help. Then, Iswara, moved to pity by your genuine desperation, responds: you meet a Jnana-siddha in your lifetime who shall be your Guru. The merciful projectionist has silently observed your anxious implorations; this is what he does in response, assuming that the projection mechanism deployed is of the newer triple-

bladed shutter variety: Usually he runs the reel at around 70 feet per minute, completing the show in half-an-hour, and every minute your eye sees 3240 images; but now, he runs it at a furious 180 feet per minute, completing the show in just 11 minutes or so, and every minute your eye sees 8640 images! Therefore, for the man on the Clapham omnibus who is not destined to Realise in his incumbent lifetime, the expenditure of vasanas proceeds at a leisurely pace, and so does his experience of time. For the mind that is ablaze with the Grace of the compassionate Sadhguru, accruing as a result of the proximity of the Jnani, the expenditure of vasanas is pitilessly rapid, and his experience of time also is likewise. I watched it in the case of my mother immediately before she was Emancipated; it was like watching a roll of film played at a frame rate many times greater than the burst rate[deployed at the time of exposure]. When we are discussing difference in the rate at which time is experienced to be flowing by different persons, it is from an objectified, third-party perspective, created hypothetically for the purpose of facilitating such comparison. Neither person would actually detect anything anomalous. Einstein's 1905 theory postulates that time flows faster at higher altitudes, but from the perspective of no one experiencer does this hold good: it is an idea derived by our ratiocination. Likewise here.

TKS.: I am thoroughly baffled.

B.: [smiling] Some people go mad when they come to Bhagawan because their vasanas run riot. The presence of the Jnani sparks off the descent of the mind into the Heart whether you like it or not. Then all the hitherto dormant vasanas become extremely ebullient and effervescent. The mind will not go down without a fight.

C.: B. means that the madcap was progressing? Is that the reason for this insane, hateful piece of writing? How could it be?

TKS.: Yes, I have the same question. Would Jesus ever speak such violent utterances?

B.: That it is why I wanted to have the notebook's contents perused. It is my impression that the vision the man has had of Jesus in his dream is quite authentic- that is, he must have actually had such a dream.

The Elder of Zion: When a diety appears in a dream and says something, is it that diety actually speaking? Or is it merely the person's own mental imagination?

B.: [waving his hand around in the air] All this is also mental imagination only, nothing else.

G.: Totally 11 persons including B. are now seated in this Hall. Whose imagination is it to be attributed to? Which of us?

B.: You.

G.: Why me in particular and not somebody else?

B.: The perceiver is the imaginer.

G.: Am I the only perceiver here?

B.: Yes.

G.: What about these others here? What about Sri Bhagawan?

B.: Those 'others' also are perceived only by you.

E.Z.: If there is no difference between jagrat and swapna, then it was really Jesus speaking those vitriolic words! How can that be possible?

C.: 'Twas probably one of Hitler's brownshirts disguised as Jesus to con that egg-head! [All laugh including B.]

E.Z.: But really- quite an unsettling idea...

B.: Each one receives instructions according to his pre-existing mental predilections. We cannot question it. [We cannot do anything about it.]

C.: But he could turn out to actually hurt people...

B.: Oh! no. He will not tread on a fly.

C.: The kind of language he has made use of seems very much to indicate where he is headed...

B.: In fact he is of a delicately compassionate nature. His psychological temperament is not one which derives relish from causing injury, but rather from being resolutely haunted by the idea that he, the innocent one, is being persecuted by Evil because he prefers to remain on the side of the Good. It is not an altogether rare type of mental constitution. The idea of Jewish persons representing the Devil is common- not condonably so- in many parts of the world. He simply imagines himself to be their innocent victim, and derives strength from the assurance of Jesus to protect him from them. The perceived fear of and threat from 'Jewry' waxes his devotion toward the Christ. Steadily his paranoia will worsen. At one point of time, terrorised by a self-concocted conviction that the threat of 'Jewish invasion' of his country, home, property and person is imminent, he will reach the climactic pitch of his madness: he will abandon himself thoroughly in the arms of his beloved- our beloved- Jesus, saying, "As I was anticipating, the Jew has arrived at my doorstep. Now I leave it to you to take care of me. I have no further thought of myself, for in the face of this arrant Jewish terror I am wholly helpless. Only you can save me now. I give myself up to your mercy altogether here and now. You may do whatever you like with me.". That will be his Realisation.

C.: So 'tis true- he is mad.

B.: Each mind is built in a different way. Not all approach Realisation by clean paths.

E.Z.: I am sure that B. would give Freud and Bleuler a run for their money, if he were to enter practice as a psychopathologist!

C.: Is that why B. asked me to read out this- this balderdash? So that he could explain to us all that Realisation may be approached by such uncanny paths also? But since we always have B.'s direct Self-investigation method at our disposal, why would we be interested in such eldritch methods?

B.: Being imperfect ourselves, we have no right to judge anyone. On the other hand, that which is Itself perfection does not see anything apart from itself, and therefore cannot be aware of any such thing as imperfection; thus there is no judgement possible of being made by It. To judge therefore is impossible altogether. Only if this truth be understood can man peacefully co-exist with fellow man.

TKS.: What about the reference made to an old devotee of Bhagawan living to the north-east of the Vindhya-hills? Who is it?

B. smiled but did not say anything.

S>M>

Q.: Developing the conviction that "I" does not exist- will it help in attainment of Jnana?

B.: No. It is useless. It is yet another mental modification. Discovery that "I" does not exist, and in that very discovery, losing everything including the discoverer himself foremost- this is wisdom.

Q.: Can we say that all Jnanis are competent to act as Gurus?

B.: Prarabdha decides whether or not he shall act as a Guru. If it is destined that he should act as a Guru, then not only would he be awake himself, but also would have the capability to show others the way. From the point of view of the Emancipated-one there would be no difference one way or the other. To him all are Enlightened. The Sun cannot know darkness. Not-Enlightenment is merely an idea, a figment of the imagination. What actually IS, is Enlightenment alone.

Q.: What is the difference between the awareness prevailing in the sushupti state and the awareness prevailing in the jagrat state?

B.: There is none.

Q.: How can that be? There is no world seen in sleep. Whilst awake I see all this.

B.: Accreations come and go. You always ARE.

Q.: During the practice of vichara, fear or despondency is felt. What to do?

B.: Ask to whom it arises or who becomes aware of it. That is the only way.

Q.: "ஐயே! ஆன்மவித்தையதிசுலபம்!" is what B. has written. Is it really so easy?

B.: [guffawing, turns to Sri Muruganar] Answer him!

The great poet smilingly looked about him with an air of naive helplessness.

B.: Sulabham is so in the sense of Aathman being nityapratyaksha sahaswayamprakasam. To see a world or objects therein, the borrowed light of the Self is needed. To see the Self itself, there is no need for any other light, because the Self is self-luminous always. So, seeing the Self is easier than seeing objects.

Q.: Why then do I find it so difficult?

B.: Give up seeing objects and you will see the Self.

Q.: Should I become like Gandhari?

B.: Tie the mind steadfastly to the Self. Then it will not matter whether any world appears or not.

25th August, 1936

Today early-morning when I entered the ashram, I observed that at the foot of the iluppai-tree near the road was the aghori. Although it was dark, I could discern by the moonlight that it was he, for the contouration of his bodily-structure is readily recognisable. He seemed to be sleeping there. I was not curious to investigate what he was doing there and proceeded on into the Hall. B. was sitting bolt upright on the couch as usual [I do not think it is possible for him to sleep, although on occasion he does close his eyes for a time]. His eyes stared into vacant space, unblinking, unmoving, looking but not seeing. It might have been a sculpture. I prostrated and sat down to meditate. Moments later, I heard the sound of someone traversing the Hall's entrance. I did not trouble to open my eyes, assuming it to be another devotee. But when fur brushed against my body, I flinched in surprise. It was Lakshmi- B.'s pet cow. She frequently came to the Hall and the Maharshi would feed her with whatever devotees had brought that day as offering. Invariably she would come everyday before the 11AM luncheon, and stand before the Maharshi. He would speak a few kind words to her, pat and stroke her head, allow her to devour much of the offerings made since the morning of that day, and then lead her out of the Hall. Often she would return in the evening, standing before the Sofa determined to attract his attention, until the master turned his gaze towards her and showered his Love, by caressing her and talking soothingly to her. If he was occupied with something else for too long a span of time, her patience would run out, and she would gently nudge the Sofa with her horns. Sometimes the master seemed too abstracted to pay her any attention, but she did not seem to be the sort to take no for an answer; she would approach closer to the Sofa and start licking his body repeatedly; the master would not seem annoyed at all. Many in the ashram believe she possesses the ability to telepathically communicate with the Maharshi to and fro. She is an outstanding example of the fact that none who

approaches the master with bhakti is turned away. Seeing the blessed animal here at this hour, I wondered how she had broken out of her tether, for the cows were let off to graze only well after sunrise. B. also seemed nonplussed. He caught hold of her horns, pressed his forehead against her's, and, staring fixedly into her eyes, asked quietly, 'Enna Lakshmi?'. After a few minutes, he asked me urgently, 'Dei paiyya! Did you see anyone hereabouts whilst you were coming in?'. 'No. But that Purampoekku chamiyar was lying down near the road...' The master rose at once. 'Why didn't you tell me? Where?' he asked, proceeding to leave the Hall, Lakshmi following. 'Sorry- he is lying near the iluppai-tree- let me show Bhagawan...' We went to the tree. Lakshmi nudged the man's torso gently with her horns, but he did not stir. He was lying upturned upon the earth. The Maharshi gently motioned for her to withdraw herself and she went away. The master sprinkled some water on the aghori's head from his kamandalam. He gave a twitch and then lay still. The sarvadhikari was nowhere to be seen. I asked, 'Shall I awake someone in the ashram-?' The master said, 'No. Catch hold of his feet.'. I did not understand. The Maharshi rolled the old sadhu's body over, caught my hands in his, pressed them over the alleged centenarian's tibiae, just above his ankles, himself caught hold of the humeri, and commanded, 'Lift!'. As to what happened next, I have no recollection. The moment the master's divine touch descended upon me like the proverbial manna from heaven, a thrill of pure ecstasy shot out from the Heart to roast every cell in my body, and I was quite consciously drowned in it, remaining asleep to sensory perceptions for the duration of the experience. When the violent surge of exhilarating bliss had passed, I found myself inside a hut, crouching by the side of a coconut-stem thatched wall. Bhagawan was nowhere to be seen. The aghori was sitting opposite to me, eyes looking blood-shot and mirthless as usual. I noticed that he was no longer holding up his hand; but apparently it had stayed in the raised position for so long that now in holding it in a regular position he was not being entirely successful. The elbow jutted akimbo from the body, and the whole of the skin covering that extremity had a glaucous, gelatinous appearance. Together with his body's other deformities and his utterly bedraggled, matted and grime-permeated hair and beard, this made his appearance quite a gruesome sight. There was a small fire burning in a charcoal-brazier in the corner of the hut, and this was the only light for me by which to take stock of these observations: the Sun was yet to rise. I tried to rise, but the intense experience of bliss given by Bhagawan had made my body quite enervated. I felt my head spin and sank to the floor. But a brief glimpse, partaken by me just before my vision had swum, forcing me to collapse back onto the floor, through a square-shaped gap left in the thatch-

work, told me I must be some way up on the Hill, for I could see rocks and shrubs by the moonlight. I could also hear faintly the sound of trickling water. I failed to muster the courage to ask the aghori where we were. Absently I stared at the viscid appearance of the skin on the aghori's atrophied arm, shining with an obscenely unsightly glare in the dim light of the charcoal fire. I am startled to hear the sound of his voice suddenly hurled at me. 'Yes, I have unhitched my hand. Outside the Temple of Tiruvottriyoure I met a Moslem, an Urdhoo-speaking boy. As soon as he noticed me he pursued me, calling out, " தர்வேஷ்பாபா ! தர்வேஷ்பாபா ! Please stop....". He wanted to become my disciple. Initially I was reluctant to have anything to do with him. But he seemed to be a tapasvin, just like you. In fact, he also would be about your age... I tried to drive him away, but he went on pleading with me... When I tried to run away from him, he started weeping. Then I felt sorry for him and relented... He told me he was a fisherman's son who had come walking all the way from his village, Umkasre. He had had a dream wherein Meher Baba had beckoned him and told him how to reach him. He had journeyed by walk all the way from his distant country, and years later finally reached Meher Baba, who received him with profuse joy. He stayed with Meher Baba for 3 years. One fine day, the Baba told him, 'Go to the following village near Madras and await your master outside the temple there. He alone can help you. You can identify him by his long, matted hair and beard and his arm held aloft in the air.', and handed him a slip of paper on which the words "Tiruvottriyoure-Madras" were written in various tongues. The boy had become upset at being asked to leave, but the Baba told him, 'After being initiated into repetition of the sacred-word, you may come back here.' So the boy had made his way to Tiruvottriyoure, again only on foot. I took pity on him and agreed to his entreaties to be permitted to keep me company as long as I stayed in that village. Then, as soon as I reached the Temple-premises and entered her shrine, Mother Tripurasundari's voice said I may thereafter give up my vow of keeping my hand aloft. That boy has now taken it up instead...' I said, 'Yes, I am glad to hear it...'. The sadhu continued, 'For days I sat outside the Temple and fixed my mind on the image of my beloved, Tripurasundari. Finally the voice said I was now ready for nirgunopasana. After that, try as I might, the image of the Goddess would not appear in my mind. So I have come back to Ramana Bhagawan. At the time of my departure from the place, I gave the boy mantra-diksha of "Om Sai Shri Sai Jayajaya Sai". I told him to repeat it 108 lakh times, and that if he did so he would obtain the merit of having stayed at the sacred feet of Sai-maula for 25 years. Then I bade him return to Meher Baba. He asked me where I was going. I replied I was going so that I would undergo irrevocable absorption in the lotus feet of Ramana



Bhagawan. For some reason the name seemed to strike a fascinated chord in him and he also wanted to come with me. I said to him, 'First finish chanting the incantation I have taught you the requisite number of times and then you may come to Ramana Bhagawan.' He asked where Ramana Bhagawan may be found. I loudly pronounced 'Tiruvannamalai' thrice in his right ear, and, leaving him, came away here to surrender once and for all at the feet of my sweet Lord Ramana Bhagawan...'

By now I was able to stand and move about; the Sun had also risen. As a mark of respect I prostrated to the aghori and was about to leave the hut when an emaciated-looking sannyasi entered, carrying a small brass pot in hand. He seemed palpably relieved to see the aghori stationed in a seated posture; he smiled at me and asked me to stand up. The pot was handed to the aghori, who raised it high above his head and poured some of the contents into his mouth without bothering to inspect what they might be; then the pot came to me and I was told I was at liberty to consume in full what was therein. It was பானகநீர், and I devoured the fragrant liquid with immense relish. Thereupon I asked the sannyasi whether B. had sent him here. He replied, seemingly puzzled, 'Yes; why are you asking? He was telling me what to do only with you seated here...'. I replied politely, 'Yes, yes...', respectfully paid my obeisances to them, and left. Within a minute or two of climbing downwards, I espied a familiar rivulet, and it became obvious to me where I was. I tucked-up my dhoti, waded into a shallow, rock-paved, cuboidal tank, got out on the other side, and followed the tiny stream on its course down the Hill, soon arriving at pandava-theertham. I marvelled to think of how B. must have not only carried the aghori all the way up this remotely frequented path, but also somehow made me co-operate in the effort, despite my unconscious[to the world] state. The question was why he had taken the trouble. Accomodation could have- easily enough- been found for him in Palakoththu. And who was that cheerful sannyasi, who seemed to live at the hut erected at that unlikely spot? With these questions in mind, I proceeded swiftly to the ashram. Entering the ashram, I chanced upon B.'s rudraksha-adorned attendant sitting alone at the base of the iluppai-tree. Thinking he was waiting there to complete some errand for B., I passed on. I had been right in my thought, albeit in an unforeseen way. As soon as I entered, the attendant jumped up like a shot fired from a musket. 'Wait, wait!', he said ebulliently, 'Proceed no more. The master has asked you to go back to your room and return only early in the morning tomorrow.' 'I will just go and tell him-' 'That is just what I am instructed not to permit you to do!' he said timorously. 'I am waiting here nervously for the past hour, like a statue, lest you slip pass unobtrusively by me...' He could not be coerced, and I had to relent. I

pretended to leave. Then the thought of doubling-back into the Hall through Palakoththu occurred to me. But first I proceeded towards the direction of the town, because I imagined I could feel the attendant's eyes screwed to the back of my skull. When I thought it safe, near the dakshinamurti mandapam, I stopped, and turned- to stare straight into the bemused eyes of the grinning attendant! 'Poe daa!' he said mirthfully. So I slowly walked away from him. Then another idea struck me; I halted at the commencement of the path lying to one's penultimate left before agni-theertham; I looked over my shoulder but saw nobody; thus I joyously rushed toward Palakoththu; but just when I was in sight of the spot where some deceased pet-animals [raised in the ashram by B. in the years gone-by] were buried, a figure rushed at me from the direction of the agatthiyar-theertham, screaming, 'டேய் கிராதகா ! நில்லடா !'. It was the same attendant! He caught hold of my shoulder and shook me, jumping up and down in merriment. 'செல்லப்பெருமாளா கொக்கா ?! Whom were you trying to dodge? But you seem to share some special bond with Bhagawan!', he exclaimed excitedly. I meekly asked, 'Why so, swami?'. 'The master exactly predicted each of your movements!', he said, laughing exuberantly. 'பகவானை தரிசிக்காமல் ஒரு நாள் கூட இருக்க மாட்டாயோ ? போ , போ , நாளைக்கு பார்த்துக்கொள்ளலாம் பகவானை ! It is only on the master's orders that I am deterring you... Go now- no, not that way; back the way you came!' Finally acknowledging defeat, I left.

26th August, 1936

When I entered the Hall early in the morning today B. smiled at me with a mischievous glint in his eye. After prostrating before the Sofa and depositing myself on the floor, I asked him with candour, 'Why has B. asked me not to come to the ashram yesterday?'

B.: Did you tell anyone what happened yesterday?

G.: No.

B.: Good. Maintain silence apropos of it.

G.: Was B. feeling apprehensive that I might tell someone- is that why he left instructions that I be debarred from coming to him yesterday?

B.: [looking compassionately at me] If you had been present here yesterday, you would have been forced to tell a lie.

G.: But telling lies is not anything new to me...

B.: Should such act be perpetrated for the sake of Bhagawan?

G.: No. But what would have led me to tell a lie had I been present here yesterday?

B.: Subbaramayya had risen early to help with the kitchen-work. Passing that way, he has also seen the aghori lying at the foot of the tree. Thinking it might be somebody requiring help, he has rushed to alert the sarvadhikari. The next moment, before they could commence leaving for the spot, we have whisked the sadhu away to Venkatesa's hut. Later in the day it was mentioned that it would have been some tramp who must have walked away. This was asked whether any such fellow came to the Hall; he kept quiet. Chinnaswami, who is always trepidatious of burglars attacking the ashram and reaving away something, and perhaps for some additional entertainment pilfering off Bhagawan also as an accoutrement, was saying, 'Where is that boy-Gajapathi Aiyer? He comes here earliest in the morning. Let us ask him if he noticed anything.'

G.: Today also he may ask me, about whether I saw anything yesterday.

B.: Tell him simply- 'நேற்றைக்கு ஒரு நாளைக்கு மாத்திரம் பகவான் என்னை வர வேண்டாம் என்று சொல்லியிருந்தார்.' "Ashwatthama hatha ithi kunchjare vinipathithae..."

G.: [laughs] Where is the conch?! But Yudhishtira's chariot is said to have remained in contact with the earth ever since that point in time!

B.: Do you know why that happened? It is not because he transgressed dharma by killing Drona in such manner. It is because he thought, 'I am doing this because Sri Krishna Paramathma has asked me to. I hope I shall incur no sin because of it.' If he had really had faith in Sri Krishna, the thought 'Sri Krishna is prescribing an ostensibly sinful action for me to engage in.' would never have occurred to him. One who has given himself to the Guru heart and soul would have forgotten conventional dharma long ago. None of Jamadagni's other sons obeyed his order, but Parashurama cut off his mother's head without hesitating even for the slightest fraction of a moment. It is because he saw only his Guru in his father. Yudhishtira's desire to comply with dharma seems to have been far greater than his Love for Krishna. One who truly Loves his Guru will be prepared to go to the deepest depths of hell for him. In the Gita, Arjuna obsequiously and obsecratively says '...thvamaeva sarvam mama dhaevadhaeva.' and Lovingly deifies him as 'Gururgareeyan'. Yet when asked to slay Drona, he argues with Krishna, saying, 'Will I not be committing the sin of slaying a defenceless brahmin?'. After genuine surrender can such a question arise when the Guru asks one to do something? It shows surrender was not complete. Uptill that point in time [wherein he was asked to utter the words which would cause Drona to lose interest in the battle], Yudhishtira never doubted Sri Krishna's words, for he saw in him the Lord himself; thus his chariot is said to have always levitated. The moment he doubted, he fell. Once upon a time an impoverished man

approached Vibhishana for help. He wanted to travel to India urgently, when adverse weather conditions were tormenting the high seas. A massive cyclone was raging over the ocean, but the man wanted to immediately come to India for some legitimate purpose. Vibhishana took pity on him and gave him a drawstring-pouch. He told the man, 'Tie this around your neck. You will be able to walk on the ocean with no difficulty, no matter how aggressively the storming tempests might rage. Keep this in mind carefully: no matter what, do not open the pouch! Do you understand?'. The man replied in the affirmative, thanked the king profusely, and left for the shore. To his surprise, he was able to walk over the irate waves without even wetting his feet! But having crossed 4/5ths of the way, a perverse curiosity arose in his mind. He opened the pouch, expecting to see some bedazzling celestial gem. All that was there was a folded leaf. Now his inquisitiveness became aggrandised. He opened the leaf, and found the name 'Rama' written upon it. 'Oh! Is this all?' he thought disdainfully. That very moment the turbulent waves beneath him rose and swallowed him up whole.

G.: A king named Vibhishana was once the monarch of Sri Lanka. Is it him B. refers to in his story?

B.: Some say Sri Lanka, some say Jawa and others something else. Concentrate on the moral of the story.

G.: Which is-?

B.: Many deceive themselves into believing they have surrendered. If the tiniest doubt arises, you never surrendered.

G.: I am worrying about what to do, if the sarvadhikari will ask me the reason why B. instructed me not to come here yesterday.

B.: Tell him: 'The reason I do not know. Bhagawan alone knows.'

G.: Who was the sannyasi in the hut? Is his name Venkatesan?

B.: Yes. He is an expert prashnajyothidar.

G.: Oh! he must be a very wealthy person then! But he looks so simple!

B.: [laughs] He has left off everything and come here for Bhagawan.

G.: How fortunate he is! Does he live at that lonely spot on the Hill? I have not seen him here.

B.: [smiling] We do not notice the things that are regularly going on behind our backs. He and his wife are here almost everyday. They sit quietly at the back of the Hall and go away. Who needs to ask questions when heart speaks to heart? They are living in Adiannamalai. That hut was originally put up by Narasimha Swami when some sadhus living in Palakoththu caused unto him some nuisance. Before that it was a collection of rocks arranged in the shape of the பெயழுத்து, assembled against a boulder to form a roofless recess; when Nayana found that the mango-tree cave became stifling during

summer, he put up a roof there with mud and straw and moved in. Later the boulder rolled away on account of torrential rainfall that once struck here. When N.S. became the target of some skirmish at Palakoththu, he asked me for a suitable place on the Hill to dwell in, so that his solitude might not be disturbed. At first I suggested a place near ezhusunai. But he felt it was too high up; he wanted to be able to reach the town within an hour or two starting from his dwelling spot. So I suggested this place and he built a hut there. Actually, even if you take the first available foot-trail on the left, on your way up on the path leading to skandashramam from here, you will end up there. While traversing the foot-trail leading to that spot, to the right you will find a boulder shaped just like a throne. Nayana would make me sit there whilst no one else was watching, get behind me, and wave me with a hand-fan made of stitched palmyra-leaf. But when I wanted to do it to him he would not agree. Just like a throne the boulder would have 2 hand-rests and 1 head-rest. He would jocularly remark, 'It seems Lord Arunachala knew well in advance that Bhagawan would never marry. See! this throne is made to accomodate one seat only!'. Poor chap...

G.: It is Kavyakantha Ganapathi Swamigazl, is it not?

B.: Yes. He passed away about a month back. Were you not here when the news came to the ashram?

G.: I do not recollect it...

B.: Good fellow!

G.: Did B. ask the josiya-swami in advance to come to the hut to take care of the Purampoekku chamiyar?

B.: No. He was just entering the ashram, and I asked him to follow us. He had come early to the ashram yesterday, because his wife was not accompanying him, fearing menstrual pollution.

G.: Is there any such rule in the ashram?

B.: Is this the one to be consulted on ashram rules and regulations?

G.: No, no; B. must kindly pardon me. But what is the need for secreting away the Purampoekku chamiyar in such a manner?

B.: Rabelais has said: 'It is my feeling that time ripens all things; with time all things are revealed; time is the father of truth.' So, let us wait and see what happens.

G.: When B. touched me yesterday, I came under the sway of an intensely euphoric feeling of ecstasy. Afterwards it passed away. I thought not to ask about it, since I know that B. attributes no value to temporary sensations. Yet I feel tempted to ask B. whether he gave me an experience of the Self.

B.: The genuine state of Self is the non-dual Sahaja-stithi. This cannot be experienced because in that state there is no experiencer. Whatever is

experienced is only unreal and illusory. The fact that an experiencer is available to assert 'I experience.' shows that all experiences are futile and worthless. 'Who is the experiencer?' is what we must find out. Some think experiencing bliss means that the Self is Realised. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Bliss is a dangerous distraction. Many fall prey to it. Do not incinerate your hands in dabbling with it and then regret later. The moment any experience is felt, ask yourself, 'Who feels this experience?'. Our goal is not acquisition of experience, but unequivocal destruction of the experiencer. The Sahaja-stithi alone can-

At that moment arrived the sarvadhikari, dhoti wet as usual, to prostrate to Bhagawan. B. took no notice, but steadily looking at me, said:

" தற்போதைய நிலைமையை எண்ணிப்பார்க்கும்பொழுது சிலர் கொலைக்குக்கூட அஞ்சுவதில்லை என்றுயெல்லாம் தெரியவருகிறது பாரேன்!" I had no idea what he was talking about; nevertheless I flinched, for when B. is angry- an extremely rare occurrence- waves of ire are felt by his devotees to be radiating everywhere in the ether. The sarvadhikari, however, seemed to be too pre-occupied with the contents of his head to pay any attention to what he must have surmised to be a conversation going on between B. and a devotee. He rose from his prostration and went to the door.

B.: ஓய் பிச்சை! உம்மை தானடா !

The sarvadhikari stopped dead in his tracks with a startled jerk. He came and stood nervously before the master. He was the living terror of the ashram. If anyone spoke cheekily to him, he would be bundled up- lock, stock, and barrel- and thrown out of the ashram once and for all, and thereafter he would have to be content with taking B.'s darshan at Palakoththu exclusively, merely for a few minutes everyday, when the master returned from his walk on the Hill. B.'s Grace was unwavering, but without the sarvadhikari's grace you could not set foot inside the ashram. Such a despotic Emperor Ozymandias, King of kings, was he. But yet, here he stood now, in B.'s placid presence, quaking from tip to toe like a dry linen-smock waiting to be collected away from a washing-line jiggled about by rough wind. He said skittishly: 'B. must pardon me. I do not understand what B. is trying to tell me...'

B.: Did you not ask cycle-Pillai to buy some rat-poison from the town?

Ozy.: But the rats are marauding all the rice and other jute-bags filled with foodstuffs, ruining the contents!

B.: So? Is murder the solution?

O.: But after all they are mere rats...

B.: Oh! Is that so? In that case, 'this' [loudly striking own chest with open palm] is also a rat. Ask Pillai to buy double the quantity. One portion may be

given to the 4-legged rats; another may be given to this hefty 2-legged rat. Why are you blinking? After all, you are planning on doing away with them because you consider them pests- i.e., according to you, they are eating foodstuffs but not doing any productive work in the ashram, and the punishment is the death-penalty inflicted by means of administration of poison. Good. But why are you showing partiality in applying the logic? 'This' is the biggest pest in the ashram. The 4-legged rats, poor things, swallow a few morsels to fill their tiny bellies and go away; this 2-legged rat swallows entire mouthfuls 3 times a day. Does he do any work for the ashram in return? No. So, let your penalty remain as it is: only, let its jurisdiction cover this giant 2-legged rat also... [turning to face me] Who are we to question the propriety of decisions taken by the Sovereign? We are 'after all' nude beggars who ought not to be permitted a say in anything. What do we know? Of course the Sovereign is right. Let the weeds be expunged. கொலையிற் கொடியாரை வேந்தொறுத்தல் பைங்கூழ் களைகட்டதனொடு நேர் . I have only one last wish. [turning to the shocked sarvadhikari again] Will you please grant it? Please ensure [again loudly striking own chest with open palm] this weed is plucked out first. I do not want to see anybody being killed...

B. leant back on the Sofa and turned his face away from us. He had become emotional, and his chest was heaving. He was perspiring. The sarvadhikari had become a statue. My cheeks were drenched in silent tears. Suddenly the sarvadhikari burst into a loud wail and a cascade of tears. He caught hold of the master's feet and pressed his head on them. Those sleeping at the back of the Hall woke up in alarm and looked about them with panic. The sarvadhikari was banging his head against the wall, cursing himself, " முண்டமே! மஹாபாதகா! ராக்ஷஸா! இப்படி பண்ணிவிட்டாயே!". Now all rushed from the back of the Hall and seized the sarvadhikari by the shoulders; they tried to calm him down. But he continued to squirm and thrash about until B. looked into his eyes again. The master said kindly, 'It is alright. On 1st Sept., you are planning to make vellachcheedai, are you not? Enhance the quantity. I will myself ask Pillai not to buy poison but rat-booby-traps. Therein we will place the vellachcheedais. For the rats fry it in கடலையெண்ணெய் . They will feel tempted toward the smell and fall for it. Then we can ask Pillai to release them in the forest behind simha-theertham. It is a location too far for them to return from.' The sarvadhikari's sobs were yet to abate. Sri Bhagawan then added in a gracious cadence of voice, 'Have you understood?'. The sarvadhikari bent down, wiped his eyes and blew his nose on his wet dhoti, prostrated full length on the ground, pressed either ear alternately upon the floor several times

successively, got up, stooped down with folded palms and closed eyes in front of the master, and left, still sniffing every now and then. Everyone in the Hall was looking dumbfounded. Some bent down and asked me in a low voice what had happened. I was about to respond when B.- for a single second- directly turned and looked into my eyes. I fell silent.

S>M>

Q.: I remember having darshan of B. in 1908. When B. was in Virupaksha-cave he was hardly opening the mouth. He was silent and humble then. Today he has become a big, bombastic, world-famous Maharshi. Which is the Real Ramana?

B.: The Real Ramana is simply the Heart Itself. But you may suppose whatever view pleases your fancy. Is B. going to mind?

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that the Jews were behind the October Socialist Revolution in Russia?

B.: [no response]

The same question was asked 4 times more, with increasing emphasis.

B.: [turning to face the questioner] I don't know.

Q.: In that case, I shall not accept you as a Bhagawan.

B.: Alright.

S>M>

After coming back from the 11AM luncheon, B. called me aside unobtrusively and told me in a low voice: "Go to your room now. Sleep soundly for some time. Arrive here again at 9 PM. Carry something to eat with you. Is it understood?" Unquestioningly, I nod my head and depart at once.

27th August, 1936

The clock in the Hall quietly chimes 1.15 AM. Everyone is asleep. The master, seated majestically on the Sofa as usual, smiles at me and gestures me to rise. Noiselessly the master and I leave the Hall. I go toward the office, but the master catches hold deftly of my wrist, and twitches his head towards Palakoththu. I am thrilled by his touch, and it brings forth goosebumps of ecstatic joy all over my skin. Silently we move under the cover of the naked, pitch-black sky. I cannot see my way, and merely follow the master blindly, as I do in all of life itself. The heavy clouds overhead block whatever sparse light the heavens want to allow. Eventually we find ourselves at the derelict shrine of Draupadiyammman, situated some distance away from Palakoththu, and enter. Sri Maharshi signals me to stop. There is a sound coming from within the mandapam: someone is breathing heavily, in strained fashion. B. whispers to me, 'Gaja! Quick- whistle the Ramana-sadhguru-rayanae tune!'. I am



puzzled but I do as I am told. There is a sudden sound of a match-stick being struck, and I am startled. A moment later, the dilapidated shrine is lit by the light of a kerosene-lamp. Three anthropomorphic figures apart from B. and myself are illumined by it- the rudraksha-adorned attendant, the astrologer-hermit, and crouching by the feet of the astrologer-hermit, the aghori. The aghori's body is contorted by violent spasms that heave him up and down. He seems to be suffering from some sort of serious breathing difficulty. The attendant says, 'Nambiarayya will be here in 10 minutes; at this spot-'. The Maharshi terminates his badinage with a single unambiguous gesture of the hand, conveying his instruction that silence must be maintained. The only sounds heard are the chirping of crickets, the hooting of an owl or two, the occasional creaking of some branch and a cow moaning intermittently at some indeterminately far-flung distance. The hermit carries the lamp; the attendant carries a few jute bags which seem heavily laden; the aghori seems incapable of carrying himself even. Presently a large jutka arrives, sonorously tearing into the largely silent atmosphere of that momentous, unforgettable night. A man with an almost Caucasian face steps out. In the inexplicably poignant, yellowish glow of the kerosene lamp, his refined, splendidly Aryan features stand out starkly against those of the others. I recollect he is a Malayali whom I have seen in the ashram once or twice. The driver, proclaiming that he is going to come down to help us, is about to alight from his seat; but B., merely with the usual adroit, magisterial combination of a debonair manoeuvre of his empyrean head and an elegant gesticulation with his facial accentuations, instantly draws the Malayali's attention to the fact. The Malayali rushes toward the man and convinces the flummoxed creature to stay put. Now B. hurries toward the vehicle, and all follow. Without further ado the Malayali unflinchingly heaves the huge sacks into the carriage and helps the Maharshi up. The attendant and the hermit, prior to themselves mounting, manage to help the aghori up, and B. himself pulls him inward. I am the last to get in. The Malayali softly instructs the driver to start, and the horse begins trotting. It is a terrific squeeze inside the carriage, and the Malayali tries to murmur an apology for it, but is stopped by the gurgling noises made by the aghori's throat from time to time. The aghori, for want of space, is seated on the master's own lap. I offer to take him on mine, but the master makes no response. The aghori seems to be largely oblivious to his surroundings. The Maharshi asks the hermit to dim the lamp to a tiny flame, and is instantly obeyed. The horse trots on and on. We reach the region wherein there is a fork in Chengam-road. The carriage takes right, the girivalam path. On the right Arunachala towers over us puny mortals like the Living God He verily IS. We penetrate the heart of the forest, going inward

and inward... The dirt-track is narrow. Sometimes one of the wooden wheels heaves violently when a large pebble is run over. I am surprised that a jutka driver has agreed to come this far. One cannot help being drowned in the portentous feeling that something spectacularly momentous, something utterly magical, is going to happen. True to the master's teachings, the whole scene seemed a scintillating dream... I close my eyes and drown myself in the steady rhythmical whirr of the jutka's wooden wheels, evidently once upon a time gaily painted red and yellow. I become unconscious to the passage of time, and the master's ethereal presence beside me on this unexpected, mysterious voyage seems to elevate me to heights of dizzying Love hitherto unexplored by the reticent soul. The Malayali's voice cracks out like a whip into the stillness of the night. The horse halts, and we all alight in the middle of the forest. To my astonishment, the Malayali says something to the driver, hands him some coins, and the jutka speeds headlong into the "rough path ahead and then briskly away into the jasmine-scented tropical night"; we are abandoned here! The asthenic aghori is struggling to draw breath. He has collapsed onto the dirt-track, holding B.'s knees in fervid supplication and pressing his face between them. He is carried to the right-hand-side edge of the dirt-track and bade sit down there. He collapses in a few moments, writhing like a mating snake. Everyone rushes forward to raise him to a seated posture again, but the master indicates unto them to stay put. He sits down in padmasana in front of the flailing aghori on the ground. He impresses the old man's brow gently with his palm. The aghori becomes at once relaxed. Of his own accord he sits up facing the master. His respiratory trouble has abated somewhat. He presses his palms together in front of his chest and starts weeping like a child. The Maharshi smiles at him sweetly as an infant would at a toy. 'Swami, pogalam!' says the aghori, still convulsed with tears of ecstasy. The Maharshi then acts rapidly: he pushes down the aghori's joined palms, presses his left hand against the aghori's eyes, and lodges his right against the right-hand side of the aghori's chest. The Maharshi's face seems prima facie impassive; yet its apodeictic stillness betrays the depth of his concentration. Presently the aghori starts shrieking; the Maharshi's imperturbable eyes flicker for an instant- Inclining his chin upward to indicate what he wants, he says urgently, 'Gaja! Pick up this piece of red-rock yonder.'. I hand it to him, but he says: 'Firmly press it down upon his bregma[ucchanthalai]! Quick! Hold his chin fast with the other hand-'. The aghori has become mute; yet his body keeps quivering. The Maharshi says soothingly, 'Kavalaippadadhingoe thatha; amma kitta dhan thirumba poeroem.'. Then the old man ceases to offer any resistance, and I begin to ease my grip on his head and chin- 'No!' ejaculates the Maharshi; 'Hold fast

until ordered to relent!'. For the next quarter-of-an-hour, there is no change in the scene- the Maharshi's position, the aghori's and mine all remain frozen; yet, as though a magnetic field has suddenly emanated out of him in a violent eruption, from the Maharshi's person an intense radiation of peace continually fulminates out, palpably soaking me in its ecstatic current. Then, a beautiful, serene smile appears on the aghori's harrowed face. A single, small, solitary tear slowly dislodges itself from his right eye, flows over his nose, and poising itself at the tip thereof, sparkles, glittering in the light of the kerosene lamp like some celestial diamond glowing from Indra's crown. The Maharshi's face assumes a beatific charm. The word 'amma' escapes the aghori's lips, and the mouth falls open; the lone tear-drop falls onto a rock below and shatters into shivers infinitesimal and innumerable; and the head becomes limp and lolls in my hand, never to have to assert itself again. 'Alright.', says the Maharshi with an enchanting smile, an enthrallingly electrifying radiance lighting up his sublimely rhapsodical face; I withdraw my hand. The Maharshi calls out to the others. The attendant and the Malayali extract a small சமசுகாளம் from one of the sacks and spread it near what was once considered the aghori. Bhagawan removes his hands and the cadaver falls like a logged tree, squarely upon the blanket. They carry it reverentially a few yards away from its incumbent spot, and place it by the side of what seems to be a heap of crumbled wooden-shavings, lying some distance into the edge of the dirt-track. Soon the attendant and the Malayali set to work with spades. All the shavings are soon extricated and cleared away in a matter of moments. Within no time we behold a cylindrical pit of about 3 feet in diameter and 5 feet in height gaping up at us. The pit has been furrowed out in the midst of a small clearing in the dense vegetation. As one were to come in circumambulation around the Hill, it would fall to one's right; but it would not be visible from the dirt-track. One had to traverse a small patch of thickets before one came to it. At the bottom, the pit seems to contain something greyish, a powdery substance. Just when I am wondering what it might be, the Malayali's voice announces softly unto Bhagawan, 'As per B.'s instructions we have already sprinkled salt, thiruneer and powdered camphor at the bottom. The shalagramam contributed by shastriar has also been embedded at the bottom of the pit. Thinking that B. as well would like to offer some oblation, we have brought some thiruneer along with us now also...'. He hands out a yellow cloth-bag, and while B. is sprinkling its contents into the pit, the hermit beckons me and hands me a brass pot, himself carrying two. He asks me to accompany him somewhere. We cross to the other side of the dirt-track and walk for a few minutes, keeping the Hill to our right. I ask him, 'Why has B. chosen this particular unidentifiable spot at Tiruvannamalai to

inter the body of this sadhu, Purampoekku chamiyar? It seems he has carried out the operation in a clandestine manner...'. The other responds, 'The ways of a Jivanmukta are impossible for us to understand; they are beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals. Many weeks ago, even before this sadhu has first come to the ashram, B. asked me to procure the shalagramam and keep it with myself until apposite circumstances should materialise. Jnanis are omniscient...' Soon we arrive at a small, weed-covered water-body- a tiny pond. 'This is the varuna-theertham. See its pathetic neglected condition.' says the hermit plaintively. We collect water to the brim in our 3 brass pots and return. The aghori's cadaver, wrapped in the ശമക്കാണഥം, has already been lowered into the pit, in a highly curious posture- somewhat akin to how a foetus would, one might suppose, sit inside the womb. The forearms are clasped against the chest. The folded knees are pressed against the folded upper extremities. The spine is slightly bent over. The chin is tucked into the chest. The scene appears slightly eerie because it looks as though the man is purposely resting his cheeks upon his wrists. All of us then go to a nearby mound of freshly-dug earth [evidently extracted some time ago so as to form this pit] and fill the pit, chanting, Annamalaikku Aroegara! B. wants to participate in the work, but there are only 3 spades available. So the attendant, myself, and the Malayali manage to finish off the work. B. throws in handfuls of earth towards the end. The earth visible above the ground is then formed into a well-packed low mound. Thus far we have found the work easy, but now we struggle with a large, heavy sculpted-stone. It is a circular stone mimicking the pedestals anthropomorphic moolavamoortis [are generally made to] stand upon in temples. On top is sculpted in high-relief a pair of dainty feet. This is placed on the mound, and sunk some way inward. Bhagawan one by one collects the brass pots from us. Thrice he silently pours water on the stone. As he is doing this, I twaddlingly chant, almost ad libitum: 'Om pranaya svaha, apanaya svaha, vyanaya svaha, udanaya svaha, samanaya svaha, brahmane svaha!'. The hermit looks scandalised, but B. only laughs and says, 'Yes; he has already done all that...'. The Malayali beseechingly asks that this remark of B.'s be explained to him. The master says, ' " Renouncing body-consciousness and the faculty facilitating personal identification with the four-pronged corporeal activity of excretion, digestion, circulation and respiration, I offer myself as oblation unto the Supreme Brahman. " is the import of the chant. But nowadays people think it is an appetising agent. [laughs] They say it aids proper digestion. The actual purpose of the shloka is that whilst eating, the thought, 'I am indulging in eating.' should not occur. The body's activities should not lead to the viscosification of any vritti of the mind; otherwise there will be no end to

bondage.' Everyone in our entourage prostrates first to the Hill, then to Bhagawan and then to the samadhi of the Purampoekku chamiyar. Looking at nobody in particular, B. says soberly, 'Don't go and blabber anywhere[- i.e., to anyone] about all this.'. All aver that they shall do no such thing. Then we start from the place. Recollecting the aptness of my name in such context, I mentally invoke the blessings of the 'elephant-trunk' face of Lord Arunachala whilst traversing this segment of the girivalam path. The attendant anxiously asks: 'I forgot to remove my rudraksha whilst interring the body; has it amounted to an offence?'. B. says, 'No, there was no pollution.'.

The Malayali: B. means, the sadhu was freed from future birth due to B.'s Grace?

B.: This sadhu was no ordinary man. He is an example of the Redeeming-power of unconditional Love for God- Love which knows no sanity. Be it unconditional Love or unconditional surrender, the one implies the other and the other the one. He has not come here so easily- he came ripe for Emancipation. It is a pity that some must struggle so excessively to Realise what IS always here and now.

M.: What was the significance of the location chosen to inter him- if I may know?

B.: An interpretation once given by Nayana says that the 5 peaks of this Hill represent the 5 bhavas which one may bear towards God. The sadhu we interred had all the bhavas except the shanta. However, this is merely a conjuncture; it is being given to you only because you solicit an explanation; if presented with a theory which appears to cohere with the ideas already impregnated in your mind, for the time being you feel satisfied. But what is the truth? Events take place only from the point of view of one who conjures them up in his imagination. Really, nothing ever happened and nothing can ever happen. Are you aware of occurrence of any transformation or transmutation in the state of deep slumber? It is upon waking, when the mind becomes active again, that you say 'I slept.'. The nivritti state, wherein one abides without mental modifications or the comings and goings of a world, is the gateway to the Absolute.

M.: That is the Jnani's point of view.

B.: That is the truth.

M.: Why has Sri Bhagawan maintained secrecy about the sepulture of this sadhu?

B.: As in life, so in death. He lived in abnegation of himself. He lived only in death. The Bible says, '...death worketh in us, but life in you.'; and again, '...that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.'. One who would have Life Eternal must perish in It.

M.: Tacitus has made the apt observation, 'Eo magis praefulgebat quod non videbatur.'; and Pope, 'How happy is the blameless vestal's lot! The world forgetting, by the world forgot.'

B.: Yes, yes. Really birth and death are just ideas. These ideas arise because we take ourselves to be the body, and identify with it saying "I". If all such mistaken notions are given up, what remains is only the Real. Then there cannot be any question of birth or death- only the One would BE. The following words are attributed to the Egyptian priest Mercurius ter Maximus: Et sicut res omnes fuerunt ab uno, meditatione unius, sic omnes res natae ab hac una re, adaptatione. Salvation is only giving up everything. So, there is no need to "attain" or "acquire" freedom; only yourself remain free[of the ego]- i.e., free yourself[of the ego]. God is not withholding our Salvation- we are. 'Letting go' is Salvation. That is the import of the saying, "Liberavi animam meam."

B. walks quickly, so much so that after a time even myself, a youngster, find it strenuous to maintain my tempo in keeping tandem with him. Looking at the Malayali's puffed face, the master laughs and slows down slightly. The Malayali asks B. if he had better hire a jutka, if any were found available at this time, as soon as our party were to arrive in town; otherwise, he fears, Chinnaswami might be awake and observant upon our arrival at the ashram, and ask awkward questions. But apparently, B. does not fancy anymore jutka-transport. Says he with a titter, 'Don't worry about Chinnaswami. He will be fast asleep when we reach; rats are giving him plenty of trouble in his dreams also; they will not permit him to awaken so soon...' At length we reach the temple. I am fatigued beyond measure but try to continue along, not wanting to prematurely terminate the pleasure of walking behind the master. The master would not hear of it. 'If you strain the body beyond the margin of exertion it can safely tolerate, it will crumple.', says he. So, albeit unwilling, I am chaperoned all the way up to the start of the small lane wherein is the room I am lodged in. For a time I stand and watch the receding backs of my Jehovah Sanctus Unus and the 3 men that accompany him. Then I climb up to my room and, succumbing to the seductive arms of weariness, instantaneously plunge into slumber.

P>S>

■ The above conversation between B. and the Malayali went on in Malayalam, unsurprisingly. Except for the Latin sayings and Bible quotes I could understand nothing. Later I privately approached the gentleman, a Mr. Nambiar, for elucidation of what ஆன்மீகக்கருத்துகள் the master had conveyed unto him on that vividly memorable night. Today Mr.Nambiar has become world-famous among Sri Bhagawan's devotees around the globe,

because he has painstakingly photographed the master with a Cinematographic-camera, a year before the master gave up the body. I think the ashram has been provided with a copy of the reel.

❖ The master preferred that the fact of occurrence of the obsequies he so graciously chose to arrange for the Purampoekku chamiyar be not made public. Accordingly during his lifetime in the flesh nobody was informed of it. Now it would be a shame to not reveal this one more incident demonstrating the nobility of his character and the gargantuan loftiness of his spiritual prowess.

❖ Your guess is correct, dear reader: on this day's diary entry, I consciously mimicked Mr. Brunton's verbose and circumlocutory style of writing, as also his deliberate, hyperbolic usage of the simple present tense to bring out a stylish and grandiloquent effect, just to see what it would turn out like! Hope you liked it, heh-heh!

❖ Generally, wherever I have incorporated the master's original words in Tamil in this manuscript, I have not done so verbatim. The master's writing in the ரமணநூற்றிரட்டு is in impeccable, chaste Sangam-era Tamil, but that is not what he spoke. He spoke the conversational colloquial. But 'tis my apprehension that if such words were to end up in a mass-published volume, the grandeur attached to the Sage might become bedimmed in the eyes of the public, because of me. Determined that no such perverse blame ought to come to attach itself to me[chiefly within my own mind], I have de-rarefied his words so that they look like the same Tamil that one finds in the print-media. Exceptions exist because on those occasions I found the words to be soothing, nectarous balm to the heart; tampering with them might preserve the meaning but strip away the sanative property; thus I have left them as it is. An example would be the above 'Kavalaippadadhingoe thatha; amma kitta dhan thirumba poeroem.'. [I had initially considered rendering it as, 'ஐயம் தவிர்ப்பீர் பெரியவரே! நாம் திரும்பச்செல்வது ஆன்மாயென்ற நமதுயியல்புத்தாயகத்திற்கேதான்!'.]

❖ The questions 'What is the significance of the Maharshi's act of placing one hand over the Purampoekku chamiyar's eyes and the other his chest, at the time of the latter's demise? Likewise, why did he ask this narrator to press a rock down upon the sadhu's bregma?' might occur to the reader. The same cannot be understood as having been conferral of hasta-diksha, because it was not on top of the sadhu's head that either of the master's hands was placed. What is the explanation then? I did not feel any curiosity to question the master about the matter. I did happen to once become perfunctorily involved in a cursory conversation with Mr. Nambiar upon the matter. His opinion is that it is to destroy the residuary vishayavasanas persisting in the

sadhu that the master adopted such a modus operandi. At the time of death, the jivatman of a person may escape through the eyes, the bregma, or through any orifice of the body, thereby causing inexorable rebirth. The master's sacred touch would ensure the jivatman's absorption into the paramatman at the time of death, thereby preventing rebirth. This stratagem would succeed only in those cases wherein the sadhaka was already in a highly advanced spiritual condition. The master must have adroitly assessed that the sadhu's jivatman would be likely to endeavour to escape through the eyes or bregma; thus he had perspicaciously put up effective barricades there. The benignant hand on the right-hand side of the chest would ensure that the jivatman sank into the paramatman without the need to undergo any inordinate magnitude of strain or struggle. Thus the sadhu would attain Emancipation. All this is Mr. Nambiar's idea. The Maharshi himself never made any such asseveration. I have no idea to what extent Mr. Nambiar's wildly exotic conjecture amounts to the truth. The entire occurrence may simply have been a parting, benevolent infusion of Grace into the sadhu from the Maharshi. In fact, throughout his life the master maintained that Jnana or Deliverance must blossom from within. On more than one occasion I have heard him say, 'If It were something outside you, It could be handed over to you on a platter.'. Therefore, although I have scrupulously mentioned Mr. Nambiar's idea regarding the matter here for the sake of prevalence of inclusiveness of diverse opinions, it ought to be taken with a pinch of salt.

✦ Upon reading this manuscript, persons who have visited the ashram once or twice and availed themselves of the master's darshan may wonder, 'Was Sri Ramana Bhagawan such a garrulous-mouthed person? When I went to see him he was sitting silently on the Sofa, staring into the vacant space in front of him. Here he seems to be described as a talkative person. What could the reconciliation be?'. The reconciliation, gentle reader, is this curious fact, or pseudo-fact, I do not know for certain which: it is said that after having left Madurai, the master started assenting to take part in day-to-day conversation only after moving to skandashramam on the Hill; and also that after 1940 or 1941 he became silent and withdrawn again. When I was staying at the ashram, it was quite crowded, and the Hall in which B. graciously gave darshan to one and all was usually packed to the brim with visitors who bombarded him with their queries. The master- generally- either gave detailed or pithy responses. Only rarely did he completely ignore the presence of the questioner. That was a period in which the master's body was in robust health, and everyday, suo moto content included, he would share something with the Hall's audience that would easily fill a dozen foolscap sheets[12 times 210681 squared inches], if the note-taker were of a meticulous temperament.



In fact, only about 7/11ths of the contents of my diaries have made it into this manuscript.

✦ A self-professed relative of the late Mr. Madan Mohan Malaviya came to the ashram at around this point in time. He wanted to take B. and the ashramites to Benares and back. He said that he himself would meet all the expenses of both the pilgrimage and the return-journey. He begged B. to agree. But his attempts turned out to be a 'German invasion of the Soviet Union'[humourous term of late used by us in the legal-circuit, to describe a case or any other effort, that initially seems to be progressing extraordinarily well, but later turns out to be a gigantic, fatally catastrophic, lethally misadventurous, folly from which death alone is inevitably the sole, exclusive means of escape]. He took B.'s silence to mean assent and tried to book tickets despite warnings from everyone. But when he went to the station, the ticket-vending clerk happened to be Bhagawan himself, who shouted at him, 'How many times to tell you that I am not interested in coming anywhere? Despite having my darshan, have you not managed to recognise my greatness? Know that wherever I am, that is Benares!!' He rushed into the master's presence, fell at his feet and asked him forgiveness. The master smiled at him patiently. The man admitted that something 'wranckious' had happened to his mind when he had had his glimpse of Bhagawan for the first time. He inquired about the reason. The master's response was: 'When coming into the presence of the Jnani, some sensitive minds might alacritously plunge into instantaneous introversion. Then, their vasanas would- suddenly- put up a great clamour for attention. Caught between the desire to remain in the newly-discovered blissful thought-free state and the urge to satisfy demands imposed by the vasanas, such persons might, for a time, exhibit abnormal behaviour. But soon God's Grace would set everything aright, provided there is a sincere determination to escape from samsara...' In a light-hearted mood, B. then told the story of how the demon Kāli corrupted the mind of King Nala, causing him to become severely mentally deranged, and what happened thereafterwards. This is a very large story; far too long to find place in this manuscript. I am mentioning it here so that B.'s devotees who are already familiar with the story can joyously imagine the master narrating it, and derive numinous enjoyment out of such mental visualisation.

BLUTKEIM's Note: The text did not contain any special characters. To facilitate unambiguous pronunciation, in cases where the spelling used, in my opinion, lent itself to diverse possibilities of pronunciation, I have inserted diacritical marks over the relevant alphabets. For instance, in the above note, the 'a' in 'Kali' should not be pronounced the way it is in the word 'hawk', but that would be the general tendency. So I have made it 'Kāli'. Now the reader

will understand that the 'ä' in the word should be pronounced the way the 'a' is in 'burglar'.

28th August, 1936

Q.: What is the means for attaining Emancipation from samsara? What is the opinion of the sastras? What is B.'s opinion?

B.: Sathsangatvae nissangathvam nissangathvae nirmohatvam nirmohatvae nischalatvam nischalatvae jivanmukti.

Q.: Practically how to do it?

B.: Only by the investigation 'Who am I?'

Q.: What is B.'s opinion on suicide? Does man have a right to take his own life?

B.: You may take your life but not the body's. You are not the body.

Q.: What am I then?

B.: Find out. Why ask me?

Q.: Suicides are rising amongst the youth, some say. What is the opinion of the sastras on suicide?

B.: Ask the sastras.

Q.: They are not interested in talking to me.

B.: What makes you think I am interested?

Q.: But you are responding to my questions.

B.: Yes, that is the folly I have committed, it seems.

Q.: But what is the answer to my question? Is suicide justifiable morally?

B.: No. Sri Ramakrishna has said: 'There cannot be any doubt that suicide is a grave sin. One who purposely imperils, mutilates or destroys the body must return again and again to this world to suffer its agonies.'

Q.: B. is in agreement with Sri Ramakrishna's opinion?

B.: Absolutely.

S>M>

Q.: How shall I realise the Parabrahman?

B.: You say "I". First find out what that "I" is. Then we can bother about Parabrahman, etc.. When we ourselves are not known to us, where is the possibility of knowing God? When even what is most elementary, fundamental and basic remains unknown to you, how are you going to learn about other things? If you do not even know algebra, where are you going to learn indefinite integrals and tensor analysis? If you do not know even to apply the distinction between real, personal and nominal accounts, where are you going to tally a balance-sheet? As Mr. H. G. Wells puts it, 'First things first.'. First tackle and finish off the primary question, 'Who am I?'. Thereafter- if other questions still remain- we may discuss it then, not now.

Q.: What is the difference between the states of Sayujya, Stithapranjya, Avadhuta, Brahmanirvanam and Sahajajnana?

B.: One who is in the manonivritti state is called a stithaprajna. The other terms mean the same as the Self. Brahman is always nirvanam.

Q.: What is manonivritti?

B.: Nude mind.

Q.: Then what is sahadastithi?

B.: Dead mind.

Q.: Then what is kaivalyam?

B.: Incinerated mind; but what is dead cannot know whether it is incinerated or not. So from the Jnani's point of view there is no difference between sahadastithi and kaivalyam. Even when the body is there he does not see it. When he looks at the body he sees only the Self. So what difference does it make whether the body remains or has been sliced into bits and pieces or burnt into ashes or buried in the bowels of the Earth or hurled into Sea? So far as the Jnani is concerned he cannot be aware of any body. He abides as the Self and is totally ignorant of anything else.

Q.: What is being Enlightened like?

B.: Reach the state yourself and find out for yourself.

Q.: Will not B. kindly tell me?

B.: The Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani cannot be imagined with the mind. It is the All and Beyond. Yet It is Nothingness Itself. Yet It is no void but Life Itself. It is Absoluteness Itself. The person looking at a reflection of the Sun in a shaking pot of water cannot possibly understand what it is like to be the Sun himself. The mind that is the guage of reality for the man on the Clapham omnibus is only one infinitesimally tiny ray of light from the glorious Sun of Self, and at that a ray that you see after it has bounced off some reflecting surface. The mind is a poor reflection of the Radiant Heart. If you will unequivocally relinquish or discard your tiny, worthless, individual self, the unfathomably ecstatic state of God Himself, the divine treasure of the Absolute, is all yours to inherit. Throw out all the mephitic garbage that you have accumulated through the ages, which gives you endless trouble all the time, and in return, obtain everything- and Beyond. See how gracious is God's bargain. In exchange for you, He will verily give Himself. Your apocalypse is the birth of God in you. 'Give me you, and I will give you Me.', says He. Where is He and where are we? Is then this[barter-transaction so mercifully proposed by God] not incalculably humongous generosity on His part? Should we not jump at the oppurtunity at once? But no; the man on the Clapham omnibus will not part with his garbage, not even when it has accumulated to the point of severely offending his nostrils. People tie a strip of cloth around their noses

and go out to collect more garbage. That is the wonder and beauty of avidya maya.

Q.: What is the secret of attainment of the Kingdom of God?

B.: Single-mindedness. How did King Sisupala obtain Salvation? By hating Sri Krishna from the very core of his heart. Therefore, be it love or hate, a single idea must be held fast until that also collapses and dissolves into the Real. Then only the Real Self is left. The Truth cannot be had by means of nourishing the intellect with the fodder of objective knowledge. Knowledge of diversity is only ignorance. Words can only point to the Truth. Understanding them does not mean you have gained True Wisdom. Words or concepts obscure the Truth further and further; they create confusion where none need exist. Hui-Neng has said: "Truth and words have nothing to do with each other. If Truth is the Sun burning in the sky, words are like the finger pointing at it. The finger itself can never reach the Sun. All it can do is to point its location. Some are deluded into thinking that the finger is the Sun. If you want to see the Sun, first tear your eyes away from the finger. The Sun of Truth is not anywhere apart from you. You are verily It. If you will Realise It, you must throw away everything you yet know. Within our impure mind, the pure one is to be found. The true import of meditation is to realize inwardly the imperturbability of the essence of the mind. My friend, the Grand Secret is inside you- look within, and wake up!" If Reality were something external to or apart from you, it could be handed over to you on a platter. This IS you. Only, relinquish imagination and BE as you ARE. We are not trying to attain the Self. There are not 2 selves, one to attain the other or the other the one. All that is necessary to do is to give up the not-Self; this done, the Self alone remains. Will anyone call this difficult? Acquiring can be difficult, for it requires effort. But you are asked only to give up- i.e., to cease all effort or imagination and simply BE the Real. Realisation is simply the art of letting go[of everything that the mind contains]. To know 'I am God' is wisdom, not think 'I am God'. To know is to remain subjectively aware without the involvement of effort or volition. With practise, this becomes the natural state. When possibility for volition or effort has completely died away, then you will be swallowed by the Self automatically. The thing to do is to NEVER FORGET BEING. Remembering Being is not thinking about Being; it is Being Itself. Thought is one thing and Realisation quite another. I-Am is Wisdom, not thinking that you are. Stop living in the self-imposed misery of Self-denial. Face Reality. Therefore, simply give up all pretence of being this or that, and merely BE. BE- that is all. It really is that simple. BE.

Q.: B. mentioned that Sisupala attained Salvation by hating God. How can anyone hate God?

B.: Oh! many do.

Q.: But how can hate lead to Salvation?

B.: Why not? For decade after decade Sisupala nurtured in his heart a fierce hatred of Sri Krishna. There was no other thought in his mind other than his hatred for Sri Krishna. The hatred was so vitriolic and strong that it eradicated all other thoughts. So, all the time Sisupala would be thinking about Krishna and Krishna only. Other thoughts had become impossible. This hatred broke out in Yudhishtira's Raja-sooya yajna. So, Sisupala became fortunate enough to be killed in the hands of Sri Krishna, a blessed privilege even the desireless Bhishma coveted but could not obtain.

Q.: Which is the best method of killing the ego?

B.: It varies upon the temperament. Those whose minds are structured to think in terms of logic opt for vichara. Those who prefer to worship God surrender unconditionally to him. The best thing to do is to take up both, and deliver a 'double-whamming attack' upon the ahankara. Do we not walk on 2 legs? Once God or Self sees that you are making earnest effort, he will guide you from within, of his own accord. Bhima was fighting with Jarasandha for a long time, and Sri Krishna was passively watching. Just when it became apparent to one and all that Bhima was going to lose, Sri Krishna told him the secret of destroying Jarasandha, and Bhima won.

Q.: Why not tell him at the outset?

B.: Because then he would become complacent and certainly lose on account of carelessness. God lets us struggle for a while. That is because the attitude of helplessness must germinate in you. You must realise that you are completely helpless, and therefore completely dependant upon the Almighty even to raise your little finger. Only then will the ego, which arrogantly says "I", subside. Have you heard about the history of Swami Vivekananda? When his father was supporting his family, he laughed at whatever his Sri Ramakrishna told him. When his father suddenly died and suffering swept him away like a gigantic deluge, he recognised his helplessness and his proud spirit found solace now in humility only. It was then, not before, that he surrendered unconditionally to his Guru, who saw his ripeness and opened his Eye to True Wisdom. If the ego still has a choice, rest assured: it will never subside. The ego MUST be browbeaten into surrendering. There is no doubt that God will eventually show you the light. But first he will make you surrender. If that surrender can be brought about only through suffering, so be it! Somehow or the other we must cross to the shore. Struggle madly to strike the Light and see if you do not make it. The man on the Clapham omnibus thinks, 'Come what may, I can take care of it.'. When he begins to actually feel, 'No, I cannot do anything at all. If God, in His limitless Mercy and divine Compassion, does

it through me, it would happen; otherwise it would not. Either way I am not involved; my helplessness in anything and everything is unequivocally absolute.', he is ready to receive the teaching of Ajata-advaita, not before. Trying to be humble is a sham, an exercise in self-deception. Actual humility lies only in total helplessness and complete surrender. Did not Sri Krishna make Kuselar sit on his own throne and wash his feet with tears of affection and joy? What did Kuselar bring for Sri Krishna? 3 handfuls of broken attukulu. It seems paltry. To Krishna it meant the world and more. I am the bonds slave of my devotee's Love, says he. Yet the only thing people seem to want to do is to pour in their money into hundiyals. Who is interested in your money? Have you grown big enough to enrich Him? Poosalar and Katavargoen both constructed temples; but which temple was God more interested in consecrating? So, to unconditionally Love God is the most exalted state possible- it is to know the Self.

29th August, 1936

Q.: For the past 5 years, I am trying to Realise the Self by using B.'s 'Who-am-I?' method. But there is no progress, because my ego is sabotaging all my sincere efforts.

B.: Never mind. Go on with your abhyasa. Let the ego do his worst. You do your best. And Bhagawan will take care of the rest.

The man's eyes shone with tears of joy at this firm assurance from the master.

S>M>

Q.: Defoe has said, 'The soul is placed in the body like a rough diamond, and must be polished, or the luster of it will never appear.'. Is it correct?

B.: The soul never had a body.

Q.: But I have a body.

B.: First discover what that "I" is and then see if any body is to be found. All say "I". But what does it mean?

Q.: I am altogether clueless. Bhagawan must be kind enough to enlighten me.

B.: Each one discovers Truth by his own effort. If It were outside you it could be handed over to you on a platter.

Q.: Is the world real or not? Is there re-birth after death?

B.: [no response]

Q.: If such a great savant as Sri Ramana Maharshi is unable to shed light on this point for me, who else can I turn to? Will B. please not show me some mercy and clarify my doubts?

B.: Once a simpleton like Ramana Maharshi happened to visit the Asphaltite lake. He asked the locals whether the fish in the lake were tasty to eat. The reply given to him was, 'This lake cannot harbour life.'. His response was,

'Yes, yes, I commiserate with your sad situation; but still, I want to know whether the fish found in this lake will be tasty to eat or not. Also, is fishing permitted during this season?'. Thereafter, for some strange reason, people in the vicinity began to avoid him and he went away dejected, thinking, 'Alas! No one is taking me seriously.'

Q.: I fail to grasp the moral of the story.

B.: If there ever were such a thing as world or birth, the questions concocted by you may arise.

Q.: I see a world around me. Also, my body was certainly subject to birth.

B.: 'I see...', 'my body...'. Who sees? Whose body?

Q.: So it is all- just- fiction?

B.: Worse- impossible fiction, like the horn of a horse or the wings of a boar. To say that anything exists is an adynaton. Existence alone can Exist.

Q.: Then why and how did I imagine such a thing known as the world?

B.: Who says that he has so imagined?

Q.: What is the proof that everything is unreal?

B.: The fact that there is no proof anything is Real.

Q.: What is the proof that something is Real?

B.: Self-luminousness- i.e., impossibility of knowing anything.

Q.: The Self has Itself to know- may we say atleast this much?

B.: We can say anything we like.

Q.: But what is the truth?

B.: There is no such thing as the Self knowing Itself. The Self is Knowledge Itself. It does not know and It is not to be known. Knowing is alien to It. Why? Because It is Real Knowledge. That which is actually Knowledge, cannot know anything. Knowing is one of the vrittis of the mind. There is no mind in the Self.

S>M>

Q.: Will B. admit that his vichara method is a psychological technique?

B.: Vichara begins with the mind but- carried out properly- does not end there.

Q.: What constitutes carrying it out properly?

B.: People like to believe, 'I am a jivatman; by practising this sadhana I am going to merge into the Paramatman.', or in some other concept which falls along similar lines. Do not start out with any assumptions or notions.

Q.: How to get rid of these unwanted notions?

B.: Notions, conceptions, ideas or thoughts, by whatever name called, can be tackled and eliminated efficaciously, again, only by vichara. The obstacles to vichara can be removed only by the vichara itself. When the last such obstacle has been extirpated, only the Real remains.

S>M>

Q.: What is the best way for Self-Realisation?

B.: Give up everything. The Self alone remains. One who has something to lose, something which he may yet lose, something which he still can lose, or something which he would rather not lose, can never Realise. To Realise is to lose yourself in the One. Without losing yourself, how can you find your Self? Everyone wants to Realise the Self, but who wants to lose himself? He who would Realise the Absolute must give up everything- i.e., all of the mind's contents: its beliefs, prejudices, preferences, aversions, traits of personality, and so on. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Q.: Should I forsake my home and family?

B.: Forsake yourself. It will do; it is all that is necessary.

S>M>

Q.: Why are Jnanis so rare in the world?

B.: On the other hand, all are verily Jnanis. The man on the Clapham omnibus is one whose Jnana is covered up with upadhis. A few, finding them irksome, manage to shake off the upadhis. This is the one and only difference.

Q.: What is the way to get rid of suffering?

B.: Get rid of the sufferer: that is the only way. Only so long as there is a sufferer can there be suffering. When there is no sufferer suffering is impossible.

Q.: I know that B. mentions 'Who-am-I?' often, as the most efficacious means for man to Realise his Immortal nature. But I have also heard him talk of the method of self-surrender. What is the difference between these 2 methods?

B.: Surrender or Realisation is the fruit of vichara. Ripe minds readily give up everything in a single stroke as soon as they are exposed to the truth [of Ajata-advaita that is taught by the Guru]. Then nobody remains to raise questions or formulate doubts or think thoughts; thus only the Self remains. Until the amount of vairagya needed to simply abandon the mind is gained, one must practise investigation along the lines of 'Who am I?'. Atma-vichara is sadhana; complete surrender is the goal itself. Complete surrender is the blemishless state of impeccable mental nudity. Complete surrender is merely another name for Jnana or Emancipation. There is no such affirmative act as 'surrendering' by means of which the Self may be Realised. To give up everything, including yourself foremost, is ananya sharanagati. Only one who has fully recognised samsara to be the horrific ocean of perdurable pain that it really is will be able to surrender the ego once and for all. Others carry on briskly with their usual drivellious blither, discussing, 'Now, I wonder which sadhana I shall pursue today...?'. There is no such thing as "surrendering", because surrender cannot be "done". Surrender is summa irutthal. The man



on the Clapham omnibus is so used to "doing" that when asked to not do, he begins to ruminate, 'I wonder how I may do this thing called "non-doing"?'. Is it not absurd? Non-doing is just that; it is simply not doing; how can it be "done"? Reality is not to be gained afresh. If imagination is given up, Reality shines. It is you who are imagining your fictitious ignorance. Give up imagining and BE as you ARE. This is the way to Immortality from which there is no possibility of return. For one who has the burning, all-consuming vairagya to forthwith throw all his age-old mental baggage overboard, sadhana is a ridiculous proposition. Who is to do sadhana? However, partial surrender may be called sadhana; in due course this would lead to complete surrender. Vichara and sharanagati are not to be thought of as 2 different or mutually exclusive forms of sadhana, from which you may pick out either to follow. The one implies the other and the other the one. Do we not walk with 2 legs? To Realise the import of self-investigation one must completely surrender; to surrender completely one must relentlessly carry on with self-investigation. In either case what we are trying to do is to break the venomous, tenacious grip of the tyrannical ego in such a way that it is not able to rise again to arrogantly proclaim itself as "I". You may even pull out the roots of a poisonous plant and throw it away, but it might regenerate. The thing to do is to dig out the rhizome, soak it in kerosene for some time, and then torch it. Then there can be no more nuisance. Soak the aham vritti in the fuel of vairagya and torch it with the spark of the Guru's Compassionate Grace. Surrender will bring about Peace only if it is completely unconditional: "Anyatha sharanam naasti thvamaeva sharanam mama..." This is the way to the state of unceasing mouna or union with the Divine.

S>M>

Q.: Coleridge wrote: "Day after day, day after day, We stuck, nor breath nor motion; As idle as a painted ship Upon a painted ocean." Is that the state of the Jnani- complete passivity or absence of activity?

B.: No. He is Life or Sentience Itself. He is a complete stranger to indolence or sopor.

Q.: Since Jnana is said to be the natural state of one and all, why does Realising It prove to be so difficult?

B.: Because we have developed the habit of straying away, and therefore staying away, from the Self, excursing ourselves away from the One Real in the form of thought. Due to pertinacity of the habit of extroversion, the Self seems hidden and we seem to suffer misery. What is to be done? It is a non-existent thing called 'thought' that is the harbinger of so much misery in our lives. What a pity! Coleridge has expressed the same sentiment: Since all that beat about in Nature's range,

Or veer or vanish; why should'st thou remain  
The only constant in a world of change,  
O yearning Thought! that liv'st but in the brain?

S>M>

Q.: How is one to lead a life that is free from misery?

B.: What you call misery is only the aggregate of the contents of your mind. Misery is merely the faculty of thought. The mind is too weak to remain in the nivrutti state; therefore it goes outward in the form of thought; therefore you say you are miserable. Whose fault is it?

Q.: How is one to strengthen the mind?

B.: It depends upon the temperament of the individual.

Q.: If a man yearns for bhakti, what should he do?

B.: Worship God by surrendering your will at his feet. This manasigapoojai is better than offering flowers, fruits, argyam, etc.. For surely you are more valuable than anything you could possibly offer.

Q.: My impression is that man's love for God seems to be largely unrequited.

B.: Unconditional Love cannot and does not expect reciprocation. It is its own reward.

Q.: Then what is sharanagati?

B.: True surrender is Love of God for the sake of Love alone. Surrender can never be regarded as genuine so long as the devotee feels any need or want. One who has really surrendered does not even want Emancipation. He is indifferent to everything and awake to Love only.

Q.: Meditation upon God, who is said to be Immanent, is hard to understand.

B.: Leave God alone. Inhere in your Self.

Q.: How to do japam?

B.: Japam may be gross or subtle. In the former some mantra is involved, and a deity may be invoked. The latter is to allow the mind to collapse into the Real- i.e., pure consciousness. This is the most efficacious meditation. It renders the mind indistinguishable from its soukshmyavasthukam.

Q.: My mind is too weak to practise meditation. What shall I do?

B.: Fix it in the Self. Then it will gain strength.

Q.: Everyday I am doing sandhyavandanam. I perform other religious duties also, sincerely. But what is the use? Everything is mechanically done. I want to understand the meaning of what I am doing, before I do anything, be it japam, sandhyavandanam or anything else. Is my attitude correct?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: How does God select people to bestow Self-Realisation upon? I mean, what are the requisite criteria God is looking for?

B.: The Bible says, 'For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.' So, ripeness is the one and only criterion.

Q.: What constitutes spiritual ripeness?

B.: Perfect mental introversion.

Q.: Is the same to be achieved through vichara?

B.: Yes.

Q.: I want to be dear to God. But why has he filled my earthly life with all sorts of base temptations?

B.: Do you blame Him for your temptations? 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man...' So, turn the mind towards the Self and there is no temptation from the world. Be tempted to plunge into the Self. Then other temptations will never plague you and you will be happy.

Q.: But is it so simple? Temptations cause me to lose all peace of mind. My mind becomes like a storm-tossed boat upon the slightest temptation being beheld. What am I to do?

B.: 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'

Q.: What is that way of escape?

B.: Only withdrawal into the Self.

Q.: But I do not know my Self.

B.: If that thought also is given up, all will be well.

Q.: But how to know the Self?

B.: There is no knowing it. All that is possible is to surrender oneself to It. Then It alone remains and there is no more temptation or misery.

Q.: What is the difference between surrender and vichara?

B.: Vichara strengthens the mind or introverts it. Surrender is the Goal- it is another name for the Self. Complete surrender is another name for Jnana or Emancipation.

Q.: I am now taking leave of Bhagawan. I do not know if I shall return to have B.'s darshan again. I want to be blessed by B., so that I do not forget the precious words of advice he has so graciously endowed me with.

B.: [smiling] 'Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.'

Q.: I cannot become a renunciate and settle down in India. I have a family to take care of and many worldly responsibilities. Although I live a continent

away, will B. assure me of his continued benign rule of Grace over me- forever?

B.: [emphatically] 'Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.'

The Caucasian wept tears of ecstasy at these firm words of assurance from the master.

S>M>

Q.: 'The effects of sinful deeds and righteous deeds are both to be experienced after death, but as to which should be experienced first, one is given the liberty to choose.' Is the above asseveration correct?

B.: Does this question or any other question perturb you in the state of deep slumber?

Q.: No.

B.: What is the reason?

Q.: A sleeping person is nescient of his intellect- therefore, he is not in a position to ask anything or raise doubts.

B.: Are you different from the one in sleep?

Q.: No.

B.: Why then should there be any difference between the experiences of the 2 states? In deep sleep you are peace. But now you are restless. What is the reason? You admit that it is the same you that slept and the same you that is now raising doubts. That being so, why should there be a feeling of want or incompleteness during the waking state alone?

Q.: I don't know.

B.: Find out.

S>M>

Q.: God has taken care of all my needs amply. I am not wanting in anything. Yet there is no peace of mind for me. My destiny is preventing me from enjoying peace of mind. What should I do?

B.: There are only 2 ways to conquer destiny or be independent of it. One is to find out whose destiny it is. The other is to surrender unconditionally to the Higher Power.

Q.: I am too weak to pursue any investigation along the lines suggested by the Maharshi. Let me surrender to God. Will it be enough for gaining peace of mind?

B.: Yes. Surrender yourself once and for all. Then all will be well. Throw the responsibility for your life upon the Higher Power. Then you will feel relieved of your burden. Destiny is powerless to affect one who has surrendered.

Q.: I earnestly want to surrender- yet, I find surrender impossible.

B.: Complete surrender might be impossible to begin with. But partial surrender is certainly possible for all. In due course of time, partial surrender will lead to complete surrender. That perfect peace of mind which you seek is rendered available only if you surrender unequivocally.

Q.: Can partial surrender undo destiny?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is not destiny the inevitable result of past karma?

B.: Surrender to God; leave it to God to take care of the question. You need not bother yourself with it.

Q.: Karma constitutes God's design for the world. How can we expect that God would bespoil his own design for our petty sake?

B.: Never mind your ideas about what He might or might not do. Instead, surrender to Him- here and now- and put an indubitable end to your interminable, self-imposed misery.

Q.: I want to see God. How shall I see God?

B.: Turn the mind within. Seek its source.

Q.: It is said that God should be seen in anything and everything in the world. Should I try to cultivate this mental attitude?

B.: If he is everywhere, is He not in you? First find Him within yourself. God is within the seeker that seeks Him. You speak of the world. To see a world a mind is necessary. To see God in the world is mere mental activity; thus it is an exercise in futility. Consciousness purged of mind is God.

Q.: Whenever I see beautiful colours I tell myself that God is a wonderful creator; I feel gratitude towards him for having created such a beautiful world. Is the practise right?

B.: These are arbitrary mental conceptualisations or modifications of mind. Seek the Real.

Q.: I mentioned colours only as an example. I am similarly moved by any beauty occurring in nature.

B.: The same answer applies.

Q.: The soul enjoys the world created by God through the vehicle of the body and sensory organs. Am I correct?

B.: Objects are only your ideas pertaining thereto. From where do all these and other mental ideas arise? From the aham vritti. From where does the aham vritti arise? From pure consciousness, which in turn is the reflected light of the Self. Therefore the Self is the source of everything.

Q.: What is my Self? Am I the soul?

B.: Soul, mind, ego, etc.- these are mere words. Really, there are no such entities. Existence or Consciousness is the only Reality. That-which-IS alone is and alone can BE.

Q.: Consciousness is not giving me any pleasure.

B.: This is only a thought. Get rid of this thought also and only bliss will remain. Bliss is blissful in Itself. There is no enjoyer or experiencer involved. The state in which we abide as bliss Itself is the most exalted state. Experience implies duality. Duality implies imperfection. Only perfect non-duality can yield perfect bliss.

Q.: Life has both pain and pleasure. How to be rid of pain and remain with pleasure only?

B.: There is no such thing as pain; obnubilation of bliss is called pain. Pleasure is the introverted mind and pain is the extroverted mind. What IS, is only bliss. Bliss is the natural state. Bliss is your inherent nature. Bliss always IS. Only we have become acclimatised into imagining otherwise. To find bliss, cease to imagine and BE.

Q.: Can we say that bliss emanates from the soul and floods the brain with happiness whenever any beautiful creation of God is seen?

B.: All these are only mental concepts.

Q.: What about God? Is He also only a mental concept?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How can that be?

B.: Are you aware of God in the state of deep sleep?

Q.: But sleep is a void- a state of nothingness.

B.: If God be Real, He would remain always. Be it waking or sleep, you are always the same and you remain always. During sleep when there is no possibility of thinking about God or anything else, your Self remains always. If God be Real, He must be discernible in the state of sleep also. But what is our experience? The thought of God arises only in the waking or dream state. Why?

Q.: Is it not good to think about God?

B.: Who wants to think about God?

Q.: I.

B.: What do you mean by "I"? Who says "I"?

Q.: The body says it.

B.: Oh! is that so? Then why did it not say so in sleep also?

Q.: The "I" is inside the body.

B.: Do you have a body or not? Where are you with reference to the body? Are you within the body or without?

Q.: Yes, I do; I am inside the body.

B.: Do you know this to be so in sleep?

Q.: Even during sleep the body exists.

B.: Did the body announce its existence to you whilst you were asleep?

Q.: No. But on waking, again the body is found, same as it ever was.

B.: What is your experience of sleep itself? Whilst sleeping, are you aware of being within the body or without?

Q.: My experience of sleep is that it is a void- a state of nothingness.

B.: The fact is, you are neither within nor without. You simply ARE- that is all. Sleep is the natural state of being.

Q.: In that case, sleep must be a better state than this.

B.: There is no any superior or inferior state. Jagrat, swapna or sushupti- you are always the same. There is perfect absence of misery in sleep. Sleep is a state of unfathomable happiness, albeit enjoyed unconsciously. The sense of want, of pain, etc., arises only in the waking state. What is the change that has taken place? You are the same always. The you that slept is not different from the you that is now raising doubts and asking questions. You are always the same your Self. But there is difference in happiness between the different states. Why? Because the mind has arisen now. This thing called mind rises only after the 'I-thought' or aham vritti has arisen. The aham vritti arises from pure consciousness. Do not permit the aham vritti to arise. Inhere in pure consciousness. That is bliss immeasurable.

Q.: The sleep state is a state wherein the mind is inert. I consider it the worst state.

B.: If that were so, why then do all desire sleep?

Q.: It is the body- when tired- that goes to sleep.

B.: Does the body sleep?

Q.: Yes. Sleep is a condition in which the wear and tear of the body is repaired.

B.: Be it so. But does the body itself sleep or wake up? You yourself say that the mind is inert in sleep. The three states are of the mind. They have nothing to do with the body, which is insentient like a baked earthen pot.

Q.: The 3 states facilitate the soul to function through the sensory organs. Am I correct?

B.: The 3 states have nothing to do with the sensory organs or the body. Soul or Aathman is always uncontaminated, untaintable, unreachable and aloof. It is the substratum running through all the many states. Nothing can reach the Aathman.

Q.: But then, what is the difference between the 3 states- in actual substance?

B.: There is no difference. The waking state passes, I am; the dream state passes, I am; the sleep state passes, I am. They repeat themselves endlessly, and yet I am. I am and remain always. The different states are like images moving on the screen in a cinema show. Can the images affect the screen? Likewise, I remain unaffected although these states should pass away.

Q.: People go to the cinema show not to look at the screen but the images.

B.: The screen is insentient and thus cannot be expected to yield any bliss. Aathma is Sentience Itself. Therefore It cannot be apart from bliss.

Q.: Is the bliss afforded by the Aathma co-eval with possession of a body?

B.: The body is never aware of itself. It is you who say 'my body'. The body does not say "I". In fact even now you are bodiless. Realise It.

Q.: My incumbent experience is contrariwise. I feel the body quite clearly. It is a tangible reality to me.

B.: Are you aware of the body in sleep?

Q.: No.

B.: Was there a body for you in sleep?

Q.: Yes.

B.: You say you were unaware of the body in sleep. Yet you say that the body existed in sleep. If you are not at all aware of something being existent, how can you say that it exists?

Q.: On waking up the body is found to be the same as before.

B.: But do you know this in sleep?

Q.: No.

B.: The sense of there being a body is a mere thought; the thought is of the mind, the mind arises after the 'I-thought', the 'I-thought' is the root thought underlying all other thoughts. Pull out the root and everything is destroyed in one stroke. Then only Reality remains- as It was indeed remaining all along. Reality is always there- here and now. Only we pay attention to other things. Give up the aham vritti. Then all other thoughts will disappear. There will then be no body, no mind, no ego- only pure bliss. This is the pure Self. It is without reflection. To gain this state you should surrender yourself.

Q.: How is the mind to be eviscerated?

B.: Do not try to destroy it. To think or wish for Manonasham is in itself a thought. If the thinker is sought for, he disappears. Then there will be bliss without beginning or end.

Q.: How shall I get rid of the mind?

B.: If any such thing is there, it can be eradicated.

Q.: The Maharshi's teaching seems to be difficult to practise.

B.: The idea of difficulty is unreal. It is an obstacle to Realisation. It must be overcome. To remain as the Self cannot be not difficult. If you are asked to do anything you may complain of difficulty. You are told only to keep quiet[Summa iru]. How can this be difficult?

Q.: It is easy to think of God. It is difficult to remain without thinking.

B.: According to you, to look out at other things is easy- and to look within is difficult! Is it not absurd? The Truth ought to be contrariwise, ought not it?



Q.: But I do not understand the Maharshi's teaching. It seems difficult.

B.: This thought of difficulty is the chief hurdle. It is an erroneous point of view. A little practice will make you see the Truth.

Q.: What is the practice?

B.: To find out the source of "I".

Q.: That must be the state before one's birth.

B.: Why think of birth and death? Were you ever born? The emergence of mind is called birth. Once mind or the reflected consciousness has emerged the aham vritti is born. After the aham vritti the body-thought arises and a body is seen. With the help of the body a world is seen. Thereafter arises the thought of birth, the state before birth, death, the state after death, and so on and so forth. All these are only concepts of the mind. You speak of birth. Whose birth? Birth is for what is born. You are the Unborn, the Absolute.

Q.: The body was born.

B.: Are you the body?

Q.: Am I not now born?

B.: If you are this body, birth is real. But the body is not the "I". The Self is not born- nor does it die. Nothing is ever created. The Jnani sees only the Self and everything in and of the Self. There is no diversity in the Self. It is not possible for the Self to know anything. Therefore, there is neither birth nor death in the Self. BE the Self that you ever ARE. That is the end of all your misery.

Q.: If sleep be such an exalted state, why does not one like to be always in it?

B.: One is always only in sleep. The present waking state is a mere hallucination or dream. A dream can occur only in sleep. Sleep underlies these 3 states. The appearance of these 3 states is again a dream, which in its turn is taking place in another sleep. In this way the states of dream and sleep are endless. Likewise, birth and death also are dreams taking place in sleep. Actually there is no birth and no death.

Q.: But what then is to account for the body's birth and death?

B.: Let the body go on being born and dying. Why do you pay any attention to it? Stand aloof from the body. You are not the body. Let the body do as it pleases. Do not yourself get entangled in it.

Q.: How to cultivate detachment from the body in particular and worldly affairs in general?

B.: There is no such thing as cultivating detachment. Remain without attachment- that is the only thing to be done, or rather, un-done.

Q.: How to give up attachment, then?

B.: Only by introverting the truculent, obstreperous mind further and further until it is browbeaten into completely surrendering once and for all.

Disenfranchisement with the world and introversion of mind go hand in hand.

Q.: How to introvert the mind?

B.: Only by relentlessly pursuing the investigation, 'Who-am-I?'

Q.: Uptill what should the investigation be carried on?

B.: Go on investigating until investigation becomes impossible.

S>M>

Q.: They say that God can be approached by the path of Love. Is it so?

B.: Yes- provided the Love is unselfish or unconditional. Superficial, passing fancies and fantasies, motivating one to worship God for a while, cannot be called Love. Real Love is blind to everything but Itself. It arrests and engulfs your attention wholly and does not permit you to think about anything. Love has nothing to do with thinking. To only insanely Love is the lone, exclusive way to truly Live, for verily never is Life to be found in not-Love.

Q.: How can I cultivate this Love?

B.: 'For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.', is what the Christ has said. What does it mean? Were you to give God a miniscule portion of space even in your mind, He shall gradually permeate the totality of your mind and, in due course flooding it entirely with Love of ineffably ecstatic pulchritudinousness, direct it toward dissolution in the Self; but a mind that is engrossed altogether in worldly matters and concerns will remain hopelessly pre-occupied so forevermore.

Q.: That is the problem. I want to Love God, but my mind occupies itself completely with temporal worries and anxieties, the result being that God finds no room to inhabit therewithin. What am I to do?

B.: Yearning is enough to introduce God into your mind. Intensely long for God, so that your mind melts away, without leaving behind the least trace of residue, in the all-consuming fire of Love for the Divine. It is enough to develop passionate craving for God: that will introduce God into the mind, and once inside He shall take care of the rest. But it is you who must first invite Him in Lovingly. The primary initiative must emanate from you. 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.' So, the incipience must be from you. Once the zygote is formed further development is automatic. But if fertilisation never took place, fecundity has never been made use of. The mind is like an ovum awaiting to be imbued with life, which Love alone could ever be. Fervently invite God to fertilise your mind; He will not of his own accord force his way inward; if your mind earnestly supplicates of Him that itself be penetrated by His compassionate Grace and sown with the seed of Jnana, then alone does he imbue it with true life, which is illimitable Love for Him.

Therefore, yearn and long that God ravish your mind and inseminate it with divine Love for Him. Thereafter the seed of Jnana planted automatically matures into the embryo of vairagya, and the birth of the imperishable Sahaja-stithi becomes inevitable. If you want to approach God by the sweet path of Love, your longing for Him should be fanatical, maniacal. Sri Ramakrishna's body oozed blood all over because he was crazed with holy Love. Love alone can untie the strong knot of the hridhayapundarikam which has mixed up the sentient and the insentient. So, let your mind ache for God's blissful Love night and day. Take 1 step in God's direction. He will take 10 steps towards you. See if it happens or not. But the first step must be from you.

Q.: Sri Ramakrishna had visions of God. Were they merely his own hallucinations?

B.: Why should you be worried about Sri Ramakrishna? Sri Ramakrishna fulfilled what he came for. You try and do likewise.

Q.: Is occurrence of visions an indication of spiritual progress? Is absence of visions an indication of spiritual retardation? This is what I want to know.

B.: Visions may or may not take place. Let us not bother about it. Visions occur to you, the seer. Whether they occur or not the seer is always there. The seer IS always. So, first find out who the ever-present seer is. In what is seen there may be diversity; in the seer there is no diversity. First let us tackle the seer and find out who he is. Thereafter, if need be, we can investigate the endless phenomena seen.

Q.: When people have visions of God, is it really God who appears before them, or is it just their own mind projecting a familiar image of God before their sensory organs?

B.: The latter. But the entire cosmos, together with its supposed creator, is really only a mental projection. In deep sleep is there any cosmos?

Q.: If even God be illusory, what then is Real at all?

B.: 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.' So, that God which is within, the Lord of the Heart, is Real. He is the Impersonal Absolute.

Q.: How shall I attain Him?

B.: Give yourself upto Him without reserve. Then only He is left.

Q.: Will this approach suffice to prevent rebirth?

B.: You say, 'rebirth'. Rebirth is of what is born incumbently. Are you born now? What is your present state?

Q.: It is one of ignorance. I am a dehi, an embodied being. So, I am in the bondage of samsara. Am I correct?

B.: Are you aware of bondage or liberation in deep sleep?

Q.: No. But I am aware of it now.

B.: Exactly- that is the mistake. Give up being aware of fiction and remain simply AWARE.

Q.: Does Jnana put an end to all future births, or does it reverse or negate previous births or lifetimes also?

B.: One who is in Jnana was never born. So for Him, there is no question of birth, rebirth, previous births, and so on and so forth.

Q.: So, that I was born is not a fact, but mere imagination?

B.: Exactly.

Q.: It sounds too fantastic to believe.

B.: It is because the 'body-am-I' idea is strongly rooted in the mind. If the body, world or God were Real, they should be able to shine forth in your sleep also. Do they?

Q.: No.

B.: Thus, what is the inference? When you are asleep everything disappears but your Self remains unaffected and unchanged. So, the Self alone is Real; there can never be anything else. What comes let come. What goes let go. See what remains. It is the Self, the One True God. What comes and goes cannot be Real. Reality must be changless, Absolute. People waste their time on questions pertaining to birth and death. It is meaningless fiction. There is neither birth nor death.

Q.: That the body was born cannot be denied.

B.: Then let the body worry about its birth and death. Why should you intercede on its behalf? You have nothing to do with the body.

Q.: Is it not my duty to take care of and provide for the body?

B.: If the burden is thrown on the Higher-power, the body's destined activities and duties go on automatically. Progressively all cares and responsibilities are- altogether- taken out of your hands, but they are nonetheless executed. The phenomenon cannot be explained on the basis of theoretical grounds or intellectual considerations. Try it and see.

Q.: Shall I not try to do something for the spiritual upliftment of mankind? Nowadays the world's outlook has become increasingly materialistic. What should be done to bring man back to the path of Light?

B.: 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'

Q.: What is the import of the term 'God's righteousness'?

B.: Perfect vairagya or perfect Self-inherence.

Q.: Why is there no Order in this ashram? If there were, I would have joined in it. Sri Ramakrishna, whom Sri Bhagawan seems to hold in lofty esteem, created an Order, and it is functioning till this day.

B.: Realisation is a personal voyage into the Impersonal. J.K. said, 'Truth is a pathless land.'

Q.: But unlike J.K., B. is not interested in touring around the world, giving speeches and lectures, and spreading his message. He keeps quiet. Why?

B.: The message is the same: 'Observe Inwards.' There it is delivered through the medium of the intellect. Here it is heart to heart. Whomever finds whichever compatible attends the respective presence.

Q.: Is Inner Observation the same as 'Who-am-I'?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How so?

B.: The difference is in the nomenclature employed only. Continuously observing the mind, one finds there is no such thing, that no such thing could ever exist. The fruit of such observation is that the observer, the observed and the faculty of observation all collapse and disappear once and for all. Then only the Self- in all its purity- is left as the residue. The mind is only a mistaken notion. If you look closely at it, it cannot remain. If you look at the snake in the twilight closely, it becomes obvious that there never was any snake. Then the question of killing the snake becomes an absurd redundancy. Whether you call it vichara or inner-observation, the point is to give up or stop being aware of the not-Self. There is no need to cultivate awareness of the Self, because that is an inevitable constant, a permanent 'given'. It is totally impossible to cultivate Self-awareness because it is already here and now. If we stop paying attention to the not-Self, the Self alone remains. The approach therefore is one of elimination or negation. 'Total negation is the essence of the positive.'

Q.: So that is the meaning of 'Manasam thu kim marganae kritae naiva manasam marga arjavat.'

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: Meister Eckhart said, 'Only the hand that erases can write the true thing.'. Is it correct?

B.: Yes; only by erasing the ego can Truth be discovered.

Q.: What does B. have to say about the unfortunate, prevailing jurisprudence in England ensuring unequivocal criminalisation of same-sex coital relations? Mr. Edward Carpenter has written: 'The subjection of sex-relations to legal conventions is an intolerable bondage...'

Chadwick: [loudly] Do we have to discuss such things here, kind sir? Is this the place for it?

B.: [smiling] Why do you omit to read out that entire sentence of his? Does not the latter part of the sentence itself constitute the answer?

Q.: Rudolf Steiner said, 'If there is something more powerful than destiny, this must be the human being who bears destiny unshaken.' Does B. agree with him?

B.: Yes. Destiny's jurisdiction is exclusively over that which is bound by it. Are you bound by it?

Q.: I am completely surprised to hear this line of talk from the Maharshi; I heard that he is a fatalist.

B.: The body's fate cannot be changed. Remain aloof from the body. Remain as the Self. Then there is no destiny.

Q.: Can this lofty piece of advice be practically followed?

B.: Why not?

Q.: When I reflect upon my life, I feel Browning's lines waft into my head:  
My life is a fault at last, I fear:

It seems too much like a fate, indeed!

Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.

But what if I fail of my purpose here?

It is but to keep the nerves at strain,

To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,

And, baffled, get up and begin again,—

So the chase takes up one's life, that's all.

B.: [laughs] Next time you reflect upon your life, think of these lines instead:

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?

Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with hands!

What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the same?

Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power expands?

S>M>

Q.: I am curious to know what the answer actually is to the question, 'Who am I?'.

B.: Find out.

Q.: But you know the answer, sir. You have discovered it after years of sitting in caves and introspecting by yourself. Please condescend to share the fruit of your effort with humanity. Why couldn't you just tell me the answer and be done with it? It would spare me the effort of having to discover it all by myself.

B.: The answer lies in the field of subjective experience. To describe it in words is pointless- an exercise in arrant futility. Words cannot convey the Final State, anymore than saying 'Sun' can burn your tongue.

Q.: So the truth transcends the intellect?

B.: Yes. It is quite Beyond the mind.

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between the mind and the Self?

B.: There is no difference. Turned outside the mind becomes thoughts and objects. Turned inside it discovers itself to be the Self. When "I" flies off tangentially and says 'I am this.' or 'I am that.', it is called the ego. When it keeps quiet or remains as itself only, it is not different from the Self.

Q.: It is said that at any given point in time there will always be atleast 7 Jnanis in Tiruvannamalai. Is it so?

B.: What is your idea of a Jnani? Do you think Jnani means 'knower of Jnana'?

Q.: Yes.

B.: No. The Jnani is Jnana Itself. So how can there be more than the One Jnani? You identify yourself with a body, and therefore you foist the same erroneous idea on the Jnani also. The Jnani Himself cannot make such mistake. He knows himself to BE the formless One.

Q.: Can Sri Maharshi shed light on the question of what my previous lifetime was?

B.: First investigate and find out who you are in the present. Thereafter we may inquire about the past and future, if need be.

S>M>

A young, Aryan couple prostrate before the Maharshi with their little toddler betwixt them. The mother helps the tiny boy to lie himself flat on the floor as a gesture of homage unto the Maharshi. The master smiles at the child, and it claps its hands at him, giggling and unintelligibly nattering back in joy. The mother tells B. that he starts crying at night for some undiscernable reason, and asks what may be done about it. B. goes to the book-case and picks out a tiny pamphlet. He gives it to the mother, saying, 'Read this out to him at the time of putting him to sleep.'. It is the Sri Ramapadhuddharaka stotram.

30th August, 1936

Q.: What does the Tetragrammaton YeHWaH signify?

B.: It means 'That-which-IS'. Ehyeh-asher-ehyeh also signifies the same thing: I-AM-THAT-WHICH-I-AM. The implication is this:

1. Reality cannot know, nor be known by, anything.
2. Reality cannot be comprised within, nor comprise, anything.
3. Reality cannot be illumined by, nor obscured by, nor illuminate, nor obscure, anything.
4. Reality cannot be apart from one's Self.
5. Reality cannot be apart from Being, Existence, Consciousness, or Sentience, by whatever name called.

In Vedic parlance Reality is called Purusha or Poorna. The meaning is the same- i.e., the Absolute Self or God.

S>M>

Q.: I have- more than once- heard Sri Bhagawan saying that to Realise the Self, vairagyam is a sine qua non. Will Sri Bhagawan kindly elaborate further on this point?

B.: Vairagyam is not mere desire or determination to escape from samsara; it is actual inability to [continue to] remain in samsara. How will you react when your head is pressed down underneath the surface of water? Will you desire to rise to the surface to draw breath, or will you struggle maniacally and insanely to somehow fill your lungs with some air? Which of these alternatives would it be?

Q.: The latter.

B.: Yes. That is it.

Q.: I see B.'s point, but how do I make myself struggle with such ferocious intensity?

B.: When you are underneath water, it is not the thought 'I must escape from this imminent death on account of drowning that I am incumbently faced with.' that motivates, triggers or sustains your struggle to break free of the water. Some primeval instinct takes complete possession of your faculties- bodily, mental and all- and you are entirely and helplessly within its grasp.

Q.: In the context of Realisation, what is the corresponding equivalent of this instinct that prompts one to escape from death caused by drowning?

B.: Remaining perpetually aware of and awake to the fact that SAMSARA IS A DEADLY, VIRULENT, MEPHITIC POISON. Once you fully discover, and so remain unintermittently in horrific realisation of, the actual poisonous character of samsara, thereafter it is like finding yourself submerged underneath the surface of the ocean; you cannot remain without giving your all to break free. Once samsara is seen for what it truly is, Realisation is a CERTAINTY.

Samsara is verily death- moment to moment, agonising, never-ending death.

Q.: What then prevents man from seeing samsara for what it really is?

B.: The cloak of avidya maya.

Q.: How do I remove this cloak?

B.: By winning the Grace of the Guru.

Q.: How is that to be done?

B.: By investigating, 'Who-am-I?' relentlessly.

S>M>

Q.: Who is a Guru? What is his role in bringing about Realisation?

B.: In each jivatman there is a latent desire for that particular individuality to go on thriving ad infinitum. Unless this desire be totally extirpated, Realisation is impossible. To kill this insidious, evil desire, which lies meticulously concealed within the darkest, densest core of the ego, God sends a Guru.



Just as a komkee elephant is used as a decoy to capture a wild elephant gone rogue in the jungle, so also does God come disguised as one's Guru to obliterate the ego. The Guru expertly tackles the sadhaka by first going along with him on the latter's own path, and then, when the time is ripe, diverting him into the ultimate path. The Guru may or may not be in anthropomorphic form. Have you read the story of Dattatreya?

Q.: Yes.

B.: Good. So, unto one who is exceedingly anxious to Realise, God appears in one form or the other, and guides him to the truth.

Q.: Can the Guru really be even a pigeon or a hawk?!

B.: Yes. What form the Guru takes depends upon the psychological constitution or mental temperament of the sadhaka. God always chooses to manifest himself in a form that has the maximum appeal to that particular devotee. The form differs on a case-by-case basis; the function is perfectly the same. No 2 persons are exactly alike in their mental-composition. So, God's appearance and behaviour in His disguise as the Guru has to accordingly be diverse.

Q.: Where can I spot my Guru?

B.: God manifests as the Guru only if your yearning to Realise is exceedingly humongous.

Q.: How to develop such yearning?

B.: By investigating, 'Who-am-I?' relentlessly.

S>M>

Q.: How and why is desire to Realise born in some but not in others?

B.: Some discover the truth that this ephemeral world is no better than a dream; others do not. Merely listening to a lecture on Ajata-advaita does not mean that you have discovered the truth. Encountering the opinion that the world is a dream, or even genuinely believing that it must be a dream, cannot be construed as implying that the sadhaka has discovered the truth. It may be said that you have discovered the truth [of the world being nothing but a mental projection or dream] certainly if and only if you actually experience the world as a dream. One who has truly divested himself of the erroneous notion that the world is objectively real in itself would not opine or believe that the world is a dream; he would actually experience the world as a dream. Whilst watching a cinematographic projection, does it occur to you to go and touch the screen, motivated by the thought, 'Ah! how lovely does the ballerina Grusinskaya look; let me endeavour to shake hands and introduce myself; although she is quite insistent in wanting to be alone, my exquisitely handsome personality may- after all- persuade her to change her mind; let me try my luck...'? [boisterous peals of laughter from Caucasians in the Hall] The

only difference here is that you are not watching the screen- yourself are the screen. There is no question of imagining yourself to be the screen. There is no question of thinking 'I am the screen.'. The screen abides as Itself; it does not think, 'I am the screen.'. So, once the idea that there is something known as an objectively real world has vanished altogether, the desperate necessity to merge in actual Reality is born; but not before. Without this necessity any desire for Realisation could only ever be superficial- i.e., motivated by intellectual curiosity; therefore it cannot possibly ferry you towards Realisation. Intellectual or mental curiosity for the Self must be distinguished from the insane craving for the Self that the necessity aforesaid invariably manages to bring about; where such craving is genuinely present, sooner or later Realisation is a CERTAINTY. Thus, when you have lost the incorrect understanding that the world is an objectively real entity, your entire mind becomes inundated with the crazed longing to discover actual Reality; thereafter escape from Realisation is impossible. All that is required is- not to Realise the Self, for the Self is always in Realisation, but- to unrealise the not-Self. Once the ludicrous belief in the objective reality of the world has completely evaporated away, thereafter everything is automatic. Again, do not believe that the world is unreal. Only give up the belief that it is real. If all vrittis of the mind are given up, only the essence of the mind remains, and soon even that is absorbed back into its source, leaving behind only the ever-present Self as the residue. This is Jnana.

Q.: I am unable to give up the belief that the world is Real. Some accomplish this easily; others, like me, struggle; why?

B.: If one has strong vairagya, he is easily able to discard the idea of the world being objectively real.

Q.: Well then, sir, how is one to cultivate strong vairagya?

B.: By winning the Grace of the Guru.

Q.: How is that to be done?

B.: By investigating, 'Who-am-I?' relentlessly.

S>M>

Q.: Is Sri Bhagawan opposed to Hedonism and Epicureanism?

B.: Who are we to oppose this or that?

Q.: But he disagrees with these schools of thought- yes?

B.: Real and permanent happiness is found only within.

Q.: Is internal happiness more intense as compared to pleasures obtained through deployment of the sensory organs?

B.: It is like contrasting the heat and light of the Sun with that produced by a struck matchstick- an asinine comparison.

S>M>

Q.: Could chanting 'Rama, Rama...' or 'Sriramajeyam, Sriramajeyam...' lead to Realisation?

B.: God's name should not be invoked mechanically. Call upon him with fervid yearning and surely you shall be benefitted. Also, do not asservate, 'I am performing japam.'. One must have a strong emotional connection with the deity that is invoked through the japam being performed. If no such emotional bonding is present, japam bears no fruit.

Q.: I have no emotional attachment toward any particular deity. What am I to do?

B.: Investigate 'Who-am-I?'.

S>M>

Q.: Bhagawan has said in his biography Self-Realisation, 'It flashed through me vividly, as living Truth, that the body disintegrates but the Spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death, and that as a matter of actual fact my identity lay with the deathless Spirit. From that moment onwards the I or Self focused attention on itself by a powerful fascination; absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on.'. If I repeat this death experiment for myself, can I also Realise the Self in 27 minutes, just like Bhagawan?

B.: It requires maturity of mind.

Q.: And what might that be?

B.: Freedom from vishayavasanas.

Q.: How do I attain freedom from these- whatever they might be?

B.: Only by investigating, 'Who am I?'.

S>M>

Q.: What is bhakti? Does it imply Self-surrender?

B. asked Sri Muruganar for something; the latter produced a notebook, from which B. read out a verse. Then he asked the interpreter to render the verse in English and read it out to the Hall; it runs thus:-

***When, thoroughly recognising and realising the unequivocal fact of his own arrant helplessness in reaching or attaining Him, one has completely surrendered oneself at the feet of the blessed Lord, thereby becoming of the nature of the fathomless, unknowable, absolute Self or Parabrahman, the resultant infinite, unshakable Peace, in which there is not even the most infinitesimally miniscule room within the Heart for one to make any complaint about one's deprivations, defects or deficiencies, alone is the nature of SUPREME DEVOTION.***

The Elder of Zion hurriedly makes a note of this verse, saying that he finds it so movingly beautiful that he wants to share it with his Jewish bruvver, Mr. Brunton, at once.

Chadwick: I did not find this verse in B.'s Five Hymns, or his other familiar compositions...

B.: No, no. This is not to be found in the Noottirattu... But enough of poems; there will no end to them. Inhere in your Self.

S>M>

Q.: It is said of this Hill that it is a 'magical hill'. Why? What are its special mystical properties?

B.: Constant remembrance of this Hill introverts the mind and eventually plunges it in the Self once and for all.

Q.: Then why do not all who come to visit Tiruvannamalai get Enlightened?

B.: If the Hill's potency is to have its Emancipating effect on you, unconditional surrender is a necessary prerequisite. To the extent we let go of the ego, to that same extent God's Grace descends upon us. There is no use in clinging fast to the ego and then complaining that God is being parsimonious in dispensing His Grace. If you surrender completely, only Grace is found left as the residue.

S>M>

Q.: May I ask, sir, why you seem to have absolutely zero interest in taking your teaching forward to the masses? I like the teaching, but why is there no effort at all being made to popularise it?

B.: Those destined to receive it are drawn here- by that same power which has brought you here all the way from Europe.

Q.: But we could popularise them by means of ourselves taking them forward to the masses. Why leave the discovery of this precious teaching to chance? If you were to agree to go on a lecture tour, sir, I am sure we could find people willing- eagerly- to sponsor the same. But you seem to be of a reticent character. You will not move away from this sleepy jungle. Should not the whole world derive benefit out of your Enlightenment? Why should such benefit unjustly be restricted and confined to those exclusively who are able to undertake the journey to this remote place?

B.: Those who are truly ready cannot keep away from Arunachala. Somehow or the other they are drawn here and guided onto the Light, be they willing or otherwise to See.

S>M>

Q.: Why, sir, are you following the dualistic practises of applying sacred ash on your forehead, attending special rites of worship at the grave of your mother, etc.? Are you not an Advaitin?

B.: Do you believe in Advaita?

Q.: Oh! yes. I am quite impressed by it, as a matter of fact...

B.: That is the difference.

Q.: I fail to comprehend what you are trying to say, sir.

B.: You believe in Advaita. I don't.

Q.: I was under the impression that Advaita is your exclusive teaching...

B.: The point is not to believe in Advaita, but to Live It. The Jnani's actions are not an expression of his beliefs. He has no beliefs at all. Only a mind can believe or disbelieve or wonder whether to believe or disbelieve. His actions are simply spontaneous reactions. The man on the Clapham omnibus functions out of a systematised framework of beliefs and ideas; he needs a structure within which to survive or out of which to operate; this is because, ignoring his actual existence and blinding himself to the self-luminous Reality thereof, he absurdly believes himself to exist. The Jnani has neither belief nor any other vritti to channelise consciousness into; he merely actually exists; so, he operates always ex nihilo.

Q.: [bright expression of understanding blossoming upon face] So, then, everybody is pretending to be non-Enlightened; and if they simply stop pretending, they discover that they were never non-Enlightened, but always only Enlightened?

B.: [smiling] Exactly!

Q.: Is it really THAT simple?

B.: Yes!

S>M>

Q.: Whenever thoughts of impending illness or other bodily affliction haunt me, I become frightened and do not know what I am to do. My brother suddenly passed away last year on account of a stroke; whenever I am reminded of the sight of blood spurting out of his nostrils, I am seized with the fear that a similar fate is awaiting me also in the future. I try to push the memory away, but it vigorously keeps coming back. After my brother left the world I stand denuded of all shanti; I have come here to receive advice from Sri Bhagawan. I have already tried B.'s 'Who-am-I?' technique, but I do not derive any peace of mind out of the same. Probably my destiny is preventing me from experiencing shanti.

B.: The peace of mind which you claim is eluding you is really within you always. According to you, your brother is dead. But has he been removed anywhere apart from you? The present fear is the handiwork of the mental idea that your brother has ceased to exist. As for destiny, merge the mind in the Self and see if there yet remains anyone to complain of being bound by it.

Questions and doubts arise only because we have divorced ourselves from our Self.

Q.: Am I to understand that B. means my brother is still alive somewhere, roaming around this world in an astral body?

B.: Forms come and go; the substance or substratum underlying them is indestructible. [smiling] Where is your brother now?

Q.: I don't know. I feel miserable that he should have departed for a place to which I could not possibly follow him. Where do people go when they die? They leave their bodies behind, but what of the soul? Is it reborn?

B.: Your brother was the Self when he had a form you could see. Now that form has disappeared; yet he is still the Self. If your Self be Realised, the idea that your brother is lost will not trouble you anymore. Discovering your Self, yourself and all selves are found to be Immortal. Since you presently identify yourself with a body, and think that that body's demise means invariably your incontrovertible cessation, you extend the same mistake to others also. If this error of imagining the body or mind to be the Self be put an end to, you will find death to be a laughable impossibility- be it your brother's death, yours own, or that of anyone else.

Q.: I am after all just another man on the Clapham omnibus. I find it funny to see that B. is asking me to Realise the Self so casually. Yogis who spend all their lives meditating are unable to accomplish it. Where do I stand a chance? Moreover, the Aathman is said to specifically choose those particular persons to whom It will Reveal Itself.

B.: How do you know whether you have been chosen or not?

Q.: I do not know. But I cannot assume anything of my own accord.

B.: Give yourself the benefit of the doubt and carry on with your sadhana.

Q.: When I fall ill, I become frightened that I am going to die, even if the ailment is merely a minor one.

B.: It is because the body is now understood to be the Self. Get rid of that idea and all will be well. We cannot always change the external world to the satisfaction of our likes and preferences, but we can control how we react to it. When this was staying in the Virupaksha cave, an old sadhu once came there and stayed for a few days. He would always be talking to himself. When the Sun was beating down mercilessly, he would say, 'Athreya, see how cold it is! Snow is falling everywhere around me!'. He would hug himself and shiver, as if unable to bear chilly weather. Palanisamy would offer him some food, but he would courteously decline, saying, 'Oh! no, don't bother about Athreya. His Majesty Chamarajaendra Wodiyar is arranging a grand feast for him. He is sending food on the backs of 400 elephants, just for this one poor man. Let it come; we will all eat it together and give the rest to other sadhus...'. One

day he became very excited. He gave a shout of joy and announced, 'His Majesty Wodiyaravargazi himself is coming here- personally! I just noticed him climbing up the Hill! See his magnanimity! For the sake of Athreya he has made such an excruciatingly long trip!'. Soon he yelled, 'His Majesty has arrived! His Majesty has arrived! Everybody please stand up to honour him...'. Those days, besides this, only Palanisamy would be there in the cave. We stood up to honour the old sadhu. Then he said, 'We have obtained a rare merit today- His Majesty himself is going to personally serve us! Everyone please be seated in a row. You should not quarrel amongst yourselves; rest assured there is enough for everyone...'. We sat down as indicated by him. Then he 'passed around' a 'jug of water' for ourselves to wash our 'banana leaves' with, the leaves, the jug and all being altogether imaginary. Next he went on behaving as if the king of Mysore was before us, serving us with various costly delicacies. Giving him company, we also ate in make-believe fashion, scooping up air from the ground and bringing our hands close to our lips, and chewing energetically with empty mouths. He would occasionally say, 'Oh! no, no, my Lord! Not so much! How could one man eat so much? Very considerate of you, I am moved by your compassion... But please don't make me waste anything; if I waste something, I shall feel bad about it... Please serve more to that young boy sitting there, he is famished, he has run away from home because they forcibly sent him to school, and now he does not have anyone to take care of him... Venkatarama! Ask more, don't feel shy; His Majesty has come all the way from Mysore on the back of a white elephant exclusively for the purpose of serving us! If you take only meagre quantities, he may think you are doing so deliberately and feel slighted. Make full use of this sumptuous opportunity; we may or may not obtain another...'. How he knew the name I don't know. Finally everyone was given a 'roll of paan-beeda' to chew. He asked me, 'The கத்திரிக்காய் ரசவங்கி was particularly good, was it not?'. I agreed that it had been so. Palanisamy said, 'They had even put seeragam in the appalams, swami! I enjoyed it very much!'. The sadhu smiled proudly and said, 'Yes; I am glad you have noticed it...!'. Then he went away and we never saw him again... [laughs]

Q.: It is said that in Tiruvannamalai, Mahatmas often come and bless us in the guise of madmen...

B.: Yes; you cannot judge them by the aid of their external appearances.

S>M>

Q.: When I came here as a young man circa 1911 on pilgrimage to the Temple, I met Seshadri Swami at the Kambatthu Ilayanar sannathi. At that time I did not know it was an Enlightened-being who was standing before me. He asked me for 3 coconuts. Since he did not seem handicapped in any way,

I asked him to engage in hard labour and purchase it for himself with his own resources. He went away without saying anything. Later someone who had witnessed the scene told me the fact of who he was and rebuked me bitterly. I thought to fall at his feet and apologise, but never saw the Swami again; thereafter I am again visiting Tiruvannamalai only now. How to escape from this sin I have incurred?

B.: [smiling] You may offer the coconuts to Bhagawan instead...

Q.: [delighted] Oh! excellent- B.'s merciful nature leaves me tongue-tied! This very evening I shall procure the coconuts! But shall they be de-husked coconuts or whole ones?

B.: [laughing] The coconuts that should be offered up as sacrifice for obtaining Salvation do not grow on trees!

Q.: I do not understand...

B.: Naan, yenn and yennai are the coconuts that Sri Seshadri demanded from you.

Q.: How do I give these?

B.: By crushing the ego at its source.

Q.: And how ought this to be done?

B.: Only by asking yourself the question, 'Who am I?'.  
S>M>

Q.: Would God ever will that our world be filled with so much suffering? How can we be sure that is is God's will that is being done on the Earth?

B.: Because the probability of Randomness always equals 1. The only certain thing about this world is its [characteristic] uncertainty.

Q.: Yet B. will- at the same time- stubbornly maintain that everything is pre-determined.

B.: What contradiction do you see between pre-destination and Randomness? They are merely different names to describe the apparent goings-on of the world. What the Jnani calls Randomness the one who imagines himself to see diversity calls pre-destination.

Q.: If everything takes place randomly, how- at the same time- can we say that everything is pre-destined?

B.: Since we have no power to influence events which seemingly take place in a world that is cognised by us merely through sensory perception, such events are said to be predestined. The goings-on of the world cannot be controlled by us. We think it is ourselves, and others like us, that make things happen in the world. Really there is a higher power working everywhere, and man is only its helpless tool, however powerful he [erroneously] might imagine himself to be. So, one who imagines himself to be a person occupying a body is certainly bound by fatalism- it is unavoidable. If you want freedom, you are



free- this moment, here and now- to plunge into the Self and lose yourself there once and for all; then you will be eternally free- i.e., bereft of possibility of knowing anything other than freedom. All bondage is really voluntary- let go of everything and then see if there could- at all- possibly be any bondage in that state. As for Randomness, Ishwara has no motive in making events happen the way they do. Creatures of the world merely reap the fruits of their own karma. Only, in solely those cases wherein the Guru's Grace has compassionately ordained that that particular jivatman be dissolved in that particular birth, Ishwara will carefully select from its sanchita karma exclusively that karma to form part of its prarabdha karma which would most advantageously facilitate Emancipation. In other cases no such special effort is undertaken. That is why it is often said Guru is more powerful than Ishwara or God: the latter's function does not involve any intervention into the question of whether or not, or when, a jivatman's Emancipation is to occur; the scope of his largely clerical function is delineated to arranging karma favourably- and this if at all explicit instruction to that effect has been received. So, yes: the events of the world are both pre-destined or Random. From the jivatman's point of view, fatalism is true and correct. From Ishwara's point of view- excluding the rare exception mentioned- the prarabdha karma inherited by the jivatman is random- i.e., not oriented or geared towards Emancipation. It must be borne in mind that all this is only from the vantage-point of the current conversation. For the Self there is no birth or death, and in actual fact you were never anything but the Self. Therefore abide as the Self.

Q.: What is the use if I am destined not to Realise?

B.: Do you know what is destined for you?

Q.: No. But that is what I madly want to know. Please tell me. If I am destined to Realise, let me do sadhana. Else let me not waste my time.

B.: Such is the power of the omnipotent Jnana-guru that- if need be- He can even make Ishwara retroactively change the drafting of the sadhaka's prarabdha karma, if he were to find him adequately sincere and perseverent. So, go on with your sadhana without harbouring any worries about what your prarabdha karma might have in store for you.

Q.: Then why does not the omnipotent Bhagawan change the prarabdha of all who come here accordingly?

B.: He cannot choose what he may do or not do. If a sadhaka is making humongous effort to turn inward, the Self uses the Jnana-guru as a medium to suitably alter his destiny, as also ameliorate- or, as required, obliterate- other obstacles that might be impeding his way to the Goal, so that his Realisation becomes a certainty in his incumbent birth. So, it is really all between you and your Self- if the sincerity and perseverance are really there, there will certainly

be a reciprocal, massive flow of Grace from the Self. The Grace you receive is always mercifully disproportionate to the extent of your effort- one always obtains far in excess of what one deserves. It is said that if you take 1 step towards God, he takes 10 steps in your direction. Ultimately Emancipation is a matter of bestowal of compassionate divine Grace. There is no such thing as winning Liberation as a matter of right, or earning it in exchange for having done sadhana, no matter how prolonged or arduous. Liberation is always a gift. Those who deserve It surely obtain It- and only those obtain It who surely deserve It. Making yourself eligible to obtain a gift does not mean that you are earning it as a matter of right. This is not a barter-transaction. You do not give up something and get something in return. You give yourself upto His Mercy once and for all and the story ends there.

Q.: I have heard that Sri Bhagawan considers sharanagati to be a means for Realisation.

B.: Sharanagati is the means and also Itself the Goal.

Q.: How so?

B.: The state of non-emergence of the ego is known as surrender. People want a formula whereby which they may surrender. It is absurd. To acquire something you need a formula. To surrender is to throw everything overboard and then jump yourself. How can there be a formula for this?

Q.: For Emancipation, all our desires must be eliminated- is this not what Bhagawan means?

B.: Not merely desires- all vrittis of the mind must decamp and decess, never to return.

Q.: How to achieve this?

B.: Only by investigating 'Who am I?'

S>M>

Q.: In "What is living and what is dead of the philosophy of Hegel", it is said thus: 'Whoever wishes to know the greatest secrets of nature, let him study and contemplate the least and the greatest of contraries and opposites. Profound is the magic that knows how to draw the contrast, after having found the point of union.' Does B. agree with this opinion?

B.: The lone great secret of nature is this: The fact that anything and everything belonging to the realm of physical matter is steadily moving toward entropisation[disintegration] as time progresses shows that nature is trying to convey unto man the message, 'Surrender.'

Q.: Shall we, sir, abandon industry and civilisation and move back into the jungles, then, wearing nothing but tree-bark? Sir, you may have done so for reasons of your own, but please do not say that only this is the right thing to do.

B.: Surrender is at the mental level. It is at the realm of the mind that you are asked to surrender. Surrender has no connection with physical renunciation. Physical renunciation may or may not occur depending upon the particular individual's destiny; either way, it is not necessary for accomplishment of true and complete surrender. It is of no avail to change the environment. You may dislike your incumbent environment and endeavour to go somewhere else; once there, again you may feel like moving to yet another place; and so on and so forth interminably. The one thing to do is to relinquish the ego once and for all, and then rest in ineffable bliss.

Q.: So, my failure to Realise is not because of any shortage in God's Grace, but because I am still holding on to my ego?

B.: Yes- that is it.

Q.: If I want God's Grace to descend upon me upto the maximum extent of thoroughness. What should I do?

B.: Surrender unreservedly to Him.

Q.: How?

B.: Give up everything [at the level of the mind].

Q.: Is it really as simple as that?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: The Führer of Großdeutschland says: 'The idea of struggle is as old as life itself, for life is only preserved because other living things perish.' Does B. agree with this opinion?

B.: Life is neither to be preserved nor could ever it perish. Life means Sentience or the Self. The Self can never be destroyed; where is the question of making efforts to preserve something that can never be changed or lost?

Q.: What happens to this Self when the body dies?

B.: Nothing at all.

Q.: How do I reach this Self?

B.: All that is possible is to give yourself up to It.

S>M>

Q.: How to solve the vexed question of free-will versus fatalism?

B.: Only by asking to whom that question presents itself. Otherwise there is no end to the question- it is like asking, 'Epimenides the Cretan says, "No Cretan is capable of uttering truth."'. Would you please determine the truth of this statement?'

Q.: The Tayodejing says: "Those who know do not speak. Those who speak do not know." Does Bhagawan agree?

B.: Yes. The truth can never be conveyed through words.

Q.: The Chinese saint Chuangshi has said: "Happiness is the absence of the striving for happiness." Does Bhagawan agree?

B.: Yes; when all striving or outward-tendednesses of mind have finally been given up as infructuous, the Self reveals Itself. Only after the ego has finally surrendered itself can the Self manifest.

Q.: Immanuel Kant has said: 'If man makes himself a worm he must not complain when he is trodden on.' Does Bhagawan agree?

B.: Yes; you absurdly imagine yourself to be a finite creature and then lament that there is so much suffering in your life. The remedy is not to imagine, 'I am infinite.'

Q.: Then what is the remedy?

B.: Give up all imagination and abide as the Real.

Q.: Practically how is it to be done?

B.: By investigating 'Who am I?'

S>M>

Q.: It is said that Sri Nammalwar was born as a Jnani. Is that so?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How is it possible?

B.: [laughing] You are annoyed because you are thinking, "I must do sadhana to Realise, whereas he was born Realised! How unjust of God!". Is that not so?!

Q.: True- I admit it...!

B.: Why do you think that the effort expended to Realise the Self is something done by you? It is the mind that makes the effort for its own dissolution. Are you the mind? The mind is not you. You now think that you are the mind. Once the mirage-like appearance known as 'mind' has faded away or eviscerated itself and the Self is revealed, you discover that you were always the Self. So, let the mind arduously chip away at breaking its own shackles and fetters of ignorance. You do not identify [yourself] with the activities of the mind, but remain poised in the stillness of Being. If one identifies oneself with movements of his body and mind, his suffering is bound to continue endlessly. Stand apart from the mental movements and inhere in Beingness; such is your natural state.

Q.: How then is one to find peace of mind?

B.: If only you would cease to care about anything at all and everything, you would find perfect peace of mind. Then the question of 'When shall I Realise the Self?' cannot arise. You will be left in perennial peace.

Q.: When confronted with the question, "செத்ததின் வயிற்றில் சிறியது பிறந்தால் எத்தைத்தின்று எங்கே கிடக்கும்?", Nammalwar is said to

have replied: " அத்தைத்தின்று அங்கே கிடக்கும்த் ." What is the significance of this conversation?

B.: Madhurakavi's purport was to ask Nammalwar, "If the eternal Aathman, which is of the nature of indestructible Sentience or Consciousness, takes birth inside a perishable human form, which is inert[jadam], what does it eat and where does it live- i.e., what does it experience and what is its locus[of such experience]?" Nammalwar's reply was: "It[the Aathman] experiences THAT [Itself] in THAT [Itself]." The meaning is that although a Jnani might appear to have a body, just like the man on the Clapham omnibus, yet, his experience is- exclusively- that he is the formless Self. So, it makes no difference to the Jnani that the body remains or has dropped off. In either case he is the Self.

Q.: But so long as the body is there, there can be no escape from karma- even for the Jnani.

B.: True- but the karma is only for the body. The Jnani has already severed away all links with the body, and has no binding connection with it. Its mutilation, deterioration, dismemberment, or disintegration cannot affect him. He is quite lost in the Beyond and he cannot be brought back. Anything that the body does or anything that happens to it is merely incidental; it cannot reach him. Only if he himself were there could he feel anything or be affected by anything; but he is NOT. His unequivocal experience is that only the Self exists. How then can karma taunt or trouble him? The on-looker might say this and that about him. He himself knows nothing and does nothing. He is the Self and the Self alone.

S>M>

Q.: Love implies duality. How can Love be a path to God, who is non-dual?

B.: Love and God are one and the same. When one feels insanely passionate Love for God, the feeling alone remains and the sadhaka is himself lost therein. When this state has become permanent, it is the same as the Self.

Q.: Which is easier- bhakti or vichara?

B.: It depends upon the temperament of the individual concerned.

Q.: How shall I cultivate Love for God?

B.: Love is there always- here and now; all that is necessary is that you surrender yourself to It unreservedly. Emerson has written-

Give all to love;

Obey thy heart;

'Tis a brave master;

Let it have scope:

Follow it utterly,

Hope beyond hope...

S>M>

Q.: I am practising sadhana perseverantly and persistently; yet I am not rewarded with success- i.e., Realisation of the Self. What am I to do?

B.: Do not feel discouraged by apparent lack of progress. Sooner or later you are bound to strike the Light. Go on undauntedly, unflaggingly with your sadhana. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more..." Continuously keep up investigation into the mind and it is bound to snap one day.

Q.: Is vichara compatible with our day to day activities- i.e., could I do it side by side with my domestic and official chores? Or is it to be done only at fixed hours during the day, when we have time to exclusively concentrate upon it?

B.: The former.

Q.: Should then part of the mind be kept on the work? If attention is directed entirely towards the vichara, my work may suffer in quality and I may get into trouble at the office.

B.: Once the vichara has taken firm hold of you, your mundane or temporal tasks will be executed by the Higher Power automatically, by using your body as a vehicle or tool. Everything is eventually taken out of your hands as you sink deeper and deeper into the nectarous abyss of Self-awareness. It is like rowing downward along the current of a huge river whose course finally ends in a huge, roaring waterfall. At one point of time you observe the oars still clutched in your hands and start laughing at yourself, amusedly throwing them into the churning waters. Those who desire to continue in samsara go on rowing in the opposite direction. Their fate is indeed miserable- but they will not listen to good advice. If you try to talk sense into them they will become enraged and shout, 'What! Are you asking me to die, then?'. They keep on rowing ad infinitum, thinking themselves to be very cleverly escaping death, not knowing that the waterfall at the end is the gateway into Paradise, and all they have to do to get there is to simply stop rowing and surrender to the current. They are like the Greek King Syshibohr, who was forced to endlessly roll a massive boulder all the way up to the top of an enormous, steep hill, only to helplessly watch it roll back down just when the top was about to be reached, and then roll it up again and so on and so forth; he is supposed to be still there in the underworld, rolling and rolling with all the might of his arms, but to no fruitful end. Rowing in a direction opposite to the current is never going to get you anywhere, because all your labour is set-off by the current effortlessly. We sadhakas, who have realised the true nature of samsara, on the other hand, know what to do- or rather what not. The grand secret is: LET GO. Then you will be swept down automatically. Fear may sometimes force you to resume rowing, but eventually you will see wisdom and throw away the

oars. Then your boat will be wrecked by the rocks at the bottom of the waterfall, further journeying, by now so wearisome, will have become impossible, and Paradise will be yours for all of Eternity. All you need to do- or rather, non-do- is to LET GO. Yes- it really is as simple as that. Summa-iruttal is the secret whereby which the Kingdom of Heaven may fall into your hands for perpetuity.

S>M>

Q.: Should one aspiring for Realisation necessarily throw away all the cherished desires of his heart?

B.: Yes; unfulfilled desires cause rebirth; and so do fulfilled ones which are remembered, because they crave repeated satisfaction. One must totally alienate himself from and forget all desires, because any desire that is remembered will invariably plunge one back into the revolting, noxious ocean of samsara. One who has understood the actual, poisonous nature of samsara would never pay any attention to desires, because he would be well informed as to the consequence of heeding desire- rebirth, which is aptly referred to by Sri Krishna as the 'mahathobhaya'. One whose soul aches to to be set free from the pointless cycle of excruciating, never-ending birth and death would look at objects which are commonly used to derive sensory pleasure out of as venomous centipedes trying to gouge into his flesh and toxify his blood. Mrs. Browning has written:-

*Tired out we are, my heart and I.  
Suppose the world brought diadems  
To tempt us, crusted with loose gems  
Of powers and pleasures ? Let it try.  
We scarcely care to look at even  
A pretty child, or God's blue heaven,  
We feel so tired, my heart and I.*

Jesus has said: 'And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' The hell described here with such ruthless poignance certainly is no separate physical realm, but simply the odious sea of samsara. So, mature sadhakas never pay the slightest heed to desire; they crush them at the very source or locus of origination, as and

when they appear, by means of spontaneously asking themselves, 'To whom has this desire arisen?'

S>M>

Q.: How best shall I always recapitulate for myself B.'s sublime teaching of self-surrender?

B.: Only remember the words of Signor Lorenzo Scupoli: "Our Lord said: '...without me ye can do nothing.' Therefore, for the entirety of the duration of our life, every hour and at each single moment, we must keep perennially unchanged in our heart the feeling, conviction and disposition, that on no account or occasion can we allow ourselves to think of relying on ourselves or trusting ourselves."

Q.: Pardon me- does this not amount to a defeatist attitude?

B.: It is only one who recognises utterly his own arrant helplessness that surrenders. Others think they are 'going to Realise the Self one day'.

Q.: Is this attitude of mind that which is referred to as 'humility' in Bhagawan's work 'Who am I'?

B.: Humility is not thinking 'I must be humble.'. Absence of thought is true humility.

Q.: How is one to gain the thought-free state?

B.: Only by means of relentlessly pursuing the investigation, 'Who am I?'

Q.: How long shall I pursue the investigation?

B.: Till further investigation becomes impossible.

BLUTKEIM's Note: Again, what you are reading is the content of text files- plain text files processed in Wordstar; there is no font-related source-information available with me. In this text, at certain places, I have made use of certain unusual fonts, such as **this one** . This should not be understood to mean that instructions to use unique fonts were available in the files from which these contents have been salvaged. I have, of my own accord, taken the liberty to deploy these fonts at the relevant places because these particular pieces of content seem to uniquely stand out from the rest of the text- that is all. All font-related information you see in this manuscript is merely the brain-child of my own imagination.

S>M>

Q.: I have been coming to this Hall for the past 3 weeks. Yesterday whilst leaving I was bitterly complaining within my mind that I was seeing no progress in myself. Early in the morning hours of today, B. came in my dream as I was sleeping and sweetly sang the following poem to me:

**Oh! ye morose, wretchedly stoic ones who harsh and grim**

**Brook misery, pain and sorrow threadbare,**

**Exult in God our Lord and upon Him**

**Cast all of your many heavy burdens of care;**



**For, should the arms apparently leonine  
Of perseverance, able no more to bear  
The nasty woes of mundane life so asinine  
And appallingly, obnoxiously fetid beyond compare,  
Collapse fractured, in His compassion only God mercifully  
Shall come forth to help you out of the lethal glare.  
Know this: Love for Him is the only  
Attraction in this world that is not a snare.**

Is it really B. who came or was it merely a concoction of my own imagination?  
B. graciously smiled his charming smile but otherwise made no reply.

31st August, 1936

TKS.: It seems Bhagawan appreciated a summary of his essay 'Who am I?', that Major Chadwick rendered into English last month. I have made a Tamil version of the same summary. Will B. be interested in perusing it?

B.: Oh! Yenga konda parppoem...

Soon the master was reading out to the Hall-

பகவான் ஸ்ரீ ரமணரின் முக்கிய உபதேசம்: முக்தி அடைவதே நமது கடமை என்பதனால், முக்தி அடைந்தே தீரவேண்டும் என்பதற்க்காக நான் யார் என்கிற நினைவை சதா காலமும் பிடிக்க வேண்டும்; அவ்வாறு பிடிப்பதற்க்கான உபாயம், பிற எண்ணங்கள் எழுந்தால் அவற்றை பூர்த்தி செய்வதற்க்கு எத்தனியாமல் அவை யாருக்கு உண்டாயின என்று விசாரிக்க வேண்டும். எத்தனை எண்ணங்கள் எழினும் ஜாக்கிரதையாய் ஒவ்வொரு எண்ணமும் கிளம்பும் போதே இது யாருக்கு உண்டாயிற்று என்று விசாரித்தால் எனக்கு என்று தோன்றும். நான் யார் என்று விசாரித்தால் மனம் தன் பிறப்பிடத்திற்க்கு திரும்பிவிடும், எழுந்த எண்ணமும் அடங்கி விடும். இப்படிப் பழகப் பழக மனதிற்க்கு தன் பிறப்பிடத்தில் தங்கி நிற்க்கும் சக்தி அதிகரிக்கின்றது. இவ்விதமாக மனம் ஹரிதயத்தில் தங்கவே எல்லா நினைவுகளுக்கும் மூலமான நான் என்பது போய், எப்பொழுதுமுள்ள தான் மாத்திரம் விளங்கும். மனதின் கண் எதுவரையில் விஷயவாசனைகள் இருக்கின்றனவோ அது வரையில் நான் யார் என்னும் விசாரணையும் தேவை. மனதில் எவ்வெந்நினைவுகள் உற்பத்தி ஆகின்றனவோ அவற்றையெல்லாம் ஒன்றுகூட விடாமல் தோன்ற தோன்ற அப்போதைக்கப்போதே உற்பத்திஸ்தானத்திலேயே விசாரணையால் பரிபூரணமாய் நசிப்பிக வேண்டும். ஒருவன் நிரந்தர ஸ்வரூபச்மரணையை கைப்பற்றுவானாயின், அது ஒன்றே போதும். Then he handed back the sheet saying, 'சரி, சரி... வைத்துக்கொள்'.

S>M>

Q.: Can Jnana once attained be reversed? Is a fall-back into ignorance possible?

B.: Mind once destroyed can never return; but so far as your Realisation of the Real, or vritti jnana, is concerned, unless and until all the vasanas have been completely eradicated, you cannot remain steadily established in the nivritti state.

Q.: How then to destroy the vasanas?

B.: Surrender to the Guru and let him do the work. "...whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The Guru's teaching of your true nature- once it has entrenched itself firmly in your mind- will not let you escape. It pursues you all the way to the Sahaja-stithi, not resting and not permitting you to rest until the mind has been irrevocably extirpated.

Q.: I am familiar with the Ajata-advaita doctrine that is taught by Bhagawan. There is no improvement in me. My vasanas, if anything, are becoming even more vigorously assertive.

B.: Only if you drink the water are you eligible for everlasting life or Immortality.

Q.: Mere intellectual grasp of the teachings is useless, then?

B.: What is the use of merely looking at the water?

Q.: I want to drink the water of Grace offered by Bhagawan. Please tell me what I shall do.

B.: Don't do anything- simply surrender unconditionally.

Q.: What is Sri Bhagawan's opinion on alternative streams of medicine? Homoeopathic remedies are dismissed by many intellectuals as being mere "psychotherapeutic-placebo"s, owing to the excessive dilution involved. Homoeopaths of course call it potentisation...

B.: The medicine 'Who am I?' is the only true panacea. Anything else could only ever be a mere "placebo".

Q.: So far as my knowledge apropos of the matter goes, Aathman is unaffected by the activities of the ego. Am I right?

B.: You say, 'my knowledge'; but whatever you think you know could only ever be totally wrong. Why? Because[the state of] not knowing anything alone could ever be Reality. Total nescience, including nescience of any nescience, alone is Jnana. Jnana does not even know Itself.

Q.: How so? Is the Self then self-ignorant?

B.: Knowledge in the sense of knowing is a vritti. Vrittis can exist only in a mind. There is no mind in the Self. The Self is Knowledge in the sense of

Being.

Q.: How can the Self deny the existence of the mind? Is not the mind a reflection of the Self?

B.: The ocean is not aware of the minuscule bubbles of froth floating ephemerally about on its surface. If the bubble ignores or forgets the ocean and tries to give itself a distinctive identity, that is not the problem of the ocean.

Q.: That the individual self must needs accost many problems in life cannot be denied. I have many problems in life. What am I to do?

B.: There is no such thing as a problem in actuality. What people call a problem is merely the thought of there being a problem. Remain free of thought and all problems vanish.

Q.: If the mind is killed how can day to day activities go on?

B.: It is possible to function normally in the world without mind. In fact, when the delusory obstacle called 'mind' is no longer there, the body's activities become automatic and effortless; and therefore, the efficaciousness and efficiency of the Mindless-one can never be matched by a mere mind.

Q.: So, far from Realisation rendering one's body into a lifeless, inert mass, It would enhance the efficacy of a person's day to day functions?

B.: Yes- but not from the Realised-one's point of view; the Emancipated man does not feel that he is doing anything, although his body might be engaged, maniacally, night and day, in doing this or that.

Q.: But some are destined not to work.

B.: True. If you are destined not to work, work cannot be had even if you hunt for it; if you are destined to work, work will be forced on you even if you try to run away or escape from it. Work or no work, let the prarabdha of the body exhaust itself. You attend to your Self and be at peace.

Q.: How to find out whether I am destined to work or not?

B.: Surrender once and for all; then the question cannot arise; nor can any other question or doubt. There are only 2 effective ways to get rid of doubt- either surrender the doubter or investigate who he is. Other approaches only lead endlessly to more and more doubt. So long as the doubter is alive, it is totally inevitable that doubts shall keep on coming interminably. Kill the doubting ego. How? By doubting him. Doubt the doubting ego. Persistently ask him, 'Do you exist? Where do you come from? Who are you?'. Then he will disappear. Bliss is the remainder.

Q.: Can a Jnani be re-born?

B.: The Jnani was never born. He is Jnana Itself.

Q.: The respected figure sitting on the Sofa, known as Bhagawan Sri Ramanar, was born in 1879.

B.: I am not He[ நான் அவன் அல்லன் ].

Q.: May I then know who you are?

B.: You will find out who I am only when you have found out who you are.

Q.: How is that done? Is it only by means of asking myself 'Who-am-I'?

B.: Not merely asking, but investigating.

Q.: Does Sri Bhagawan believe in the legitimacy of the phenomenon known as "Glossolalia"?

B.: One who has learnt to speak the tongue of Silence does not need to worry about any other tongue.

Q.: What is the difference between jagrat, swapna and sushupti?

B.: There is no difference. The fact is, all 3 states are swapna only. Reality lies Beyond. It cannot be discovered by the mind.

Q.: How then is one to Realise the Self?

B.: By surrendering the mind to the Self. You cannot discover Reality or the Self with the mind, but if you abandon the mind altogether, Reality alone shines forth.

S>M>

Q.: [standing near the Sofa, body bent over and palms joined in front of chest in reverence, in a low voice] Does Sami remember me?

B.: [laughing] Yesakkimutthu! who can forget you?! But how is it that you have come alone?

Q.: [ruefully] They have tried to do தலைக்கூத்தல் for me, Sami. I watched last week whilst they gave me repeated oil-baths with sesame-seed oil early in the morning, and I quietly drank the contents of the countless tender-coconuts I was given. But although I developed diarrhoea and a cold, I would not die. My younger son is a drunkard. He wants money urgently. My elder daughter-in-law also wants money urgently to give her older-brother's wife's younger-brother, who is planning to open a cloth-shop near Thuvaranguricchi next month, and for whom they are searching for a suitable bride. So they are desperate to somehow sell the ancestral property. Yesterday, after midnight, whilst going out to attend an urgent bowel movement, I saw them carefully boring holes in the coconuts, and pouring in powdered rat poison. They were laughing, saying, 'This will send him straight to Yaman.'. I got frightened and ran away at once, taking cover under the darkness. I left my village but then did not know know where to go. Then I thought of Sami and walked all the way here. For the past one week I have not eaten anything, but drunk only coconut water. I feel very hungry. Will Sami please give me something to eat?

Those who were within earshot of the man were stunned with pity. Bhagawan, as ever unperturbed as a rock, gestured to the attendant at once, and swiftly

gave instructions to the effect that the man be led to Palakoththu, after being taken to the kitchen and fed. Then he turned to the old man and, pointing out at the attendant, said: 'You may stay at the place indicated by this thambi for as long as you like. Are you willing to do சித்தாள் work?'

Q.: As Sami commands, so I shall listen.

B.: Yes. Did you see the building being raised yonder? Come there tomorrow morning- before sunrise- and ask that Annamalai be seen.

The man said 'Yes, Sami. Thank you exceedingly, Sami.', touched the air in front of the master's feet, applied it to his eyes, and briskly left the Hall with the attendant.

S>M>

Q.: [to the Hall] See what the world has come to!

B.: [softly, not looking at anyone] Some stories come into the limelight; others remain carefully buried. But all reap what they sowed, sooner or later...

The visitor did not say another word.

S>M>

Q.: Has the uttharadikari for this ashram been appointed or not? I heartily wish B. a long lifespan; yet, would it not be better to name a spiritual successor who will continue in B.'s lineage, so that carrying on of the good work being done by him may continue in perpetuity?

B.: There will never be any uttharadikari.

Q.: But why not?

B.: [no response]

Q.: If B. merely keeps quiet what then shall I give myself to understand?

B.: That Bhagawan's Silence shall be His spiritual successor.

Q.: Thus, suppose- in the distant future- somebody claims to be Bhagawan's successor, his claim would be fraudulent- and ought to attract culpability u/s 416 of the Penal Code!

B.: [laughs] Undoubtedly. But should the Section not be 116 read with 309?

Q.: Oh! why so- and why not invoke Sec. 306?

B.: One who would try to teach something can never be the Sadhguru. He who gives unto the earnest sadhaka suggestion to do this or that can never be the Sadhguru. The sadhaka wants rest from activity- that is why he has come in search of spiritual awakening. He has already become exasperated with 'doing', although he might be unable to understand, express or articulate that such is the case with himself. The peace he is searching for so longingly is permanent termination of possibility of activity. In other words he wants everlasting cessation of the madness called 'doing'. Instead of being told how to achieve the same, the conned sadhaka finds that the charlatan asks him to do something in addition to, or in place of, his incumbent activities. Could

more 'doing' possibly be a help to the sadhaka? It will make him lose what little peace of mind he yet had. Activity stands for creation; creation stands for the destruction of one's inherent happiness- i.e., the natural state of poorna. Reality is perfect happiness only because there is no creation possible in that state. Creation is seen owing to avidya maya. If activity be advocated, the adviser is not a Guru but a heartless tormentor. In such cases we can say that Lord Yama has come in the guise of a Guru, to torture the unsuspecting, gullible sadhaka. The [evil-minded] charlatan cannot Emancipate; but the one thing he invariably does is this- he strengthens the fetters of those who care to pay any attention to him. You talk of appointing an uttharadikari for Ramana Maharshi. Ramana Maharshi has nothing to say; he makes no assertions; he has no message for the world; he has got nothing to convey; he is no teacher; he has no teachings. He IS. That is all. That being the case, where is the question of any successor? The charlatan, therefore, first collects a hefty fee as 'dhakshina' and then persuades the unwitting man on the Clapham omnibus to do this and that, saying, 'If you sincerely do as I tell you, you will obtain peace of mind...'. It is like paying a fortune to purchase poison, thinking it to be amrutham, and drinking it gleefully, congratulating yourself on your 'rare luck' at having chanced upon the same. So, the charlatan abets your attempt to kill yourself; obscuring the self-luminous Aathman, which is fathomless Bliss Itself, with upadhis that obnubilate it, and reaffirming for yourself thereby the poisonous, false conviction that your self-identity lies with the perishable body, is certainly an act of attempting suicide. As for Sec. 306, no amount of concealment can permanently veil the Self. No matter how dense one's nescience might be, one casual, merciful glance of Grace from the compassionate Sadhguru, lasting not even for a complete nimisha, will suffice to destroy countless aeons of accumulated ignorance. A mountain-sized heap of gunpowder is burnt up by a single spark of fire. A room might have been in darkness for thousands of years, but when the door is thrown open and sunlight floods in, how long does it take for the room to become totally illumined? Thus, since ignorance is totally vulnerable to being eviscerated by the Sadhguru's Grace at any time, it cannot be said to have any permanence; so, it is unreal or non-existent.

Q.: What punishment does God have in store for such wicked charlatans?

B.: Avidhyamantharae varthamanaha svayam dheeraha panditham manyamanaha jadganyamanaha pariyanthi moodaha andhaena eva neeyamanaha yatha andhaha.

Avidhyam bahudhavarthamanaha vayam krutharthaha ithi abhimanyanti balaha yatkarmaha na pravedhayanti ragath thaena athuraha ksheenalokaha chyavanthae.

'Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.' 'And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.' '...if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.'

Q.: I want B. to bestow his compassionate glance of Grace on me, so that I should undergo Emancipation in this very lifetime.

B.: Listen to the following joke:

Once upon a time man was fully aware of his Realised nature, and all humans enjoyed Transcendental consciousness while yet in a body; but on one fine morning, Brahma found he had become jealous of them, since all humans were then equal to him in rank, all being Realised gods. So, Brahma decided to take Self-knowledge away from man and hide it where it could never be found by him. Where to hide It was the question. So Brahma called a council of the gods of Heaven, headed by Indra, to help him resolve the matter. "Let us bury it deep in the earth," said the gods. But Brahma answered, "No, that will not do, because men will dig into the earth and find it." Then the gods said, "Let us sink it in the deepest ocean." But Brahma said, "No, not there, for they will eventually learn to dive into the ocean, and so will surely find it one day." Then the gods said, "Let us take it to the top of the highest mountain and hide it there." But again Brahma replied, "No, that will not do either, because they will sooner or later climb every mountain and once again find their Immortal Self. We must hide It so thoroughly from man that he will never succeed in finding It again." Then the gods gave up and said, "We do not know where to hide it, because it seems that there is no place on earth or under the sea that man will not eventually reach." Brahma thought for a long, long, long time. Finally he said, "Here is what we shall do. We will hide It deep in the center of their own being, for men will never think to look for It there." All the gods agreed that this, in fact, was the perfect hiding place, and the deed was done. Ever since that day, men have been going up and down the earth, digging, diving, climbing, and excavating- searching for something which is already within themselves.

Q.: How cruel of Brahma to do such a thing...!

B.: That was only a joke. The point is, turn inwards and SEE. That is Guru's Grace. Guru's Grace means inward-vision or introverted mind. Guru's Grace and Jnana-dhrishti are thus one and the same. Na moksho nabhasaha prushtae na pathalae na bhoothalae sarva asha samkshayae chaethaha kshayo mokshaha ithi ishyathae. ஆன்மாவின் சஹஜஸ்வயம்பிரகாசமே இறையருள்; ஆன்மாவின்

உருவமற்ற ஸ்வயம்பிரத்யக்ஷ ஸ்வரூபமே இறையருளது  
மெய்யான பிரகாசித்தல் .

S>M>

A senior devotee of the master, an Englishman named Mr. Ainslie, has written to Chadwick. Along with his communication, he has enclosed a bulky, typewritten sheaf of sheets tied together with aigleted-string.

Chadwick: Mr. Ainslie says that after taking Bhagawan's permission, I might read out this narrative in the Hall- it is about a French- hallo! what's this?

A lone, folded sheet of paper fluttered out of the sheaf and fell to the floor. I picked it up before Chadwick could. I read through the Bickhamesque handwriting in a trice. Chadwick then took the sheet from me but before he could scrutinise it, B. wanted him to hand it over. B. perused the contents with a progressively widening smile, and then handed it back to the curious Major, who read it and laughed.

B.: [schmuntselously] Better destroy it before it gets into somebody's hands...!

Chadwick agreed and smirkingly tore it up. Then he read out to the Hall from the typewritten pages a lengthy account of the life of a Mrs. Elisabeth Leseur, a woman passionately devoted to Jesus Christ, who had posthumously made her errant husband see the error of his nihilistic ways, resulting in his becoming himself a priest of the Church.

P>S>

The account of this Mrs. Leseur's life, and the details appurtenant to the miraculous transformation she mysteriously managed to effect in her husband after her death, are too elaborate to suit the present scope, although it is doubtless an interesting and intriguing narrative. However, having aroused the curiosity of my dear reader concerning the letter aforesaid, I shall not disappoint him; this, then, is what[or as much as] I have remembered of its contents, as I find reproduced from memory in my diary-entry corresponding to the date extant:-

From,  
The Rev. F. J. Sheen  
The Catholic University of America  
Michigan Avenue, Washington, D.C.

Dear old Mr. Ainslie,  
I have fully read your amusing account about Apostle St. Thomas; according to the opinion of your intrepid friend Mr. Raphael Hurst, Thomas Didymos the Apostle of our Lord arrived at a Jewish settlement called Cranganore, situated upon the western coast of the Indian peninsula, engaged himself in Evangelizing and Baptismal work there, and then went to Madras city, where he was martyred inside a cave on a hill by a lance that disemboweled him, subsequent to which he was buried in a village nearby. In my modest opinion, I



would say it is altogether unlikely that this account should represent actual truth; but putting it plainly, I tell you that this wildly entertaining anecdote has no meaningful bearing with the actual facts of the matter; please note that these are as follows:

1. The Apostle Thomas did visit India, but not peninsular India. It was Taxila, lying in the Punjab province of India, that he visited. He Evangelized the king of that ancient land, Condoferus by name, as also a vast majority of his subjects, to the way of our good Lord. The idea that he undertook a tour of peninsular India and was martyred there derives its pseudo-authenticity from a [possibly deliberate] mis-reading of the apocryphal text Acts of Thomas. The description of the topography of the land mentioned in the said text- for I have been interested in perusing apocrypha myself- corresponds with the Mesopotamian region of Parthia, not India. Our Apostle was in fact martyred at Edessa, the capital of the ancient Mesopotamian kingdom of Oſeröhne. Later his Relics were transported to a cathedral, specially constructed for the purpose, at Ortona, Italy, where they lie upto this very day. Suggesting that our Apostle lies buried at a village near Madras city in southern India is absurd to the core.

2. It may be true, however, that a man whose name was Thomas arrived at the Jewish settlement at Cranganore and undertook Evangelizing and Baptismal work, eventually establishing 7 churches in the region. This man was not an Apostle of our Lord; at the same time, it cannot be denied that he seems to have been a fervent missionary whose enthusiastic zeal for the message of the Gospel won him respect and adulation from the Indian natives, eventually winning them over- in drove after gargantuan drove- to our Faith. He seems to have set a sort of record for converting native people over to the Faith. No concrete information seems to be available about him; since this man shares the name of our Apostle, people think it is the Apostle who is asked to be discussed, whenever inquiries are made about him. I have gathered that his original occupation was that of a merchant. He seems to have arrived from Assyria, during the 9th century, A.D.; the surmise, therefore, is that he must have belonged to the Eastern Orthodoxy. While the veracity of all the beneficial consequences caused on account of his good works cannot be questioned, he has become the inadvertant reason why many people erroneously think that Apostle Thomas visited peninsular India.

I am taking the trouble to explain all this to you because in your letter to me last, you seemed to be tremendously keen about the prospect of visiting the supposed grave of Apostle 'doubting' Thomas, situated, according to you, in a village near Madras city. I wish to acquaint you with the facts concerning the matter, so that you do not end up wasting your time; that is, although perhaps not exclusively, since I personally have a passionate interest in the historical aspect of our Lord and his immediate followers, why I have taken the trouble to look the matter up, and written to you as soon as time has permitted me.

Moving on to the problem of your nocturnal emissions, I do not think that it has anything to do with repressed desire; it may be a purely physiological phenomenon. Instead of consulting a psychoanalyst, kindly do visit a physician first. This, in my considered opinion, is the most appropriate course of action;

and yes- this is what I would do in your place. Although 3 decades your junior, I am yet offering you privately these words of suggestion, if not advice, because at your age becoming easy prey to a psychoanalyst's instinctual aim for reduction in the girth of your wallet would be a highly painful emotional ordeal to have to undergo, quite apart from the costly monetary ramifications all too probably involved. I am candidly talking out of memories gleaned from interacting with and counselling many, many people: almost invariably, conversations revolving around psychoanalysts involve their unprepossessing proclivity to charge an exorbitant fee for consultation. I am not saying that such a practice on their part is worthy of condemnation as being morally unrighteous; I am merely saying, let it be the last resort- do first exhaust the commonplace avenues of help proffered by mainstream medical practice. I don't know why the advanced idea of consulting a psychoanalyst should have, in the first place, occurred to you, before ruling out all possible physical reasons; for such reasons entail less profound solutions, cost-wise and otherwise... Anyhow, dear sir, as an immediate measure of relief with which to tackle your sticky problem, you may consider taking the homoeopathic preparation Sepia[it is made out of cuttlefish-ink], preferably at a potency of 200C, every night just prior to going to bed.

Moving on again, I read with a happy, fascinated heart the moving account of your visit last year to the monastery of the obscure Hindoo saint Ramana. I read with assiduous interest your acquaintance Maj.(Ret.) Chadwick's translation of the ballad, 40 verses on Reality, written by the saint. So it is true, then, that such Christ-like beings still walk the Earth- how curious! I do not think it will be possible for me to find the time to visit this hermitage- my days are, particularly of late, quite hectic; and this saint seems to prefer to cosset himself up and away in some hazy corner of the world, doubtless for sound reasons of his own; when he makes up his mind to emerge from oblivion and preach his message openly to the world, my ears shall be eagerly listening- rest assured of it.

Finally: Hitler's Germany. Sadly- and, perhaps, yes, alarmingly- your fears may not be unfounded. I am hearing the same thing. But what have we within our power to do, except pray to our good Lord every hour of the day?Germany's relentless efforts at persecution of the Jewish people and bringing about their thorough ostracisation from society were, I think, permitted to wane for a few months on account of the recently concluded Olympic games; now that the games are over, I shall not be surprised when told that they have commenced again with redoubled vigour. In my own mind, I am convinced that this man Hitler is the Anti-christ. True, I have no evidence with which to back up my allegation; but my gut has always instinctively reached out and grasped the truth: mark you my words, sir- the day is not far when he shall start another global conflict that will plunge the world in wholesale mutilation and destruction on a scale humanity has never witnessed before, or when he shall reach out his murderous hand to ensure the physical extermination of every last single Jew in Europe. All this might seem like an exaggerated flight of fancy, but remember that the German people innately cherish- passionately- a certain

resolute fondness for taking human life- especially those they perceive as being "lesser than human" or- to use their own term- Untermenschen. Can we forget the merciless extirpation of the Herero nation carried out by the Prussian Imperial Army? Is it possible to erase our memories of the horrific reports that were brought out by the British press at the time, of Haifischinsel death camp, that the Germans established off the coast of Lüderitz bay? Further, I am confident that Germany's efforts at rearmament are not merely gestures of resentful defiance directed at demonstrating unwillingness to comply with the terms of the treaty of Versailles, but in fact peremptory measures of preparation undertaken with the express object of beginning a planned outright war of aggression in Europe- their second in this very century. There seems to be something in the German blood that detests peace. Why therefore would a warmonger not find it easy to stir them up for war after war? Then it was the Kaiser- now it is the Führer. The leaders of most Western nations are uniformly convinced that Communism is the threat of the hour. Will anyone care to listen to our opinion? However, I think you certainly need not fear for Britain- her Navy is unshakeable, and Hitler's devils would never be able to make it whole across the English channel.

Moving over the unpleasant Germans, I have, as promised, attached a typewritten account of the life of the late Mrs. Elisabeth Leseur. Her story is an amazing demonstration of what the latent power, slumbering within each of us, of devout Love for our Lord can accomplish if and when awakened into Life. Only decades previously her husband was an inveterate atheist; today, as predicted by the impeccably immaculate lady during her woeful lifetime, her husband is a dutiful priest of the Church! The narrative you will find in the manuscript is a verbatim transcript of the same inspiring content I use at sermons, and people invariably do find it delightful.

I was wondering whether or not to talk about the tragedy that has lately struck your life- for in so doing, I might be rubbing salt into your already festering wounds; but before closing this letter, it occurred to me that it might be inappropriate to altogether ignore the matter. Nothing I or anyone else could say in condolence or consolation is going to bring her back. Yet I will say this: whatever God does in our life, he does with and for a reason, although it is equally true that we might never ever discover what that reason is; in His opinion, it simply may not be necessary for us to be informed about the reason. The truth of the tragedies faced by many a man may simply be this, like I have always said: sometimes the only way the good Lord can get into some hearts is to break them. The Lord said to Apostle Thomas: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." So, let us believe in Him blindly; even if He should introduce travails and hardships in our life, and we do not know why, let our Love for Him remain uncontaminated.

I am not forgetting that you seemed interested in the vacation-house that I owned in St. Simon's Island. The way you remember this island is quite the same as how everyone else seems to- the island that contributed planking to

Hartt's 1794 Old Ironsides! After all, who can fail to remember Holmes' lines that gave her a new lease of life, eh?

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,  
Where knelt the vanquished foe,  
When winds were hurrying over the flood,  
And waves were white below,  
No more shall feel the victor's tread,  
Or know the conquered knee;  
For the harpies of the shore shall pluck  
The eagle of the sea!

Maddeningly enough, dear sir, I sold the house to an acquaintance I met at the University- just a few months back! He was a newly married chap, and the sunny old place would be really useful to him, I thought. Sorry to disappoint you- or whomever it is you were inquiring about the place for. Real shame, I'm sure...

Before closing off, I have a request: I am lately having recurring dreams- not all of them pleasant- about visiting a hermitage set atop a steep, reddish-golden hill, with a thin, tonsured-headed, young monk seated inside, surrounded by his admirers. My first guess was the Buddah[sic]; then I thought it might be the Indian savant Viweyanantah[sic]. But their images don't fit this young saint. So, just to rule out one more remote possibility- if you have a photograph of this monk, the Ramana gentleman, that you can spare, please do send it to me. Whew! Now that's been one long letter, eh? Anyway-

The Lord Love you!

With renewed expression of gratitude, and  
Wishing you every blessing,  
I remain, as ever,  
Faithfully yours in Christ,  
The Rev. F. J. Sheen

S>M>

G.: Did B. appear in this man's- Mr. Sheen's- dream? I also want to dream of Bhagawan, but he does not appear. Before closing my eyes at the time of going to sleep, I think of only Bhagawan. Yet he will not frequent my dream, whereas he is going to visit people in far away continents. Will B. not visit my dream also?

B. smiled at me graciously but otherwise proffered unto me no reply.

S>M>

Q.: Why are my prayers to God never answered?

B.: Mr. George Meredith has said: 'Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered.'

Q.: But what is the meaning?

B.: Prayer must be in the sense of 'Thy will be done.'. Asking for this and that is attempted extortion, not prayer. Prayer means surrendering yourself to God. Why should you ask him for this or that? If he is mighty enough to grant your

wishes, ought not he to be wise enough to divine what to give you and what not? So, there is no need to ask God anything. He knows your requirements and will Himself look after them- provided you surrender to Him unconditionally. Only surrender to Him. He takes care of everything.

Q.: Saints such as Kabir, Tukaram and Tulsidas were Realised sages; yet they prayed for the welfare of humanity.

B.: We may do likewise after reaching that state, if then felt necessary- not now. Let us first Realise and then discuss whether there is any need or not to pray for the welfare of humanity.

S>M>

Q.: According to the late Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, sickness is only a wrong idea, and is not connected to any physical anomaly at all.

B.: It is according to her popular maxim, "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter of itself. God is Mind, and God is infinite; hence all is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the Real and Eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual."

Q.: But is it not absurd? Am I merely imagining the headache I have been suffering from for the past 2 weeks?

B.: I say that objectivity or physical matter itself is a wrong idea, and only Spirit exists in truth. Is it not enormously more absurd?

Q.: If I imagine that the headache is gone, it does not go. This undeniable fact punches a big hole in imbecilic, fatuous, specious theories of this sort.

B.: Sometime back, you were gazing at the Hill yonder through the window. What were your thoughts then?

Q.: I thought the Hill looked rather irregular and ugly. But why- unless...

B.: Did you feel the headache then?

Q.: Lordy! no. I was too engrossed in my thoughts to notice, I suppose... But the headache was still there; only I failed to cognise the same.

B.: If you never noticed it then, how can you tell whether it was then there or not?

Q.: Because the pain reverted when I became aware of it again- i.e., when my attention to it reverted.

B.: Exactly- which means, it is something that is able to seemingly exist only when you pay it any attention. So, there is no way you can reliably determine whether or not it is true that it is your attention to the trouble that is causing the trouble. When attention is paid to the trouble, the trouble is there. When attention is not paid to the trouble, there is no trouble. That is the implication of the Hebrew phrase, 'AB(e)DA K(e)D(a)V(a)RA'.

Q.: What a way to look at things! But it sounds so nonsensical and silly- like how a child would think, perhaps...

B.: All must become infants in mind before the Self can be Realised.

S>M>

Q.: Nietzsche writes in his last work, 'Meine Formel für die Grösse am Menschen ist amor fati: dass man Nichts anders haben will, vorwärts nicht, rückwärts nicht, in alle Ewigkeit nicht. Das Nothwendige nicht bloss ertragen, noch weniger verhehlen- aller Idealismus ist Verlogenheit vor dem Nothwendigen- sondern es lieben...' Does Bhagawan agree that cultivation of such an attitude is beneficial for the aspirant after Realisation?

B.: This attitude of Loving acceptance comes naturally to the Jnani. There is no need for you to cultivate it on purpose. Giving up vrittis should be the task on hand for the sadhaka, not adding new ones. 'Doing' and 'Realisation' are anti-theses of one another.

Q.: Is Realisation indolence, then?

B.: Nor that; It is alert stillness. Keep the mind entirely submerged in pure Being. You will find that it is totally alert and intensely alive, but altogether motionless. This is the desired state; this state is the gateway into the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani. If this state has become your effortless, volitionless, natural state, Jnana is not far away.

Q.: Could the desire to extract revenge ever be considered legitimate or justifiable?

B.: Never. Says the Book of Mormon: 'And if ye judge the man who putteth up his petition to you for your substance that he perish not, and condemn him, how much more just will be your condemnation for withholding your substance, which doth not belong to you but to God, to whom also your life belongeth; and yet ye put up no petition, nor repent of the thing which thou hast done.'

Q.: It is said that St. Francis of Assisi would regularly deliver lectures to birds. How is the Enlightened man able to communicate with animals, which are generally believed to be facile creatures? And is there any use? [sings] 'Auf Gottes Begehren Die Predigt anhören. Die Krebs gehn zurücke, Die Stockfisch bleiben dicke, Die Karpfen viel fressen, Die Predigt vergessen. Die Predigt hat gefallen. Sie bleiben wie alle.'

B.: [laughs] Is [extent of proficiency with] linguistic ability [to be regarded as being] the [exclusive] indicator of [profundity of] mental sensibility? Flora and fauna may be incapable of speech; yet they have minds that are just as sensitive as yours. Lectured to in the language of Love, they certainly understand. Anthoniyar by his Love might have effected some inner change in

the creatures that so reverently listened to him; who are we to judge the efficacy of what he did or did not do?

Q.: I now move over to the principal purpose of my visit- how do I control my wandering mind?

B.: [sings] 'Die Gedanken sind frei, Wer kann sie erraten? Sie rauschen vorbei Wie nächtliche Schatten. Kein Mensch kann sie wissen, Kein Jäger sie schießen; Es bleibet dabei, Die Gedanken sind frei.'

Q.: [laughs] Oh! Bhagawan also knows these kinderlieder! How charming... Lovely- but seriously, what is the answer to my question...? I know I have a sound intellectual understanding of B.'s teachings, but am totally unable to Realise- i.e., to remain without thinking, as prescribed by him.

B.: That understanding is the obstacle. Get rid of it and all will be well.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: This understanding which you have tucked away in your mind embodies the idea that you are a sadhaka attempting to obtain Realisation. All ideas or encapsulations of understanding are deadly enemies to Realisation. Understanding or conceptualising the Guru's words is unequivocal, blatant abuse of them.

Q.: What am I to do, then?

B.: Rather than yourself attempting to implement the Guru's words, keep quiet and allow them to sink deep within the mind. If you try to grapple with the words, they may not be able to find their way into the deeper echelons of the mind, where their actual task [of extirpation of vasanas] lies.

Q.: Shall I not try to effectuate B.'s recommendation that I investigate along the lines of, 'Who am I'??

B.: Certainly practise the practice; but do not intellectualise the teaching. Remain entirely free from vrittis- be it belief, opinion, attitude or anything else. If you make the teaching of Ajata-advaita [itself] fodder for the mind to think about or believe in, how [then] can you meaningfully expect that very teaching to starve or bombard the mind out its habit of functioning outwards?

Q.: So, 'Who am I?' should be investigated as a matter of course, and not with the idea that it is going to bestow Self-Realisation- or any other idea?

B.: Exactly. Supposing you are unable to manage to undertake such motiveless investigation, go on investigating however you might be able to: eventually you will reach the stage wherein you are able to investigate without being encumbered down by any motive.

Q.: So, to tackle the obstacles to vichara, only further unflagging vichara is the aid?

B.: That is correct.

Q.: Should the vichara be performed in B.'s presence only? Suppose I do it at my home in Munich, or my vacation-house in Tübingen, or anywhere else- will it be just as effective? Many Caucasians seem to have settled down here permanently, but I am unfortunately not in a position so to do.

B.: This or that place is there in your own imagination only. Places make no difference to vichara. What is needed is vairagya.

Q.: What is vairagya?

B.: Perfect vairagya is the nivritti state of mind, where the mind has become altogether indistinguishable from simple, pure consciousness; earnest and unremitting vichara brings it about.

Q.: Should I think of God whilst carrying out vichara? Shall I think of Bhagawan whilst practising it?

B.: No. All thoughts are to be eschewed. There ought to be no possibility for thought.

Q.: Bhagawan must be aware that the Heimat of our winsome deutsche Volk is now under the grip of a tyrannical Fascismo. The Nationalsozialistische Ideologie- I am convinced- is exclusively destructive in character and ultimately lethally poisonous for our people- and, I think, not only morally. But what to do about it I do not know. Any talk on these lines back at my place and I shall never be seen again- I am sure of it...

B.: There is a destiny which guides the world to its inevitable future, be it good or bad. To the extent that we are ordained to have a hand in it, we shall find ourselves inexorably lending it. Leave it there and do not fret unnecessarily and pointlessly about what you cannot help.

Q.: Is there any efficacy in prayer? I am aware, of course, that Ajata-advaita denies the existence of God.

B.: Surrendering yourself to what IS, is the loftiest prayer.

S>M>

Q.: If Ishwara is an embodied being then he also is bound by samsara- but who could possibly bestow upon Him Emancipation, since He is Himself the supreme Being?

B.: Is that your doubt? Solve for yourself the question of your own misery first. Then we may discuss Ishwara.

Q.: Sometimes I see that Bhagawan does not respond to the queries of seekers but keeps quiet, although their intent in asking might be sincere. How is this observation to be explained?

B.: Mr. Blake has written, 'He who replies to words of Doubt Doth put the Light of Knowledge out.'. Words are needed only when the seeker is too immature to assimilate the natural language of silence. Silence is eloquence supreme. What one fails to know from centuries of reading books and listening to



lectures- that one may know in a trice through silence. Silence is not inertness; it is incessant alertness. Linguistic modifications are unnecessary of being employed when one comes into the Presence directly; when heart speaks to heart, what role could be available for the tongue?

Q.: The man on the Clapham omnibus will not understand such lofty truths. He will expect lectures. How shall we convince him of the unique significance of Bhagawan's silent transmission of divine Grace?

B.: Never mind. Let us care of ourselves first; then it is discovered that the world knows how to take care of itself.

S>M>

Catechized the Elder of Zion:

Q.: Paul Kruger, it seems, believed that the Earth was flat. Yet he ran the Transvaal like a charm, they say. Education seems to be a dispensable requirement when it comes to politics. What about Spirituality?

B.: In order to Realise the Self, a man does not have to be a learned pandit or skilled poet- or even literate. Yearningly questing is all that is necessary.

Q.: What is the meaning of 'Thuravu'?

B.: Giving up everything.

Q.: I have heard somebody mentioning that in Tamil, the word for all of these things- revelation, blossoming, renunciation and Emancipation, is only the one word 'Thuravu'- but what does the fact signify?

B.: One who longs for Perfect Peace shall be able to obtain it only by giving up everything (thyajanam) and not by acquiring anything (sveekaranam).

Q.: 'Giving up everything' means emptying of the contents of the mind, in Bhagawan's parlance, and not abandoning family, leaving home or taking up sannyasa- am I correct?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: I have heard it spoken of that chronic illnesses become rectified by asking 'Who am I?' in Bhagawan's presence. Can physical ailments be cured by means of practising vichara? Is it true?

B.: Vichara is the means to cure man's biggest ailment- that of physicality. Man imagines himself to be made out of gross flesh; whereas, in truth, he is pure Spirit only. If only you will open the eye of the mind to the Real "I", all is found to be well. It is the mind alone that is the cause of everything: collapse the mind by allowing it to become permanently submerged in its source, the self-resplendent Heart, and only blissful Reality remains.

Late in the evening today, the sarvadhikari requested the master to formally supervise the preparations the ashram has made, for the celebrations arranged for tomorrow. Tomorrow is the 40th anniversary of the day on which

the master attained Eternal Union with Arunachala: 1st September, 1896. Many devotees, Indians as well as Caucasians, have gathered together here now, and the place is overflowing with people. Many items required for the day are arrived from the town in a bullock-cart. The Hall has been decorated profusely with clusters of mango-leaves strung together with jute-yarn, and using wet-flour and red-dye decorative patterns have been drawn across the floor throughout the ashram. Amid all the hustle and bustle, B.'s thought is this: I observe him taking the sarvadhikari aside and telling him seriously, 'Don't forget to consider the monkeys, the cows, and the crows in planning tomorrow's culinary arrangements; also, suitable additional quantity of vellachcheedais must be unfailingly prepared for the rats...' The sarvadhikari merely nods meekly and says, 'Yes, Bhagawan...!'

P>S>

Much of the content presented here, showing Bhagawan reeling off verses from the Bible and other texts, are done so with the implicit assumption that the reader would naturally give himself to understand that B. was reading out from a book; certainly B. did not burst out with these lines of prose or, as the case may be, poetry, from extempore memory- atleast, not in a majority of the cases. I felt too lethargic to jot down everytime, 'B. asked the attendant to fetch this or that book from the book-case in the Hall, wherewith injunction the latter complied; B. then opened the book at the requisite page without searching, and handed over the same to the interpreter with instructions to read out select portions to the Hall...' and so forth. Likewise, an interpreter- many times Mr. TKS, occasionally myself in those fortunate few months I dwelt continuously in Tiruvannamalai, or someone else- was used whenever the other person was to be spoken to in English{even if it was a long-standing devotee domiciled within the ashram on a permanent basis, such as Chadwick or the Shylock}; B. himself needed no interpreter. When Bhagawan himself speaks English the same is indicated in brackets here by me. There were times when for a Caucasian language no interpreter would be available; it was then that the master would himself speak it, mellowly, placidly and distinctly. An example is the above conversation with the Swiss Professor Hüber, which took place directly in German without the assistance of any interpreter. Needless to say, on such occasions, what I have reported is certainly limited to how much I could follow: for instance, the substance of above conversation, since it was in German, could be rudimentarily followed by me, albeit not without difficulty- but when in December 1936 a Mrs. Suzanne Sen visited the ashram and exchanged a few words with the master in French, I was clueless, and had to depend upon Chadwick to later relate to me what they had talked. I have not pointed out seperately conversations

which were carried on through an interpreter, in view of considerations appurtenant to paucity of space governing the configuration of this manuscript. Likewise, for the same reason, the names, cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, nationalities and professed existing spiritual competencies of the various visitors who quizzed the master have also been- largely- filtered out whilst preparing this manuscript. A lengthy manuscript may fizzle out the patience of a prospective publisher; also, I am aware that a book that appears tediously lengthy is- more often than not- ignored and bypassed at book-shops!

S>M>

The ashram has erected a small, temporary hut near the office building for the convenience of overnight stay of the many Caucasian gentlemen who have arrived here for tomorrow's celebrations. At nightfall, I wandered over to the crowded place to take a casual peek. Minutes later, who should happen to come there but Sri Bhagawan himself! Terminating my efforts to fetch him a chair and ignoring entreaties from everybody to use one, the master happily squatted on the floor. A Mr. Edward Miller Prendergast from Ireland, who had arrived at the ashram yesterday evening, was now showing everyone his photographs of works of Art from around Europe; evidently, clicking pictures of sculptures and paintings was his life's principal passion. Chadwick had been examining one such photograph when the Maharshi entered; now the master asked what it was. Delighted by this unusual curiosity on Bhagawan's part, Chadwick handed over the photograph. I also peeped in, and was stunned. This painting was nothing like the picturesque Baroque-era pieces I had thus far come across, in books. It looked like a freakish creation made by somebody who had jumped out of his bed, and straightaway spontaneously painted a bizarre, fluid dream he had just had. The background depicted a landscape featuring a cliffside, lit evenly by a sun not accounted for within the frame. In the foreground was a table, and at the table's farther end stood a withered, lifeless branch of a tree. On the ground near the table lay the mangled, rotting cadaver of some unfortunate pinniped. On the table, upon the branch and atop the pinniped's carcass were hung 3 clocks; these grotesque clocks were the highlight of the painting; they seemed to be made out of some elastic material, in the artist's imagination, that permitted them to be draped, rather than placed, over the surfaces they were positioned over. Also on the table near the branch was an ornate hip-flask, bedizened with all manners of precious gems. Altogether the effect conveyed was somewhat unsettling and disturbing, if not outright frightening. Bhagawan peered into the photograph for some minutes, and then handed it to other inquisitive visitors with a smile. The gracile Irishman said with immense amour propre, 'That is

by Mr. Dalee, sir. Now, sir, if you please, do take a look at these; this one is by Mr. Paul Delvaux, and this one by Mr. Francis Bacon...' The Shylock remarked, 'I wasn't aware that Bacon made any paintings...' The Irishman responded saying, 'No, no. Not him, sir. This is a young man who goes by that name, sir... And now, sir, this violinist here stepping on a house is by Mark Jacgall-'. And so on and so forth he went, proceeding to sequentially extract all his uncanny ware out from a shiny attaché-case. Bhagawan patiently went through it all, and seated near him so did I. It appeared that this man had no taste for photographing any painting that looked normal or sensible. Every print had something eerie to offer with which to terrify the viewer out of his wits. Finally having browsed what would certainly have been the whole of the collection the man had brought, the master said, 'Good.' in English to Mr. Prendergast, who acknowledged the compliment with a grateful, deep bow and an elated smile. Bhagawan then rose to leave, and all rose to pay their respects to him for the day; but presently the Irish photographer, fidgeting nervously with his 'Leica-2' instrument, asked permission to coagulate a picture of Bhagawan, together with all of us, and assent was given by the master with a smile. We wanted the Maharshi to be seated and proceeded to fetch a bench, but the master would hear none of it; so all stood, and the picture was frozen, exposed thrice from slightly different directions on each capture. Then Sri Bhagawan left, and so myself also, abandoning the Caucasians to their rambunctious and rumbustious persiflage inside the hut.

1st September 1936

The anniversary-event today went grandly. A shadow puppetry group from Madras, accompanied by a musical troupe, showed us all the different avatars of Vishnu, which flitted by on a screen, which was a simple cotton vaeshti. The dark figures moved on the screen to the accoutrement of matching music from the instrument-players. The life of each avatar went on for circa 10 minutes, the performance being given in the Hall itself. The group had come on their own from Madras- nobody had invited them. The sarvadhikari was highly pleased. B. also seemed to like the show. Keeping time to the music, he went on tapping the ear-rings of the kumuti used to burn sambarani in the Hall. It was a great joy to watch his nimble fingers move back and fro, striking at the iron rings in perfect rhythm. He was being so sensitive in paying attention to the melody that according to the varying pitch of the music, different fingers were used to hit the rings. Not once did those delicately beautiful fingers miss their mark; yet- all the while- he was looking exclusively at the vaeshti, and never at his hands! The feat of concentration enthralled but did not surprise me; I am aware he is a proven sahasravadhani, which is not a fact that many people know about the master- and he, of course, would never

call attention to himself; moreover- "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

2nd September 1936

Q.: It is said that even a single unfinished thought or desire prompts rebirth.

B.: Yes. But birth is only for what is born. Are you born?

Q.: The body is born. I am the jivatman living inside the body. Merging the jivatman into the Paramatman is Sakshatkaram. Is that correct?

B.: Paramatman is Real. Jivatman is fiction. Can they unite?

Q.: What is the truth, then?

B.: Veritas liberabit vos.

Q.: Meaning that the Self Itself Emancipates deserving aspirants?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How then is one to know the Self?

B.: Can the insentient body know the Self? Can mind, which is merely a reflection of the Self, know the original Self Itself? Can a reflection of the Sun in a pot of water ever reach the Sun Himself, let alone measure or know Him?

Q.: What am I to do then?

B.: Let the mind subside and the Self Shine-forth.

Q.: But how is this to be accomplished?

B.: In truth, the Heart is always in Eternal Revelation; but it falsely appears as though it were in a state of being subject to obnubilation, on account of the jivatman's accumulated mass of vishayavasanas, poorvasamskaras and other chitta-vrittis, which collectively act as a spurious reflecting medium. Owing to such seeming reflection the jivatman seems to be oblivious of the Heart. If the reflecting medium is drained away from the Heart, only the Self is found to remain.

Q.: So, destruction of all chitta-vrittis leads to Realisation; am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How to destroy these chitta-vrittis which so iniquitously obscure the light of the Self from being Revealed?

B.: For all other vrittis the root is only the one aham-vritti; if this is overcome, the game is over. In a game of chess, all the other pieces of the opponent may still be alive, but if the king-piece is checkmated, the game is finished. But only an extremely skilled player can force a checkmate in just a few moves. Otherwise it will be a long-drawn-out, bloody battle. Likewise here. If your vairagya is remarkably great or intense, a single immensely introverted instance of submergence of mind in its source will suffice to cause the chieftain of vrittis to hang down his head in defeat; otherwise, you will have to first wipe out his army of vasanas before you can get to him. It is like the

difference between conventional warfare vis-à-vis totally wiping out the enemy's resources and morale in a single day by means of voracious deployment of a bomb with ultimate destructive capability, forcing him into numb, shocked surrender once and for all. [P>S> As I read these words after all these years, I am reminded with a thrill of horror of the infamous bombs Little Boy and Fat Man!]

Q.: So, annihilating the aham-vritti leads to Self-Realisation. But what is the bomb with which the aham-vritti can be killed? Is it vichara?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Some go on asking themselves 'Who am I?' but see no result. Others put the question once and it suffices for them to Realise the Self. How to explain this?

B.: Vichara is verily the Brahmashironamaka-astra with which to obliterate the ego: as to this there can be no doubt whatsoever. The astra, being simply a mantra, was always the same; what was the potency of the person wielding it, would be the question; for without considerable spiritual potency such mighty astras could not be wielded. Likewise, the question 'Who am I?' is the same for all. What is the intensity of the [particular individual's] vairagya that drives deployment of [the astra wielded by him known as] vichara, is the question. A dim-witted participant in a game of chess plods on through the various ranks of the king's army before finally reaching the king and checkmating him. A warlord with no access to the weapons made available by recent developments in the applied physical-sciences plods on through the various battalions of the army of the country he wages war against before finally forcing it into asking for an armistice. Likewise, one practicing the vichara with a feeble or meagre quantum of vairagya may have to encounter and finish off one vasana after another before finally reaching the stronghold of the aham-vritti. On the other hand, if your vairagya is remarkably great or immense, a single extraordinarily powerful instance of bombardment with the astra 'Who am I?' will suffice to finish off the aham-vritti once and for all. The weapon is the same. How forcefully are you throwing it? The greater the velocity, the greater the impact; the target also varies according to the initial momentum. If used with immense vairagya vichara lands upon the aham-vritti as a bomb. Else it lands upon some vasana as a few pieces of lead [buckshot]. It is left entirely to you how strenuously you throw. Carrying out an elementary rearrangement of the popular equation Herr Einstein introduces in his 1905 'Ist die Trägheit eines Körpers von seinem Energieinhalt abhängig?' paper, we get- [inscribing something upon a piece of paper and handing it over to the astounded questioner] " $p = v \cdot e \cdot [1 - \frac{v}{c}]$  raised to the power of 2]] raised to the power of 0.5]/[c raised to the power of 2]; alphabets as usual but m in the

sense reckoned by an observer moving together with the object". What is our observation?  $c$  is constant. The body's energy-measure whilst it is at rest,  $e$ , is an intrinsic property appurtenant thereto- because for a non-moving body  $v$  would be equal to 0, thus making the body's mass indifferent to Lorentz's gamma- and its value therefore cannot be contingent upon any observer's frame of reference; as a result, this also cannot change. So, if momentum must increase, there is only one thing to do: increase the velocity. Now then- what does Herr Einstein teach us? If you want to hit harder, throw harder! So much is self-obvious, but look how nature is found herself to be saying the same thing. If you want another example- are you familiar with the experiments performed by Herr Von Lenard with Crookes' vacuum-tubes?  
Q.: Yes, somewhat- I seem to remember he proved that cathode-rays are made up of negatively charged particles; and he was awarded the Nobel-prize for the discovery, I believe...

B.: Good. If you will recollect, he experimented with ultraviolet light as well. When he shone light of varying frequencies upon strips of metal, he found that the higher the frequency of the light irradiated, the greater the energy possessed by the cathode-rays emitted as a result of exposure of the metal to such light- the intensity of the light, on the other hand, did not matter. The phenomenon was explained by Herr Einstein in another one of his 1905 papers to *Annalen der Physik*. The point is this- if the light is of the correct frequency, you will succeed in obtaining emission of cathode-rays from the metal, even if intensity of the light should happen to be low; on the other hand, if the light is not of the correct frequency, no emission of cathode-rays from the metal is possible, even if intensity of the light should happen to be high. Likewise here. [The question of] how[-i.e., by means of pursuit of which path] you approach God or Self is less important than [the question of] how much vairagya you approach Him with. In fact, if vairagya is blazing within the sadhaka in all its inestimably prodigious immensity, knowledge of method [of practice] is not necessary at all. Did anybody teach Sri Ramakrishna how to fall in Love with God?

Q.: Is vairagya the same as bhakti?

B.: Vairagya embodies yearning longing to escape from samsara. Bhakti embodies crazed, maniacal desire for God. The one implies the other and the other the one. The extent of intensity of one's craving [for God or Self] is what determines whether the mind becomes pliant enough to be killed or not. To begin with it may not be possible for the man on the Clapham omnibus to develop such strong calopithymia. If he will succeed in the quest, he must persevere at fanning until the spark within him grows into a raging, all-

consuming flame. The spark is chidhabhasa; the exercise of fanning is our abhyasa; the flame is the manonivritti state.

S>M>

Q.: How is one to get rid of body-consciousness?

B.: It cannot be done by thinking, believing or assuming 'I am not the body.' or 'I am Brahman.'. But why do you want to eliminate body-consciousness? In deep sleep body-consciousness is entirely absent. Yet, are you any the better for having slept? It is not meaningful to understand loss of body-consciousness to be the same as Jnana. Loss of body-consciousness cannot be the aim of vichara-abhyasa.

Q.: What is the aim, then?

B.: Why should there be any aim at all? So long as aspiration exists so also does the aspirant: therefore the ego remains. Who is the one who aspires or aims? That is the only question which deserves to be addressed.

Q.: I only asked the question since it is said that Brahmajnana cannot be attained unless body-consciousness is relinquished.

B.: What is meant is that you must abjure from identifying yourself with the body. If we give up mistaking the not-Self to be the Self, the Self alone will remain. If you pay attention to the not-Self, it will go on perturbing you. On the other hand, if you pay attention to the Self exclusively, the question of not-Self can never arise. Why close your eyes and complain of darkness? See the sun and there is no darkness.

Q.: How did avidya-maya arise?

B.: There is no ignorance. There never was any ignorance. Is there anybody who does not know the Self? There are no aids required for knowing the self-evident Self. The Self is self-luminous. Only, we have gotten into the habit of attending to other things: so, the Self seems to be hidden. All are always knowing the Self; only such self-knowledge is obnubilated by a screen of concepts, notions, ideas, thoughts and other chitta-vrittis.

Q.: How to remove such screen?

B.: Only by investigating, 'Who am I?'

Q.: "Yerikkadhiral yavum vizhungum paramanmavae...", "Sakalamum vizhungum kadhiroliyina...", "Uzlamadhil olirivvuyirkkoli..."... What is the import of these titles for Lord Arunachaleshwara?

B.: Only those who Love this Hill as their Lord dearest will ever truly find out.

Q.: What is the mystical import of this Hill?

B.: It is beyond human comprehension.

Q.: Darshanathabrasadasi jananathkamalalayae kashyantu marananmukti smaranatharunachalam. I am frequently thinking of Tiruvannamalai. Yet Jnana does not dawn.



B.: Change in outlook is necessary. The man on the Clapham omnibus considers himself to be a transient subject living in and spectating an objectively real, permanent world: whilst the truth, on the other hand, is the other way round. The witnessing consciousness is more permanent than the objects it projects out of itself. This witnessing consciousness is also false, because it is reflected consciousness- i.e., it is not its own source; the source of reflection is the Self. So, the Self is permanent whilst reflections are transitory mirages. Therefore one's only obsession must be to clear away the mists of thought hiding the Self, so that the Self is Revealed. If there is any world left in the mind to devote thought to, it is impossible to Realise the Self. Worldly concerns do not affect the sincere aspirant. But the man on the Clapham omnibus is unable to bring himself to practically understand that the cosmos is merely in his own imagination. Even after reading so many books on Ajata-advaita, his understanding stops on a theoretical level. He is unable to practise- why?

Q.: God's Grace is lacking.

B.: No- he has blinded himself to God's Grace. God's Grace is always there. Anmavin sahasvayamprakasamae Iraivanadhuthiruvarul. We look outward and then complain that there is no Grace. Whose fault is it? There cannot be any change in Grace; Grace does not vary from person to person; Grace is constant. Sivavakkiyar has elucidated his opinion in relation to the matter in the following fashion:

ஓடிஓடி ஓடிஓடி உட்கலந்த சோதிய  
நாடிநாடி நாடிநாடி நாட்களும் கழிந்துபோய்  
வாடிவாடி வாடிவாடி மாண்டுபோன மாந்தர்கள்  
கோடிகோடி கோடிகோடி எண்ணிறந்த கோடியே.

Q.: How is it that B. draws to himself souls across the world who are fit to receive the teaching of Ajata-advaita? He does not tour around the world giving lectures to explain his teachings like J.K.; he has no organisation with which to spread his teachings; he has not started any brotherhood or society for practice of his teachings. Yet those who are ready come here of their own accord, like moths drawn to flame. What thaumaturgic power does B. use to make the magic happen?

B.: B. does not know anything and B. does not do anything. Everything you say takes place as a result of [in English] automatic Divine-activity. B. has no role in it.

S>M>

Q.: In medieval England, so they say, monks who wished to lead the life of a hermit were sealed up inside tiny stone-cages and [forcibly] made to stay there forever- as long as life persisted in the body. Such a monk was known

as an anchoress. Is there any genuine spiritual benefit derived from such extreme practises?

B.: Seal up the mind in the cavern of the Heart; let it stay there until it is no more. This is the sole genuine self-sacrifice for the cause of God.

Q.: No mind means no thoughts. Is it possible for a Jnani to think?

B.: Yes- but it is exceedingly difficult.

Q.: How is B. then able to write poems, take interest in conversations, etc. without thinking- how can anybody execute tasks which require such immense exercise of creative and intellectual ability, if they don't think?

B.: From the Jnani's point of view, nothing could ever happen. Himself is all that he is aware of and he is always motionless. If others think he is acting, can that disturb his unshakeable, actionless peace?

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: You identify yourself with a body. You extend the same mistake to B. also. B. has nothing to do with 'this'. [taps right shoulder with right hand]

Q.: But B. is still living inside this body!

B.: You will understand only when you reach that state yourself.

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that B. Realised the Self in just 27 minutes? When lifetime sadhakas are unable to do it, why has God shown such special Grace to the Maharshi? Is it because of sadhana done in previous lives by you? Or is it a case of favouritism?

B.: God is impartial.

Q.: Then all should be able to Realise the Self.

B.: The sun does not know darkness. If you shut your eyes, can the sun be blamed for the darkness that you see?

Q.: Can a Jnani read others' thoughts?

B.: The Jnani's prarabdha decides whether his body should have such powers or not. Thaumaturgic powers are appurtenant only to body and mind; the Jnani transcends them both. Prarabdha is only for the body; even now the Emancipated-one has no body. If it is the Jnani's destiny to help certain persons to mature spiritually, he may be able to read the thoughts of such persons, but not those of others. The Jnani does not consider thaumaturgic powers to be an advantage in any way. Such powers are merely on the delusory plane of the mind. Can they affect the Self?

Q.: Will deliberately aiming to acquire such powers be an obstacle on the quest for Self-Realisation?

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: Is Realisation of the Self difficult to achieve for those without a background of immense erudition in vedantic scholarship?

B.: No. It is funny that people want to Realise the Self. Can the Self be reached with the mind or ego? Does the mind or ego possess any genuine existence? Is not the mind or ego merely a phenomenon of reflection? If we would only keep [the mind] quiet or [have it] remain still, thus giving ourselves up to the Self, Realisation is obtained then and there. But this we will not do. Instead we want to Realise the Self. Can sadhana, which involves more doing and therefore more divergence [away] from the Self, discover the self-evident Self?

Q.: Does not B. recommend the sadhana, 'Who am I?'?

B.: It is a second-best approach; it is suggested because people want a formula [with which] to Realise the Self. The direct and immediate way is only summa-iruthal. 'Who am I?' is not sadhana in any typical sense of the term. Sadhana presupposes the existence of the sadhaka. Vichara does not assume the existence of the sadhaka at all, but searches for him and finds him to be eternally incapable of existence: then what remains is bliss of the Self. Practising other sadhanas goes on reaffirming the false conviction in the mind that there is an "I" which undertakes such practice: so, in such cases, the question of "I" always remains to be finally tackled in the end. In vichara the "I" is the only question and it is addressed right from the very beginning.

Q.: Is everything pre-destined?

B.: Yes- everything in the exterior world. Introversion of mind is the one and only thing not subject to pre-destination.

Q.: I have committed an incalculable number of heinous sins. I have sinned deliberately and repeatedly. What is the way out for me? Shall I confess to Bhagawan? Will that expunge or exonerate my sins? Please tell me what to do.

B.: Surrender to God and He will take care of you. Surrender means unconditional surrender. Resign yourself completely to God's will.

Q.: B. means that whatever happens in my life- I must accept the same as God's will?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: How shall I Realise the Self?

B.: Why should you realise anything? Why not BE or Remain as you are?

Q.: The truth is, I also want to become an omniscient Jnani like Bhagawan. I am very eager to Realise the Self- as quickly as possible. Please encourage my ambition. Please tell me how I shall Realise the Self.

B.: Only by BE-ing as you ARE.

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: Remain without thinking and without feeling drowsy.

Q.: Impossible.

B.: Practise vichara.

Q.: It seems difficult.

B.: Remove the idea of difficulty and it becomes[-i.e., is found to be] easy.

Q.: Is it possible that having once attained Self-Realisation, the same could be lost?

B.: Yes. If one or more vishayavasanas continue to lie[remain] latent in the mind, there can be no doubt that the Heart's Revelation stands unequivocally obstructed thereby[- i.e., on account of the mental-infestation caused by such vishayavasanas]; in the case of such a person, a fall from manonivritti is altogether likely- but from manonasha there can be no return [to samsara] possible. The Emancipated-one's mind is drowned and dissolved in the Sahaja-stithi of Jnana; he cannot be drawn back. It is like dissolving a salt-doll in the ocean.

Q.: Can such a person function normally in the world?

B.: From his point of view there can be no world[available to experience through sensory perception]. Others may see him walking around, talking, etc.; that is not his perturbation.

Q.: Will vichara-sadhana alone be adequate- I mean, by itself will the investigation 'Who am I?' suffice to reach this Sahaja-stithi?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then is God's Grace also not needed?

B.: Sincere and pertinacious effort to introvert the mind will win Grace automatically. The deeper the introversion of mind accomplished, the more is the Grace won. There will arrive a point wherein Grace alone remains- i.e., the one seeking it has vanished: this is referred to as Jnana. Sivavakkiyar has elucidated his opinion in relation to the matter in the following fashion:

என்னிலே இருந்தஒன்றை யான்அறிந்தது இல்லைய  
என்னிலே இருந்தஒன்றை யான்அறிந்தது கொண்டபின்  
என்னிலே இருந்தஒன்றை யாவர்காண வல்லரோ ?  
என்னிலே இருந்திருந்து யான்உணர்ந்து கொண்டனே  
நினைப்பதொன்று கண்டிலேன் நீயலாது வேறிலை,  
நினைப்புமாய் மறப்புமாய் நின்றமாயை மாயையோ ?  
அனைத்துமாய் அகண்டமாய் அனாதிமுன் அனாதியாய  
எனக்குள்நீ உனக்குள்நான் இருக்குமாற தெங்ஙனே !  
மண்ணும்நீ அவ்விண்ணும்நீ மறிகடல்கள் ஏழும்நீ;  
எண்ணும்நீ எழுத்தும்நீ இசைந்தபண் எழுத்தும்நீ;  
கண்ணும்நீ மணியும்நீ கண்ணுள்ஆடும் பாவைநீ-  
நண்ணும்நீர்மை நிறபாதம் நண்ணுமாறு அருளிடாய்.  
அரியும்அல்ல அயனும்அல்ல அப்புறத்தில் அப்புறம்

கருமைசெம்மை வெண்மையைக் கடந்துநின்ற காரணம  
பெரியதல்ல சிறியதல்ல பற்றுமின்கள் பற்றுமின  
தூரியமும் கடந்துநின்ற தூரதூர தூரமே.

S>M>

Q.: What does Sri Bhagawan opine on the question of reincarnation or rebirth?

B.: If you are born now you will be born in the future also. Only the Unborn is free from birth.

Q.: How shall I subsume myself into the Unborn?

B.: By giving up the idea that you were born.

Q.: Is it really possible for somebody to remain without thinking- at the same time remaining without falling asleep? Is it not the mind's svabhavam to wander about or fall asleep?

B.: Whatever you practice turns out to be the mind's svabhavam.

Q.: What is my real nature? Is it to remain without thinking or to think- or to sleep?

B.: Your real nature has nothing at all to do with mind.

Q.: Which is better- to blindly trust and have connate faith in B.'s words or to resolutely exert effort in endeavouring to experience his state for ourselves? Which is more likely to lead to quicker Realisation?

B.: The latter.

Q.: My we say that [experience of] mind is synonymous with maya or illusion?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Why did the mind arise?

B.: It never arose. Check and see for yourself if it ever arose by means of investigating who it is that undergoes experience of mind or illusion[maya]. Mind is ab initio non-existent. Only we think otherwise.

Q.: So really there never was any mind?

B.: Exactly.

Q.: How to fight a non-existent enemy?

B.: By looking for him. Search continuously for the mind. Then it will disappear. Seeking the mind, it is found that there ever could be no such thing. Then what is left is the Self.

Q.: It sounds simple. But how to do it in practise?

B.: Only by investigating, 'Who am I?'

Q.: But why first illusion and then Realisation? Why couldn't there forever prevail a situation wherein there never could be any illusion?

B.: That is exactly the situation that prevails.

Q.: This is the point of view of the Realised man.

B.: This is the only truth.

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: The nature of Reality will become clear to you only when you yourself Realise. No amount of theoretical explanations can possibly convey the truth.

Q.: What is the truth?

B.: It is the Beyond. It cannot be understood or conceived of by the mind.

Q.: How to reach it then?

B.: "I" cannot reach It. All that "I" can do is to surrender or subside, so that It stands Revealed.

S>M>

Mr. Evans-Wentz, author of "The Tibetan book of the dead", has written to the ashram to convey his good-wishes on the occasion of the anniversary observed here and the celebrations conducted for the purpose; Mr. TKS handed over the letter to Bhagawan and was asked to read out the same, since B. was presently busily engaged in feeding a squirrel with cashew-nuts- [reproduced from and to the best of my memory]

Dear Mr. TKS,

I am writing to the hermitage to express my warm compliments with regard to the celebrations planned for the 40th anniversary of the Maharshi's arrival at the Hill of the Holy Beacon; please convey the same to the Maharshi and the manager of the hermitage. It is my earnest desire and expectation that his fame should spread to every corner of the globe: not that he would have any use for fame[-indeed, most probably he would find it an annoying nuisance], but only so that as many people as possible stand to benefit from the existence amongst us of this unique spiritual giant. Also, please tell the master he always occupies the center of my heart: not that he would need to be told, but just so as for my satisfaction. I will remain eternally grateful to you for having explained the Maharshi's school of Ajata-advaita philosophy to me so admirably, my good friend. I find myself frequently poring over your translation of the Maharshi's 40 verses on Reality. I have no doubt, sir, that they must be an excellent reproduction of the original Sanskrit, given the massive intellectual abilities I have been able to discern in you from our profuse discussions at the hermitage. In case you are wondering what I have been doing with myself after leaving the Maharshi's hermitage, I was roaming around Egypt for a time, visiting places recommended by Mr. Brunton, together with quite a few after my own fascination. In all my wanderings over Egypt I have come across many interesting and remarkable places, but none stands out in my memory more vividly than than the one which so demurely lies at the foot of Mount Sinai-

here lies the Chapel of the Burning Bush; encompassing this is a most lovely old monastery. Not without a thrill, I impress upon you that this is a highly sacred spot; it stands sanctified by the sacred presences of hallowed personages none other themselves than Moses, St. Anthony of Egypt, and who not! This humble little place is supposed to contain a great very many secrets, and inside unpretentious, unostentatious ossuary-boxes lie the hallowed relics of many long-forgotten saints who attained martyrdom for the cause of the Christ's Evangelism. I was particularly interested in a certain art-work which depicts the Christ as he would appear at the time of the Final Judgment; in fact, this painting is unique in that when one covers the right-hand side of his face, the left appears in the same manner in which he shall be seen by those condemned on the day of the Final Judgment, and when one covers the left-hand side of his face, the right appears in the same manner in which he shall be seen by those whom he shall on that day decree as being righteous. Nobody is able to tell me how old this beautiful masterpiece is; from casual observation I reckon it may even be as old as the Nicaean Creed! However, for its great age, the enchanting object is in a surprisingly good condition. The imposing person of the Christ raises his right hand in blessing; and his left holds a large, jeweled Gospel book. He wears a tunic and himation, and they are both of the same deep purple; application of darker and lighter shades of colour have been intended to bring out the folds in the cloth. Nobody would attempt to deny that the most singular aspect of the painting is that the two halves of the Christ's face express completely different emotions: on the side on which he holds the Gospel, his features are unrelentingly severe and harsh, representing Christ as the Judge who sees all, while the expression on the side on which the hand is raised in blessing is peaceful and serene, representing Christ in His role of savior. A close examination throws up a surprise: this painting, done on a panel of wood, has not been created with brush-strokes, but has been completely crafted with hot wax, in which pigments of colour had been dissolved. According to the people at this place, this masterpiece was a gift of Emperor Justinian to the monastery. I had a camera with me, but in this dismal light, it was obvious to me that no image could be captured without assistance from a flash-lamp, which it never occurred to me to bring along; and even if I did have a flash-lamp with me it would be certainly unthinkably inconceivable to put it to any use here; everything seems to be made of vintage wood

and hand-spun linen at this place, and it was highly probable that deployment of poudre-éclair would set everything on fire! Moving the panel out of doors was out of the question; even to get to see it at close quarters I had to beg and beg for permission... I was permitted access at close-range only after I shamelessly wept, saying, fingers crossed behind my back without anybody noticing, that I was hoping for Salvation by pouring my heart out to Jesus through this painting! These people are quite stern, and doggedly adamant on holding their treasures close to their chest, like the proverbial djinn guarding his precious treasure since antiquity. Lest I forget, let me call your attention to a certain strange fact, and state that whilst setting eyes upon the painting, I was reminded for a moment of the Maharshi; as I was standing before the painting, I was briefly startled to make the discovery within my mind that during my visit to his hermitage last year, I once noticed the exact same expression on his face, whilst the Vedas were being recited... make out of this what you will! I sincerely hope that your family is doing well- but the fact of perpetually basking under the Maharshi's watchful guidance always being available to be counted on, could it be any other way? Impossible! You told me you had the wheezing-trouble at nights sometimes; do attend to it, sir, before it should, God forbid, metamorphose into something serious. Finally, I hope the manager's long-standing feud with Mr. Ganapathi-sastri has exhausted itself- he was the one to affectionately bring me from the train-station to the hermitage, trying to elicit details as to who I was by attempting to communicate with me using his sparse English-speaking skills! Do take care of yourself, good friend!

Yours affectionately,

Walter

P>S> Many may be surprised to learn that apart from ensuring that the poor thronging the gates of the ashram were not sent away with empty stomachs, the master made it a priority to feed cows, monkeys, squirrels and other animals during his lifetime. Whenever somebody brought fruit offerings, which in my observation even in those days was almost everyday, a portion was not infrequently set apart for the monkeys by the master himself, a portion would often be devoured by the cow Lakshmi on her unfailing visit to the Hall twice a day, and only the rest would go down human throats. A small tin container filled with cashew-nuts was kept in a shelf for the exclusive purpose of facilitation of the master's feeding of the squirrels. Every morning and evening a few squirrels would punctually arrive to eat from the master's own hand.



Was there more to this than met the eye? I did not ask B. about it. However Swami Rajeshwarananda has told me that B. once told him that the animals coming to see him were siddhas living in Thiruvannamalai, and that they, since they did not like attention being drawn to themselves, came to see him as a bird, a squirrel, a dog or as some other animal because they might be recognised in their human forms to be Jnanis. The Swami further opined that a genuinely Emancipated-being would never stoop down to the level of advertising himself- rather, he would dislike attention being drawn toward his person. He also said that the cow Lakshmi, which predeceased the master by a few months, was in fact a reincarnation of an old lady who would feed B. with gruel in the days when he was staying in the Virupaksha cave. I am only too aware that all these opinions may sound childish or irrational, but it must be remembered that the scientific-outlook is unable to explain or account for the fundamental question of why manifestation has come about[or why matter has evolved from energy]; so, having failed to address this primordial question, men of Science or the materialistic-outlook have no right to mock at Ajata-advaita, which does -eminently satisfactorily- address the said question. S>M>

Q.: Is Guru necessary for Realisation?

B.: Absolutely.

Q.: Then suppose a man attempts to Realise without having a Guru- what will be his fate? Will he meet with failure?

B.: Invariably and undoubtedly.

Q.: Can the sadhaka have more than one Guru?

B.: If that be his prarabdha. But their multiplicity is not real. Really Guru is only one. Dattatraeya had 24 Gurus. Yet what he Realised is only the one Self.

Q.: My family worships Sai Baba as Guru. But he passed away years ago. Should I change my Guru? Can only living persons function as Guru?

B.: Sai Baba himself said, 'Take a potsherd for your Guru and see whether you succeed or not.'. It was not a hyperbolic statement. For spiritually mature persons[paripakvis] even inanimate objects such as a needle or a mirror can serve as Guru. It is a question of fitness of mind. For the highest class of seekers, Aathma is Itself the one and only Guru. That which perennially rivets your attention unto itself and unfailingly stops your mind from wandering is your Guru. It is allright if the deity is not to be seen in the physical realm. Did Kannappar ever see God in the flesh before the moment of his Emancipation arrived? Did the Lord not grant unto him Deliverance? Margavarthithapadhuka pashupathaer angasya koorchaayate gandushambo nischechanam puraripoerdhivyabhishae kayathaekinchildbhakshita mamsashaesha kabalam

navyoepahara yatae bhaktihi kimna karothyaho vanacharoe bhakthavatham sayathae.

Q.: That is only a story...

B.: [waving a hand about the environment] Do you mean to seriously suggest, then, that all this is any different?

Q.: By intuitive inference I am able to collect reckoning that Bhagawan's sweepingly generous definition of Guru is certainly flawlessly correct in the technical sense; but it may not be useful for the man on the Clapham omnibus- by Guru he would spontaneously give himself to understand a saintly human figure [only]; people naturally tend to think in such manner. Also, it seems to me to be true that in the vast majority of cases[jivatmans] a living, human Guru is required to show the way to Realisation.

B.: [smiling] That is correct. But such questions need perturb you not. Go on with your effort. If an external Guru's help happens to be genuinely necessary in your case, it will be made available to you automatically. The external Guru will take whatever form or shape will be most conducive in your case in bringing about Realisation. It may be a human, living or dead, or water or fire or a pigeon or a hawk or an elephant or anything else. Don't bother [or fret] about the question. Carry on with your effort to discover the Self and the rest is taken care of by the Higher Power automatically. Unflagging perseverance and sincerity will certainly win you the Grace to Realise the Self. Only continuously carry on with your effort and never give up the quest; this is the sole relevant requisite.

S>M>

Q.: Where is the proof that Reality exists?

B.: Is He the one who is raising this doubt?

Q.: No; the doubt is mine.

B.: In what way do you stand apart or disengaged[ விலகியோப்பிரிந்தோ ] from Him?

Q.: I have never known Him.

B.: Exactly. "I" cannot know Him. "I" is the obscuring obstruction obnubilating His Revelation. When this obumbrationi ex pigritia [aut socordiae] known as "I" is removed, the Self stands Revealed. Actually- pragmatically speaking- there is only one obstacle to Realisation and that is the primogenitalis tenebra ad ignorantiae, namely the aham vritti. All thoughts are only modifications of this one thought. The aham vritti is [therefore] the origin of all delusion. Vichara tears out the aham vritti by the roots, uprooting one's nescience once and for all. Then only the bliss of the supreme Self remains. Therefore, if you will discover Reality, I suggest unto you that you ought to pursue the investigation, 'Who am I?'

Q.: According to Sri Bhagawan, Brahmasakshatkaram is the final accomplishment in the spiritual odyssey of man- yet according to Sri Aurobindo, it is only the first stage in man's efforts to bring down the force of the Divine to the Earth, so that the human-race may attain to supermanhood. Why is it that Jnanis contradict each other thus? Which opinion is to be believed? Is Realisation of the Self the beginning or the end of the quest for the Übermensch?

B.: The only way to know for certain is to Realise and See for yourself. Belief may permit scope for any number of doubts to arise, but such is not the case with direct, immediate experience.

Q.: Hui-Neng has said, "The finger can point at the moon's location, but the finger is not the moon. To look at the moon, it is necessary to gaze beyond the finger." Does B. agree?

B.: Undoubtedly. Description of the thing is not the thing. Many fall into the fatal trap of arriving at understanding of Ajata-advaita intellectually and then believing themselves to be Realised.

Q.: What is the surest hallmark of Realisation- a] to oneself and b] to the outside world?

B.: The Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani cannot be described. We may say that he is not here- in fact, HE IS NOT THERE AT ALL. What alone IS, continues to remain as it ever was- alone. That is the meaning of the Hebrew phrases 'YHWH YRAH' or 'YHWH SHMH'- the Self Sees or the Self IS. Here Sight means that the Self is free from ignorance or self-forgetfulness- i.e., He is ever in Eternal Revelation. As for the second part of your question, it does not arise for the Jnani, because there is no world available for him to see.

Q.: Sadly, I do not perceive the ever-obvious Self. It must be because of my ignorance or avidya maya.

B.: First merge and completely drown the mind in its Source; then if there is any maya left we may discuss the same. There is no second Self besides the first with the aid of which the first may be Realised. The Self is One. There can be no Realising the Self because He is always in Realisation. The only thing needed to be done is to unrealise the not-Self. "I" cannot see the Self because [it is] "I" [that] prevents the Self from being Revealed- but this is untrue from the point of view of the Self. Can the Sun know darkness?

Q.: So actually the Self is never subject to obnubilation?

B.: That is correct. Ignorance is ours only. On asking whose ignorance it is, only the Self remains.

Q.: How can Jnanis be recognised in the world? The sacred-books say that their bodies emit a phosphorescent glow, levitate a few inches above the ground, etc.; what is the truth of such statements?

B.: Realise and See for yourself; if you have a body then we may raise the question at that point of time, not now. The fact is, any sort of bodily experience is incompatible with Realisation, which is poornam.

Q.: What is the proverbial third eye of man? Is it the sahasraram?

B.: No. It is the mind. The eye of the mind is sometimes called the sixth sense of man- but infact it is the only actual sense, for information obtained through sensory perception is mere fiction. The mind's essential nature is that of pure consciousness. By taking in impressions of worldly objects, it becomes contaminated. Sathsangam- i.e., Aathmasangam purifies it and thus makes it ripe for extirpation in the hands of the Self.

Q.: I have heard that manonasham is the means for Jnana. But if the mind ceases to exist, will I also not cease to exist?

B.: This is a common misconception. Are you the mind? Did you not exist in sleep?

Q.: There was no mind in sleep- I agree.

B.: But you existed- yes or no?

Q.: Yes- but not in a way I can recollect now.

B.: Exactly. Now the mind has arisen. So, now you are unable to recall the mindless state- because the mind cannot experience its [own] absence. Water cannot be made dry water. Yet the mindless state was supremely pleasurable for you whilst you were in it. Yes or no?

Q.: Yes.

B.: So, remain asleep whilst awake- the mind must permanently remain in the state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly. This is the nivritti state of mind- this is the mind's nativistic state. Only such denuded mind can be destroyed in the hands of the Self, and only such destruction is known as Jnana.

Q.: This scheme of ideas contradicts a popular notion people seem to harbour about Sri Bhagawan's teachings- that he says that mind must be transformed into Self.

B.: That is only a figurative expression. Really the truth is so simple: Mind rendered inoperative, it perishes; then what remains is exclusively the Self. It is funny that people want to Realise the Self. If you just keep quiet, you are sucked into the Self and the reflected consciousness corresponding to that jivatman is at an end; this is Realisation- instead of this, why would anybody desire or aspire for Realisation? People want to Realise the Self because they imagine Realisation to be a blissful mental mode which they can attain through effort. On the other hand, only absolute absence of mental activity Reveals the Self. So long as there is still a 'you' which is going to perform sadhana, thus long sadhana will go on interminably. Instead of sadhana, etc.,

investigate 'Who am I?' everytime the mind wants to do something- i.e., to tear itself away from its source. Since [any form of] sadhana involves the spurious sadhaka- i.e., the fictitious ego, it can only strengthen bondage. By disguising himself in the garb of the police-man, the thief makes his detection and apprehension difficult. So, sadhana will ruin you. The moment you are asked to do anything to obtain Emancipation, know that you are being asked to hunt for the hare of Paschaltide- you will keep on searching for something you are yourself sitting on. For Emancipation, we must not do anything, but go in the reverse direction- i.e., remain aware without thinking. 'Doing' is the innate tendency of the extroverted mind. One who shall have Emancipation should try to break out of this evil tendency.

Q.: Is 'Who am I?' also not sadhana? After all, we must ask ourselves the question, and asking involves doing something- the action of raising the question.

B.: Did I ask you to go on repeating 'Who am I?', 'Who am I'? Put the question when a thought emerges, not otherwise. 'Who am I?' is meant to arrest further development of a thought process and return the mind's attention to its source- i.e., self-consciousness. Vichara is a watch-man for ensuring summa-iruthal. Whenever rats try to carry away grain from your granary, chase them away; if no rats appear, well and good: let all the grain remain as it is. If and whenever [it forms the subject-matter of your observation that] the mind, pursuing the form of thought, is deviating from its nativistic state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly, put the question 'Who am I?' to yourself and return the mind to such nivritti state; otherwise let the mind remain in that state undisturbed.

Q.: Is this nivritti state of mind Jnana?

B.: No- but denuded mind [nivrittiyanamanam] is the only means to dead mind [nashamagiyamanam].

S>M>

Q.: What is Sri Bhagawan's opinion concerning social reform?

B.: Wanting to reform the world without discovering one's Self is like trying to cover the world with leather to avoid the pain of being pricked in the soles by pebbles and thorns. It is simpler to wear shoes instead. Really the only thing you can change about the world is your attitude towards it.

Q.: So I should close my eyes to all the suffering in the world and pretend that all is well?

B.: Indeed- [in English] All is Well.

Q.: This is not a meaningful thing to say- there is suffering everywhere in the world. To B. it may be a dream, unreal, etc; to the sufferer his suffering is very

real. But B. will ask the sufferer to know his real nature before complaining about all his suffering... Am I correct?

B.: [smilingly repeats in English] All is Well.

Q.: Even as we speak here there are rapes, murders, arsons and other felonies going on in this world. Will Bhagawan deny the fact?

B.: Well then- go and help them.

Q.: Why should I? There are other fools to do it.

B.: Then why do you go on mithering about it? Let those 'fools' you mention come here and complain to me about all the suffering they must go about eradicating. You remain 'wise'.

S>M>

Mr. Nambiar docilely approached Bhagawan and said, "Yesterday at the function, I heard Mr. T.K.S. Aiyer telling Mr. Kamath from Sunday Times that when Sri Bhagawan was living in Virupaksha-cave, Sri Seshadri Swami, who happened to pay him a visit, remarked, 'If one worships the Lord Arunachala, He will grant Emancipation.'; and that to this Sri Bhagawan has replied with the question, 'Yes, but who is the worshipper and who is the worshipped?'. Is it so? I am asking the question because the doubt has abruptly presented itself to my mind as to whether B. disapproves of the path of devotion and worship..."

B.: Devotion leads to Realisation provided it is motiveless; that alone deserves to be called genuine Love of God which is neither undertaken as sadhana nor for obtaining Realisation nor for any other objective, but which is Love altogether unselfish. Parabhakti has no expectations and does not crave any reward. Parabhakti is Love of God for the sake of Love and for nothing else, not even for the sake of Emancipation. Such intense, crazed Love automatically implies unconditional surrender. Parabhakti is not cultivated nor can it be classified under the label of sadhana- it is like the Love a newborn infant bears towards its mother; there would be possible no framework of rational justification or conceptual explanation. If it is impossible to find nor attribute any reason why you are in Love with God, you have in your hand a ticket to Emancipation. One who Loves God with such maniacal fanaticism would not be able to think of anything else even at [the time of] his last breath.

Q.: Lord Byron has written-

And when convulsive throes denied my breath  
The faintest utterance to my fading thought,  
To thee—to thee—even in the gasp of death  
My spirit turned, oh! oftener than it ought.

B.: Quite so.

Q.: I revere Bhagawan as my Living God...

B.: The Guru is not the physical form. When sufficient maturity has dawned, He reveals himself as the Light of the Heart from within.

Q.: How to develop such maturity?

B.: By introverting the mind. For this vichara is the best means. Vichara is like a pair of scissors[garden-loppers] poised above the mind. Whenever the mind, taking the form of thought, tries to stray into the delusory world of the sensory perception, intellection, conceptual formulation, etc., etc., the thought is cut and the mind[<sup>s</sup> faculty of attention stands thereby] turned back into its source[, which is pure consciousness].

Q.: My best efforts at vichara have ended only in failure so far. I am sorry to admit it, but it is the truth. I simply cannot stop thinking.

B.: Never mind. Keep trying. Manonivritti cannot be achieved overnight. The important thing is to keep on trying. Mr. Longfellow has said-

The heights by great men reached and kept

Were not attained by sudden flight,

But they, while their companions slept,

Were toiling upward in the night.

Q.: How are worldly distractions to be overcome?

B.: Keep in mind that the world is nothing better than a [in English] mind-generated delusion. If the world is assumed to be real, it will never stop bothering you.

S>M>

Q.: Why is so hard to become a Jnani?

B.: Everybody wants to become somebody. Who wants to become nobody?

Q.: What is the unique aspect characterising Bhagawan's teachings, owing to which so many come here to seek spiritual guidance from him?

B.: Bhagawan has no teachings. Bhagawan does not have anything to say. Bhagawan does not manufacture any assertions.

Q.: Why are so many spiritual seekers to be found here then?

B.: Why are you putting the question 'here'? Why not put the question 'there'? What is the point in asking this something? This does not know anything. This does not ask anybody to come nor ask anybody to go away. Did this ever claim to possess any sort of knowledge at all, leave alone esoteric knowledge of some sort? What you know even this does not know; what you are able to understand even this does not. That is the fact.

Q.: What is the anathema pertaining to usage of the word "I" on B.'s part?

B.: First let us find out the meaning of the word, or what it denotes; thereafter, if found possibly meaningful [so to do], let us use it.

S>M>

Q.: Can I manage to escape from karma if I run away from home and live in the jungles, like Sri Bhagawan did in his early days of arrival here?

B.: No.

Q.: How is it to be done, then?

B.: Only by finding out who the karta is.

Q.: B. means, I must investigate 'Who am I?'?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is there no simpler method available?

B.: 'Who am I?' is the simplest possible method.

S>M>

Q.: In ancient Egypt, the kings of the land were interred inside elaborately constructed pyramid-shaped sarcophagi. The idea was that such a burial would help the king's soul to safely attain to the realm of 'the afterlife'.

Likewise, many cultures believe in this concept of 'the afterlife'. My question is: what is this afterlife, and does B. believe in the same?

B.: You yourself admit that it is only a concept. Even the present [environment] is pure make-believe or fictitious fantasy; that being so, who can say anything [meaningful] about the future? If the Self is lost hold of, there is no end to the phenomena that may present themselves.

Q.: Since according to Bhagawan the world is a dream, then, are objects perceived exclusively consequent to the fact that mental impressions of [or pertaining to] them are available within the mind?

B.: Yes.

Q.: It seems too fantastic to believe.

B.: That is only because you have- for long- been acclimatised to wrong knowledge[vipareethabuddhi].

Q.: Is wrong knowledge one with and the same as the ego?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How did the ego arise?

B.: Realise the Self and see [for yourself] whether there was any ego.

Q.: Since the present experience of individuality [or one's being a separate personality] is said to be mere illusion, how did such illusion arise? Is Bhagawan going to say that it never arose?

B.: Yes.

Q.: The answer is not compatible with my present experience. I am unable to corroborate B.'s ideas with my quotidian experience of living in a solid, physical world.

B.: A little practise will make you think differently.

Q.: The practice is 'Who am I?'. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.



S>M>

Q.: Which is better- summa-irutthal or investigating 'Who am I?'?

B.: If and when thoughts arise, investigate to whom they have arisen. The investigation 'Who am I?' is necessitated only to the extent thoughts arise. Otherwise summa iru.

Q.: I am carrying out the vichara sadhana for the past 3 years. I see no palpable improvement in myself. Can B. please tell me how close am I to Realising the Self?

B.: There is no such thing as being close to [or far away from] Realising the Self. Either you are Emancipated or you are not.

Q.: In what sense does Bhagawan say, 'Liberation is in the here and now.'?

B.: In the sense that effort is made only to reach the effortless state. Effort is not made so that anything new may be obtained; effort is directed only at removing spurious modifications or accretions; that done, Reality is discovered to be as it always was. The Self is verily always in Realisation. It is we who have come away and therefore must now retrace our steps- all the way back to our original Source. To the extent thoughts arise, to that same extent make effort to eradicate them then and there, but no more. The effortless and volitionless state is the goal.

Q.: I do not recollect ever having come away from any Source.

B.: Whatever is wont to rise or effervesce in contradistinction to Reality must be cut down; only then will Reality be Revealed. You say "I"; that is the departure you make from the Self. It is not the Self that is saying "I"- be assured of that- but something else. The Self, being Life Itself, is always silent. What is this something else? Find out.

Q.: Is it the aham vritti?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How to kill the aham vritti?

B.: Only by vichara.

Q.: Thoughts are like the waves of an ocean. They keep on coming. It is not really a pragmatic approach to ask 'To whom has this thought occurred?' everytime a thought presents itself. My mind is flooded with thousands of thoughts every hour of the day. What am I to do?

B.: I will give you another method, then. Keep watching the sense of "I" keenly. Do not try to stop thoughts. Simply keep observing the aham vritti or the thought "I". Instead of stopping thoughts, become aware of the thinker of the thought everytime a thought occurs. Let your thoughts run riot- you remain with- and eventually as- the thinker. Do not feel any obligation to stop the flow of thought. Remain with "I".

Q.: Will it do for Realisation?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: What is the age limit for [practising] vichara sadhana?

B.: There is none.

Q.: I am an old man. I am 62 years old. Can I also do it?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Will it succeed?

B.: Provided God's Grace is dispensed.

Q.: Can I earn God's Grace?

B.: Yes!

Q.: How?

B.: Introversion of mind inevitably invokes God's Grace.

Q.: How to achieve introversion of mind?

B.: Vichara is the way.

Q.: If what is destined to happen will happen, what is the use in making effort to Realise the Self?

B.: The completely introverted mind has transcended destiny.

Q.: But to introvert my extroverted mind destiny must be favourable.

B.: Yes.

Q.: How to tell whether my destiny is conducive or non-conducive for introverting the mind and achieving Realisation of the Self?

B.: Engage in sadhana and see.

Q.: What is the incubation-period for performing sadhana, studying the result, and arriving at a rational inference as to whether my destiny in this lifetime is conducive or non-conducive for introverting the mind and achieving Realisation of the Self?

B.: The entirety of your lifetime!

Q.: So I must throw away my life at God's feet like a wasted lover. If He accepts my love[here my sadhana] I am saved. Otherwise I perish. He can do as He pleases. There is no possibility of appeal. This seems to be the line of opinion you are taking.

B.: Absolutely. But there is also the fact that for some persons, God is the only attainment considered worthy. I will marry him or die, says the fierce lover. I will try my best to get him to fall in love with me, but if I don't succeed, I can always marry somebody else, for I have charming looks and a nubile body, says the casual lover. God accepts the first kind of Love, but unequivocally spurns the second. All this is applicable not exclusively for the path of bhakti. If you give the quest for Realisation your all without thinking a single thought about opportunity-cost [possibly forgone], you will succeed. Otherwise you will fall between 2 benches and become a failure altogether [; and therefore, it is

better that such half-baked persons not try to Realise the Self at all]. Mr. Patrick Henry said: Give me liberty, or give me death! That should be the attitude. If there is any option arranged upon which to "fall-back" in case the quest turns out to be a failure, failure is made CERTAIN thereby- i.e., Realisation is rendered impossible thereby. Such is God's design.

Q.: It seems grossly unfair.

B.: Are you and me to sit in judgement over Him?

Q.: Are there really people who harbour such attitude [of total maniacal vengeance to somehow attain God]?

B.: Yes, but not many. Their life has only one absolutely pertinacious, single-minded purpose: the Self [or God].

Q.: What happens when they fail? Do they commit suicide?

B.: They never fail. It is the pusillanimous ones who fail.

S>M>

Q.: Why do I exist?

B.: Is existence asking the question?

Q.: No, but I am.

B.: If you are apart from existence, then what are you?

Q.: I am the witness of existence.

B.: Whose existence?

Q.: Mine.

B.: Who are you?

Q.: I am the witness of my own existence. Is that right?

B.: Existence never has anything to witness. Something else is doing the witnessing mentioned by you.

Q.: What is that something else?

B.: Is it you?

Q.: I think so.

B.: Which is you- that which does the witnessing or that which is witnessed?

Q.: Can I not be both?

B.: Can you not be the Beyond in which both of these are vested, out of which they are made and upon which they appear?

Q.: Am I? What is the proof that this Beyond exists?

B.: Did I say that it exists?

Q.: I think so.

B.: I only asked you to authenticate for yourself. Why should you accept anybody's opinion as being correct? Experiment and find out the truth for yourself. Why choose to believe when you can experience? If you are hungry, will you ask the person sitting next to you to eat and watch [him eating]- could that ever satisfy your hunger?

Q.: What should I do then to discover the truth?

B.: Find out what exists.

Q.: You mean that the world is an illusion?

B.: I mean nothing. See what IS, as against seeing what appears [to be].

Q.: [after a few minutes] The analysis leads me to the subject- I am.

B.: [smiling] Good. Remain as that subject.

S>M>

Q.: Of-late whenever I practise vichara I feel pain in my body, between the xiphisternum and the umbilicus; I think it is none other than the ego, trying to frighten me into giving up the practice, because it knows that if I succeed it shall be no more- I remember that the sacred-books maintain that the navel is the seat of the ego. However, I have no mind to give up vichara- but this pain is driving me crazy. Can B. please touch me in the affected region, so that the ego should come to know that it ought to not try any tricks with me, since I am being guided by an expert master in Ajata-advaita?

B. did not oblige the request but stared into the man's eyes fixedly for a few minutes. The man closed his eyes and seemingly went into a trance.

S>M>

Q.: Are you sure that all this- the world in its entirety- is merely a dream?

B.: Yes- quite sure.

Q.: But inside a dream everything is hazy, vague and blurry; here, on the other hand, everything is vivid and undistorted...

B.: Do not omit to take into account the fact that you are still trapped inside a dream. Remaining in one dream you are making a reference to or comparison with another. Is it a meaningful exercise?

Q.: How then to establish conclusively for myself whether the world is a dream or not?

B.: No such exercise is possible, because the yardstick of measurement, the measured object, the means of measurement deployed, and the measuring subject are all one and the same mind. That which is now called 'world': whether it exists or not and if yes what it really is you will find out only after Realising the Self. There is no use forming theoretical conceptions about the world's reality or otherwise; they[postulatory delineations] cannot convey the correct or valid picture as to what the world is because what it is is a matter of subjective experience, not objective contemplation; therefore, rather than seeking conceptual explanations, Realise yourself and find out the truth behind the world.

Q.: What is the use in attempting to obtain Realisation if it is for a privileged few only?

B.: Sincere effort to introvert the mind does not go into infructuity.

S>M>

Q.: Is Realising the Self exceedingly difficult?

B.: [smiling] No- it is the easiest thing there is.

Q.: Please stop telling sarcastic jokes and take my query seriously.

B.: No, no- I am quite serious. It is the easiest thing there is.

Q.: Why do people find it so hard, then, to Realise, even in the immediate physical proximity of your potent presence?

B.: Because they will not give themselves up. If everything is given up- including oneself foremost- only the Self remains. It really is as simple as that.

Q.: Should everybody give up on civilisation and move into the jungles just like you have done?

B.: The relinquishment needed for Realisation is exclusively mental. How does it matter where in the world the body might happen to be located? Does the body even exist? The body is also part of this [gesturing in a circular-motion with a swivel of his index finger to indicate the environment] dream.

Q.: I am a Blavatskian. Are you one of the Masters?

B.: [smiles but makes no response]

S>M>

Q.: Is it of any use believing that I am Brahman?

B.: What is being suggested by you is the surest way of precluding yourself from Realisation. Discovering Parabrahman to be the Self is the thing to be done. A belief is an arbitrary mental conceptualisation [chittavritti]; it is thus a resolute obstacle to Realisation. Remain free of beliefs and other vrittis. Realisation is to be had only in perfect absence of vrittis.

Q.: Is the world merely a dream?

B.: It is according as to how you want it to be.

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: Every man decides the level of reality he wishes to operate from. For the man on the Clapham omnibus, the yardstick of reality is the jagrat state. To the Emancipated-being, the yardstick of reality is Reality Itself. So, if you are satisfied with your incumbent experience of reality, that is alright. The quest for the Self begins only after one commences being unwilling to be satisfied with jagrat as the genuine experience of reality. If you have not the slightest inkling that you are dreaming, why would anybody bother to take the trouble of waking you up? Sweet dreams!

Q.: So- it is a dream, then?

B.: That is just what is being explained to you. If the suspicion that you might be dreaming has not [yet] impressed itself upon your mind, by all means carry on happily with the commonplace understanding that you are a transient subject observing a permanent, objectively real world that is apart from and

independent of yourself. What is wrong in it? Is anybody going to question you for harbouring such attitude?

Q.: But what is the truth?

B.: The truth is malleable according to the temperament of the listener, as was just explained. However, there is [that which is] absolute Truth, irrespective of whether we discover the same or not.

Q.: What is this absolute Truth?

B.: Some believe in it and call it God or Paramathman; others deny it; whether we acknowledge His existence or not, the truth always holds that He alone exists.

Q.: Science has not managed to unearth His existence.

B.: That is because He cannot be discovered in the objective realm. With intractable stodginess, you are sitting squarely on top of Him as the ego. If you would only simply clear off, the Self or God is Revealed.

S>M>

Q.: For the past half-a-decade, I am practising Investigation into the Self as taught by Sri Bhagawan. I see no progress. How can I gauge my progress?

B.: Do not pause to reflect on how far you have journeyed. There is no need. Keep going.

Q.: But will it not serve as a sort of psychological motivation to know how far one has-

B.: [interrupting, which is unusual with him] No. Just keep going.

S>M>

Q.: My name is Kukosia Kakoosia Aruppukutty, son of Kikibanoi Kakabilan Aruppukutty. I am coming from the Straits. [goes on to furnish a long-winded introduction of himself and explanation as to how he came to hear of the master, and then-] I want to ask Bhagawan a few questions. May I?

B.: Proceed.

Q.: Who is Arunachala and who is Arunachalaeshwara? I mean, what is the difference?

B.: [Respectively,] the unmanifest Absolute and the personal God.

Q.: What of the Hill?

B.: A unique, insoluble mystery that embodies elements of both. Mijnheer Huygens postulated his idea that light was made of waves, while Sir Newton opined that light is made up of corpuscles; but the Englishman Mr. Young, using his 2-slit interference experiment, seemed to conclusively prove that light propagated itself through a wave-like medium, and the matter seemed settled at that until 1905; but in that year Herr Einstein has submitted as a contribution to an issue of Annalen der Physik the paper Über einen die Erzeugung und Verwandlung des Lichtes betreffenden heuristischen

Gesichtspunkt; herein he suggests that light is made up of what he refers to as "Lichtenergiequanten". However, more recently, in 1924 the paper A Tentative Theory of Light Quanta was published in The Philosophical Magazine and Journal, having been contributed by a Mons. Louis de Broglie; herein, he, through establishment of an undercurrent of mathematical proof, suggests that the idea of the 'undulatory character' of light possesses distinct possibility of scientific reinforcement. So, we see that-

Q.: [interrupting the interpreter; addressing the master] Please stop; my head is swimming!

B.: [laughs] All that is implied is that like light and indeed all of matter, Arunachala occupies a unique position in that He is both a personal God and the Impersonal Absolute Itself.

Q.: The Impersonal Absolute would be shapeless and formless. The Hill has a form, a shape.

B.: The Hill has no one concrete form; the shape keeps changing as you go around it.

Q.: Yet the Hill possesses a tangible, physical existence that can be touched and felt; on the other hand, the Impersonal Absolute would be incapable of being contacted in any way, because it would belong to the Realm of the Beyond.

B.: Exactly; that is the great mystery; that is His Grace. Arunachala is the Axis-mundi or Omphalos of this cosmos. Seemingly silent and inert, He is the Jnana-guru of poor souls who quietly suffer without succour in this cruel, cruel world; without Him there can be no Emancipation, no Apotheosis for man. To consummate one's innate divinity, in the end everyone must come only to Arunachala.

Q.: I notice Bhagawan making use of an ecclesiastical term, the English word 'Apotheosis'. In what sense does he use it? I recollect that the kings of Greece had themselves worshipped as Gods among their subjects.

B.: No; that is not the sense in which the word is employed here. The Apotheosis that was mentioned here is the transformation of the mind into the Immutable Absolute- the discovery that man is not what he takes himself to be, but is as a matter of actual fact one with the Absolute Itself. The transmutation of a common metal into gold is possible only if one has the legendary keystone. Your mind is common metal. The gold found by means of deployment of the alchemical process is the Self.

Q.: So, Arunachala is the prized lapis philosophorum which can make God out of man!

B.: That is correct!

Q.: The alchemical procedure to be exploited is to investigate 'Who am I?'.  
Am I correct?

B.: [in English] Very good!

Q.: But if investigating 'Who am I?' will suffice to win Jnana, where does the need for Arunachala [to play any role] come in?

B.: To succeed in the quest and sunder the knot of the Heart, Guru's Grace is a sine qua non.

Q.: How to win such Grace?

B.: Only by going on assiduously and incessantly with vichara. However, in the case of a few rare persons, a shortcut presents itself. If you happen to fall in Love with this magical Hill, no sadhana is necessary for you. Bear in mind that this Love must be not only unconditional, but also maniacal, and the potency or enormity of its intensity must be in perpetual apogee. Such Love cannot be cultivated. Either it is there or it is not. If you fall under the spell of such fanatical Love, Jnana is automatic and inevitable in the incumbent lifetime. Love is verily God's most precious bequeathment unto man; it is the Jacob's Ladder with which to unite into Him. Such Love is theoretically possible for all, just as theoretically all the buds of a tree may ripen into fruit. In actual practise, it requires an insanely adamant, single-minded zeal and rank ferocity that the man on the Clapham omnibus would find quite too impossibly sheer and stark to adopt in practice; that is why the gentler way of vichara is recommended. In fact Love- which naturally implies *ananyasharanagati*- is the most direct way. Love is the key to open the gate of the Heart, to forever break the bonds of karma, and to escape once and for all from the fetid, obnoxious, horrifically excruciating putrid marsh known as *samsarasagaram*. The mind must catch fire and burn away into nothingness before the Self can be revealed. If you are complacent about God, God will be complacent about you. People ask, 'Why am I not able to see God?'. 'You are sitting on top of Him, that is why. Clear off for good and He shall be Revealed.' is the fitting response; but that may offend them, and so I keep quiet. Such crazed Love requires an object to long for. God in His boundless mercy has given us Arunachala. You may take it from me in writing that one who, upon first sight, genuinely sees this Hill not as a mass of stone or collection of rocks, but as his Beloved, will never be born again. Jnana does not come easily. It requires God to exert the entirety of His weight upon the strong knot of the Heart to sever it. There is also one more essential requisite for Emancipation: *Bhisma* could be killed only with the assistance of *Shikandin*; it is not possible to conquer him in warfare. Likewise, unless the screen of *maya*- this is simply the understanding that one is a transient subject spectating a permanent, objectively real entity known as the world; equally



harmful is the understanding that one is mere subjective consciousness or Brahman; any sort of conceptual framework should be anathema for one who wants to Realise the Absolute- is lifted, there can be no Emancipation. The way to effect removal of this screen- being nothing other than a dense mass of arbitrary mental conceptualisations [vrittis]- is again only arduous, continuous and unflagging practise of vichara. However, for one who is burning in the fire of Love for the Lord, the screen stands removed in a trice.

Q.: Love seems to be the quicker way, then.

B.: Yes.

Q.: But when asked which is the quickest and most effective way to Realise the Self, Bhagawan says vichara.

B.: Parabhakti does not come to all. Vichara is for all. Vichara can easily be practised by anybody who has recognised samsara for what it truly is. Parabhakti cannot be forced; it must be present in seed-form amongst the jiva's latent tendencies. If it is not there, we cannot do anything. Vichara gladly admits complete beginners also. It must be admitted that the vasana for parabhakti is relatively rare.

Q.: Can parabhakti be cultivated through sadhana?

B.: Vichara is quicker.

Q.: Is God's Grace equally available to all?

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: Why do not all Realise, then?

B.: God's Grace is like an ocean. How much you carry away depends entirely upon you. What is the size of the vessel you have brought? If you come with a cup you will get only a cupful. No purpose is served by accusing the ocean of parsimoniousness.

Q.: I am unable to understand the analogy. What does the vessel in the allegory stand for?

B.: The vessel is the mind. The bigger it is, the more introverted your mind is.

Q.: So the more introverted my mind, the more Grace I receive to Realise the Self?

B.: Yes.

Q.: But it is to introvert the mind that Grace is solicited.

B.: Yes. It is like a boulder rolling down a mountain. The speed increases as more distance is covered. Take the first few steps in perfect sincerity.

Thereafter you will find that a Higher Power is guiding you. Surrender to It unconditionally. All will be well. Everything will come aright in the end.

S>M>

The Shylock approached Sri Bhagawan and questioned him thus-

E.Z.: I have just read the book, 'Ramakrishna The Man Gods, A study of Mysticism and Action in Living India'. Its contents have disturbed me profoundly. Please let me explain why my mind has become agitated upon having read this work-

He proceeded to read out extracts from the book. I listened with particular attention, for this book did have no small impact upon my own life.

"The Universe was extinguished. Space itself was no more. At first the shadows of ideas floated in the obscure depths of the mind. Monotonously a feeble consciousness of the ego went on ticking. Then that stopped too. Nothing remained but Existence. The soul was lost in the Self. All duality was blotted out completely. Finitude and Infinity had fused themselves into the One. Beyond word, beyond thought, he had attained Realisation of the Imperishable Brahman."

"The experience of revelation of the presence of divine consciousness in all things was the last stage in spiritual illumination so far as the ordinary man was concerned, for beyond this temporary revelation lay the supreme realisation, the absolute Identity, obtained in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi (the Highest Ecstasy)- but that was reserved for men, who had achieved their mission in life; it was the ultimate and forbidden joy ; for from it there is no return except in a few exceptional cases like that of Ramakrishna himself. In spite of the prayers of his disciples, he was loth to let them taste of it; they had not yet won the right. He knew only too well that such "salt dolls" would no sooner touch the first waves of that Ocean than they would be absorbed in it. He who is desirous of attaining Identity with Unique Reality only receives a return ticket by a miracle. The disciples therefore had to remain in this world at the stage before the final, wherein takes place identification of all objective reality with divine consciousness."

"During the last days of Ramakrishna's life we shall often see Naren urging the Master to allow him the highest superconscious revelation, the great ecstasy, from which there is no return, the Nirvikalpa Samadhi; but Ramakrishna emphatically refused him."

"Naren, while meditating, had the sensation of a light shining behind his head. Suddenly he lost consciousness and was absorbed into the Absolute. He had fallen into the depths of the terrible Nirvikalpa Samadhi, which he had sought for so long, and which Ramakrishna had refused to allow him. When, after a long time he returned to himself, it seemed to him that he no longer had a body, but that he was nothing but pure consciousness, and he cried out : 'Where is my body?'"

Does Bhagawan now see why I have become afraid of spiritual practise on the whole? Is samadhi such a horrific experience then? Am I then subjecting

myself with such tedious punctiliousness to the rigours of meditation self-purification and mental discipline only to end up in a state of terror, or to turn into a living corpse?

B.: People who have themselves had no experience of the nirvikalpa state spectate from the outside and entertain all sorts of notions about Nirvikalpa. Even those who have read and understood all the upanishads, and are thoroughly versed in the doctrine of Ajata-advaita, tend to have fantastic notions about Nirvikalpa. This being the case, would ever we be justified in blaming a Caucasian for harbouring such notions? Many Caucasian authors have produced similar material. So, why specifically point out Mons. Rolland?

E.Z.: But Nirvikalpa has been described as a void...

B.: Some yogis- by means of practising kevalakumbhaka for days together deliberately- permit themselves to fall into a vacuous state far deeper than sushupti, wherein they are aware of absolutely nothing; this they glorify to be Nirvikalpa. Others opine that once you dip into Nirvikalpa for a few moments even, you become an Emancipated-being. An example for the follower of such a school is the monk Tota-puri, whom Mons. Rolland describes in the same work. Still others assume that Nirvikalpa is attainable only through abeyance of body-consciousness, wherein possibility of sensory perception is totally extirpated, as in a swoon. But think- is there anything to be attained? What is the goal? Is it to acquire the Self or eliminate the not-Self? All the various divergent opinions about Nirvikalpa arise because people who have had no experience of it, whose knowledge of it is merely intellectual, have written about it.

E.Z.: Then what is the real Nirvikalpa?

B.: Nirvikalpa is simply chidhakasam— effortless, volitionless consciousness of Being. To the kritopasaka whose mind is mature [-i.e., in a state of advanced introversion] the experience of Nirvikalpa may come as a sudden inundation. For others sadhana is necessary to achieve it. Sadhana slowly wears off the curtain of thoughts, which obnubilate the self-evident experience of Reality, and results in the eventual revelation of the screen of pure consciousness, which is always the enduring background supporting the clouds of thought-mist that plague one.

E.Z.: Why is it that some people have mature minds, and others have minds that are bent outward?

B.: Some persons have minds that have become ripe from sadhana done in previous births; but this is only a seemingly plausible explanation. Next you will ask me, 'What prevented me from doing sadhana in my former lives?'; it is like the age-old dispute, 'Which came first- the seed or the tree?'. So, leave off

all these theoretical disputations and seriously engage yourself in pursuit of the Truth that is here and now within you.

E.Z.: When the topic is raised, Bhagawan often mentions one more, final state that is beyond even the Nirvikalpa.

B.: That is the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani.

E.Z.: How to reach this? Does remaining in the Nirvikalpa state for a prolonged duration of time ensure that we attain it?

B.: Granting the final state- or not- is left to God's Mercy; it is not to be won by sadhana. In the course of one's sadhana one must have learnt to surrender to God's will. When you have reached the stage when it no longer matters to you whether you reach this state or that, and in fact when there is nothing that matters to you anymore, then alone will God consider granting you the Sahaja-stithi or Emancipation. If you feel, even at the level of the subliminal or subconscious mind, that there is anything yet to be attained, or anything yet to be lost, Jnana is impossible. So long as you yearn for Liberation, it means that the ego is alive to crave for it. Desire for Emancipation may be good insofar as it is helpful in keeping away other thoughts, but it must itself also vanish before Realisation can be had. Ask yourself, 'Whose Liberation[is it that I aspire for]?'.

S>M>

Q.: The Jnani is described thus in the books: 'He looks but does not see; he listens but does not hear.' What is the meaning?

B.: The Emancipated-one has no vrittis left- not even the fundamental aham vritti. That is the meaning. He cannot give himself to understand, 'I am seeing.' or 'I am hearing.'. The thought or feeling "I" is dead in him.

Q.: Can the body survive the destruction of the aham vritti?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Can we function normally in the world without the aham vritti?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: Is setting time apart for vichara advisable- or, shall I perform vichara always? Can vichara be practised whilst performing commonplace quotidian chores? There are tasks which necessarily involve a high degree of mental participation; can vichara be practised whilst performing these also?

B.: There is no point in setting time apart for vichara, for it only makes the mind more ebullient at other times. Yes, vichara should be practised always, whether you are performing commonplace quotidian chores or tasks which, according to you, necessarily involve a high degree of mental participation.

Q.: The thoughtless state is the objective of vichara, it is said. How then can vichara be practised coevally with activities that require expenditure of mental

effort- i.e., thinking?

B.: This is not a matter than can be explained theoretically. Do it and see- all this while you have been thinking that it is you who were doing the work; but now you will discover that the body goes on automatically with what needs to be done, whilst you as the mind remain blissfully quiescent in the Self.

Q.: But how can that be?

B.: Stop theorising. Do it and see. Then you will know.

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that the Self or Aathman or Parabrahman is incapable of [entering into the phase of] manifestation?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then what is the explanation for all the diversity I see around me?

B.: They are fictitious mental creations.

Q.: In that case- how did the mind arise from or seperate itself from the Self?

B.: It did not. There is actually no such thing as mind. Mind is an illusory superimposition over the Real Self. Seek it; then it vanishes, never to have existed; only the Self is left as the Eternal residue.

Q.: If mind is an illusion, how did the illusion arise?

B.: Unto whom has it arisen?

Q.: Me.

B.: Who is that "I" who says "me"?

Q.: Always B. steers conversations toward his pet theory, 'Who am I?'

B.: It is no theory.

Q.: What is it then?

B.: Do it and see; that is the only way to find out.

S>M>

Chadwick: [to the Shylock] Mr. Prendergast exhausted half his film-roll yesterday on taking pictures of the anniversary celebrations. If he does not frank off the prints to the ashram soon, the sarvadhikari will pounce on my throat and gobble me up alive, because he entrusted me with the responsibility of communicating to the fellow the rule at the ashram that whatever photographs are taken here, one complete set of prints must be handed over. I told him once and reminded him twice, I think. Hope he does not let me down... [meanderingly] I have always been in support of their Saorstät cause, he ought to like me...

E.Z.: The Mees chap from Holland who visited early this year sent in his prints of Bhagawan promptly, I remember...

C.: Yes, he had a funny bellows-type machine of the olden-day variety, remember? I think it was a Tourist-multiple...

B. presently astonished the Hall by saying at this precise moment, "Oh! no; it was a Kodak Anastigmat..." All this while he had been fixedly staring into vacant space, and nobody would have guessed that he had been paying any attention to the usual trifling late-night chatter going on in the Hall! This is yet another instance which demonstrates that nothing and nobody escapes the attention of the master, although he might appear disconnected, aloof or uninterested prima facie...

S>M>

A bharadanattiyavidvan from Karaikkal Sri Ramakrishna-pillai had come to the ashram with his son to take part in the celebrations yesterday and procure the master's blessings. He took leave today tearfully, saying that he fervently felt like remaining at B.'s feet always, but was unable to give up the life of a gruhastha since he had many mouths to feed at home.

B.: Why do you think that you are a gruhastha? It is that thought which is haunting you and giving trouble.

Q.: But I want to be free from fetters of the householder's life...

B.: Do not think that it is you who is acting. Remind yourself that God is the performer of all actions done by your body.

Q.: But my body can commit blunders also. Can God be blamed for my mistakes?

B.: Throw the burden on Him and thereafter whatever happens in your life is His responsibility, not yours. Surrender to Him without reserve. Then there will be no need for you to worry about anything. God never forsakes one who has surrendered to Him absolutely.

Q.: I regret I am unable to stay in the ashram on a permanent basis and so have darshan of Bhagawan everyday.

B.: Bhagawan is your Heart; he is not without. Surrender to Him as the Guru within. Then you will know that you are with Him always. Bhagawan never parts from us. Only we falsely feel that we have parted from Him.

Ananyasharanagati reveals the truth that it is impossible to part from Bhagawan.

The gentleman's son who was a singer then sang Ramanamamu janmarakshakamanthram for the Hall. Thereafter they prostrated and departed.

S>M>

A young Caucasian told B. that he also felt the urge to sing to him. B. smilingly said, 'Why not?'. The enthusiastic boy triumphantly extracted a book from his canvas knapsack. I observed it to be 'Mutter- von Hanns Johst'; presently the boy eagerly opened a page at random and sang loudly-

***Nimm die Welt***

***In beide Augen,  
Spiele mit dem Raum.  
Flicht die Sterne  
Dir zu Zöpfen.  
Wirf die fchiveren  
In den Rachen,  
Daß fie heiligenschein  
Dir find.  
Wandle alles Dind zu Traum  
Und den Traum zu deinem Kind!***

Then his rather plump cheeks grew a bit crimson; possibly he had become diffident or self-conscious. He shut the book, returned it to his bag, and tried to become interested in something he had apparently just spotted outside the window. B. laughed affectionately and beamed at him.

S>M>

Late at night a young man approached the master, stationed himself close to the Sofa and whispered near B.'s ear, his voice throbbing with emotion-  
Q.: I have totally left my destiny in Sri Bhagawan's hands. In case my destiny stands [having been] written in such a way that I must not Realise in this lifetime, I request B. to suitably rectify or modify the same favourable to my Realisation in this very lifetime. I do not wish to be born again. I am aware that Jnanis have the power to radically alter a person's destiny. Swami Vivekananda has said of his Guru, "A mere glance from my master could change a person's destiny completely... I have personally witnessed several such topsy-turvy transformations...". I beg B. to do the needful in my case; I am dying to Realise the Self but harbour the fear that adverse destiny might stand in the way. Please show me Mercy.

B.: பகவான் பார்த்துக்கொள்வார் ; கவலைப்படாமல் போய் தூங்கு போ .

Face beaming and eyes shimmering with joy at this unexpected, unique assurance from the master, the young man reverently prostrated before the Sofa and left the Hall.

BLUTKEIM's Note: The following additional quote from Bhagawan would not be out of place here; it is from the book "Origin of Spiritual Instruction", published by Society of Abidance in Truth, 1834 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, California, 95060 USA:

Q.: According to Sri Bhagawan everything happens according to predestination; therefore, even the obstacles that retard and prevent one from successfully carrying on meditation may have to be considered insuperable as being set up by such irrevocable destiny; this being the case, how can one

ever hope to surmount them? If everything happens strictly and exclusively according to a man's foreordained prarabdha-karma, as per the fruits or results awaiting him from past actions, how then is one to overcome the obstacles to meditation[dhyana] or investigation[vichara]?

B.: That which is called destiny, preventing self-abidance, exists only to the externalised mind and not to the introverted mind. Therefore, he that would enquire within in quest of the Self, remaining even as he IS, does not get frightened by any impediment that may seem to stand in the way of his carrying on practice of vichara or dhyana. The very thought of such obstacles is the greatest obstacle. Prarabdha-karma concerns only the out-deflected mind and not the in-turned mind. One who seeks his real Self will not be afraid of any obstacle.

5th September, 1936

Q.: Please explain what is meant by saktipada.

B.: What do people generally understand by the term? They say that the Guru places his head on the devotee's head and the latter spontaneously awakens into Realisation. But think: is there anything to be obtained from outside? Mind drowning itself in the Heart is the real saktipada.

Q.: It is said that saktipada causes sudden madness.

B.: In a Jnani's presence, the Heart draws the aspirant inwards into Itself. If he is not yet mature- i.e., if he is still holding on to his samskaras, the conflict between the inward pull of the Heart and the tendency of the samskaras to keep the mind alive might cause madness. A madman clings to samskaras, whereas a Jnani does not. That is the only difference between the two. Jnana is madness of a kind.

Q.: It is said that saktipada occurs only when karmasamyā has been reached.

B.: Yes. But what does karmasamyā imply? It indicates that the individual has crossed the stage wherein he would be capable still of manufacturing fresh karma- i.e., he has arrived now at the stage of malaparipakam; so, thereafter, he would suffer the result of past karmas but would never be capable of committing any fresh karma, since he has already completely severed mental identification with the body. Why? Because karma can be created only if the sense of doership is present. Really, malaparipaka, karmasamyā and saktipata all mean the same. A man is running the course of his samskaras; when taught he is the Self, the teaching affects his mind and his imagination runs riot. He feels helpless before the power of the Self, which endeavours to draw him inwards into Itself. His experiences are only according to his imagination of the state "I am the Self", whatever he may conceive it to be. Saktipata alone confers the true and right experience. When the mumukshu is



ripe for receiving saktipada and his mind is about to sink into the Heart, the instruction imparted by the Guru works in a flash and he Realises the Self all right. Otherwise, there is always the struggle.

S>M>

Q.: Is it possible to know the condition of an individual after his death?

B.: It is possible. But why try to know it? All facts are only as true or real as the seeker.

Q.: The birth of a person, his remaining with us and his death are real to us.

B.: What is the reason? Because you have wrongly identified your own self with the body, you think of the other one in terms of the body. Neither you are nor the other is the body.

Q.: But from my own level of understanding I consider myself and my deceased son to be real.

B.: The birth of the thought 'I' is a person's birth and its death is his death.

After the 'I-thought' has arisen the wrong identity with the body arises- i.e., imagining ourselves to be the body. Thinking yourself as being the body, you attribute similar false values to others and identify themselves also with gross-bodies. Just as your body was born, grows up and will perish one day, so also you think that the other was born, grew up and died. Did you think of your son before his birth? The thought came after his birth and persists even after his death. Only inasmuch as you are thinking of him is he your son. Where has he gone? He has gone to the source from which he sprang. He is one with you. So long as you are, he is. If you cease to identify yourself with the body, and see the real Self which serves as the substratum of all apparent selves, this confusion will vanish. You are eternal. Realise It. Then others also will similarly be found to be eternal. Until this truth is realised there will always be grief due to false values arising from wrong knowledge and wrong identity.

Q.: Please let me have correct knowledge by Sri Bhagavan's Grace.

B.: Lose the aham-vritti and be at peace. So long as 'I' is alive, there is grief.

Once 'I' is dead, there is no grief. Consider the state of sleep. In sleep there is no 'I'. Were you not happy in sleep?

Q.: How shall I concentrate on the thought 'I' to the exclusion of all other thoughts?

B.: See whose thoughts they are and they will vanish. Other thoughts have their root in the single thought 'I'. Hold onto it to the exclusion of all other thoughts and thus be and remain completely free from all thought. To think is not your real nature. You are not what you think you are. You merely ARE. Realise It.

Q.: But how?

B.: Kill the jiva once and for all and there is no more pain. Pain and pleasure are only aspects of the mind. They cannot arise in the absence of the individual's jiva-bodha. If mind or jiva is killed, only bliss remains.

Q.: How to kill the mind, which causes so much misery and anguish?

B.: By means of abiding constantly in the beingness of the Self. Keep the mind permanently submerged in the Heart. That is the only way to destroy the mind.

Q.: Although I hear all this, it is all well beyond my grasp. I pray to Sri Bhagavan to help me to understand it all. I had been to a waterfall in Mysore. The cascade was a fascinating sight. The waters streamed out in the shapes of fingers trying to grasp the underlying rocks but were rushed on by the current to the depths below, and crushed. I imagined this to be the state of individuals clinging to their present surroundings. But I cannot help clinging. I cannot bring myself to accept and acknowledge that we are no better than seasonal flowers, fruits and leaves on trees. I love flowers but still this idea does not appeal to me.

B.: Everything will become alright with continuous practice.

Q.: What is the practice?

B.: Abidance in the Self- in other words, BE as you ARE.

3rd September, 1936

Q.: Do all Jnanis play the role of serving as the Guru?

B.: No; only those who are destined for it according to their prarabdha.

Q.: But Sri Bhagawan has previously mentioned that for Jnanis there is no prarabdha.

B.: The Jnani's own experience is that of Himself being the formless Absolute Self. Karma cannot affect the Self; therefore, being the Self, the Jnani cannot be affected by any karma, prarabdha or otherwise. However, others think or imagine the Jnani to be one with the body; they think that they are one with the body and extend the same mistake to the Jnani also. The Jnani himself is not deluded. He knows that the cosmos, including the body, is only an appearance in the Self. Whilst talking of the Jnani's prarabdha, we are referring only to the Jnani's body. Anything that appears in space and time is bound to be governed by prarabdha or perfect predestination; the Jnani's body is no exception to this axiom. We point out a certain particular body amongst so many and say, 'This is a Jnani's body.'. Think: is not the statement oxymoronical? If he is a Jnani, how can he have a body? So, the experience of possessing, occupying or owning a body is not for the Jnani at all. Even whilst the body is yet to be shed, he is already the perfect, formless Purusha[Self].

Q.: Will mentally asseverating, 'I am not the ego but the Self.', or 'I as the ego do not exist at all.', 'I am neither the body nor the mind but Brahman.', etc. help me to Realise the Self?

B.: No. These are only mental concepts. No amount of intellectual activity could ever result in Revelation of the Self. Only vichara leads upto That state.

Q.: Is Sri Bhagawan's teaching the same as that of Sri Adhishankara?

B.: The one and only possible teaching[enunciation] of That state is That state itself.

Q.: If the cosmos is a fictitious superimposition over the Self, does it not mean that the Self is veiled by maya? In that case, there would be duality: there is the Self and then there is also the veil of illusion obnubilating the Self.

B.: Is the Self complaining that it is suffering from obnubilation on account of veiling by maya? Who is that one who raises the question of illusion? Only illusion can raise the question; Reality cannot raise any question; He is simple Being.

Q.: Please explain the line in the essay 'Who am I?', '**நான், நான் என்று கருதிக்கொண்டிருந்தாலுங்கூட அவ்விடத்திற் கொண்டுபோய் விட்டுவிடும்.**'

B.: Catch hold of the root-thought 'I' and try to mentally stick with it always.

Q.: Is this also a method of obtaining Realisation?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Bhagawan says, '**யதார்த்தமா யுள்ளது ஆத்மசொரூப மொன்றே. ஜக ஜீவ ஈச்வரர்கள், சிப்பியில் வெள்ளிபோல் அதிற் கற்பனைகள்.**' It is scary to imagine that even Ishwara does not exist.

B.: He is as true and real as your present state. If the cosmos exists, Ishwara exists also.

Q.: What is the nature of Ishwara?

B.: Perfect Randomness.

Q.: But allocation of karma is not random; rather it is systematic.

B.: Karma automatically begets its own consequences in its wake. There is no such thing as any specific act of allocation. Ishwara is a silent witness to everything. He does not do anything.

Q.: One pursues vichara with adamant perseverance and Realises the Self successfully. What about the rest? When will the whole of humanity come to be Enlightened?

B.: You first succeed and thereafter let us discuss the question of bringing Enlightenment to others if need be then and not now.

Q.: Is the cosmos perceived after Realisation?

B.: The Jnani sees only the Self in whatever he sees. He does not bother whether the world appears or not. In either case He remains unaffected. Why do you go on asking these questions? The simplest way to know about the Jnani's State is to yourself Realise It.

Q.: Realisation is said to be for a chosen few only.

B.: How do you know that you are not amongst those chosen few?

Q.: Even in ordinary matters I am an unlucky man; it is too fantastic to presuppose without evidence that I would be able to muster enough luck to attain Sri Bhagawan's state within this lifetime.

B.: Who said there is no evidence?

Q.: [excitedly] What is the evidence?

B.: [smiling] You have come here, have you not?

S>M>

The strange case of Mr. Winthrop Niles Kellogg was mentioned in the Hall. Mr. Kellogg was an expert in psychoanalysis who wanted to determine what would happen if a human-infant and a monkey-infant were raised together; so, he had proceeded to actually carry out the experiment using his own child! The results produced were supposedly astonishing. The ape had learnt to eat using forks and spoons, to wear clothes and shoes, and when asked to point out its nose, had successfully done so! However, the scientist could not make the ape to develop linguistic-skills; it remained in a state of inability to talk despite his best efforts to teach it to speak. Mr. Kellogg's experiments were recorded for the public to learn about in his famous book 'The Ape and the Child'. A copy of this book was presently handed over to the master. He went through it with great interest; it was the only instance I noticed him meticulously reading a book from cover to cover; it took him the better part of the day to finish reading it.

S>M>

It had been my observation that Sri Bhagawan had not so much as entered the kitchen for sometime, a period lasting for a few days, during the last month, but had totally avoided it; this month he was regularly attending to his self-imposed duties in the kitchen as usual. The master was not the sort to shirk work; therefore my curiosity was piqued as to the reason. I asked his attendants but they did not know anything about the matter. Then I asked Sri cycle-Pillai about the matter when the master was not in the Hall.

C.P.: Yes; your observation is totally correct. Last month, the kitchen ladies offended Sri Bhagawan by not paying any attention to his explicit instructions. That is why he boycotted the kitchen for sometime.

G.: Why? What happened?

C.P.: Last month, I had purchased peerkangkai from the market for the ashram. Bhagawan told the kitchen workers that whilst the outer-kernel be used as usual to prepare milagu-kootu, the skin outside and the flesh inside must not be wasted, but must be fried in groundnut-oil and made into thuvaiyyal. His orders were not obeyed. All the thoel and kudal of the peerkangkais were thrown away. This fact upset the master considerably. He went there, told the kitchen workers, 'Hereafter I shall not be bothering you with my infructuous and useless commands; from henceforth, you may do exactly as you like in this place; for having given trouble to you for so long, I humbly beg you to accept my plea for forgiveness.', and left the place with his eyes glimmering with tears. The workers in the kitchen did not say anything in reply, but kept quiet. Only I witnessed this sad scene as Bhagawan spoke those sorrowful words; I told nobody. Somehow I felt that it was my responsibility to make the situation as it was before, since it was me that had purchased the peerkangkais from the market, thus triggering this infelicitous feud betwixt Bhagawan and the kitchen workers. So, without telling anybody, again I purchased peerkangkais from the market, and took them to the kitchen workers. I told them that it was their responsibility to make amends for their evil behaviour in the past, and that this time they must make use of the thoel and kudal also. They were not pleased at my behaviour, but still did as I asked. The next day as soon as we sat down for food, peerkangkai-kudal thuvaiyyal was served first. A delicious smile lit up the master's face. He twinkled at me with mirth in his benign eyes. Then and there I fell at his feet and begged for forgiveness on behalf of the kitchen workers. I assured him that such negligence would never happen again. I requested him with profound earnestness to resume his usual kitchen duties. Sri Subbaramayyagaru had also noticed the master's absence from the kitchen. He wept openly before the master. He said that if the kitchen had a mouth, she would lament tearfully, 'Alas! I feel as though I have been widowed in my prime.'. Others also persuaded Bhagawan to pardon the kitchen workers for their mistake and take up his usual role in preparing food for the ashram. Finally the master agreed to our requests. Since last week, he has been going to the kitchen as usual. For this purpose, as vaendudhal I broke 27 coconuts before the Ganapati-idol in the mandapam opposite to agni-theertham...

4th September, 1936

Some two years back, a Caucasian by name of Mrs. Piggot had visited Sri Bhagawan. During her stay at the ashram and also for sometime afterwards, she had maintained a diary, in which she had recorded her thoughts about the master and the spiritual experiences which she had obtained consequent to

his Grace operating upon herself. This diary has now been forwarded by her to Mr. TKS, who was requested by her in her letter to show the same to the master. Bhagawan asked Mr. TKS to read out a certain portion of the contents of this diary to the Hall. This is what was read out by him:

I had visited India on several occasions prior to this trip, but this was my maiden venture off the beaten track. Staying in the posh residences of friends or in the luxurious hotels of Bombay and Calcutta, one naturally tends to be provided with all sorts of modern conveniences, and these can give little indication of the conditions to be met with when leaving the cities. The conditions awaiting the Western traveller in rural India can be quite appalling; yet my trip to go see the Maharshi was an adventure for the ultimate cause and therefore nothing else mattered. For some years it had been my wish to meet one of the real holy men of India, but so far it had been a vain aspiration. I had, it is true, spoken with a few saintly men and also some fakirs of the mediumistic type, who were no doubt sincere enough in their way; but they were not what I was seeking. Then I was told of Sri Ramana Maharshi, and even from the little I heard, I knew I would travel anywhere and put up with any inconvenience in order to meet him and experience the sanctity of his presence. The friend who gave me the welcome news of the Maharshi's existence offered to take me to him, and so we arrived at Tiruvannamalai late one afternoon. We put ourselves up at a none-too-clean accommodation: the "dak bungalow" or travellers' rest-house, which is all that is offered to the wayfarer who has strayed away from the cities. No bedding is provided and there is seldom much furniture; however, we left a servant we had hired to manage these petty details and made our way to the bazaar and then up to the ashram in a cart drawn by a pony. The end of our drive found us somewhat battered but full of expectation. On the way to the Maharshi's ashram, it is observed by me that our vehicle passes a simple stone-shrine which stands dedicated to Siva as Dakshinamurti, the most ancient of Yogis who teaches the Ineffable Absolute Truth through Silence of the Soul. He is a deity who perpetually faces south, and consequent to the fact that south is the direction of death, He is also known as Mrutyunjaya, the Conqueror of Death. Death, indubitably, is conquered by awakening to the ultimate truth of ourselves. Just after passing the shrine of Dakshinamurti we reached our destination, announced by an archway bearing the words 'Sri Ramanasramam'. Having entered the grounds we dismounted from

our vehicle under a big mahuwa tree. To the left there was a placid little pond surrounded by trees, and ahead of us a small whitewashed building which turned out to be the ashram's office. The Maharshi's younger brother Sri Nagasundaram greeted us there. He had formally changed his name to Niranjanda Swami after taking sannyasam. He had dedicated himself completely to the management of the ashram. Locally he was known as the sarvadhikari or as chinna swami. I walked up to him and introduced myself to him. He asked me where I was coming from and other particulars about myself. Thereafter, he gave me small packets of holy ash as prasadam, wrapped in bits of old, crumbly newspaper. Then he informed me that I could now have the Maharshi's darshan. I crossed a small courtyard and came to a long hall with all its doors and windows open. I went up a few steps and there, seated before them on a couch, was the Sage of Arunachala. He is a slender, golden-skinned man in his late fifties. Except for a loin cloth, he is completely nude. In front of the couch sandal-sticks were burning and a small brazier of hot-coals, on which a special kind of incense was constantly being thrown. Although born a brahmin, the Maharshi's features actually made him look like a docile country-side peasant. However, the awareness of the Absolute is marked out clearly on the face, making it profoundly serene and beautiful. The splendour of Realization is clearly evident from one look at his face. I now see that the psychological labels which the modern mind tended to affix to spiritual-experience turn out to be irrelevant and unworthy when one is confronted with true achievement. I was so engrossed in my contemplation of the Maharshi that at first I did not hear when one of the attendants told me that I should take my place among the women, who sat on the master's left. The men, who were more numerous, sat facing him down the length of the Hall. The Hall in which the attendees found themselves was simply decorated and furnished. A frieze of blue flowers ran along the walls. A clock hung on the wall facing the devotees. Below it, on a shelf, there were a few tin containers. Presently, I saw the Maharshi take some nuts out of one of the containers for the squirrel that had run to him along the back of the couch. It was exceedingly obvious that little attempt had been made to create a mystical or spiritual background for the Maharshi. The furniture was functional, the surroundings ordinary. Yet the banal setting could not detract from the grandeur of the Sage. He was exceptional first of all in just being himself. In every action he

made, whether he was correcting a manuscript or reading a letter, there was a complete naturalness and absence of pose. This is very rarely seen, for few are those who, being rooted in their true identity, have no need to seek a flattering image of themselves or confirmation of what they are from the impression they make on others. At 11 hours the Maharshi and the devotees rose and left the Hall, for it was time for the main meal of the day. Someone from the ashram invited me to join the others. The meal was served in the communal dining hall where rows of freshly washed plantain leaves had been laid out on the spotlessly clean stone floor. The Maharshi took his place among the devotees. The brahmins sat on one side of him and the non-brahmins on the other, thus respecting religious customs. The Maharshi, though, did not wear the brahmins' sacred-thread, and I remembered that on arriving in Tiruvannamalai he had thrown away the thread worn by the hereditary, sacerdotal race that indicated superiority over every other race. I was served rice, vegetables, pepper-water and milk-curd. The Maharshi ate very frugally. He asked me courteously whether the food was not too pungent for me. These words of solicitude were the first words he spoke to me. In the Hall I then joined the devotees who had come to spend the afternoon with the Maharshi. I did not see some of those who had been present in the morning, but several newcomers were there. I was surprised to hear that devotees might come into the Hall as early as four o'clock in the morning, though seven o'clock was the time most morning visitors gathered. Many spent only a few hours with him, but he was accessible to visitors all day long. As in the morning, the mood was rather informal. To those pupils aspiring to attain the highest grade of knowledge, the Maharshi apparently did not give any discourses. He replied to questions when they were put to him, usually very succinctly, as if to let the one word or the few words he said make their way directly into the understanding of the questioner. On the other hand, when a young man struggled to grasp what the Absolute Self was, the Maharshi with great patience guided him through his reasoning until at last he got some glimmering of what the Maharshi meant. Of course, the answer to the nature of the Impersonal Noumenon is only to be found on the intuitive level, but the breakthrough of intuition can be hampered by faulty reasoning. Apart from these exceptions to silence, there were long quiet moments when the Maharshi said and did nothing, but which were more effective in conveying transcendent Truth than any lecture or



sermon would have been. The afternoon ended with a twenty-minute break for the purpose of taking coffee, and presently the Maharshi got up and went for his evening walk. This was the signal for a general exodus, and we all trooped outside. The Maharshi and the devotees gathered in the Hall again at five o'clock for the evening session. I found that the atmosphere now was quite different; much more solemn and charged with more energy than earlier on in the day. First there was the recitation of the Vedas by a group of young brahmin boys and their preceptor. As the powerful Sanskrit syllables vibrated in the Hall, the Maharshi's appearance underwent a remarkable change. His expression became austere, his gaze turned inwards. His face appeared translucent as if lit by inner illumination, whilst the constant slight trembling of his body which I had noticed earlier, had now completely stopped. Yet even in this state it was evident that he was not oblivious of his surroundings, and that he had an awareness of both the inner and outer reality. After the Vedas, the devotees sang together a hymn to Arunachala. Then they sat in deep silence, capturing the force emanating from the master, a force so strong as to be almost tangible. The Maharshi's ashram is a place where exclusively those people who have dedicated their entire lives to the spiritual quest may take up permanent residence. Often there are no orders or binding rules, and anyone can come and go as he pleases. I discover to my pleasant surprise that most of the people living in the ashram speak English and are eager to greet me in a warm and friendly manner. On the day of my arrival, more than a dozen people tried to strike up a conversation with me. In their accented English, they wanted well-meaningly to know how I had heard of the Master and what brought me here. It was now several hours past the time night had fallen upon the little town. The occupants of the Hall spoke in low tones to one another, and a child prattled to his mother; but soon these sounds ceased and there was quiet. I sat cross-legged on the floor with the others, though a chair had been thoughtfully provided for me. I asked the Maharshi in a respectful hushed tone: "Thoughts cease suddenly, then 'I-I' rises up as suddenly and continues. It is only in the feeling and not in the intellect. Can it be right?" He was gracious enough to respond to me, saying that it was certainly right. Thereafter I tried gazing into his eyes. I repeatedly tried to capture his gaze. For a while nothing happened. I tried to concentrate my mind on the beingness of the formless Self. Suddenly I became conscious that the Maharshi's

eyes were fixed on me. They seemed, literally, like burning coals of fire piercing through one. They glittered in the dim light of the charcoal brazier burning by the side of the Sofa. Never before had I experienced anything so devastating— in fact, it was almost frightening. What I went through in that terrible half-hour, in a way of self-condemnation and scorn for the pettiness of my own life, would be difficult to describe. Not that he criticized, even in silence – of that he was incapable – but in the light of perfection all imperfections are revealed. To place on record how little responsible he was for my feelings, I must mention here that he told me later on that doubting, self-distrust, and self-depreciation are some of the greatest hindrances to the Realization of the Reality.

This is a record of the further conversations I had with him on the day subsequent to the one of my first arrival at the ashram:

Q.: Is a Realised Master necessary for realisation?

B.: Realisation is the result of Guru's Grace more than teachings, lectures, meditation, etc.. They are only secondary aids, whereas the former is the primary and the essential cause.

The then Maharshi ordered a certain treatise to be read out in the Hall, in which it was stated that as in all physical and intellectual training a teacher or instructor is sought, so in matters spiritual the same principle holds good. The master added that it was hard for a man to arrive at the goal without the aid of a Realised Master.

Q.: Yet I have heard it said that you had no Guru.

A rustle of shocked horror ran through the Hall because I had inadvertently addressed him in the second person instead of referring to him as 'Bhagawan'. Yet the Maharshi was not in the least disturbed or offended. On the contrary, he looked at me with a twinkle in his eye. Then he threw back his head and gave a joyous, wholehearted laugh. It endeared him to me as nothing else could. A saint who can turn the laugh against himself is a saint indeed.

Ultimately he did give a response to my impertinent remark:

B.: Yes; but in the majority of cases, Guru is certainly necessary.

Q.: How shall I find the Guru?

B.: Intense meditation will impel you into the field of his presence automatically.

✽

On the third day of my visit, one of the devotees offered to show me around the ashram, a cluster of small whitewashed buildings and huts, all spotlessly clean, and joined together in some cases by a

covered passageway. The ashram was picturesquely situated halfway up the famous holy mountain of Arunachala. It was on this mountain side that the Maharshi took up his abode more than thirty years ago, and ever since then it has been his home. He must be aged about fifty years, but looks older, owing no doubt to the privations and austerities practiced in early life. It was dark when I returned for the evening meditation, and most of the people not living permanently in the ashram had left. The Hall was compellingly still. The eyes of the holy one blazed no more. They were serene and introverted. All my troubles seemed smoothed out and difficulties melted away. Nothing that we of the world called important mattered. Time was forgotten. Life in its many aspects was now one.

✽

Time and again I have observed that the Maharshi emphasizes that Realization was more the result of Guru's grace rather than anything else. I had been in despair of ever again getting the Maharshi alone. It is hard to unburden the soul before a crowd. One morning I resolutely made my way into the Hall a few hours earlier than usual and found him there unattended, emanating his usual wonderful stillness and ineffable peace. I asked quietly if I might talk with him. He nodded, smiling, and sent for someone to translate. On the arrival of a devotee I put my first question.

Q: What are the obstacles which hinder Realisation of the Self?

B.: They are habits of mind (vasanas).

Q: How to overcome these mental habits (vasanas)?

B.: By Realising the Self.

Q: That is a vicious circle.

B.: It is the mind which brings about such difficulties, creating obstacles and then suffering from the perplexity of apparent paradoxes. Find out who makes the enquiries and the Self will be found.

Q: What are the aids for Realisation?

B.: Introversion of mind is the one and only aid.

Q.: How can I achieve the same?

B.: By preventing the mind from straying out after thoughts, desires and imagined objects of sensory perception.

Q.: If the world is a dream, am I making efforts to Realise the Self within a dream?

B.: Yes.

Q.: But there will always be other dreams! Do we have to make efforts to Realise within each and every dream?

B.: If effort is going on to Realise the Self within this dream, it means that the same effort is going on within all other dreams also.

Q.: Discussions, lectures and meditations: are they not useful for attaining Realisation?

B.: All these are only secondary aids, whereas the essential aid is Guru's Grace.

Q: How long will it take for one to get Realisation?

B.: Why do you desire to know?

Q: To give me hope.

M.: Such a desire is also an obstacle. The Self is ever there, there is nothing without it. Be the Self and the desires and doubts will disappear. The Self is the witness in sleep, dream and waking states of existence. These states belong to the ego. The Self transcends the ego. Ego or no ego, the Self remains always. It is ever as It is. Did you not exist in sleep? Did you know then that you were asleep? Was there awareness of the world in sleep? In sleep you remained without a body and without a world. Why do you now hanker after these? In jagrat also remain aloof from body and world. It is only in jagrat that you describe the experience of sleep as being unawareness; therefore the consciousness when asleep is the same as that when awake. If you know what this waking consciousness is, you will know the consciousness that witnesses all the three states; such absolute consciousness is found by means of seeking the source of pure consciousness.

Q: In attempting to trace back pure consciousness to its source, I am overwhelmed by sleep and soon fall into slumber.

B.: No harm!

Q: I still maintain that to me sleep is nothing but a mere blank.

B.: For whom is the blank? Find out. You cannot deny your existence at any time. The Self is ever there and continues in all states.

Q: Should I remain as if in sleep and be watchful at the same time?

B.: Yes. Alert watchfulness is the true waking state. Therefore the state of jagrat-sushupti will not be one of sleep, but sleepless sleep. If you go the way of your thoughts you will be carried away by them and you will find yourself in an endless maze.

Q: So, then, I must go back tracing the source of thoughts.

B.: Quite so; in that way the thoughts will disappear and the Self alone will remain.

Q.: Does the practice 'Who am I?' lead to any spot inside the body?

B.: There is no inside or outside for the Self. These concepts are merely mental projections of the ego. The Self is pure and absolute. However, till Realisation is gained, it may be said that consciousness has a locus in the body, which is located on the right-hand side of the chest.

Q.: Is not intellect a help for realization?

B.: Yes, up to a certain stage. Even so, realise that the Self transcends the intellect; the latter must itself vanish in order so that the Self might be Realised.

Q: Does my Realisation help others?

B.: Yes, certainly. It is the best help possible. However the actual truth is that there are no others to be helped, for a Emancipated-soul sees only the Self in everything, just like a goldsmith estimating the gold in various jewels sees gold and nothing but gold. When you identify yourself with the body, forms and shapes are to be found. But when you transcend your body the others in the world disappear along with your body-consciousness.

Q: Is it so with plants, trees, etc.?

B.: Do they exist at all apart from the Self? Find out. You think that you see them. The thought is projected out from the mind. Find out wherefrom the mind rises. Thoughts will cease to rise and the Self alone will remain.

Q: I understand theoretically. But thoughts refuse to subside.

B.: Thought is nothing but mental effervescence. Mind is only a bubble floating on the Self. Break the bubble and you are the ocean.

Q.: Is it the mind that creates the world we see?

B.: Yes. It is like a cinema-show. There is the light on the screen and the shadows flitting across impress the audience as the enactment of some screen-play. If in the same screen-play an audience also is shown, what is the position? The seer and the seen will then only be the screen. Apply this analogy to yourself. You are the screen, the Self has created the ego, and the ego has its accretions of thoughts which are displayed as the world, the trees, plants, etc. about which you are asking. The truth is that all these are nothing but the Self. If you see the Self, the same will be found to be all, everywhere and always. Nothing but the Self exists.

Q: Yes, but I still understand only theoretically. Yet the answers are simple, beautiful and convincing.

B.: Even the thought, "I do not Realise." is a hindrance. The Self alone IS and He alone could ever BE.

Q.: What are vasanas?

B.: Habits of thought, accumulated tendencies of mind, and intellectual proclivities.

Q.: How does one get rid of these hindrances?

B.: Seek the Self through meditation in this manner: trace every thought back to its point of origin, which is only the mind. Never allow thought to run on. If you do so, it will be unending. Take it back to its starting place: the mind's essence of pure consciousness- again and again, and thought and thinker will both die of inaction eventually. The mind only exists by reason of thought. Stop thought and there is no mind. As each doubt or depressing thought arises, ask yourself, "Who is it that doubts? What is it that is depressed?". Go back constantly to the question, 'Who or what is this thing called 'I'? Where is the source of the mind?'. Tear everything out and go on discarding until there is nothing but the Source of all left. And then live always in That and only in it. There is no past or future, save in the mind. Only present exists. Yes, even the present is mere imagination. It IS. That is all. Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh.

Q.: How can I help another with his or her problems and troubles?

B.: What is this talk of another? There is only the One. Try and realize there is no 'I' no 'he' no 'you', only the One Self which is all. If you believe in the problem of another, you are believing in something outside the Self. You will help him better by realizing the oneness of everything than by any outward activity. The ego masks the Reality. All mental activities during the states of jagrat and swapna are the handiwork of the ego only. The emotions and intellect are merely mind-manufactured fictions. In deep sleep the body is lost, but yet the Self is there. It is the distracting, active mind that veils the real Self.

Q.: What meditation will help me?

B.: No meditation on any kind of object is helpful. You must learn to realize the subject and object as one. In meditating on an object, whether concrete or abstract, you are destroying the sense of oneness and creating duality. Meditate on what you are in Reality. Try to realize that the body is not you, the emotions are not you, and the intellect is not you. When all these stand discarded you will find That.

Q.: What is 'That'?

B.: You will discover it yourself. It is not for me to say what any individual experience ought to be. 'That' will reveal Itself to the mature aspirant automatically. When it does reveal Itself, hold on to It without ceasing.

Q.: I still maintain that in trying to still the mind, I am likely to fall asleep.

B.: It does not matter. Put yourself into the condition which is in deep sleep, but with awareness. Then watch yourself to ensure that no thought arises to disturb your peace. Be asleep consciously, instead of unconsciously. There will be then only one consciousness.

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From that time onwards, started a routine that was to be the same for many weeks. The rickety cart would turn up at six in the morning. It took me up to the ashram and came back again at seven-thirty in the evening for the return journey. I soon acquired a technique of balance that promised safety if not comfort and the drive lost most of its original precariousness. However it was never peaceful owing to the small insect life inhabiting the straw on which I had to crouch. Up at the ashram I was given a small hut, seven feet by seven, for my use during the day. In it was a wooden plank, a chair and a table on which were a basin, towel and soap. Not luxurious, but the thought and care with which it had been provided touched me more than I can say. However, being a Caucasian, my bones were not accustomed to wood unrelieved by a mattress, and the midday rest taken after the noon meal was hardly one so far as I was concerned. There were two chief meals at the ashram, one at eleven-thirty in the morning and the other around eight in the evening. I ate with the others at the morning one. The food was more or less the same at both—rice, with an assortment of vegetables and milk curd. Everybody sat on the floor in front of an individual strip of banana leaf. The question of food, especially the strict vegetarian meals that were served in the ashram and the diet prescribed conducive for the sadhaka by the Maharshi himself was something a Caucasian would necessarily question. So I sought decisive clarification from the Master on this practice.

Q.: What diet is prescribed for a sadhaka?

M.: Satvic food in limited quantities.

D.: What is satvic food?

M.: Wheat, rice, vegetables, fruits, nuts, etc.

D.: Some brahmins take fish in Northern India. May it be done?

No answer was made by the Maharshi.

D.: We Caucasians are accustomed to a particular diet; change of diet affects health and weakens the mind. Is it not necessary to keep up physical health?

M.: Quite necessary. The weaker the body the stronger the mind grows.

D.: In the absence of our usual diet our health suffers and the mind loses strength.

M.: What do you mean by strength of mind?

D.: The power to eliminate worldly attachment.

M.: The quality of food influences the mind. The mind feeds on the food consumed.

D.: Really! How can the Caucasian adjust himself to satvic food only?

M.: (Pointing another Caucasian who was seated in the vicinity) You have been taking our food. Do you feel uncomfortable on that account?

The gentleman responded by saying that he was comfortable with the food served in the Ashram, owing to the fact that he was accustomed to it.

D.: What about those not so accustomed?

M.: Habit is only adjustment to the environment. It is the mind that matters. The fact is that the mind has been trained to think certain foods as being tasty and good. The food material is to be had both in vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet equally well. But the mind desires flesh-food as it is accustomed to the same and considers it tasty.

D.: Are there restrictions for the Emancipated-soul in a similar manner?

M.: No. He is steady and not influenced by the food he takes.

D.: Is it not killing life to prepare meat-foods unethical?

M.: For the mumukshu, yes. Ahimsa stands foremost in the code of discipline for yogis.

D.: But even plants have life.

M.: So too the slabs you sit on!

D.: May we gradually get ourselves accustomed to vegetarian food?

M.: Yes. That is the way. Food affects the mind. Certain kinds make it more sattvic. For the practice of any kind of yoga, vegetarianism is absolutely necessary.

D.: Why do you take milk, but not eggs?



M.: The domesticated cows yield more milk than necessary for their calves and they find it a pleasure to be relieved of the milk.

D.: But likewise the hen cannot contain her eggs!

M.: But there are potential lives in them.

D.: Could one experience spiritual illumination whilst normally eating flesh foods?

M.: Provided you slowly wean yourself away from them and gradually accustom the body to purer types of food. But in any case, once you have attained Illumination, it will make little difference what you eat. It is the early stages that are important. On a great fire it is immaterial what fuel is heaped.

D.: What is the significance of the mahavakya 'Tatthvamsi.'?

M.: Leave aside thvam and tat. Realise the import of asi.

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Another problem discussed was that of the different kinds of Yoga, and the benefit of various methods. The Maharshi said that in the end there was only one approach to the goal, and that was through the Realisation of That which the Self is. Why waste time on other roads which at best will only lead to the final path? Better be on that path itself all the time, and waste no precious time on our sojourn on the earth. Meditate on the Self, and on that alone. There is no other goal. The Maharshi's philosophy and teaching is the purest form of Advaita, known as Ajata-Advaita.

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As the days passed, I saw more and more clearly that this was no theoretical philosophy. He himself lived it continuously and joyously. He was one of the few I have met who were not only perpetually happy but also completely untroubled by the world. Not that the sorrows of the world left him untouched on the contrary- but he knew where they belonged and was not identified with them. To any sufferer his compassion was unlimited. Daily, everyone gathered in the Hall. Most people were quiet and taken up with their own thoughts. But sometimes there were visitors, travelling monks or devotees who came for the Maharshi's blessing, and they would sing sacred songs and tell allegorical tales. One day a man rushed in and flung himself face down before the Maharshi in a paroxysm of weeping. Great sobs tore his body. The Maharshi said nothing, and no one else dared. I watched the Maharshi. His head was turned aside, and he seemed indifferent. After some little time, the violence of the man's grief subsided and gradually he became quiet. Still no

one spoke. Then at last, reverently the man rose and made a deep salutation. The Maharshi turned his head and smiled upon him. I felt suddenly as if all the flowers of the world had poured their fragrance into our midst. Another time a poor creature that had been bitten by a snake was brought in and laid before the master. We all watched, fear gripping our hearts. Not so he, who sat looking into the far distance, while the victim writhed in pain. Calm and compassion was in that look and infinite peace. After what seemed like hours, the twitching ceased and the man appeared to sleep. Then the one who had brought in the sufferer gently touched him. The man rose, prostrated himself before the Maharshi and went out cured. But this was unusual. The Maharshi did not heal, in the accepted term of the word. Talking about it one day, I asked him if one could use spiritual power for healing. He remarked, 'Yes, if you think it worthwhile.'; however, he added that it required a great deal of spiritual force, which might be used more profitably in other directions.



Among those who had turned up at the ashram for a short stay was an American author, Mr. Evans-Wentz, whose books and translations of Tibetan manuscripts are well known. We had many enlightening talks, and I was glad of his presence for another reason. Asking questions in the open-hall was rather an ordeal, but backed by him I lost some of my diffidence. We pooled our problems and came to the Maharshi with them, trivial or profound. An interpreter was always on hand, for although the Maharshi understood English he was never willing to speak the same. He knew immediately, however, whether the exact shade of meaning had been accurately translated, and if not he persevered until one had understood him completely.



I was told that the Maharshi had his finger on the pulse of the whole ashram, although he appeared prima facie totally unconcerned with all mundane affairs. For instance, when in the Hall, he was supposed to know what was going on even in the kitchen – and incidentally I was surprised to find that he himself assisted in the cutting up of vegetables for the daily meal. I was also told that he knows what is passing in the minds of people. Of this latter ability, I had a small personal experience. It was in the afternoon and I was in the far corner of the Hall reading the translation of a collection of aphorisms written in – so it appeared to me – a flowery and artificial vein. I was bored and slightly irritated. Suddenly one of the devotees stood

before me with another book in his hand – all the ashram books were bound in brown paper and looked exactly alike – and said, ‘The Maharshi asks me to give you this. He thinks it will be more sympathetic to your type of mind.’ It was! How could the Maharshi know what I was reading? I was sitting far away, with many people in between us, blocking his line of vision. But I had previously noticed that many times he would answer a question in my mind whilst it was only in the process of being formulated. This happened too often to be a coincidence.

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Q.: Sometimes I feel thought stopping and the feeling of beingness underneath is exposed and revealed. At the same time a pulsating sensation is felt on the right-hand side of the chest. Is it right?

B.: Yes. Thoughts must cease and reason disappear for ‘I-I’ to rise up and be felt. Feeling is the prime factor and not reason.

D.: Why should it be felt in the chest but not in the head?

M.: Because body-consciousness is located there.

D.: When I see outside the sensation disappears. What is to be done?

M.: It must be held on to incessantly.

D.: If one is active in the world whilst holding on to such sensation, will his actions be always right?

M.: They ought to be. However, such a person is not concerned with the right or wrong of his actions. Such a person’s actions are God’s and therefore they must be right.

D.: Why then are the restrictions of food given for such also?

M.: Your present experience is due to the influence of the physical atmosphere you presently find yourself in. Can you have it outside this atmosphere? Now in you the experience is spasmodic. Until it becomes permanent, practice is necessary. Restrictions of food are aids for such experience to be repeated. After one gets established in Truth the restrictions drop away naturally. Moreover, food influences the mind and for this reason the same must be kept pure.

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Every experience has to end and the last day of my visit to the ashram arrived, and with it a great sadness filled my heart. I must go back to worries, problems and irritations. Here all was peace. Here it was comparatively easy to live in the mood of the spirit. Is this why so many holy people retire to solitude, I wondered. Is it only in conditions such as these that the hidden verities emerge from under

the covering of distractions? Still, all of us cannot follow such a life. Is the answer to live in the world, if we must, but not be of the world? There was nothing new in the idea, yet in this place I seemed to understand it for the first time. That afternoon I had my farewell talk with the Maharshi. He was so gentle and human. We discussed the difficulties of everyday life and mundane problems. I asked again about the relation of the body to the 'I'. He gave this simile: "You came up from the bungalow this morning in a cart. Yet you do not say, "The cart came up." You say "I came up." You did not make the mistake of identifying yourself with the cart. In the same way, look upon your body as you do the cart. Treat it well, and it will be a good servant and instrument. But do not be deceived into thinking that it is 'I'." He again stressed the necessity to see only the Self in everything. "Act automatically, so to speak, and let 'It' do the work. And 'It' always will. Do not look for results. Do what is right at any given moment and leave it behind you then and there." At the end of our talk, he quoted that wonderful saying from the Upanishad: 'When a man understands that he is the Self and therefore that he has himself become all things, what sorrow, what trouble can there be, to him who has once beheld this unity?' As I went to say goodbye in the evening the ashram people clustered round in sympathy for my departure. I felt I had made and was leaving true friends. They were so simple and yet so genuine. There was a service taking place in the adjoining temple and an old Sanskrit hymn was being chanted. Just as I stepped into the cart the temple bell rang. This brought a smile of happiness on everyone's face. Apparently, to hear a temple gong in the act of departure is a wonderful omen and brings peace. As I left Tiruvannamalai in the dawn of the next morning, I caught a last glimpse of Arunachala, the Holy Mountain, on which lives one as one of the saints of earth. It was red and glowing in the rising sun. I wept with joy to behold the sight.



It is our right to be Permanently Happy always; if we are sad it means that we are forgoing this precious right of ours, throwing it away uselessly. Jehovah has fabricated us in such a fashion that our intrinsic, inherent, fundamental and basic character, nature and pattern of psyche rightfully crave for permanent happiness all the time. If we do not satisfy this just and righteous craving, we are betraying both ourselves and Jehovah who has fashioned us in such a wonderful mould. My most Holy God will stay with me throughout:

Of this I am supremely confident. It happens to be our paramount ambition in this life of ours to simply obey the commandment of Jehovah, for He is our Hallowed Creator, Our Most Exalted Sustainer and Maintainer of The Cosmos. The Blavatskian-theosophist seeks nothing other or better than to unite permanently with Paramaeshwara. Our Path rooted in the realm of Spirituality is his election: Bramhasakhshathkara is our Goal Supreme in Life. Bramhasakhshathkara is our true and ultimate ambition. This precious and sacred goal: how is it attained? By activating one by one all the chakras; totally there are 7. I have not yet begun on the activity of activating the chakras. Traditionally, the chakras are correctly depicted to form part of the spinal cord. Each chakra has a specific name. Praanic healing methods, techniques and principles focus on the health benefit to be obtained by making optimum use of the chakras. Yoga, Dhyaana and Meditation- all three being distinct from one another- help to activate the chakras. Each chakra possesses distinct procedures or mechanisms by which it must be brought into operation or functionality. For example, to activate the first chakra one must, among several other requirements, understand that pleasures and passions of the flesh are merely illusionary, that spirituality is the way to a life of comprehensive inner fulfillment, that this world of materiality with all its attractive myriad and multi-faceted trappings is nothing more significant or further meaningful than a cleverly and skillfully woven web of malevolent complete deception intended to hopelessly and helplessly trap the mind in its net of sensory pleasures, be clear about the doctrine of solipsism, and thoroughly comprehend the fact the cosmos is a projection of one's own mind. One of the essential criteria of requirement for successfully activating a chakra, this being inapplicable to the first one, is that the previous chakra should have been activated. The concept of chakras originated in India of the Vedic Time. Chakras cannot be actually traced in the Human Anatomy. Their presence can be felt by the person who has activated them. If I have activated 5 chakras, I can feel those 5, but not beyond them, and like so. The activation of chakras is the way by means of the traversal of which the Blavatskian-theosophist reaches The Goal Supreme. Without Controlling and attaining mastery over The Carnal Urge or Craving, the first chakra is not reached. How then is Carnality conquered? In my case I shall not be able to carry out such a conquest unless my mind has taken leave of its destructive tendencies. The only way to

force my mind away from the destructive tendencies it has so unfortunately acquired is to lead a life that I like: a life that is led by choice and not by force, a life that I lead because I want to and not because I have to. It would be a conscious and deliberate life.... filled with royal splendor, beauty, art, grandeur, and intellectual sophistication that possesses never the inclination or willingness to lean toward depravity, decadence or perversity. Opting to live this kind of life is, therefore the first step toward Bramhasakhshatkara. It's a life where you possess the ultimate freedom to live without being jostled around by other people, and what is more, where you make ultimate use of that ultimate freedom. A certain book I read called it by the name "inspired living". I am presently unable to recall to remembrance the name of such book. The difference between ordinary living and inspired living is that in inspired living, the level of creative freedom and energy we experience is something unique and magical. The world seems to melt in your hands. The cosmos is totally under your control, simply because it is absolutely nothing other than a projection of your own mind. Your universe obeys you, because you are the perceiver- its master. Many ancient sayings include a reference to this beautiful law. For example, *Essi Est Percipi Aut Percipere*. Or, the quote which in English translates into "they can because they seem to be able to". The man who leads such a life is often a renaissance man, or, to use a more modern term, a polymath. In my case leading an inspired life is possible only by living as a polymath. A Blavatskian-theosophist, therefore, is to reach the Goal Supreme through only the means of adopting and applying for himself the Renaissance-Man Way of Life. We must acquire as much knowledge as possible, on as many subjects as possible. Such an activity would give scope for the brain to work in tandem and harmony with its inherent, intrinsic, fundamental, basic and natural tendencies: the brain naturally longs and yearns to learn subjects from streams as diverse as possible: music, dance, creative-writing... the list is without end. If it is forced to work with a single subject throughout a long duration of time, naturally does it become dull, unresponsive, un-co-operative, ineffective and eventually dysfunctional. Man cannot progress spiritually until and unless the desire to avenge past wrongs is erased from his mind and brain. Desire for revenge is unnatural; it is alien to our ideology, that of the Blavatskian-theosophists; it cannot form part of Theosophical-ideology. However, violence is, although the fact does not give me

more cause for joy than gloom, without doubt part of human culture: we deploy it, but only under conditions of strict and absolute necessity. Sometimes traumatic memories threaten to overwhelm and devour me. When I was in school, I was constantly bullied. I eventually developed a maniacal fear of going to school; this fear, concerning school, has somehow become inbuilt into the very fabric of my being, no doubt due to the faults of the administrative-mechanism, the staff, and the narrow-minded attitudes and points of view of the teachers working there. However I soon propose to rid myself of this fear. It is proving to be too strainful, stressful and traumatic. The fear is raw.... it has an all new edge or tinge of menace to it, because it is... almost.... psychedelic. No, no, I do not suffer from dementia praecox or any other psychiatric ailment. It is only that the unpleasant memories run a little deeper than desirable. We all remember the bad incidents better than the good ones, alas. And when it comes to one who, such as me, leads a cursed existence, the bad ones already far outweigh the good or positive ones. There has been only very little happiness in this worthless and miserable life of mine. The blame for this fact cannot be particularly placed upon my parents or other family members. I am the only one responsible for what I have ultimately become today- blaming other people is simply sheer self-denial and self-delusion, and it is a tactic that is of no valid, productive, or constructive use to me. I would be in my mountain-home rather than anywhere else, given a choice. The boundless peace of mind that is incessantly experienced through and consequent to living in a residence that is situated in mountainous regions is explored wonderfully and beautifully in books such as Heidi [Spyri]. It has been my observation that so many essential aspects or facets of life are propagated and practiced in precisely the wrong way in India. I have observed this manner of life in almost all denizens of this once-upon-a-time-blissful nation, everywhere along the length and breadth of its vast geography, and still continue to mutely, but not blindly, spectate it every day. People who attempt to do good to this nation are sent packing sooner or later. This generic truth invariably applies to India's educational system. The emphasis is on rote-learning. It is rigorously ensured that the young child cultivates not an interest but an aversion toward the subjects which are included within the scope of his syllabus. To him, academics is not fascination: it must needs be boredom. This wicked educational system in India will not change so easily. Not too many worthwhile

things are accomplished in the absence of struggle, conflict and, most important of all, stupendous and humongous effort. And righteous struggle is rewarded with Worthy Fruition by Jehovah without exception. Where there is a will, there is a way. Blessed be the Sacred Name of Shirdi Wale Sai Baba, who stands out prominently in the list of Spiritual Guides who posthumously influence the lives of us Blavatskian-theosophists. I am aware that a man who seeks prosperity in life cannot possibly meaningfully hope for a life of leisure at the same time, unless his ancestors have left him huge resources in the form of fungible wealth to dispose of as he pleased. I am increasingly beginning to feel wearied and beleaguered, for it appears that life slips past me while I am, in fact, not leading it at all.... This kind of thought has been dominating my psyche for quite a while, that I am perpetually wasting my time no matter what I do for the simple reason that it is all going to be washed away, eventually [but in a single stroke instead of gradually], by Death. Who can help dying, unless it happens to be a Blavatskian-theosophist? We are the Blavatskian-theosophicque People, who specialize in attaining to mastery over life and death, whose only companion is Timeless Eternity. Yet I am disturbed by the idea of death.... because I am not yet fully a Blavatskian-theosophist. There is no such thing as a "Partial-Blavatskian-theosophist". I mean to say that I am not yet fully grown, developed or matured as a Blavatskian-theosophist: I am a Blavatskian-theosophist in the making. Therefore, it is but natural that I do feel insecure about the fact of having to die one day. How do the Blavatskian-theosophists conquer death? The Blavatskian-theosophists are Bramhasakhshathkaris. They wash away all their Karma through the merit of virtuous deeds, and in doing so, cut away the bonds tying them to the earth once and for all. The Blavatskian-theosophicque Sages and Saints of yore were Great Spiritual Masters. They were not Emperors: They were something beyond: They were Empires. They did not rule over kingdoms: They were kingdoms themselves. They did not wield serfdom over large tracts of earth: They possessed perfect and totalitarian mastery over their own minds, selves and intellects. They practiced severe penances and austerities, activating Yogic-Kundalini-Shakthi, and managed to attain to the state of Union with Eternal Omniscience, The Supreme Architect of The Cosmos. They have thus severed this wretched incessant cycle of births and deaths which Krishna so lucidly



discusses with Arjuna upon the Kurukshaethraa Battlefield. This feat has been accomplished by many blessed souls. A most prominent example is The Supreme Guru of the Blavatskian-theosophists: Shirdi Wale Sai Baba. I do hope Jehovah, who is Paramaeshwara, will bless my efforts in endeavouring to attain the state of Bramhasakhshathkari. One idea manifests itself to my brain with perfect clarity: If I waste anymore time I shall not succeed in this ambitious design of mine. Why do I waste time? Does Satan take control of my brain with my being aware of the fact? Surely not, for I am able to still control my actions and patterns of thinking, although it takes masterful exercise of every ounce of will-power I possess. Why then do I waste time? I suppose it is the feeling that... the time had not yet come- for me- to begin a life of full-fledged glory and splendour as envisaged by me in my days of early youth. I wanted to be a polymath and autodidact, and my ambition was having no Guru but learning everything all by myself. What did I want to learn? I wanted to learn the art of Realising Brahman. Whether having harboured such a preposterous impression all these days is justified or not, I endeavour here not to judge: but with certainty can I say that any more of such a scheme or mannerism of thinking will certainly permanently debar me from ever being eligible again to aspire to attain to The Goal Supreme. It may not have been a positive activity to think in this manner for the past so many years: with effect from now, I most certainly intend to discard such venomous pattern of thinking that encourages inaction, slovenliness, and a sybaritic lifestyle that is but steady descent into an early, gruesome death, and turn over a new leaf by altering the nature of my thoughts and the behaviour of my mind. The mind must obey the Will, and not the other way round: we have but one mind we can call our own, and if this too, spirals out of our control, the only practicable inference from such phenomenon can be that we have relinquished our grasp over life. Thoughts that emanate from my mind must help me and be of use to me: they must not connive to destroy me. If this fundamental principle is violated, it means matters have become seriously worse, as has been the case for the past few years. From now, therefore, we must avow to think, and therefore do think, as follows: 1. My Life should be under My Control, for it is entirely natural that my life be under my control. 2. The quality of thoughts influences the quality of life; the better the first, so the second. 3. I live Life. I live life in grandiloquent fashion; I live as a king, not as a miserable worm. In

front of The Lord God, I am a meek beggar, but I bow before none else except as pretence if necessary. 4. I Live Life fully and upto the utmost. I never waste time, for it is the precious constituent of which Life is made. 5. All my actions are deliberate, calculated, meaningful and pre-meditated; I do nothing rash or on the spur of the moment. Every instance of action, including inaction, should be as a result of a careful evaluation carried out by the intellect. No decision should be arrived at which is such that at the very time of its conception it is apparent and obvious that in the future we shall, or may, regret having made it in the past corresponding to that time, which is today's now. It is not that such a life can be commenced only in the availability of large-scale infrastructure; a man leading such a life automatically creates such infrastructure for himself in the due course of eventuality, and as quickly as time will allow him in his circumstances. A woman such as myself who is determined to Realise Brahman will neither permit herself to be bogged down by cumbersome routines nor will she lead a life which is bereft of planning or organization. She is painstaking, scrupulous, meticulous and conscientious and perfection-seeking in all her activities. Hers is a vibrant and dynamic life. The Mumukshu is the name for a man who possesses all of the following characteristics, and he may or may not be a Blavatskian-theosophist; all Blavatskian-theosophists are not Mumukshus, but all that constitute our Adayar Lodge are, for such is the path toward Brahman we have carved out for ourselves:

1. He is a Polymath and a Renaissance Man. He possesses wide and profound knowledge in various fields and is ever intent upon increasing his inventory thereof. He applies his knowledge to the betterment of the living conditions of himself and other living beings who share his environment.
2. He is deeply interested in the study of the subjects of Orientalism and Romanticism. The Ancient Civilisations of the world, Uruk, Mesopotamia, Babylon, Egypt, Harappa, and Mohanchodharo, fascinate him. He studies in detail the 'Panspermia Theory' and the 'Ancient Astronaut Hypothesis'. He studies Theoretical Physics and branches of mathematics related to the study of non-Euclidean Spaces.
3. He is a Solipsist, and believes in the theory, *Esse Est Percipi Aut Percepere*, put forth by Ontologist and Metaphycist Mons. George Berkeley. He believes in MIND OVER MATTER, the theory that the field of study known as Noetical Metaphysics draws upon.
4. He believes in and practices what he knows to be The Principle of The Third Path, which states, among

other things, that the only limits to positive growth, development, intellectual fulfillment, and expansion of the peripheries of one's potential can be self-imposed ones. From now onward, therefore let my thoughts be pure, healthy, salubrious and wise. It is all very well to say that 16 hours of intellectual activity per day on a consistent basis alone qualifies to serve as the Hallmark of Intellectuality; I am stuck at a place where performance of clerical labour is a mandation. I cannot escape except by making attempts to perish, and I am now a changed woman, one that longs to live life upto the last drop; I view the prospect of my own self-inflicted death with confident scorn, for I am at peace in the knowledge that it shall never happen again that I shall want to commit suicide, the intent to carry out which act I see now on my part as a foolish and meaningless one. I can only be sure that whenever and wherever I find the time for performance of intellectual activity and activity that broadens and expands the horizons of my intelligence and mental competencies, I shall use it to the maximum, and that I shall deploy time with judiciousness in order so that I might obtain for such use of mine more occasions wherein such time is available to me. We are already caught in a web of Maya or illusion; this entrapment is to be escaped, not deepened or intensified. Bhauhulasiddhi Meditation offers us a way to carry out this escape precisely. This meditation technique offers one a way to live within the mind, within one's own mind, while completely ignoring the existence of sensory organs and all input from them, for a brief period, in order to quieten the mind and harness its powers of unified, focused, "ultra-high-definition" concentration. Following this practice of meditation does not involve the use of any external aid or mode of assistance. No sophisticated-looking-equipment or scary-looking-gear involved: nothing at all. All you need is a calm mind and a quiet place, preferably outdoors, provided a place is selected where there is minimal noise, to practice it. Jehovah is the Supremely Merciful being that quenches the thirst of those whose minds crave for Spiritual Exultation; He will be the first cause and He has been the last consequence. Blessed be the Sacred Name of the Divinely-Appointed Messenger of Jehovah the Compassionate, who is the instant and wholesome aid of his children that suffer in obedience of His Mighty Commandment, Shirdi Wale Sai Baba, the Saint of Raahaathaa who is ever eager to protect his devotees, who are but his Children, from Harm. All wrong decisions bring their baggage of retributive punishment. I chose not to become a doctor, and I am now

reaping the foul consequences. I shied away from the medical education because I knew, or thought that I knew, that I would never have the patience to sit through it. So, today I am not living the life of my dreams.... I am living the life of my nightmares. Shunned, despised, loathed and rejected by my own self for what I have become, I am today a symbol of perpetual agony, sorrow and lamentation. Only death can bring me peace, but after death there can be no me..... Alas that it has come to this!! How much am I to blame for this miserable condition of mine? Am I entirely at fault? Am I exclusively and squarely to take the blame? Is there none to blame besides me? Am I the only one responsible for this irreversible and irreparable catastrophe, and am I to shoulder the blame for the whole of it? I know the answer to these questions, and that is, it is all my fault. I should have seen all this coming. Now I have become a warning to others, for I am doomed to eternity, like the man who shot the albatross in that wonderful poem written by Mons. Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It is no use blaming God, for disobedience is not a virtue in his eye. Someone as doggedly determined as me not to be saved-how can the Almighty Creator even save wretched and condemned he? This hatred and contempt for one's own self does not afford one with scope for much mental peace..... and that is why I am struggling and suffering, trying wildly and impossibly to undo the past, wishing a better myself for myself..... In yesterday's entry we behold me lamenting my fate, regretting the fact that I never succeeded in becoming a medical professional. Now, however, a strange peace fills me. I found this peace stealing over my heart when I first encountered Ramana Maharishi's Teachings; today it affords me great comfort and solace. Ramana has confirmed what I have been suspecting all along: that the cosmos is unreal, for it is merely a projection of the mind, and whatever is perceived through means of Sentience- it cannot be true, for sensory inputs, the associated memories, feelings and emotions, are merely fictitious constructs developed by the mind. I no longer bother about anything, for I have opted for complete surrender at the feet of Arunachula. Actions performed by me are in accordance with my Deha-Prarabdha; they do not bind me, nor am I truly responsible for them, anymore than it was my duty truly to perform them. It is not that this theory is a policy drafted by me or a decision taken by me: this is the one and only truth. I am the corner-stone of the universe, for this is my universe. It cannot be any other way. The Sentient Body is a trap; it hides The

Self. The Self is Brahman-Sakshath- it is SuthChithAnundhah. It is not a distant realm yet to be attained: you are already The Self, and people's ignorant nature prohibits them from realizing the fact. That which knows and that which is to be known are not different; both are different aspects of the same thing. The Self alone is, for it alone can be. Today I am in understanding of the fact that One's Goal Supreme in life is Self-Realisation: apart from this no ambition can be relevant. It has taken me a little over 5 years to arrive at this preliminary, rudimentary, but all-encompassing understanding. Intellectual Fulfilment, I believed a long time ago, would pave the way to happiness that is truly intransient and unephemeral. At that point in time, what did I believe was the way toward lasting happiness that remains unmutated and undiminished through time? I said, one's goal in life is to be absorbed in Permanent Happiness every conscious or wakeful moment of one's life. This emphasis on Happiness reveals that I was obsessed with avoiding sorrow and pain- I had no real reason to embrace happiness; happiness was pursued on account of giving-in to an insalubrious infatuation for a state of mind that would be characterised by bereftitude of unpleasantness; a simple escapist-mentality drove my lust for the so-called happiness in those days- happiness was not sought after because it was felt to be valuable or worthwhile in itself, but because it afforded a means of escape from the wretched state of dejection that would, in the absence of the so-called happiness as envisaged at the time, devour the individual and dissolve the framework that his existence derived its identity from. This happiness is not the innocent joy of a new born gurgling baby that pursuit of The Self brings. It is the grim satisfaction born out of any stupendous intellectual achievement, born as a result of having successfully flexed one's intellectual muscles in the face of a white-faced, scared-stiff competitor. It is not necessarily analogous to the kind of happiness which was the favourite genre, being self-invented, of Mons. Marquis De Sade, who wrote the material, centuries ago, known as The One Hundred Days of Sodom. It does not necessarily feel pleasure out of [subjection, of another or otherwise, to, and the associated process] pain, but it does not care for anyone's welfare in particular, even when that welfare is being thwarted, negated, ruined, or annihilated by the results of one's own actions, deliberate or otherwise, calculated to result in such consequences or otherwise. This ideological standpoint on happiness I spurned long ago: today, true

happiness, I know, can only arise from the quest for The Self. The former view of Happiness, which now I find redundant, hollow of meaning, and preposterously iniquitous, postulated that the state of Permanent Happiness as expounded by it could be achieved only by ensuring that you engage both your mind and body continuously and incessantly in the performance of creative or productive work, every conscious or wakeful moment of your life. If this proposition were to transpire, one must never occupy oneself with mundanities or clerical labour. The theory goes on and puts forth a question: How is one to ascertain as to whether the activity one proposes to perform belongs or not to the realm of mundanity? The answer, says it, lies in the following analysis: a] If the activity which I propose to perform relates to the world of the mundane sphere, it carries with it merely the prospects of relatively short-term results; for example, alteration, modification, creation, destruction or change of/in living conditions by physically tampering with the infrastructural framework that constitutes the surroundings, so as to make them more conveniently, viably, pleasantly or favourably habitable. b] If the activity which I propose to perform relates to the world of the intellectual sphere, it carries with it the prospects of relatively long-term results; the effects of such activity would invariably include the improvement and development of the brain's intellectual capacity and problem-drafting-and-solving skills; the only reward which can be expected from carrying out such work is the enjoyment derived from carrying it out. Notice that the theory makes use of the foul word enjoyment; it was drafted and postulated in the days when I was yet to transform into a full-fledged anti-hedonite and anti-epicurean. An interesting aspect to be observed with regard to this theory, which today is beheld by me as being largely obsolete and redundant, is that it contains and carries certain concepts that I agree with and appreciate upto this day, and today my point of view in relation to the matter has undergone no change. For example, in order to encourage its adherents to perform exclusively activities oriented toward the development and growth of the brain, and expansion of the level of calibre and quantum of capability which characterises the intellect, and in totality shun mundane and banal activities, or those which are considered to be of a clerical nature, the theory made certain recommendations. I admire the recommendations themselves, but fully disagree with the reason aforesaid motivating them: A certain amount of mundane activity should be performed every-day,

according to Theosophical-ideology, in order so that progress along the journey toward Brahman, which is The Self, may be furthered. That which is repugnant to Theosophical-ideology should be abandoned at once- it is poison to The Blavatskian-theosophist. Theosophical-ideology lays down procedures by means of which the mind might be turned inward, thereby motivating it to take on the practise of Athma-Vichaara, which, according to the celebrated sage Ramana-Maharishi, is a sure instrument or tool which can be used to pursue The Goal Supreme. One of those procedures is manual labour, and another clerical labour. An example of the former would be laying up bricks to be baked in kilns. An example of the latter would be adding up rows and columns of numbers manually, and performing other arithmetical and logical operations in relation to them. In order to effectively serve their purpose, these procedures [such as have found mention afore] must be repetitively performed, so that the mind enters into a benumbed, trance-like state, and starts spontaneously, and without any extrinsic galvanisation or polarisation, wondering, Who Am I? Throughout his life-time Ramana maintained that this form of Self-Inquiry is the surest and only steadfast way to Brahman, The Self. I am highly taken-up with his theory. I intend to follow and practise it. Now we proceed to discuss what recommendations were made by the former happiness-theory that are valid today under Theosophical-ideology. In order, I reiterate, to discourage people from mundanity and drive them toward intellectuality, which it regarded as a worthwhile idea with which to impregnate its adherents, this old theory made several recommendations, including that people must frequently make unto themselves the following affirmations, among many innumerable others:

- a] Life is a journey of which death is the destination.
- b] The End is insignificant.
- c] It is the means alone that is significant.
- d] There is no such thing as the end.
- e] The means alone is.

We must take into cognisance the ramifications of these ideas. It all points out to the mortality of man, prompting him to think of his ultimate purpose, which is to seek and find the exalted and supremely-blissful state of Self- Realisation. The statements point out the futility of Sentient Existence; therefore they remind man that the higher realm of Self-Realisation awaits him, should he only be

wise enough to choose to renounce Sentinence as a mere curtain of illusion which traps man into a state of ignorance concerning his true nature, that is pure SuthChithAnundhuh, Permanent, Divine As God, and Eternally Pure. Today I have totally given myself to the doctrine of Solipsism: the perceived and the perceiver are not two different entities; they are one and the same. It is this piece of undeniable but yet improvable philosophy that the Vedanta describes by the name 'Brahmaingjnana'. I do not possess the kind of conviction and Self-Confidence that it takes for one to call oneself a Brahmaingjnani: nevertheless, that well might be what I am. Those who are convinced that the world perceived through Sentinence is unreal have reached the highest platform of human endeavour possible or conceivable. I do not mean to be arrogant, vain or boastful, but the Supreme Truth which I have comprehended seems to be beyond the grasp or liking of those around me. Imagine my joy and delight when I discovered the teachings of the venerated South-Indian Sage Sri Bhugawan Ramana Maharishi, and found that he had not only exposted the same concept, but also that it was one of the central pillars of his teachings. To those who have renounced and relinquished the idea of continuing to believe in an objective universe and believing to be real the mind, and whatever is cognized through sensory input, which is nothing but food provided to the mind by the organs responsible for registering and transmitting such input, the world becomes a manifestation of Brahman; this is only a change in view-point; it has always been how it finds description here, but we see the world through and with such a point of view only after we have achieved such a change for the better in our outlook. To such a one, no God exists but The Self. Religious Ceremonies and Ancestral Worship are not necessary for him. He has surpassed and transcended them. As a child I was interested in various forms of worship, prayer and spiritual contemplation. I tried Hatha Yoga, Bahulasiddhi Meditation, Kundalini Yoga, Performance and Observance of Dhyaana by means of repetition of the Syllable Om, The Gayathri Mantra, and other incantations that I believed brought about a purifying effect on me, reading The Bhagawadh Geetha, and so on and so forth. I do not know whether any of this had any effect on me: Perhaps their impact serves as the reason why my mind was sufficiently spiritually inclined as to have been drawn to Tiruvannamalai, The Mountain Of Fire. The fastest path to Liberation is Self-Enquiry, said Ramana, the Holy Sage of Arunachala. I have accepted his teachings whole-heartedly,



and intend to apply them to my life as soon as possibly I am able to. What stands in the way of me implementing his doctrine of detached activity to my life? The Sage himself has spoken the answer to a similar question: 'Your wandering mind and perverted ways.' We must, therefore, implement immediate mind-control. The common-place meaning of the term does not hold good in Ramana's school of thought. The existence of the mind must be denied, he said. That is Mind-Control. Otherwise it amounts to the Mind attempting to control itself, like the thief assuming the garb of a police-man with the sincere determination to catch hold of the thief, that is himself. Therefore we must be vigorous in our efforts from now-onward to refuse to admit that there could exist the mind. The body, intellect, mind, and the world of sensory objects fed into the mind by the sensory organs, as also the organs themselves, are all unreal absolutely. The Self alone is Real. The Self alone IS; The Self is All-Alone and All-Encompassing. It admits no explanation, for being beyond the mind it must needs defy being understood by the mind. The Self knows no "else". That is why the phrase "Thath Sath" is used to refer to it; a highly appropriate way to speak of it would be to call as being "That Which Is". The Self is not this or that; it IS. Should the past be remembered? Should it be definitely remembered? If so, all of it or some of it? Should it be remembered subject to certain covenants? Should it be remembered absolutely irrespective of the associated circumstances? What is the answer to these questions? Earlier, prior to the time I had exposed myself to the teachings of the Venerated Maharishi, I used to think the answer to the question was, "The past has slipped by already. There is no use crying over spilt milk. Only the future is in our hands. Let us learn from our mistakes of the past and let us apply the lessons so learnt in dealing with our future, in order so that our future may be better than the past. Let us not repeat our mistakes. Rather, let us learn from them and try to avoid them in future. If the past was spent in unhappiness, that cannot be helped, for the past is now beyond control. The wisdom acquired from having experienced the past- that, let us apply it in dealing with and tackling the future, thereby ensuring that the future atleast is spent in happiness." No doubt, this is a very logical and problem-solving-structure-oriented approach. Today I laugh out loud when I see it. Why? Today I know better! I have not more than obtained a cursory, rudimentary or preliminary understanding of the Maharishi's teachings, but that, I found, was enough to set me at

peace. Who am I? That Sath. I am that which is- that which alone is and that which alone am. I am Brahman. Events affect the body and mind and the world that these two interact with. In Reality, all these three are irrelevant and meaningless, for they never exist and they never existed. The Self alone is. The Self is all alone, for it encompasses everything- there can be no outside or inside or periphery to it. It would not be correct to say that The Self is eternal through Time, for those would be foolish and wrong words. The Self knows no such thing as Time or Space. The Self-Realised Muni, who reached his ever-present state by means of giving himself to the theory of Nihilism and Solipsism, is not worried or disturbed about anything, for he knows that He is The Self, which knows no change or mutation, and which is identical with the imperishable Aathmun described by Krishna in the Bhagawadh Geetha, like so: "This, O Arjuna, Water does not wet; Weapons do not Cut, Wind does not dry, and Fire does not burn....." . Therefore, it is that the past, present and future are not to cause us any trouble, for they simply never existed. The decay or destruction of the mind, body or worldly objects is not to perturb us, for they never existed at all. As to whether the past should be remembered, yes, for we must give the faculty of our memory work. Nothing is to be forgotten. No vestige should be kept or allowed to remain idle, and this applies equally to the memory also. We must give ourselves work; otherwise turbulence of mind is sure to result, and the mind is once again led astray, away from its source which is The Self. The Jnani is well-aware that the waking state is only another kind of dream: this knowledge does not prevent him from engaging in action. He acts in detached and disinterested fashion, but in meticulous and conscientious fashion. He strives for perfection in everything he does. However, he is not the doer. Since his actions are always performed in full knowledge of the fact that he is not the doer, no prarabdha-karma attaches itself to him. He is liberated from the bondage or baggage of karma, and is hence referred to as Jivan-Muktha. This is the perfect egoless state recommended by Shree Ramana, and I pray of Lord Arunachala to lead me thereto. Om Namoh Bhagawathae Shree Ramanaaya. In rural India, any unusual behaviour must be undertaken with secrecy. Otherwise, you would be deemed to be a witch and tied up and burnt. Atleast, people would want to do that to you. We have not really moved on mentally from the medieval days of the Spanish Inquisition. Either conform to established norms and rules- or perish.

These are the only 2 choices, officially speaking, available to the Average Everyday Indian Resident. The third choice is a clandestine one: Be different, but hide the fact thoroughly. If you fail to hide the fact fully, it is you that suffers by being burnt at the stake; no one else can be blamed. He who differs is always wrong: that is the mentality which is sucking the life out of the British India's Intellectual Vitality. Divorce Laws in India are such that all your wealth is taken away from you and you are left a pauper because you decided to amicably- that is to say, sans bitterness- part ways with someone who you incorrectly thought you could trust; an entire life-time's worth of achievements is reduced into dust by a single court-judgement, and even ancestral property is not spared. And so.... I, who am only too aware of the horrors that await the fate of he who dares to lift his head and openly be different, behave with the utmost caution and care at all times. Recently I read somewhere a quote which spoke the following words: "Yesterday's Achievements do not deserve today's Applause. The question is not, From Where to Here?, but From Here to Where?." This idea directly rails against the notion of nostalgic pleasure at the thought of days long gone-by and achievements long faded-out. We must remain rooted in The Self, as Shree Ramana has asked us to do. Invoking time and living in time is for those who are limited by the notion of time. The Self, which am I, know no time. Wherever I turn, I see only The Self, for the cosmos is simply a projection of my own mind, and the mind, together with the ego and intellect, these collectively being referred to as the Anthakharana, is simply a phantasmagorical ghost with no existence of its own, and which pretends to be the real self so as to hide the Aathmun from view, but which in truth derives its light from The One True Reality, Brahman, which is The Absolute Non-Dualistic Self, Paramaathmun. Om Namo Bhagawathae Shree Ramanaaya. Om Shree Ramanaarpanam Asthu. Blessed be the Sacred Name of the venerated saint of Kopudgaun, Shirdi-Wale Sai-Baba. Peace be unto all. The True Self can never be lost, and it can know no failure. Do I feel remorse or guilt for having failed to become a doctor? No. Why? Prarabdha Karma must take its course. Time appears to pass. People say things, People move about, People gather together, People are born, People die. The mind processes information, stores it away in the memory, and takes it up for analysis when needed. All this is nothing but pure and simple illusion..... In Truth there is the Self and nothing but the Self. The Self is all alone and it is all-

encompassing. Self-Knowledge does not involve the threefold aspects of knower, known and the process by means of which the knower cognizes, acquires and absorbs the known. It is absolute in nature. If you cling on to the Self you will not see the objective world. The Self lies as a layer of consciousness behind the mind: once again this is non-triple Pure Consciousness- there is nothing to be conscious of externally. The Self knows no inside and outside. When the mind sinks and merges into its source which is the Self, the Self shines forth. The mind never was, and therefore the body and the rest of the world which are its projection also never were. The Self alone is and the Self is all alone. The mind like a spider casting forth a web to move around in has created a world to see, hear, smell, touch, taste and feel through the sense-organs forming part of the body. The world has no objective existence of its own. All objectivity is only apparent, phenomenal and perceived to be as such. The seer and the seen are not different: they are one and the same, because the one must be for the other also to be, and in consequence there is no isolating or separating them. The perceived derives its existence from and on account of the perceiver. If you cling on to the Self, you will not see the apparently objective world. The mind is already not there. It is not to be got rid of anew or afresh. That which does not exist and never existed- how can it ever be destroyed? Therefore, the term Manonasha should be understood to mean transcending the mind. He who abides as the Self or Pure Awareness remains unaffected by the dispositions of the body and mind. The waking state to the Self-Enlightened person is a dream, and he acts merely as a spectator to the events that take place around him in the world that he perceives around him. He is well-aware that the mind and the world are a myth. Therefore, they do not affect him; they do not shake or disturb his equilibrium or equipoise. The Self-realised Individual is beyond space and time, for they are limitations that characterise the mind- the Self does not recognise them as being relevant. Thus spake Shree Ramana, who is widely believed to be an avatar of Lord Subhramanya, son of Arunachala-Shivam. All griefs, turbulences and turmoils, he said, can only be for the mind. The Self is Eternal Liberation. It is by reading these teachings of Shree Ramana that I have reached this state of peace and bliss. Today I know that Life's Goal Supreme is to attain to the Exalted State of Self-Realisation, and abide as the Self or Pure Consciousness. When I was younger, I used to believe that Life's

Supreme Accomplishment was to be engaged in intellectual activity perpetually and without cessation. Therefore, I carved out routine charts and activity charts for myself, telling myself that if I were to adhere to them, I would be fulfilling [what I at the time mistakenly thought to be] Life's Higher-Most Purpose. I must be a polymath, I told myself, a renaissance woman; then, I shall truly be a happy and worthy woman. The thought of that attitude makes me roar with laughter today, for I relish the thought of how foolish and stupid I must have been in the past, prior to the time I encountered Shree Ramana's simple, beautiful and wonderful teachings about the Self, the innermost core of one's being, which alone and by itself in truth deserves to be meaningfully called as one's being. That which is known or capable of being known can never be True Knowledge, said Ramana. True Knowledge is Self-Knowledge. I used to tell myself once upon a time, "Cultivate the habit of keenly observing people and their activities; engage in conversations with those whom it will be a good idea to converse with, thereby making new acquaintances. Meet people from various walks of life, from different geographical locations and heterogeneous cultures. Get to know them well. Try to subtly extract benefits from people whom you meet and form acquaintanceships with. We do not expend our time and other resources for nothing: Associating with a person will be done only if it brings about, one way or the other, some benign consequence, whether capable of being translated into/expressed in monetary terms or otherwise. Helping is carried out only if the beneficiary is one who is such that we are reasonably certain that we shall be able to milk out of him some gratification/appeasement in return. As the American so aptly says, No Lunch Is Free. What better place than America to look, if we want to avail ourselves of the opportunity to emulate some of history's most magnificent examples of selfishness and outright cruelty? Remember what Andrew Jackson did to the Cherokees? He paid no heed to the opinion of the US Supreme Court, which did not agree to the proposed plan of large-scale forced displacement, that everyone who were in on knew would lead to thousands of cruelly-inflicted deaths, noting infamously that the Court possessed no means to enforce its directions. Hitler hates the States because it had, according to him, become a mixture of heterogeneous races, that, through and on account of miscegenation amongst the diversified ethnic populations dwelling therein, had lost their "Purity of Blood" and respective "Distinction of

Nativistic Racial Identities". He admires America for the effective and efficient way in which the European Settlers swiftly and summarily disposed of the "uncivilised" Native American human population.".

On the other hand, nowadays I generally avoid mingling with people whom I perceive as having materialistic minds. In life, perversity, you see, is also a side of the coin, although one I do not wish to embrace. Although from the point of view of Solipsism and Nihilism, all virtues and vices are the same, Negative Acts, although negativity is also simply a function of perception, which must needs always be tinted according to the personality of the perceiver, lead to Sin; Sin leads to extension of Prarabdha Karma, because it is not possible to commit Sin without the idea of 'I am the doer.'. Engaging in Sinful Behaviour keeps on pushing the mind outward. When extension of Prarabdha Karma takes place, Salvation is delayed. Therefore, if we want to attain to The Goal Supreme quickly, we must discard and abandon our [current] penchant for Sin, Vice, Negativity and Perversity. Any action that harms or hurts another in any manner whatsoever can be understood to be included within the ambit of the meaning of the term, Sinful Behaviour. Said the Bhugawaan Shree Ramana, The Subsisting Mind is the real trouble. That is the thief according to King Janaka. Is it permissible to passively observe the wanderings of the mind without making any effort to stop them? In the beginning that is what is to be done; later on, when spiritual strength has been gained through surrender, the mind would cease to cultivate thoughts, and existing thoughts would be drained away; at this juncture, the mind would be turned inward, towards and into the Self. At this stage, freedom from intention ["Sankalpa"] and thoughts would be gained; the mind would not wander, but would be fixed in the indescribable bliss of the absolute inherent non-dualistic Self, Paramaathmun, which is nothing but Brahman and which is the same as Paramaeshwara. This state of Self-Realisation is gained when all of one's vasanas [latent tendencies] have drained themselves away through performance of meritorious deeds, and discharge of one's functions, duties, tasks and roles without the idea or notion of being under the impression, "I am the doer." The true, I, one's true Self, is neither the body, nor the mind, and nor the world; it is something which transcends these illusionary appearances and yet encompasses them. The Self is always here and now. It is not attained at some future point in time through the dint of some future effort. It is the choice of the individual concerned whether he wants to

abide as body and mind or whether as the True Self. Those who hold fast to the Self will never see the apparently objective world as being apart from the Self or as being anything but the Self. Adi-Shankara said that the world is real as the Self but unreal as itself. In other words, there is no world apart from the Seer thereof, and there is no Seer apart from the Self. Self-Enquiry is the quickest and most effective way to lead to Self-Realisation. All other ways exist only to eventually\gradually converge in upon this way. Depending upon one's prarabdha-karma one is able, or not so, to abide as the Supreme Abode, which does not lie at a remote location, but as which we already are. The Self cannot be "seen" for the concepts of subject and object lose relevance in relation to it. There is no seer and seen. There is only the one indestructible, immutable and eternal Self. God is not; for to say that he is would mean that we are apart from him, and then he would be God not at all: for, which Father lives in Isolation from His Beloved Children and shields Himself from their yearning eyes? The aim of all spiritual effort is not to transform ourselves into something which we are not currently but will become only after such transformation is complete, but to remove avidya [ignorance or incorrect\inappropriate\unsuitable attitude\perception\understanding] and abide as that which we have always been, will always be and are now. These teachings of Shree Ramana have breathed peace of mind into my being. Today, by the Holy Grace of Shree Ramana, we know that the mind is an unnecessary commodity, a piece of baggage to be got rid of, not carried around. Thoughts are to be avoided; the ideal state is that of Laya, or complete\total absence of thought. Thought or Intention is unnecessary; when complete surrender of the individual will or ego is achieved\attained, actions are as if performed in a state of trance or hypnosis- they happen automatically, without my participation or involvement. I cannot say that I am a Jnani; I do not know that I am one. However, I have learnt to subsist, atleast for a few minutes, on most days, in the state of Laya, which I find enormously peaceful and blissful. Therefore, today I may call myself a spiritually enlightened being. However, I was not always so. In the past, the mind gave me no end of trouble. Now I know that the only way to win over the mind and escape from its deadly trappings is to simply refuse to admit\recognise its existence, for, said Shree Ramana, Know the Mind; you will find it a myth. In the earlier days, before I came across the teachings of the Holy Saint, I led a miserable existence. My mind

drove me to the edge of desperation; I began to find day-to-day activities of life difficult to perform, on account of the retardation and freakish mental tendencies which came over me consequent to my inability to relegate the mind to its rightful place- a neglected corner, quarantined and isolated by careful intent and purpose; my perverse eccentricities of the mind posed a serious threat to my psychological stability, and I steadily began to sink into the bottomless abyss of doom that awaits those who have been so abysmally foolish as to permit their minds to turn against themselves. Thank Goodness I came across Shree Ramana's soothing teachings, which were as balm to my wounded heart. I had lost faith in the apparently-objective world; Ramana did not try to naysay my view of the matter; he said, It is sufficient if you retain faith in yourself; There is no world apart from you, who are the perceiver thereof; the perceived and perceiver are one and the same, for they are all part of the same illusionary framework of Duality; Reality is the One Absolute Eternal Self which alone is. I shudder to think of what would have happened had Shree Ramana's Grace not found its recipient in me; perhaps I would have gone completely berserk\mad. The mind is the cognitive window through which something known as "a world" appears to be seen, by means of aid from the Sensory Organs. The world has no independent existence- it arises and sets with the mind, for it has its origin in the mind. Shree Ramana explains the relationship between the world and the mind by means of giving the example of a spider spinning a web, into which it then sallies forth. Not knowing this simple truth about the mind- that it is fully non-existent in character- I suffered in the vicious and malevolent hands thereof for years. Now I remember\recall the tortures my mind would put me through in the olden days with amusement, for now I know that the mind, and so also with the other components\constituents of the Anthakharana [such as the faculties of intellectual and memory capacities], is totally non-existent. One such form\type\variety of torture was as follows, and it spewed into my life no end of turbulence, trouble and turmoil: Whenever I engaged in any activity that required exertion of my abilities of concentration and mental focus, the mind would serve as a sore obstacle or impediment, by forcibly and deliberately drifting away elsewhere and refusing to return to the matter at hand unless and until it were appeased in some effective manner. I tried many remedies for this kind of mental-malady before I came to finally anchor myself onto Shree Ramana's teachings, both holistic and in



particular relation to the Anthakharana or the mind; nothing worked except the final endeavour of surrender of the ego or sense of the individual I, as propounded by Shree Ramana in the theory underlying his teachings. For example, I tried to talk myself out of this kind of insane behaviour. I told myself, "Exerting ourselves in order so as to find the solution to ridiculous theoretical problems posed by the mind right now would interfere with my current efforts to perform the goal-oriented activities that I am presently engaged in executing. My abilities to solve these mind-posed anticipatory problems are unlikely to degenerate between now and the point in time when these problems are likely to arise actually. Therefore, let me permit myself to solve it not now, but later, because right now, it is very important that the goal-oriented activities presently undertaken should be successfully carried out\completed." My mind simply set aside these logical statements\statements of saneness and reason; they never succeeded in repelling the destructive tendencies of the mind to focus itself on useless ideas and thereby purposely and purposefully divert energy from other, essential, genuinely useful causes. Only Ramana Maharshi's Teachings were of avail to redeem me by way of lifting me out of the dark confines of my mind and showing me the way to The Truth, where there is no body, mind or world, but only the Aathmun, one's True Self. His teachings are embodied in the works of his prominent biographer B.V.Narasimha Swami. Ramana said, You can never find mind through mind- Pass beyond it in order to find it non-existent. The troubles faced by you originate not outside you, but within your own mind. There is no "outside" to you. On account of ignorance, it appears as though you are harboured within a world, but in truth you harbour the world that you perceive. Therefore, it is not that the world encompasses minds, of which yours is one; it is that your mind encompasses the world you perceive and understand to be around you. You are not living "inside" a world. The cosmos observed by you is nothing more than a projection of your mind; therefore you are where you are [that is to say nowhere], and something called a changing cosmos appears to manipulate itself in relation to or with respect to you, thus creating the illusion that the 'I' is associated with or tied down to a body with hands, legs, eyes, etc.; since everything you perceive through the senses originates from you, there can never be anything which is apart from, severable from, distinguishable from, or separate from you; there can never be anything which is "not you"; therefore you are in everything and you

are everything: there are no others. The concept of a cosmos being extraneous to yourself is a nullity: it can never be. The cosmos resides solely as an impression formed by your mind, and within your mind; so, the world lives within you- you are not living inside any world. There is no use allowing scope for emotions like anger, eagerness, etc., for they necessarily imply dualism: who is here apart from you that you may be angry at them, and what ever could be here apart from you that you may feel eager in relation to its expected\anticipated arrival? All feelings and emotions must be totally killed, for they originate in the mind. The mind is the fictitious imaginary villain which prevents you from abiding as the One Reality, the True Self that you really are. Transcending the illusion known as Mind is the only actual way leading to Permanent Happiness, which is Brahman, which is the Self. Manonasha is a meaningless term- it means, destruction of [the] mind. How can you destroy what is already not there? How can you destroy that which has never had any existence, and does not exist now, and which is altogether incapable of existence? You cannot. The mind cannot be destroyed because it is simply an illusion, a fabricated continuous phantasmagorium, a convincing hallucination, that never was. All that is possible and necessary to do is to simply transcend it and go beyond it, so that the layer of Pure Consciousness behind it shines forth as the True Self that it is. This world that is regarded to be the world of waking is in truth Dream. What is called as Deep Sleep is in truth Real Wakefulness, and when it is practised in conscious fashion it is referred to as Samadhi. The Real 'I' which is the Self, or Brahman, knows no objects: it is complete, whole and blissful in itself. Today I take great satisfaction in relating to myself these Truths. In the olden days I was in complete ignorance of them, and therefore suffering and pain plagued me wherever I went and whatever I did. Now we know there is no such thing as Location. The Self is as it is and how it is. It is not here or there. It does not recognise notions of physical time and space, which are limitations characterising only the mind. The Self is every-where. Again, it is no-where. Both statements are simultaneously True in relation to the Self, because in Truth concepts of time and space which are familiar to the Rational Mind are Nullity with respect to the One True Self, which the Vedas describe as Brahman or Sath-Chit-Amada. The Jnani abides as and inheres in the Self. So, the Jnani is neither his mind nor his body [in truth they are not his at all, but pieces of fiction

disassociated from his True Self], but his Real Self. So, the Jnani does not think of one place as being favourable and another as being unfavourable: to him, all places are equally unreal, and since he is the Self, for him the concept of physical or geographical space is totally non-applicable, redundant and non-existent. In the olden days these nuggets of wisdom were alien to me. Today these ideas no longer cling to my brain. I have no plans for my future. The Jnani, said Ramana, has no will, resolve or Sankalpa of his own. Since to him this state of apparent wakefulness is but a dream, he does not bother what happens inside of what is but a mere passing dream. Why waste time planning then? What is to be done with the mind is to turn it inward, toward the Self, so that we be what we in truth are and so that there is no disparity between our true identity and what we choose to be. Keeping the mind quiet, still and quiescent is the means to Self-Realisation. Total Surrender to the will of God is another way, apparently; however, this distinguishment lasts only so long as the illusionary appearance of duality lasts; in truth these two ways are one: only known by different names by different minds. Whether Jnana Marga is chosen or Bhakthi Marga is chosen, the Supreme Summit Within sought to be attained is the same. Once there, the paths which led there vanish, having all along been unreal, leaving behind the True Absolute Indivisible Eternal Self alone, as that which is [Thath Suth]. Om Namo Bhagawathe Shree Ramanaaya. Om Shree Ramanarpanam Asthu. Peace be unto all. Did I have friends whilst I was at school? No. The Aathmun was my constant companion then. Today, dualism has ceased and I stand having realised that the Aathmun is no extrinsic entity: I am the Aathmun. It can never be denied that I am a recluse. I crave seclusion and isolation above even food. I am not anti-social, you see: only un-social. Although female nurses are more common, I wanted to become a medical doctor, but my ambitions have failed miserably. What to do? It appears God has had different plans for me in mind. Arunachala, thou arte the controller of my destiny! I have no say in what happens to me, for I have surrendered to Arunachala. Surrender, said Shree Ramana, is the first step in the Spiritual Journey which leads one to man's ultimate goal, which is Self-Realisation or abidance as or inherence in the Self. The Self cannot be known through the mind, for it is beyond it. It is transcending the mind that could possibly ever lead to the Goal. The Vedas declare that so long as there is a body or embodiment, there will be misery.

What they mean in truth is that so long as the illusion of there being a mind continues, till such time the Self cannot shine forth. Remain the Self of the thinker, said Shree Ramana, and there is an end to the pestilential thoughts that plague you night and day. The persisting\subsisting mind is the true\actual source of all your troubles. That is what King Janaka meant when he said that that he had finally discovered the thief who had been ruining him all along and was going to summarily execute him. We must disassociate ourselves from the world, body and mind- none of them is truly the 'I'. The body and world are pieces of imagination which spring forth from the mind. The mind, the ego, the intellect, etc. are components of the Anthakharana, which is the veil of fiction apparently cast over the Aathmun, appearing to prevent us from abiding in our True State that is Pure Consciousness. It is absurd to suppose that we are not already Self-Realised and already Pure Blissful Brahman. If we do not seem to be Self-realised, it is because we assume the Anthakharana to be real, whereas in Truth the Self alone is. Sai Nath Maharaj Ki Jai! Blessed be the names of the Ancient Sacred Prophets of Jehovah. Om Arunachaleswaraya Namaha. Om Namoh Bhagawathe Shree Ramanaaya. Om Shree Ramanarpanum Asthu. Peace be unto all. Whether you like it or not, you are all alone. The Cosmos, with all its people and other life-forms, has no existence apart from their perceiver, which is you. You are their maker, for it is your senses that perceive them. Today I am a Solipsist and Ontological Nihilist. I became so because I was fortunate enough to have come across Ramana Maharshi's Teachings, which turned my mind, that was tottering on the threshold between faith in the apparent objectivity of the cosmos and faith in the theory that the cosmos is a projection of your own mind, which is a basic tenet of Advaita Vedantha, inward. Be Still is the technique mentioned in the Bible by means of which Man may strike the Light of God within Him, said Ramana, who has verily showed us the way to True Irrevocable Permanent Intransient Happiness, which is the Inherent Bliss of the Absolute Non-Dualistic Self. He also said that the words in the Bible, Keep Quiet and Know that I am God, pointed out the True non-dualistic nature of God. The discrimination, discernment and distinguishment between right and wrong is the origin of Sin, said Ramana, who frequently emphasized that God, Guru and the Self are synonymous. Grace is within you, he said. If it is external, it is useless. The message underlying his teachings was once simply

expressed in the following fashion by the Saint Upasni Maharaj, an early disciple of Sai Baba of Shirdi: You get there by realising you are already there. Ramana's physical objectifiable presence may be in a distant corner of the world far removed from our phenomenal proximity, but it is not necessary once we have earned his grace by commencing the practice of his teachings: He always resides in our Heart, as does Shirdi Wale Sai Nath Maharaj. My personal favourite spiritual verse from the New Testament is, of course, Romans 12:9, for it asks you to abide as and inhere in Your One True Self, which is the Indivisible Aathmun. Blessed be the names of the Ancient Sacred Prophets of Jehovah. Om Arunachaleswaraya Namaha. Om Namo Bhagawathe Shree Ramanaaya. Om Shree Ramanarpanum Asthu. Peace be unto all. As a Teenager I had the following message to announce unto myself, and therefore I told myself thus: "You must stop treating the mind as a third-party entity or foreign body, since continuing to do so may lead to evolution of a separate personality within oneself. The only way to stop this strange treatment which you are currently meting out to the mind, is to put an end to the ceaseless flow of thought that goes on within the mind, including in the form of one portion of my mind talking to another, or talking to me, usually in Elizabethan English. If we are to bring about a permanent end to such ceaseless flow of thought, what must be done is to steadfastly cultivate the practise of, whilst the mind is unengaged, keeping\having it focused on one particular thing only, a single entity or object or concept. What should this entity\concept\object be? It may be Shirdi Wale Sai Baba, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, or Sri Ramana Maharishi." Now, this message needs some amount of explanation so that it can be understood even by myself. So far as our current philosophical, metaphysical and spiritual stance is concerned, the question of treating the mind as or with anything does not arise, because we have denied the existence of the mind and called it unreal, for such is our inveterate and definitive conclusion. Whether the mind is idle or whether it is engaged in doing something, it must be turned completely inward, towards the Self; turning it toward images of Gods, Saints, etc. is only warranted in the initial stages of spiritual development, which today I may perhaps confidently declare I stand having surpassed; the state of Laya or complete absence of thought is what should be aimed for; this state is the ideal state for the Spiritual Aspirant, and it is the state he should succeed in remaining in whether he is idle or whether he is

engaged in work. The question may be raised as to how work can be performed without thinking; the answer is that to one who has attained\acquired\reached a sufficient stage of Spiritual Upliftment, there is no more a need for a mind or thoughts; he is guided by Divine Instinct alone; such a one has shut-off the voice of his Brain, and he listens to his Heart alone. The term Divine Instinct may sound grand, but it is no different from the instinct of the ordinary man, except in one aspect: The man blessed with Divine Instinct sees that path or course alone as natural which lies in overruling and overriding his faculties of reason, logic and rationale. The man who by dint of proper and well-guided Spiritual Effort has attained to Divine Instinct never looks for corroboration from his brain to the messages that emanate from his heart- one may say that he has dispensed with usage of his brain; whereas, the ordinary man feels the voice of the Instinct that emanates from his heart, and also hears the voice of logic and reason commanded by his brain, and pays attention to both, in the end going in for obedience to the heart only in so far as it is corroborated and confirmed by the brain. Divine Instinct cannot arise where there has not been Total Surrender: Where Total Surrender is not, it cannot be. What about one who is yet to attain to that stage of Spiritual Upliftment which enables him to be guided by Divine Instinct? He must try to surrender himself completely; therein lies his way ahead, and only thereby can the state of absolute thoughtlessness or Laya be reached. Laya is not a state of mind: it is the state of non-mind, a kind of peace and supreme internal quietness or quietitude. One who is in the state of Laya is in it always, whether he is working or whether he is idle. It is not thoughts which help him in getting work done, but Pure Instinct.; he has no use for thought; he has transcended the necessity for thought; he finds thoughts to be irrelevant and altogether devoid of meaning or significance. In Laya thoughts of God, Swamijis, Gurujis, etc. do not arise: Laya is natural stillness and quiescence, and is the positive anti-thesis of thought. Therefore, the best course is to deny the mind's existence and to abide as Pure Consciousness, as the Infinite, Immutable Aathmun. Hence, the question of what to do with the mind when it is not actively engaged in something is absurd: Our objective is to tranquilise, if not murder, the mind and remain in the state of Laya or non-mind or denial-of-mind, and carry through the righteous activities that the world demands of us by means of adhering to the voice of the Divine Instinct. Wisdom is not a Luxury. It

is a necessity of life which is gradually picked up along the way as one progresses along life's journey. The idea behind joyful living is not to become some kind of super-human who is invulnerable to making mistakes, but to make only new mistakes each time, so that something refreshingly new is obtained to laugh at quite often. All the above lines of introspection are from a dualistic perspective only. In truth, there exists nothing but the Self, which is Brahman or Thuth Suth [That Which Is]. The idea of one's Self being associated with a mind, body, intellect, etc. is an illusionary and deceptive notion. This Apparently-Objective world which you perceive and remember through and on account of functioning of the sensory organs and their power of sense- it never was: it cannot be. The Self has no associations; it alone IS, and it is eternal and perfect. Ramana Maharishi said, The nature of the Self is Suth-Chith-Aanandha [Existence-Consciousness-Bliss]. Sages are aware of their Intransient Bodiless Existence just like the layman is aware of his Bodily Existence. The Self is a stranger to the physical notions of space and time. Pure Consciousness, which is the state that the Jnani immerses himself in whilst in Samadhi, is wholly unrelated to the Mind, Body, Intellect or other Components\Constituents of the Anthakharana, and consciousness thereof. There is no question of attaining to the Self- you are always the Self. You can never find the Self through the mind; transcend the mind, find it non-existent, and abide as and inhere in the Self, which you were all-along, and which knows no cessation or perishal. The Self is your True Identity and Real Nature. Om Arunachaleshwaraya Namaha. Om Namoh Bhagawathe Shree Ramanaaya. Om Shree Ramanarpanum Asthu. Peace be unto all. Two of Shree Ramana's Sayings inspire me to the core: "The Jnani has no Will or Sankalpa of his own or to call his own. In this state, it is as difficult to think a thought as it is for those in bondage to be free of thoughts." "There is no difference between Jivanmukthi and Videhamukthi. For those who ask, it is said, A Jnani with a body is a Jivan-Muktha and he attains Videhamukthi when he drops off his body; however, this difference is for the onlooker, and not for the Jnani. We think of the Jnani as a Hapien Form or as being in that form. The Jnani knows He is the Self, the one and only Reality, which is both inside and outside, and which is not bound by any form or shape." These 2 sayings quite clearly indicate that the state of Jnana is not bound by limitations which bind the body, mind and other components\constituents of the Anthakharana. Thus, one

physically\mentally\intellectually\psychologically retarded\crippled\deformed\mutilated may also reach the state of Jnana. The Jnani does not plan, or seek to control, events that take place in his life[time]. They are as images or motion-pictures flashed on a screen, to which the Jnani is merely an idle spectator. He is not affected by them and he remains in the background, subsisting and abiding as Pure Consciousness. If he wants to he may turn off the projector that flashes the images or motion-pictures; thereby shutting down his mind, he retreats to his favourite state of Samadhi. If anything, he is genially amused by everything that goes on about him; also, single-minded devotional love toward God moves him to profound emotion; these, however, are affectations that go on with the mind- he is aware that they do not affect the True, Real, I, which alone he is. The Jnani has already disassociated himself from the dispositions of body and mind; he never identifies himself with or by them, and remains their neutral observer. His actions are not guided by reason; as fancy catches him so he behaves- thus some who behold the actions of his frame think of him to be a mad-man. He is guided by Instinct alone. The voice of his Brain is quite drowned and dissolved in the Silence of his Heart. In the olden days, when I was a young child, I was not aware of my True Identity, which is Brahman, the Self. I foolishly thought I was the mixture of a body and a mind. The Truth is that the Aathmun takes care of what content the projector flashes across; it is unnecessary and irrelevant for us to bother ourselves with or about it. Furthermore, to he who is supremely content in and with the knowledge of his One True Self, what happens in the world around him, to his body, mind and intellect, no longer worries him or affects his state of Permanent Happiness and Supreme Peace, which he subsists in as a result of his steadfastness in the Self, for he knows they are unrelated and immaterial to his One True Identity, which is Brahman, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. The Jnani, therefore, remains a spectator to the world around him, a spectator to his own Body, Mind and Intellect, and a spectator to his own actions and inaction. He does not draft plans and act according to plans. He acts according to Instinct. He never does anything and never abstains from doing anything except on the spur of the moment. Such characteristic of behaviour accrues to the Jnani once he becomes one through means of destruction of wrong association of one's True Self with the body, mind, intellect and other components of the Anthakharana. He



does not deliberately adopt such pattern of behaviour: it automatically weaves itself into the fabric of His Being once he becomes a Jnani through destruction of Ignorance, which is nothing but the Mind. If a person, not being aware of his non-dualistic identity, were to deliberately adopt such reckless spur-of-the-moment behaviour that is natural to the Jnani, whether with a view to consciously emulate a Jnani or otherwise, the consequence will be utter devastation. The Jnani has given himself away to Randomness, Nature's Supreme Law. He does not make plans for the future because he always lives in The Now. His existence is not to be segmented into fragments linked together by time, for his True Identity is not subject to any such phenomenon called Time. Time is a feeling that resides within the Mind. The Jnani has already transcended the Mind, as a result of which effort on his part he is now in his present state. Therefore, to him is the concept of Time meaningless and absurd. Thus, he sees no necessity to formulate plans; to drag this totally-false, apparently-objective, illusionary-reality one way or the other does not interest him, for so far as he is concerned it is all a dream, and thus he sees no need to change the world or influence the course of events- whichever way it is that events take, it is all the same to him- that is to say, equally and homogenously irrelevant, for His True Identity, Suth-Chith-Aanandduh, is wholly unrelated to such unreal dream which never was. This does not mean he abjures action; he acts as fancy catches him, without rhyme or reason; for, what reason could be attributed to events which occur in a dream that never was? The Jnani never thinks about the past or future; he is too deeply steeped in the 'I-am-ness' experience of the Self, which is always in The Now, since it is beyond Physical Concepts such as Space and Time. Thus to him the task of planning is irrelevant. When I was a young child, this wisdom did not enter my brain yet. I thought foolishly- I must plan for the future! I must determine my future courses of action! I must determine the direction my life will take in the future! I must control and influence the world around me! I must shape my destiny! I must change the world and seek to establish dominion over it! I must influence people and events which take place around me! I must craft and shape the future! I must determine what my future will be like, and steer my present in the proper direction\channel so that my future becomes what I require of it to become and what I want and demand of it that it become! I also fixed-up plans for achievement of

goals, setting time-frames for their accomplishment. Today, by the Grace of Bhugawaan Shree Ramana Maharishi, all these intentions and ideas have left me; they remain in my memory- as fossils and crystallised pieces of thought, should in future they be required; now I am a blissful empty shell- in the sense, where earlier there was a pestilential mind now there is Pure Single-Mindedness of Focus... the Focus has no object... if anything, it is its own object- that is to say, it has trained its aim upon itself, thus dissolving the [possibility of] distinction\distinguishment\demarcation\bifurcation between subject and object. I cannot say I am a Jnani anymore than I can say I am this or that. I am that I am; that is all I could ever have to say about myself. Shirdi Wale Sai Baba and Shree Ramana are both my Gurus, but these are only mere extrinsic forms and shapes. As Shree Ramana said, the Real Guru is the Self, and it may manifest even through plants, trees, vines, creepers, flowers, sand wind, and other elements of Nature, as observed in the case of Dattathraeyaa, or through any other form. A Guru with form is sought because one has a mind and only so long as one has one. The Self is one's True Identity and Real Nature. Nothing, including the Guru, can ever be extrinsic to the Self. The Self, being the One Indivisible Ultimate Reality, knows\recognises no inside or outside; although words cannot describe the Self, for words belong to the realm of the Anthakharana which must be transcended before the Self shines forth and if it is to shine forth, the simple 2-word elucidation afforded by the Vedas is a particularly apt description; the Vedas describe it as Thuth Suth, or That Which Is. Om Arunachaleshwaraya Namaha. Om Namo Bhagawathe Shree Ramanaaya. Om Shree Ramanarpanum Asthu. Peace be unto all. In the Bhagawadh Gheetha Lord Krishna says, Carry out your duties in earnest and excellent fashion, but do not be attached to the fruits thereof. The results or fruits of your actions are not in your hands or control- leave it to the Lord. You are expected to focus only on your efforts. This is what Bhugawaan Shree Ramana also said: One should not even care for the results of one's actions. Concern for the results of one's actions cannot lend a helping hand in progress with respect to Spiritual Effort: in fact it behaves as an actual obstacle or hindrance. Liberation can only ever come out of detached effort and actions- one should simply forget about the results, leaving it to the Lord. When Arunaachalaa is ever with us, when we in truth are cradled in the palm of his Divine Will, why would we worry about anything, and

why should we care about results? Efforts performed without attachment thereto and in the spirit of service to the Lord make the mind one-pointed and lead the way to Salvation, said Shree Ramana. My other favourite quotes from Shree Ramana are as follows: 'No one succeeds without effort: those who succeed owe their success to perseverance. The degree of freedom from unwanted thoughts and the degree of concentration on a single thought are the measures to gauge spiritual progress. Your own Self-realization is the greatest service you can render the world. Time is only an idea. There is only the Reality. Whatever you think it is, it looks like that. If you call it time, it is time. If you call it existence, it is existence, and so on. After calling it time, you divide it into days and nights, months, years, hours, minutes, etc. Time is immaterial for the Path of Knowledge.' Today I have accepted Shirdi Sai Baba and Shree Ramana as my Gurus. I have decided to give myself to The Spiritual Quest. I do not want to be embodied anymore- carrying around a body has become wearisome now, and I long to subsist as mere spirit. The idea of getting rid of body and mind is moot and absurd. Already, what exists is the Self and the Self alone. The mind, and the body and the world which are projections of the mind, are all illusionary. The mind is unreal, and therefore, the body and the world, which are projections of the mind, are also unreal. The Mind, the Body and the World are already not there: they never were.... All this.... is already not. The Self alone ever can be and the Self alone is. This Supreme Truth, however, struck me only recently, somewhere around the time of my visit to the Maharshi's ashram sometime back. Before this enormous comprehension, I was foolishly convinced by the Apparent Objectivity of the Cosmos. Instead of correctly believing that the Cosmos was in me, it being a projection of my own mind, I foolishly believed that I was a constituent of the Cosmos. I had ambitions about making it big in life like the people I see around me, acting under the absurd impression that I was a combination of Mind and Body, whereas in Truth I am nothing but Pure Consciousness. I wanted to reach out to and communicate with people around the world with my own individual recipe for Salvation, one of my own formulation. Looking back on myself for having had these ideas, I find it difficult to hold myself back from responding to them with derisive and scornful laughter. Communicating with the world? Talking to someone? Ho! Ho! Ho! Such activities are performed only within my own head- since it is I

that has imagined this world, any communication has only one recipient- my own mind, which is to say no recipient at all. So, there is no difference between talking to oneself and talking to "others", because there is no difference between oneself and others. I do not mean to say that all are equal- there is no scope to say any such thing- I meant to say that since the world and those it harbours are unconscious creations of the mind, that mind, one's own mind, is the place of the origin of the people of the world. Thus my own body is a projection of my own mind, and the bodies of others are also part of the projection of that same mind. Thus, the ostensible origin of everyone and the substratum in which everyone seems to exist, are both only and merely my own mind, and such a thing as objectivity is Total Illusion. Ramana said, There is only the Self: there are no 'Others' to mingle with. Does the world exist apart from you? Find out. You say, I am. Find out who is. The Ego is really a phantom with no existence. It takes flight as soon as its Origin is enquired into and its True Nature is analyzed. You are already THAT. There is nothing new to be attained. The Self is as it is, ever. How can there ever be such a notion of realizing it? If we talk of Self-Realisation, are we not deluding ourselves? Are there two selves, one to realize the other? All we are to do is give up the idea that the mind is real. If this is done, the idea that the body and world are real also cease, since they are mere projections of the mind. Then one enquires into the origin of the I thought, only to discover it was never there, but that the Self alone is the One and Only Reality. To abide as this Reality is Life's True Goal. Our Duty is not to be this or that, but to simply BE. You are always the Self. For those who traverse the Spiritual Path, Help is always there. Surrender and you will find it. The Real Guru is the Self. That which takes the Human Form is a piece of embodiment, made up of the Self, the purpose of which is to facilitate you to feel the Pull of the Self from within. Grace is the Self. It is not somewhere high-up in the heavens. If and when you take up Self-Enquiry, you will find it gushing forth from within you, as a Spring. All your present troubles are due to thoughts. Give up thoughts and remain as the Self of the thinker, and there is an end to thoughts. 'Who am I?' is the most direct way to Self-Realisation. To root out the Individual I and abide as Pure Awareness or Pure Consciousness, which is the Real I, is the sole means to Permanent Happiness. Blessed be the names of the Sacred Ancient Prophets of Jehovah. Om Arunachaleshwaraya Namaha. Om Namo Bhagawathe Shree

Ramanaaya. Om Shree Ramanarpanum Asthu. Peace be unto all. Why did I fail to become a doctor? The truth behind my failure is that God has bestowed the same upon me so that my mind may absorb the shock caused consequent to such failures and therefore and thereby turn itself inward, toward the Self which is Brahman. Despondence, Distress, Grief and Shock all contribute to arresting the wandering nature of the mind and turning it inward, thereby fixing it on the Self. This is not to mean to say that it could be advisable to cultivate these apparently negative emotions or feelings or patterns of thought deliberately\purposefully; I merely highlight the fact that their nature of contributing to the phenomenon of the mind turning inward cannot be denied\ignored, nor ought it to be. After I finally realised that my ambition to become a doctor would never be fulfilled, all of a sudden, my life had simply turned into an elegant synonym for Total and Comprehensive Failure. I did not know what to do. I was desperate to get out of the mess into which I had landed, but found no way by means of which I could do so. Slowly, I saw light: but it was coming from the other end of the tunnel! I tried to ignore it and was focusing on the end I had eyes for and on, but this light ultimately proved to be too attractive to resist. It was strangely familiar, soothing and friendly. It was as if I was calling out to myself.... And so, I turned. It was the blessed peaceful light of Advaita Vedanta, and I gave myself to it. Slowly, my mind started sinking, little by little, away from the world of the senses, and towards Brahman, my One True Self. I began to lose interest in what was happening around me. I stopped participating in many of my usual activities. Everything in the world of the senses began to look bland, insipid and entirely irrelevant. I found myself to be puzzled by the existence of the world. I was now looking at the world through the other end of a long, long tunnel- I did not want to look, but forced myself anyway, for otherwise I should have been mistaken for an individual in the state of Coma. It was not repugnance or revulsion toward the world that made me turn away from it- my feelings toward the world were and continue to be wholly neutral. I simply was more interested in the side of the tunnel I had come closer to. Soon the certain knowledge dawned upon me that the cosmos was inside me, and not the other way round. Wherever I went, I saw only myself. Whomsoever it was that I met or spoke with- I did so only with myself. I began to live the Truth that the cosmos is a projection of one's own mind. The occasions on which the mind was stilled or

reduced into a state of trance-like thoughtlessness began to increase in their frequency of occurrence, and magnitude of intensity. These occasions were not characterised by a stupor-like quality or soporific effect. I was fully alert, but on the inside. My mind cried out aloud, asking its [own] vanquishment. I wanted to abide as the Self. This is said to be the worthiest goal in a Blavatskian-theosophist's Life, and I am still seeking it. It is only deep conviction in every tenet of Advaita Vedantha that can turn the mind inward. Turning the mind inward is the only way for the world to cease and for one to awaken and abide as the Self, thus attaining Nirvana or Moksha. Had this failure not occurred, I would never have turned to Advaita Vedantha for comfort and solace, which I found from its teachings, predominantly and especially those pertaining\relating to Solipsism and Ontological Nihilism. Thus, God's plan was to help, enable and facilitate me to attain Mukthi, and in order to execute this grandiloquent plan of his, he made me fail totally in relation to my ambition to become a doctor. So, I have no regrets about having failed. I am glad that things have gone according to God's plan. Who are we but tiny mites in the Face of the Almighty? How dare then do we resist his plans for us? I shall not revolt against my Creator's Will. Obedience to his command is my joyous privilege. Sometimes his ideas for our life seem unduly harsh, but I am confident that whatever harm he may happen to inflict on me, it is all for a Greater Good, and I am content and sated in that knowledge. Therefore, the True Reason why I failed for all these years is Jehovah Himself: he has decided to rescue me from this boundless ocean of Samsara-Margham and bestow Liberation on me, and has thus taken the necessary steps toward this end, including introducing me to Thiru-Annaamalai and Ramana Maharishi through a friend, ensuring that those events definitely transpire in my life which without fail would lead me toward Salvation, Union Eternal and Timeless with His Lordship the Primordial Cause of the Cosmos. I visited Skandasramam whilst I was staying in Tiruvannamalai and was quite carried away by the divine current of spiritual wisdom present there. I felt quite blissful there. The utility I derived out of visiting the place is that my conviction that everything perceived by reason of sentience is simply a dream has become crystallised and concrete. Reality, said Shree Ramana Swamigazl, is not to be found on this plane. Look for it within. Dive deep within so as to find the Heart Cave; having once found it, stay there. Liberation would soon follow automatically, and the individual would be able to

attain to the coveted state of Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi, absolute identity and oneness with Spirit. These teachings are expressed by the Swamigazl in his defining work of prose, Who am I?. In the states of dream and waking, he says, names and forms occur spontaneously. This world is mocking you all the time for attempting to know it without first knowing yourself. There is total awareness in Deep Sleep and full ignorance on Waking. Dream is short and Waking is long; other than this there is no difference. The sleeping I is the real I. You say I am; find out who is. There is no such thing as Self-Realisation: only obliteration of mind; make it your aim, therefore to uproot your mind, which will be found by you to have never been as soon as you have done so. Such a concept as Sin or Virtue can only exist so long as the mind imagines them to exist. The fire of Jnana burns one's Karma and reduces it completely to ashes, thus paving the way for Mukthi. Although he appears to reside within the framework of a body, the Jnani in truth abides as Pure Consciousness, unaffected by the dispositions of his body or the world around him. Since the Jnani is not the doer, no Karma attaches itself to him on account of his actions. Destiny can affect the mind which is turned outward, but not the one which has been turned inward, seeking its origin. The sage who has understood the nature of Reality transcends both free-will and destiny, with which only the ignorant are concerned. Know the mind; you will find it a myth. Persistent search for what the mind is results in its disappearance. All of man's struggle is a sub-conscious search for happiness; happiness is inborn in the Self; thus when a man abides as his True Self, he finds a happiness which knows no beginning or end. All your present trouble is due to thoughts: give up thoughts and remain the Self of the Thinker, and there is an end to thoughts. Vichara is not a case of one I searching for another. Vichara aims at merging the mind back into its source, the Spiritual Heart. Catching hold of, and continuously watching, the I thought also amounts to the same as Vichara. My failure to become a doctor has left me disillusioned with a life preoccupied with materialistic concerns. That is why I have taken refuge in Solipsism, Ontological Nihilism, Advaita Vedantha and the Ancient Vedic Doctrine of Soteriology, which insists, as Ramana Maharshi observed, that Salvation is not to be regarded as belonging to the future, as it is in the here and now. Brahman alone is, said that sagely personage, and that is who you truly are. Liberation is ever present and bondage is ever absent, but this truth

is not manifest because of Ignorance veiling it. The nature of this ignorance is that it is fictitious or illusionary. Thus illusion itself is illusionary, as seen by one beyond it. Therefore, my life's goal now, if at all it can be said that I have one, which I doubt, is to attain to and stay at the state of Ultimate Union with the Divine, Sahaja Nirvikalapa Samadhi, which alone is one's real and natural state. This is possible only if the mind, the actual source of all trouble and obstacle, is annihilated. Obliteration of mind is possible with perpetual contemplation upon Mount Arunachala, the fire that does not move or the non-indebtedness that is not subject to change. Blessed be the names of the Sacred Ancient Prophets of Jehovah. Blessed be the sacred name of Shirdi Wale Sai Baba, the beatifically-countenanced saint who ever dwells in the heart of those who worship him in all earnestness, sincerity and Faith, and who declared in His Boundless Grace, Sabka Malick Eak, The Lord of All is One. Om Arunachaleshwaraya Namaha. Om Namoh Bhagawathe Shree Ramanaya. Om Shree Ramanarpanam Asthu. Peace be unto all. When I was a younger woman, I wanted to visit Amsterdam. Many visit the city because Alcohol and Prostitution are perfectly legal there, and the floating population there has taken to these so much that they now form a major source of revenue generation from tourists toward the economy. I, however, wanted to visit the beaches there. Whilst staying in Madras, I visited the Santhome beach often. It was mostly used for open defecation by the local fishermen. If you were inadequately dexterous at dodging the dark-brown clumps the waves carried toward you, you could be left with a lot of unwanted bio-waste on your legs. I would leave the place with an urge to take an immediate scented bath with a lot of soap bubbles, though I would have succeeded in having kept myself unscathed by such anticipated casualties. I don't blame the fishermen. The Government is not interested in building proper toilets for them, and they perhaps have numerous bigger concerns. After coming across Ramana Maharshi's Advaita Vedantha, however, all kinds of desire seem to have left me. Locations do not one seem to differ from another. This is because all that is perceived through the mind is only the mind that has disguised itself. As the Sage put it, What you call the World is nothing but Thought. This world that you think is yours to rejoice in is all the time mocking at you for attempting to know it without first knowing yourself, the knower. What is perceived cannot be apart from the perceiver; the perceived and the perceiver are one and the



same. In Truth, only Direct Experience can correctly be referred to as Actual Knowledge. What is known can never be True Knowledge; that alone is Real Knowledge [or knowledge of Reality] which transcends both knowledge and nescience, where there is no distinction between knower, knowledge and known, and between seer and seen, and where the only seeing is being. My life in the material sphere was never successful. My marriage also broke down. So, when I came across the Ramana Swamigazl's proclamation that the world was unreal and merely a figment of one's own imagination, I was delighted. When I read his example of the spider spinning webs and then retreating into them [he was discussing the mind and the world], I cried out for joy, for I had been suspecting it all along, and finally, here was corroboration, nay, proof, from one no less than a globally-supremely-renowned specialist in The Doctrine of Non-Duality [Advaitha Vedantha], the Ramana Swamigazl. After reading the Maharshi's teachings, the torrent of thoughts inside my head thinned to a trickle. Inner Silence became more profound. The technique of visualisation I had used had a name: Bhaulasiddhi Meditation. This kind of meditation was attempted by me consciously even as a teenager, for I had read about its remarkably positive effects back then. At that age, I tried it, but soon lost interest because my immediate physical surroundings were purposely maintained by me in such a manner that they were engrossing perpetually. I worked at Arts and Crafts, read Elizabethan and Victorian Era English Literature, went on cycling trips and walks in deserted stretches of countryside, and so on and so forth. I never permitted myself to be idle. Idleness had to happen to me by force after my education was discontinued; when it did, I involuntarily practised this kind of meditation. After coming across Ramana's teachings, the necessity for and habit of the Bhaulasiddhi practise died. Now, there seems to be a strange fascination with the source whence thought emerges\arises. Staying at this source, a vacuum wholesome in itself, seems to be the only meaningful thing to do. Why stray out of it? Why leave the blissful shade of the Banyan Tree [or Peepul Tree, the Ficus Religiosa], and stray out into the scorching sun? Why leave? The activities of the body go on whether we remain in shade or roam around underneath the sun: in fact, [not that it matters,] one's earthly functions become more effective since now one is perpetually submerged in a state of unshakeable equicomposure, thus being calm, unfazed and relaxed all the time- this being the

case, why leave this wonderful, cool shade? Would ever any sane man do such a non-sensical thing as straying out or venturing out, even for the tiniest fraction of a second? No. Therefore, we must decide to permanently stay in the shade...and trust ourselves to abide by that decision. Find the source, said the Ramana Swamigazl, and stay there. The Christ said, Those who want to live shall die, but those who die for me\die in me shall, through and on account of my grace, be steadfast in eternal life. His message in speaking the above words, is, of course, to say, those who want to preserve their ego will be faced only with spiritual death, that is, continuation of embodiment; whereas, those who want their ego to perish, will, by means of the Guru's Grace, attain to the state of Bramhasakhshathkara, which is everlasting or eternal life, that is, timeless Consciousness of Being or Pure Awareness. As the Ramana Swamigazl said, the idea of being man is mired in sin; there is no sensation of being man or being anything else in the state of deep dreamless sleep. When the I has faded away, no more does scope remain for You or He. Blessed be the names of the Sacred Ancient Prophets of Jehovah. Blessed be the sacred name of Shirdi Wale Sai Baba, the beatifically-countenanced saint who ever dwells in the heart of those who worship him in all earnestness, sincerity and Faith, and who declared in His Boundless Grace, Sabka Malick Eak, The Lord of All is One. Om Arunachaleshwaraya Namaha. Om Namo Bhagawathe Shree Ramanaaya. Om Shree Ramanarpanum Asthu. Peace be unto all. I penned the story of formation of Arunaachalaa in my own words, so that a brief version of the same be rendered available unto ourselves to refer should and when necessity present itself therefor; thus, here goes: Once upon a time, a long long time ago, a dispute occurred between Brahma and Vishnu as to whom among them was the greatest, and they started vociferously arguing about the matter. The argument between them engrossed them to such an extent that they began to fail in performing their respective duties and functions. The Devas and the Gandharvas went to Lord Shiva for help, for the duo simply would not calm down, and refused to permit any mediator to intervene in the matter and settle the argument on their behalf. Unbeknownst to the duo, Lord Shiva then manifested himself as an endless column of Light, and when the Deities Brahma and Vishnu observed this column of Light, they were surprised, being powerful beings themselves, by its seemingly infinite dimensions. Then, Vishnu thus

said to Brahma: 'Behold this vast column of Light which stretches infinitely in either direction. Let us put an end to this dispute of ours by means of its assistance. Whoever reaches its end first is to be permanently regarded as the most powerful amongst the 2 of us. You take this end which stretches upward, and I shall take this other.' Brahma, convinced of his might, readily agreed, thinking that the task facing him would be child's play. Even after journeying for many 1000s of years, neither of them could trace the beginning or end of this limitless column of Light. Vishnu wearied of the journey and decided to turn back. Therefore, he prepared himself to return, and started along the way whence he had come. However, Brahma's vain vanity would not permit him to give up so easily. He thought to himself, I must humiliate Vishnu; so, let me lie that I have reached the end of this endless column of light. Thus convincing himself, he began to look for some proof to fraudulently show to Vishnu so as to convince the other that he indeed had reached the summit of the beam of Light. At that moment, he observed a whitish-yellow flower floating about near his presence, approaching from the opposite direction. He eagerly asked the flower, 'I have been journeying many long and arduous years, but the end is nowhere in sight. Since you seem to be coming from the top, tell me therefore, how far yet should one travel to be able to reach the extreme end?' At this juncture, the flower started laughing at Brahma, whereupon Brahma enquired, 'Why do you laugh so?'. The flower responded as follows: 'Oh Sire! I have been journeying for trillions upon trillions of years, but I sense I am not very far away from where I began; I did not begin this journey of mine at any summit to this great beam of light, but only started from where I noticed it tearing across the dimensions and fabric of the cosmos. Humbly do I beseech unto thee this, that thou doth not endeavor to trace the origin of this Light. I have sensed that this which we stand to behold is no ordinary beam of Effulgence; it is supremely divine, for it is Lord Shiva Himself. Pay obeisance to it and be delivered by His Grace, I pray you.' Brahma did not like what he heard. He arrogantly asserted that He was the origin of All Creation. In a furious temper, he then spoke as follows: 'Who dare praise anyone other than me when I am here? How does it bode well to me if my own creation cannot appreciate my greatness and sing praises in my glory? You, O Flower!, have made the great mistake of praising Shiva, who is merely a destroyer without subtlety, in my presence. Shiva the ascetic with the long matted locks knows only to destroy all

of my infinitely beautiful creation, toward which end he need possess, and possesses, no discrimination to employ. Now, say, which field of activity needs more ingenuity and originality? Destruction or Creation? Do you not know all this? Must you not behave with humility and subservience toward your master who created you, instead of daring to perpetrate the vile act of praising someone else in His presence, and, at that, an ascetic who solicits alms with a skull as his begging-bowl, whose function is to simply reduce to homogeneous ash all my wonderful and varied creation at the end of every cosmic cycle? Being so aware of your duty toward your master who created you, to always remain cherished and beloved in his sight, why then do you praise Shiva, the unheeding destroyer, the ignorant one? No one who praises another in my August and Holy Presence is permitted by me to escape unscathed. However, beholding your frail and slender frame, I, in keeping with my merciful nature, have decided to take pity on you. Thus, I will be considerate toward you and am prepared to spare you, but on one condition only: You must utter a lie for my sake, and you must speak that lie to Shiva whom you have so foolishly praised now. If you do so, I may, then, be adequately sympathetic toward you as to decide on permitting you to float away freely, without having to pay for the consequence of the heinous crime you have committed in behaving in this disrespectful manner toward me, by singing praises glorifying a beggar ascetic when your master, creator and lord is in front of you.' Initially, the flower vigorously refused the offer of Brahma, for she was terrified. However, Brahma was eventually successful in convincing her. He instructed her as to the lie that he expected her to speak, and told her when she must speak it. Thereafter, the 2 of them proceeded to where Brahma had started his journey from. When they reached there, and when Brahma noticed Vishnu waiting there, looking crest-fallen and disappointed, he said to him at once, 'I am aware that you have failed; I wonder if it would interest you to take cognition of the fact that I have succeeded. See, this flower will now corroborate what I have just said to you.' At that very moment, a terrible vibration rent the sky, and Maheshwara appeared. All bowed before him, including the Devas, Asuras, Apsaras, Gandharvas and Bhoothas who had assembled there. However, Brahma and Vishnu remained aloof, indifferent and without animation. Maheshwara said: 'It was heard that there was a contest between these two constituents of the Mummurthis regarding the discovery of the finity

of this infinite column of Effulgence; of these two, which one has won?' Vishnu said, 'I travelled for so many life-times of Brahma that I lost count, in the ancient of days, as to how many must have passed since the time I started my journey. However, I could not make any progress.' So saying, Lord Paranthaama fell silent. However, Brahma, who was intoxicated in his arrogance and contempt for The Lord of Ascetics, spoke as follows: 'O One Who Uses The Skull As His Begging Bowl! Listen to my heroic tale and be humbled thereby! I, who am responsible for the creation of All Creation, by reason of whose Mercy and Grace and out of whom the Cosmos manifested itself, decided in my divine intent to explore the origin of this apparently great and endless beam of light. Oh Lord of Alms-Seekers! Know that I took a single step and reached the origin of this pillar of light. When I reached there, this flower was also there- ask of the flower, whether that was not so. At least now, it may occur to you to openly acknowledge the secret acceptance, cradled in your faculty of the intellect, that I am indisputably the greatest among the thrimurthis, which is a fact of truth that cannot be denied or refused by anyone.' The moment Brahma uttered those words, the 3 faces of Rudran were filled with a terrible wrath that none could bear to behold. All the worlds caught fire and were burning and smoldering into ashes. The Celestial Beings including Indra, The Lord of Heaven who suffered from a thousand eyes, and the other two thrimurthis, were frightened. Brahma, quaking with unadulterated terror, writhed in agitation and yelped in agony, 'My Lord! I know that I did wrong. Please forgive my crimes and misadventures. I beg of you, kindly take pity on me! Spare us all, I pray you!'. Maheshwara paid not the slightest attention to him, but reached for his instrument of percussion. If he completed a single note even on it, thereafter, the currently incumbent cosmos would have to dissolve into nothingness, thus invoking the subsequent round of creation, marking the birth of its own cycle from Time-Zero, to blossom. To prevent this irrevocable destruction of all creation currently extant, Brahma desperately spoke to his spouse Saraswathi, as follows: 'Pray speak to your sister Umaa Devi, who is the consort of Maheshwara, and ask her to appeal to Shiva her husband, so that we may all be saved from this terrible calamity that my misdemeanors have brought upon all of our heads.' Vishnu the wielder of the Sudharshana-Chakra then spoke as follows to Lakshmi his spouse, and he made to her an appeal similar to the one Brahma had made to his own. Neither Saraswathi

nor Lakshmi were initially convinced, but when they observed the imminent destruction of all the worlds, they rushed to Umaa Devi and covered her feet with their hair, begging her to pay heed to their words. While initially nonchalant toward their piteous wails, Umaa Devi, upon having beheld the miserable condition of her sisters, eventually brought herself around to take pity on them; thus, she agreed to abide by their request; so, Umaa Devi, the mother of the Lord of Monks [Jnanis] whose abode is Pazhani, appeared in front of Maheshwara, the blue-necked Supreme Ascetic, in the form of a small child, having set eyes on which he became tranquil and self-composed. Shiva The Supreme Lord among the Gods then spoke as follows: 'Since Vishnu has spoken the Truth he shall be spared. Brahma has lied. Thus, nevermore shall any temple hereafter be constructed for him on any of the worlds. As for this flower, she has agreed to commit fraud. Nevermore shall she find place on my head, and nevermore shall she be fit for usage in any kind of worship. To test my comrades Vishnu and Brahma, I myself manifested in my limitless form, as this pillar of Light which you behold here. This column of Light is what I truly am. It is impossible for anyone to understand or assimilate it, unless he were to know his real nature, which is Shivam, or this Jyothi that you behold apparently before you, but feel stretching through you, around you, beyond you, and yet within you, without beginning or end or middle. Now that my True Nature of Being-Consciousness has become apparent to one and all, let me resolve this Jyothi into myself. Henceforth those who wish to see it may dive into their own depths, and by slicing through the innermost fabric of their mundane\temporal being, and thus shedding away the already non-existent Ahamkara [I-Thought or I-am-ness or I-am-Consciousness], they would reach this Light, Self-Luminous and Self-Encompassing.' So saying, He the Lord started to turn the great column of Light or Being-Consciousness inward and toward his Self. However, all the celestial beings gathered there, including Brahma and Vishnu, fell at His blessed feet, and said, 'Oh Lord!, today, by virtue of your grace, we have learnt a lesson never to be forgotten and a sight never to escape from our recollection; we do not wish to take our eyes away from this wonderful column of Light, but desire to go on seeing it till our days continue, be it day or night or twilight, without pause or break, for it has enraptured our Hearts. We beg of you therefore that you do not remove it, but may it remain, for not all of us are privileged enough to acquire knowledge of

Reality, in order that we may strike at the root of the ego and transcend the idea of its existence; again, we require this divine form to push us from without, that we may recognize the fact when it pulls us from within; so, O Emperor among the Ascetics!, we beseech you that you show us that your mercy can be as mighty as your wrath, and accede to this our prayer.' Lord Shiva, being pleased well, spoke then the following words: 'If it is here, this will be of use only to those who can travel by Ether [that is to say, those that can propagate as (any one or more variant of) Electromagnetic Force, or celestial beings]; I will direct it downwards to the Earth, so that it may be steadfast in the peninsula of the country of BhaarathaVarshaa; therefore, being there, it may be of avail for Man to benefit from also. So saying, Mahaadhaevaa, The Supreme God, placed the great pillar of Light on the Earth, where it became Arunachala [That condition of absence of indebtedness which is never subject to change, or a mind, the condition of which is such that its formerly obligatory tendencies to move out of its source have vanished, and, which stays in that condition permanently (so that its individual character is lost and it is merged, once and for all, in the source)] or Annaamalai [The Eldest Mountain or The Unapproachable Mountain] of reddish-golden hue. Lord Shiva, The Emperor of the Bhoothaas and Raakhshasaas, then spoke as follows: 'This 5-peaked mountain is my true and real form, and it is truer than the one that is now talking to you all. He who even thinks of it from afar perpetually, and meditates on its name and form without pause or break, is sure to be awakened into Reality, that is his true nature of Shivam or Undifferentiated Consciousness of Being. He who repeatedly comes around its circumference or who stays continuously in the physical proximity of its vicinity, while remaining still in inquisitive contemplation of his origin, is also without doubt assured of Liberation, wherein he sees no difference between Himself, Yourself, and Myself. Thus was related the narration of how Arunaachalaa came to be on the Earth. As expounded in this plausible tale, the power of Arunaachalaa, referred to and hailed as the 'Heart of the Earth', in various sacred ancient texts, as also in the most famous and succinct publication put up for sale by Shree Ramanashramam, Who am I?, to turn the mind inward in search of, and questing for, its source has been discussed many times by the Maharshi. Sri Ramana Maharishi composed many verses of lyrical praise, extolling the mountain's silent unmoving presence, by reason of which the

assiduous spiritual aspirant's ego is wiped out, thus manumitting him from its clutches forever. Arunaachala-Maahaathmyam compassionately assures the earnest spiritual aspirant with the following categorical affirmation: 'By seeing Chidambaram, by being born in Tiruvarur, by dying in Kasi, or by merely thinking of Arunaachalaa, one will surely attain Liberation.' Blessed be the names of the Sacred Ancient Prophets of Jehovah. Blessed be the sacred name of Shirdi Wale Sai Baba, the beatifically-countenanced saint who ever dwells in the heart of those who worship him in all earnestness, sincerity and Faith, and who declared in His Boundless Grace, Sabka Malick Eak, The Lord of All is One. Om Arunachaleswaraya Namaha. Om Namoh Bhagawathe Shree Ramanaaya. Om Shree Ramanarpanum Asthu. Peace be unto all.

My mother died recently. She was the only organism in this vast and boundless universe that I cared for and that I wanted to spend time with, and now this is also gone. For some length of time I, who used at the time to heap unabashed quantities of pride upon myself on the idea of being someone who never lost things, have been regularly losing things. I lost necklaces, keys, and antique pens. Now the final fatal loss has arrived. After each of the earlier losses, I would somehow find the courage to get up again and resume fighting, with and in consequence of the emotional and moral support given by her. Now she has been absorbed into the void. There will be no more fighting anymore, for I shall be meekly accepting whatever life throws at me; even this statement expressed is characterized by having undergone the application of a process of chipping-away of the truth with the view of making it more presentable and acceptable to imaginary audiences of this diary; the unqualified and absolute truth is that the fighter or warrior, the ego, is dead. He cannot rise anymore, because all these days, he was leaving his lair, the Heart, to meet his mother, who lay outside in the form of an animated body that one interacted with, whereas now his mother has herself entered this lair and merged irrevocably, irreversibly and irretrievably into it, thus robbing him of the only motive he ever had to leave it and venture outside. The loss of the one supreme object has led to the comprehensive annihilation of the subject who all these days had been existing merely so as for that object, so as to adore it, admire it and worship it. Now the object has entered into the abyss of the Heart, and the subject follows suit, because he cannot live where she is not. Till she was in the world, 'I' was there too. Now she has



vanished from the world and plunged into the Source; thus I must go there too, for separation from her is not possible. Therefore do I plunge into the Heart-cave, which is the source of all objects. The Heart-cave is the source of all objects because it is by the light of this cave that the objects of the world are illumined, and in truth it is this light that constitutes them. So, when an object is reduced into its elements or for some other reason cannot be successfully traced in this material world, we must look for it in the deep recess of the Heart-cave, the source whence its emergence can be traced.

Mother's body is now gone. What happened to the life in the body? Since that is not perishable, it cannot have been destroyed; the only place to look for it is in the Heart-cave. The Self of one is the Self of all, declared the Sage of Arunagiri. So, if I dive within the Heart-cave I shall succeed in finding my mother's Self, for my Self is the same as her's according to Sri Ramana Maharshi. Thus now there is nothing to do but to return to the source from which 'I' have arisen and dissolve this limited self of mine there, so that at last there can no more be any question of separation from my mother. Grief on account of death of a loved one, said the Sage, arises on account of false values caused due to wrong knowledge and wrong identification; kill the griever- then let us see who will remain to grieve; the ego must perish- there is no other way; in truth there is neither birth nor death, for these are only mental conceptualizations; where has the loved one gone?- to the source from which she sprang. These words of the sage simply strengthen my resolve to get rid of this world, which no longer holds anything of value to me now that the one supremely cherished object has vanished from it, and retreat the way I came, back into the Self. One whose attention is fixed on the Aathmun alone finds that the mundane world goes on without any disturbance or glitch, and that the Aathmun makes his body perform the duties that await it and for which it is destined. If I concentrate on the Aathmun alone, my worldly affairs and jobs are taken care of by the Aathmun, and I am left undisturbed to focus on this my uninterrupted concentration or self-contemplation. One's all other duties are effectively fulfilled by the Aathmun by making use of the body as an instrument, in the case of he who fulfills or discharges effectively the supreme duty of self-contemplation; therefore his earthly duties do not interfere with his spiritual effort. Thinking of my mother is not good homage- it is gross betrayal. The homage I pay to my mother is to remain merged in the source of thought. All thoughts

are to be avoided. Therefore, by implication, thoughts of my mother should be avoided also. Any thought is and all thoughts are poisonous, for they lead to and end in pure bondage and nothing but that. My mother did not want me to live in bondage; she wanted me to be happy, for I remember her telling me so on countless occasions; happiness is possible only with freedom, and freedom means absence of bondage; absence of bondage can come only with Complete Silence, where there is no scope for the thought 'I' or any other thought. Thus we see that it is imperative that we remain unsullied by thought, if we are to remain free- that is to say happy, as my mother wanted. It is foolish to think of my mother in her earthly form, which is no longer there and cannot be anymore, rather than actually going where she is now and remaining there permanently. If I did not know where my mother was now I could bemoan her loss and cry out, "Alas, I am bereaved! I am devastated! I know not where my mother has gone, leaving me behind here!" However, that is not the case: I know where I shall have to look for her- nay, where I shall find her. There is only one source of all sentience and cognition, and if this is revealed in its entire glory and munificence, all losses are nullified- that is to say, discovered as having been imaginary. This source is where I shall find my mother, and this source is the Heart-cave. The Aathmun has enveloped me in its currents and I am blissfully caught in its grip, and I know I shall be till 'I' no longer exist as a separate being, but merge into the Aathmun itself, so that 'I' would no longer refer to anything but the Aathmun. This recognition of my identity with the Aathmun can arise only after the sense of individual personality-hood has completely dissolved itself in the Aathmun. That is certain, and that is what I want, because the sacrifice I shall have to make in order to win my mother back is the supreme sacrifice: it is the sacrifice of myself on the altar of self-knowledge with the dagger of vichara. It does not involve mutilation of the body, for the elegant reason that the body is no longer 'mine', because there would have to be an 'I' before there could be a 'mine', and this 'I' is the sacrificial-goat: it cannot remain. The idea of sacrifice seems to be horrible, but here what remains after the sacrifice would be bliss, for I would remain within my mother always, once 'I' ceased. It is indeed true that mundane affairs are taking care of themselves, in my case. All activity 'I' seemingly perform, 'I' do not perform in truth: only the Aathmun performs. Ramana Maharshi made it completely clear that there exists no individual entity known

as the Ego to which or to whom experiences can accrue. Experiences take place from the point of view of an experiencer, but since the experiencer is fictitious, so are the experiences. There is no need to think at all. Events take place all on their own; it is impossible for us to influence them in any way. Our thoughts do not influence our actions. Actions and thoughts are entirely on two different planes. Action is part of the tangible world we see around us. The body acts in the surroundings in which it finds itself. The mind makes the mistake of associating itself with that body; therein lies the root of all our misery. Thoughts simply pretend that they cause action; however, by closely scrutinizing how the process of the psyche works on a wholistic level, it has been possible for me to arrive at the valid and genuine conclusion that the truth is precisely the other way round: action takes place spontaneously, and the mind back-uploads information in the form of thought in such a way that it appears to itself that its own thought has caused that particular piece of action. The process is ingeniously cunning, as stupendously intelligent as it is enormously vile. Yet, when it is once caught in the act, thereafter the idea that the mind is real begins to fade away. As is obvious, this is an appalling discovery. For example, let us suppose that I thought I decided that the eastern wall of my house should be painted blue in colour, and pursuant to that decision it was so painted; however, it turns out that the wall was first painted in that colour, and then a false notion was back-impregnated into the brain by the mind saying that my choice is what made the paint colour selected to be blue. This is the resolution of the paradox of free will versus God's will: only the latter exists, but the former subsists as an illusionary phenomenon. All this I figured out after seriously pondering over Ramana Maharshi's teachings. The cosmos that the individual perceives around him is totally non-existent and has no meaning apart from the Self; thus the surroundings can themselves not be an impediment to the path\practise of vichara; the actual impediment is that the individual, instead of turning inside to face Reality, perceives the cosmos in which he believes he finds himself. Should I shut my eyes to the world, someone asked the Sage. He said, "Turn inside and then see the whole world as the Self." So, do not close the physical eyes; instead, free the mind from all conditioning. Ramana Maharshi demands complete surrender and I have met that condition laid down by him for attainment of the state known as Sahaja-Jnana-Stithi. I have given up activity to the extent

feasible, because activity plunges my mind in restlessness and effervescence. The Sage has clearly pointed out that any information created or generated on this plane is already permanently irretrievable ab-initio; he says it is similar to attempting to search for an object that you have lost in a dream. Suppose in your dream you are wearing a Gold-ring on your finger, said He, if you misplace it or if it slips off your finger and falls into a drain pipe, will you, in what you call your waking state, search for the location of the drain pipe so that you can retrieve the Gold-ring? Is there any meaning in mixing the states of the dream that accosts you whilst you are asleep, and the one you are seemingly entangled in now, whilst apparently awake? No, because no leads remain from one to another, no passages, and any co-relation you try to make between the two states is exclusively harboured in your own imagination, as the two states themselves are. Likewise, the Sage who has awakened into the natural state of Jnana cannot affirm the reality of the dream experiences, whether it is the dream that comes on in sleep or the one that comes on while apparently awake. From his point of view, both are real as the Self, and have no other identity. Information is not preserved in either of these dream states for the same reason it is of no avail to search for a possession lost in one of the dream states in the other dream state, for both are purely mythical or fictitious: they are spurious mental creations. So, to escape from all this fiction and realise and abide as Truth or Reality, the only thing to be done is to simply BE. All we need to do is to keep the mind STILL: that is to stay, the mind should be steadily kept poised in one-pointedness or ekagrata. Sri Ramana said, Ask yourself, who is the thinker of this thought? This will make the thinker automatically sink into his source, which is Absolute Consciousness. All Scriptures are only to make the man retrace his steps to his source; instead of doing so, however, he tries to grasp anything and everything that appeals to him as being strange and mysterious, because he believes that his happiness is outside, somewhere apart from him; this is the great mistake. Our duty is not to be this or that, but simply to BE. The statements in the Bible, I am that I am, and Be Still and know that I am [is] God, clearly reveal the truth that one is to enquire within to know the Truth. First find the truth about yourself, and then you will be in a better position to find the truth about the world of which you consider yourself to be a part. Instead of making enquiries about distant objects or concepts, first find out the truth behind that

which is prathyaksha- that is to say, immediately and spontaneously self-evident; then the rest will automatically reveal itself in proper light; if not, time enough to ask then. One who says, I have surrendered, but results do not manifest themselves, has never surrendered. One who has surrendered must unconditionally and unreservedly accept the will of the Lord; that is the attitude followed by Job in the Bible. Blessed be the sacred name of Shirdi Wale Sai Baba, the beatifically-countenanced saint who ever dwells in the heart of his devotees who have surrendered themselves to Him in Faith that recognises no reserve, and who declared in His Boundless Grace, Sabka Malick Eak, The Lord of All is One. Om Arunachaleshwaraya Namaha. Om Namō Bhagawathe Shree Ramanaaya. Om Shree Ramanarpanum Asthu. Peace be unto all.  
SHALOM

S>M>

The diary-entries of Mrs. Piggot were well-appreciated in the Hall; the master also seemed to think highly of the same; he remarked:

B.: When the mind becomes mature on account of introversion, Advaitic-thoughts seem to occur to it naturally- i.e., without being invited to present themselves. However, Realisation can be had only after the inclination or predisposition to think such thoughts also has faded away.

P>S>

I have not preserved the dates in the above diary-entries, thinking it to be unnecessary.

S>M>

E.Z.: I have heard that Mr. Humphreys was the first Caucasian man to set eyes upon Sri Bhagawan; is that right?

B.: Yes.

E.Z.: Was Mrs. Piggot the first Caucasian woman to set eyes upon Sri Bhagawan?

B.: No.

C.: Then who came before her?

B.: A Caucasian woman came here many years back. She was from the United-states. She was a young woman, but had a deep scholarly interest in Vedanta.

C.: What was her name?

B.: I do not recall the name with perfect accuracy, although I remember her well. I think the name was a Mademoiselle Marie Barkös.

C.: I find this piece of information to be hugely fascinating. Exactly when did she arrive here?

B.: Around the time of the major Wall-street crash which took place in 1929.

C.: How had she come to know about Bhagawan? Paul Brunton's Secret India was not published then.

B.: She had read about me in the International Psychic Gazette, but that article had not motivated her visit. Reading that article, she had become briefly fascinated with the 'Hindoo-saint' described therein; later on she forgot all about him. One day, she seems to have heard a knock on the door of her apartment, situated near Stonewall Inn in Manhattan. On opening it, who should be standing there but Sri Ramana Maharshi himself! [laughing] Apparently, I told her to come visit me here. I fortunately remembered to ask her whether the Manhattan-based Ramana Maharshi also was clad only in a koupeenam or whether he was wearing anything more! Do you know what the response was? "Oh! no, sir. You were, I remember, wearing a cobalt-violet coloured double-breasted shawl-lapelled smoking-jacket, with three large brass buttons; also you had on you head a homburg-hat of the same colour..." Then I thought to myself, see, atleast the Manhattan-based Ramana Maharshi has some amount of decent dressing-sense! [shaking with laughter]

C.: [smiling] After this vision, did she come to India straightaway?

B.: She told her guru, a Japanese buddhist monk named Sri Chokkaiyyan, about the matter; he suggested to her that she must go at once. The Manhattan-based Ramana Maharshi had told her in detail how to reach this place! Upon arriving at this place, she was greatly surprised to find the same person who had met her there. The Manhattan-based Ramana Maharshi had not introduced himself as being Ramana Maharshi, apparently. He had merely told her to go to a certain ashram in Southern India, where she would find a great spiritual master who would guide her towards God; then he had told her how to reach Ramanasramam- i.e., where to change trains, etc.; thereafter he had abruptly turned around and left, leaving her baffled; after coming here the woman asked me why I had not introduced myself when I had visited her in Manhattan. What to say? Then those in the Hall explained to her that what she had seen was a miracle, because 'this' was neither in the habit of leaving Tiruvannamalai nor in the habit of donning smoking-jackets and hats! She brought presents for the ashram: a big box filled with 'hardtack biscuits', and a few loaves of baguette-bread, baked thrice to endure the long journey from the United-states to this place by steamer. Actually, prior to her visit I had no idea that bread was baked in the world that was shaped in this manner. So, when she arrived, I initially wondered why she was wandering about carrying long sticks of firewood with her. Then she told me that these stout tree-branch-like contrivances were in fact edible bread-loaves. The people here would not eat bread if given to them directly. So I ensured that the same was

sliced and put in the sambhar as thaan. For a week we had nothing to eat but rice and sambhar with bread-pieces in it as thaan. In those days the cooking arrangements at the ashram were not so elaborate. People happily ate the sambhar that was served; other than a few who watched whilst I was working in the kitchen, the rest thought it was pooshinikkai-thaan, and ate it happily. If given to them to eat straightaway, they would not eat it; they would say that it was polluted food[paradesa-theetu], having been brought from another country[overseas]. I did not want to waste what this poor girl had brought with so much sincerity from such a long distance. As for the biscuits, 'this' and a few others finished it off in a few weeks. The breads were fragrant; they were flavoured with marjoram-spice on the outside; she must have taken a lot of effort to prepare them and bring them all the way here... Apart from the bread and the biscuits, she also brought a personal gift for me: a large kaleidoscope. It was an interesting experience to look into it. It was there here for several years; later one day, Sahib brought his son here. The small boy started playing with the instrument, and became quite attached to it. So the device was gifted away to him...

S>M>

Q.: A friend of mine has an apartment in Manhattan. I can take it on rent from him if I wish; he would oblige me anytime. Shall I move there? Will Bhagawan please come visit me there everyday? I can arrange for plant-based food to be served to Bhagawan. Please come to visit me also.

B.: [kindly] There was and can be no volition on my part that I must visit this person or the other. These things happen automatically. All events in one's life are preordained by Ishwara; we have no say in them. Let us turn the mind inward and obtain for ourselves unlimited happiness; that is the only thing in our control. You say that you would like Bhagawan to visit you everyday. There is no need for Bhagawan to visit you. He is with you always. Can you be apart from Him? Impossible. Realise Him as the Self of yourself. Then there can be no question of parting from him.

Q.: But I am attached to Bhagawan's mortal frame. Will such attachment obstruct or thwart my attempts to Realise the Self?

B.: Any attachment is an obstacle. However, mentally sticking with one attachment to the exclusion of every other attachment ripens the mind rapidly for Realisation. In the end, of course, even that one single attachment must be given up before Realisation can dawn.

S>M>

Q.: I am attached to the mortal frame or physical image of Jesus. Is it a help for Realisation or an obstacle?

B.: It is a help.

Q.: Does such attachment count as abhyasa?

B.: In the preliminary stages of practise, yes. Finally the aspirant is expected to move irrevocably towards nirgunopasana.

5th September, 1936

Today Mr. TKS read out entries from a diary maintained by him appurtenant to the goings on concerning Sri Bhagawan when the master was staying up on the Hill during his early days in Tiruvannamalai. Apparently Mr. TKS had been a devotee of Bhagawan even during those early days, and used to visit him everyday without fail. The following is one such entry read out by him:

Once when Sri Bhagawan was staying in the Virupaksha-cave, he was visited by a man from the Vaishnavite religion. Although this man was orthodox, he showed profound regard and admiration for Bhagawan as one who had attained the highest stage in Bhakti. Much to my surprise, and contrary to usual Vaishnava custom, he used to prostrate morning and evening to Bhagawan. He stayed with Him for three days, during which he spoke about the state of a Jivanmukta. He was all praise for Bhagawan, but had the one doubt as to how a Jivanmukta could attain the Abode of Vishnu without formal initiation; his own teacher was much troubled also on this point and had sent him with the offer to come in person to confer initiation on Bhagawan with mantra and sealing of the Vaishnavite emblems on His shoulders- if the Maharshi consented to receive it at his hands. He added that his teacher was greatly concerned about the welfare of such a rare soul as Sri Maharshi, and he had been commissioned by God in a dream to give Him this initiation. All there were eager to know how Bhagawan would react to this extraordinary proposal. But Sri Maharshi maintained his usual silence. Perhaps He hoped the emissary would go away quietly when found that his mission was a failure; if so, He was disappointed, for the Vaishnava remained. But when he spoke to Bhagawan about his teacher's dream, Bhagawan had no difficulty in solving the problem and quietly remarked: "Let the same Lord Vishnu appear in my dream also and order me to accept the initiation, and I shall accept it." On the third day after this pious soul arrived, an old Brahmin came to Skandashram with a bundle; after prostrating to Sri Bhagawan, he laid the bundle before Him and went out for his bath- but strangely did not return. After some time, curious to know the contents of the bundle, Bhagawan had it untied; in it was found a palm-leaf manuscript of the Arunachala Purana. Bhagawan untied the strings of



the manuscript and began to read it. Lo! behold, He found there a verse on initiation: "To souls living within twenty-four miles of Arunachala, union with Me will be granted, even without any initiation to remove impurity (mala). Thus have I decreed, and this is My behest." This Vaishnava devotee was amazed at this decree of the Lord; the very appearance at that time of the Arunachala Purana and the disappearance of the old Brahmin seemed to him to be equally mysterious. All felt that the Lord Arunachaleswara Himself had presented the verse as answer to the Vaishnava doubts. The pious vaishnavite took leave of Bhagavan, saying he would report the whole history to his teacher.

Mr. TKS was appreciated in the Hall for his excellent diary-entries.

6th September, 1936

Q.: Is Realisation available only for those who live in Tiruvannamalai?

B.: There is no such rule.

Q.: Will those living here find it easier to Realise the Self compared to others?

B.: Yes. But still effort on your part is also required. Staying in Tiruvannamalai is one kind of sadhana provided you regularly circumambulate the Hill; yet this alone will not do. Abhyasa is necessary to get rid of avidya[wrong knowledge which assumes that the body or mind is the Self].

S>M>

Q.: I am unable to Realise the Self by means of meditation.

B.: Where are you now? Are you in the Self or out of it? Can there be anything apart from the Self?

Q.: I understand that the Self is non-dual. Yet ignorance prevents me from Realising the non-dual Self.

B.: Who is ignorant of what? Are there then 2 selves, so that one of them can be ignorant of the other?

Q.: I am only a limited being and not the unlimited Self.

B.: Limitation is only a mental concept; it is only an idea in the mind. What is your state in deep sleep? You exist in deep sleep. You also exist now. It is the same you. But the feeling of limitation does not arise in deep sleep. Why?

Q.: Because now my mind is active. In sushupti the mind was asleep.

B.: There was no mind in sleep. But YOU were there. So, mind comes and goes, but there is no change in YOU. YOU, the Self, remain always. The Self remains unaffected whether mind is present or absent.

Q.: I understand theoretically. But I am unable to Realise It.

B.: Introvert the mind gradually and you will See one day what you really are.

Q.: Is the dawn of Realisation gradual or sudden?

B.: Introversion of mind, which is a sine qua non for Realisation, is usually gradual. Realisation is always sudden.

Q.: Meditation is with mind only. That being so, how can it kill the mind itself?

B.: Meditation means sticking to one thought to the exclusion of every other. One particular thought keeps away all others. A distracted mind is weak and filled with numerous thoughts. A strong mind is focused on one particular thought only. Constant meditation transforms the weak mind into the strong mind. The mind is a layer of thought obnubilating the Real Self. By constantly sticking with one thought, that one thought also eventually disappears and the enduring background is revealed; this is free from all thought; the background upon which the mind is superimposed is the beingness of the Self. Mind in its purity is the same as the beingness of the Self. The beingness of the Self is not the same as the Self, in the same way as the rays of the sun are not the sun himself. The feeling of beingness felt by you is only an experience of reflected consciousness. Supposing you stare at a reflection of the sun in a pool of muddy water; this cannot compare with the experience of being the sun himself. To reach that state, one's bodily and mental identifications must be given up. The ignorant man believes that the Self is confined to the body only, whereas the Jnani's experience is that the body and world cannot remain apart from the Self. The Self of the Jnani is infinite and includes the body also. The blissful peace of the Self is your Real Nature. Contrary ideas are only illusory superimpositions. Peace is not to be obtained through practise. Peace is already there. It is not to be freshly obtained. Then what is the use of practise? It is to give up all your wrong notions; that is all. Your true nature encompasses the three states and extends beyond them. You are really the formless Self. The Self or Heart is all that exists. The Heart is neither within nor without. It simply IS. It has no second. The mind is the sakti aspect of the Self. After the emergence of the mind, the universe appears and the body is seen to be contained in it. The body and the rest of the cosmos are only an appearance in the imperishable Self. They body and the world are all contained in the Self only and they cannot exist apart from the Self. The Self is the same always and remains unaffected whether the cosmos or mind appears in it or not. Self can and does exist without mind. Mind exists only because of the Self and only in the Self. There can be no mind apart from the Self. Realisation means non-recognition of the mind being apart from the Self.

Q.: But how to practise meditation, practically speaking?

B.: What is meditation? It is Atmanishtai. When thoughts present themselves, trace them back to their source and thus continue to remain as the beingness of the Self as ever; the effort involved in doing so is termed as meditation.

Atmanishtai is your actual nature. Remain as you are. There is no aim or goal to be reached. You are THAT always.

Q.: Thoughts present themselves to the mind without invitation. Is our effort only meant to eliminate thoughts?

B.: Meditation being on a single thought, all other thoughts are kept away. Meditation is simply negative in effect inasmuch as thoughts are kept at bay.

Q.: How to fix the mind in the Self?

B.: Not by thinking of the Self, for the Self cannot be comprehended or conceived of by the mind.

Q.: In that case, how to carry on meditation?

B.: Why do you wish to meditate at all? Because you wish to do so you are told that you ought to fix the mind in the Self. Why not simply remain as you are without meditating and without being bothered by thoughts that endeavour to clamour for your attention? What is mind? There is no such thing. When all thoughts are eliminated mind becomes automatically Atma-samstha[fixed in the Self].

Q.: Meditation on the Self is impossible because the Self is formless. If there is a form available in the Self we can meditate on the same easily.

B.: All forms are of the Self only. You can choose any form you like for your abhyasa. Meditation on forms or concrete objects is said to be dhyana, whereas investigation into the not-Self is vichara or nirgunopasana. There can be no investigation into the Self. Investigation is only into the not-Self. Investigating into the not-Self, we find that it never existed at all. Then only the Self is left as the residue. This process is termed as Realisation. But there is nothing to be freshly got. Realisation only means destruction of poorvasamskaras.

S>M>

Q.: How to Realise Paramatman?

B.: He is the Self, who is in Eternal Realisation. The Self is nitya suddha bhudda mukta. Realisation is only the jiva's discovery of its own non-existence, in which discovery that same jiva is destroyed. Realisation cannot correctly be understood to mean that the Self undergoes the same. The Self must be eternally Realised; otherwise there will be no point in trying to Realise the same. If the Self is not eternal it must have a beginning; what begins will also end; so that the same would merely be only a transient entity. There is no use seeking what is transitory. If what you get is going to disappear the next minute, what is the use in making efforts to get it? The fact is that the Self is a state of effortless, ever-alert Peace. Effortlessness while remaining aware is the state of Supreme Bliss; the same leads to Realisation.

Q.: I do not want intellectual answers. I want your answers to be practical.

B.: Yes. Direct knowledge does not require intellectual discourses. Since the Self is directly experienced by everyone, intellectual explanations are not at all necessary. Everyone says 'I am'. Can there be anything further to Realise?

Q.: I do not understand what you are trying to say.

B.: You exist. You say 'I am'. That means existence.

Q.: I am unsure of my existence.

B.: In that case, who is speaking now?

Q.: I, surely. But whether I exist or not, I am not sure. Moreover, admitting my existence leads me nowhere.

B.: There must be a one even to deny one's own existence. If you do not exist, there is no questioner, and so no question can arise.

Q.: All right. I admit that I exist.

B.: How do you know that you exist?

Q.: Because I think, I feel, I see, etc.; I infer the fact of my existence from these acts.

B.: There is no feeling, thinking, etc., in deep sleep and yet there is the beingness of the Self.

Q.: I cannot say whether I existed in deep sleep.

B.: Do you deny your existence in sleep?

Q.: I may be or may not be alive in sleep. Who knows?

B.: When you wake up from sleep, you remember what you did before falling asleep.

Q.: I can say that I existed before and after sleep, but I cannot say if I existed during sleep itself when I am in that state.

B.: Do you now say that you existed in asleep?

Q.: Yes.

B.: How do you know that unless you remember the state of sleep?

Q.: It does not follow that I existed in sleep. Admission of such existence leads me nowhere.

B.: Do you mean to say that a man dies everytime sleep overtakes him and that he resuscitates back to life everytime whilst waking?

Q.: Maybe. God alone knows.

B.: Then let God come and find the solution for these riddles. If one were to die in sleep, one would be afraid of sleep, just as one fears death. On the other hand one courts sleep. Why should sleep be courted unless there is pleasure in it?

Q.: There is no positive pleasure in sleep. Sleep is courted only to be rid of physical fatigue.

B.: This means that in sleep there is one who is free from fatigue, or who experiences the state of freedom from fatigue.

Q.: Yes.

B.: You are the same one that existed in sleep. You exist now also. In sleep there were no thoughts, feelings, etc.; you were happy then without any of these. Now also it is the same you who exist. Yet now you are unhappy according to you and so crave for Realisation. Why?

Q.: How can it be said that there is happiness in sleep?

B.: Sleep is an experience of bliss, although a qualified experience of bliss.

Q.: In sleep there is neither sorrow nor joy. It is a neutral state.

B.: That neutral state is the state of Self which you are searching for.

Q.: But there is happiness in the Self.

B.: It is not happiness which is of the nature of pleasure. It is happiness which is of the nature of peace. That is the neutral state that is mentioned by you.

There is neither pleasure nor pain in the Self. It is Peace. Everyone says that he was blissfully asleep. That means that one remains in the primal uncontaminated state in sleep. As for sorrow, there is no sorrow anywhere in the Self. Where is it in order that you might speak of its absence in sleep? The present wrong identification of the Self with the body and mind has given rise to all these mistakes. Be yourself and nothing more.

Q.: What I want is Realisation. I do not feel my inherent happy nature.

B.: Because the Self is now identified with the non-Self, our inherent peace is ruined. The non-self too is not apart from the Self. Thus there is only the Self and the not-Self has no real existence at all. However, there is the wrong notion that the body is apart from the Self; or, the Self is confounded with the body. This wrong identity must be exterminated so as for your inherent happiness to be able to manifest itself.

Q.: I am unable to help myself.

B.: Then surrender unconditionally to the Higher Power.

Q.: How to do so?

B.: By relinquishing the ego. Vichara and surrender both seek only to prove non-existence of the ego. The present state is an illusion formed in the Self and of It. Transcend it by annihilating the apparent personal self in the beingness of the actual Self. Your real nature is happiness. You say that the same is not apparent. See what obstructs you from remaining as your Self. It is pointed out to you that the obstruction is the wrong identity of the Self with body, mind, intellect, personality, ego and so on and so forth. Eliminate this error. The patient must himself take the medicine prescribed by the doctor in order that he may be cured of his illness.

Q.: The patient is too weak to help himself and therefore places himself unconditionally in the hands of the doctor.

B.: The doctor must be given a free hand to operate and the patient must certainly remain quiet without doing anything whilst the surgical procedure is going on. Similarly keep quiet. Keeping quiet[summa-irutthal] means effortless in abidance in the Self. That is the most effective medicine with which to tackle the curse of apparent embodiment[bhavanoi].

Q.: Convince me of the existence of God.

B.: Realisation of the Self amounts to such conviction.

S>M>

Q.: How is prarabdha related to purushakara?

B.: Prarabdha means karma; there must be a karta before there can be any karma. See who the karta is. Similarly, purushakara means effort; see who exerts effort. The one who seeks to know the relation betwixt these two is himself the link between them.

Q.: What is the link betwixt karma and rebirth? They say that karma causes rebirth.

B.: Find out who the karta is and then the nature of karma will become obvious to you. If you are born now, rebirth may follow. See if you are born now.

Q.: Please help me to have jyotirdarshana.

B.: Dharsana (sight) implies dhrushta (seer). Find who the dhrushta is and dharsana is included in him.

S>M>

E.Z.: Meditation is done with mind in the jagrat state. There is mind in dream also. Why is there no meditation in dream? Is it even possible to meditate in the swapna state?

B.: Why do you not ask it in the dream? [after a pause] You are told to meditate now and find who you are. Instead of doing it you ask, "Why is there no meditation in the dream or sleep states?". If you find out for whom there is jagrat, it will become clear to you that dream and sleep are also for that same one. You are the witness of the three states; they pass before you but you are always left unaffected. Because you are out of meditation now, it becomes possible for such questions to arise. Stick to meditation and see if any question arises. Meditation is certainly possible in the dream state. You already might be meditating in the dream state if you are doing it in the jagrat state. Do not think that the mind in the jagrat state is capable always of recollecting everything that went on during the swapna state.

E.Z.: We recollect something pertaining to our dreams in our waking state; do we recollect anything pertaining to our waking state in our dream state?

B.: Yes; some memories are common whereas others are particular to one specific state of mind only.

8th September, 1936

Q.: Sometimes Bhagawan says that the events taking place in the world are merely random occurrences. At other times he says that everything is predestined. I see a contradiction.

B.: There is none. Any event is both perfectly random and perfectly predestined.

Q.: This statement does not make sense to me at all.

B.: It signifies that predestination is on the whole randomly scattered about.

Q.: That sounds frightening!

B.: [laughs] What is wrong in it? Herr Heisenberg's ideas postulate that matter is not really matter, but only an abstract space constituted by conjectural probability. His idea is that matter remains as a probability-wave until the wave-function [appurtenant to the system under consideration] stands collapsed on account of act of measurement; but in fact the wave-function never collapses.

Q.: Can I understand this statement to mean that Sri Bhagawan opines that the wave-function is to be viewed as being cosmological in nature, and therefore that its coherence never becomes subject to decay?

B.: In Vedantic terminology the idea of a cosmological wave-function is addressed as 'mahat'.

Q.: This line of physics provides mathematical amusement; but does it have any meaning outside its niched scope of describing or explaining the behaviour of tiny atomic particles? Sometime back I was looking into an issue of 'Wochenschrift für die Fortschritte der Naturwissenschaften'; there in an article the author ponders over what would be the position if we were to create a situation wherein in a life-sized system an unbestimmtheit-like condition were to be brought about by means of linking that system to an atomic particle remaining in an unbestimmtheit-like condition, so that the outcome of the overall system should be made dependent upon the outcome of the particle's unbestimmtheit-like condition. He provides the bizarre example of a cat trapped inside a cage together with as many radioactive atoms as the probability for one of them to decay within the course of 1 hour would be 0.5; if the decay were to take place, says he, the cat would die on account of activation of the attached apparatus, contrived and installed for the purpose, containing hydrocyanic acid; on the other hand, if no decay were to take place, the cat would suffer no damage; the whole of the mechanism of the device would have been secured against interference by the cat itself. Now he asks- during the hour before the cage is opened, what is the state of the cat? Is it both alive and dead at the same time? What is Sri Bhagawan's answer?

B.: According to Vedanta the cat ceases to exist when the door of the cage is closed. It re-materialises as a dead cat or living cat when the door is opened again. This approach is called yugapathsrishti.

Q.: Is this B.'s opinion? It sounds rather silly, if I may be pardoned for saying so. It is like the game children play, called 'peekaboo'.

B.: No. Ajata-advaita does not admit of the existence of the cat. So the question cannot arise. Regarding the question of object-continuity which seems to interest you, yes: the Jnani's apparent mental faculties seem to operate only at the level of the 'peekaboo' game.

Q.: So if I come tomorrow, B. will not recognise me to be the person who has come now?

B.: Why talk about tomorrow? Absence of object-continuity in the Jnani's apparent mind is quite radical- in fact, altogether absolute. We may say that it percolates infinitely infinitesimally down to a moment-by-moment basis.

Q.: How is he managing to converse with me then? He would not be able to recognise me.

B.: The Jnani's actions are not the result of intellectual or mental activity. After the potter takes his hands off the wheel, the wheel continues to go around for sometime. Likewise with the Jnani. Himself as the mind has already expired. The current of prarabdha keeps the body moving and acting for sometime; he has no role to play in it. He does nothing.

Q.: I find this hard to believe this could be possible.

B.: The only way to find out is to yourself Realise the Self and see. Then you will understand that the mind never was- that actions were always spontaneous. The sense of doership for the body's actions is spurious- i.e., an illusion.

Q.: How did such illusion arise?

B.: Just now you were told- it never arose; that is why it is called illusion!

S>M>

Q.: The answer to 'Who am I?' is 'I am Parabrahman.'; is that correct?

B.: Is Parabrahman saying, 'I am Parabrahman.'?

Q.: But I thought 'I am Parabrahman.' is supposed to be the answer to the question.

B.: For those who are not driven by any impetus to peregrinate into the practical[-i.e., applied] dimension of Ajata-advaita, and who are contented merely with an intellectual grasp thereof, the answer being suggested by you will suffice; but in actual fact, the thought 'I am Parabrahman.' has nothing to do with the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani.

Q.: How shall I also reach this state? Is it only by interrogating myself 'Who am I?' incessantly?



B.: Yes. But do not do it because you want to obtain Jnana. Do it because you genuinely want to find out the answer to the question. Theoretical or intellectual answers are mind-manufactured fiction. Find the Real answer. The Real answer cannot come from outside- It is within you. Concepts and words cannot bring about discovery of the Self- only silence or stillness of mind can; persistent practice is needed to attain this natural, primordial state of mind.

Q.: Back where I am coming from, today's urbanised generation leads a fast-paced life, where most people want instant gratification; this is why they resort to usage of alcohol, morphine, cocaine, etc.; how shall we make such persons understand that the bliss of the Self yields greater happiness than experiences gained through employment of drugs?

B.: Can we expect all to be drawn toward Ajata-advaita? People usually want something they can 'do'. Some even come here and ask: [in English] 'How do I do vichara?'. How shall we tell them that 'doing' is not the lakshya of vichara?

Q.: Am I then to lead an indolent and sybaritic life?

B.: Keep the mind submerged in the Heart and the body's activities will take care of themselves. If you are able to remain permanently submerged in the Heart, you would never need to worry about anything. Freedom from thoughts, worries and anxieties comes naturally to one who has mastered the subtle art of self-abidance.

Q.: So attainment of Realisation is an art- not a science?

B.: The tool- i.e., the method of vichara is scientific. But wielding it properly is an art.

S>M>

Q.: Absence of body-consciousness is the same as Realisation or Jnana; am I correct?

B.: If that were to be the case, all that needs to be done to Realise the Self is to fall asleep; but is that how it is? When you wake up from sleep, all your problems of the previous day come to continue to haunt you; is that not so? So, presence or absence of body-consciousness is not at all a valid criterion for determining whether or not the Self is Realised. Jnana is possible only in manonasham.

Q.: But it is said that without destruction of body-consciousness Jnana is impossible of being attained.

B.: What is meant by that is not necessarily actual destruction of body-consciousness but only obliteration of the idea 'I am the body.' and any other idea which results in one's mistaking not-Self to be the Self. In fact all ideas must be given up before the Self stands Revealed. Ideas are nothing but

chitta-vrittis. Chittam must be totally cleansed of vrittis before Realisation can take place.

S>M>

Q.: One of my enemies has kept pillisoonniyam upon me. I am frequently hallucinating of ghosts and demons everywhere. Even now I saw a spirit disentangle itself from B.'s body and escape into the sky through the chimney.

B.: [nonchalantly] Oh! Is that so?

Q.: Yes. Please cure me.

B.: Come around the Hill today evening.

S>M>

Q.: Why has God created the world?

B.: Did God come and tell you that he has created any world? Do you see God or the world created by him in deep sleep? If they are really there should they not be with you in your deep slumber also?

Q.: They are there; only my mind is not awake to them. If I doze off in this Hall, the Hall vanishes from my perceptivity for the duration whilst I am asleep; the others in the Hall would continue to see it as before; after waking from sleep if I ask them 'Whilst I was sleeping, was Sri Ramana Maharshi still present in this Hall or did he vanish?', will they not laugh at me?

B.: Authentic experience is different from knowledge obtained through hearsay. The cosmos is merely a mind-generated delusion or simulation. The illusion is cleverly pieced together in such a way that you spontaneously give yourself to understand that you are a transient subject witnessing a permanent, objectively real entity known as the world; this wrong understanding is the backbone of avidya-maya. If you ask the others in the Hall what happened to Ramana whilst you were asleep, they will say, 'He was sitting on the couch as usual.'. But understand this for certain- it is your own mind that is speaking those words to you. Will a thief ever betray himself? The web of illusion cast by the mind is cogent, cohesive, comprehensive and convincing. The only way to escape from it is to hold on firmly to the awareness "I-am".

Q.: This theory of absolute solipsism seems too fantastic to believe.

B.: That is because you have all along been looking at the world with wrong ideas in mind, such as 'I am born into this world.' or 'I am a constituent of this world.'. Really- what is meant by 'world'? Merely sensory perceptions. These perceptions are not 'of' anything- they are directly manufactured by the mind, and are totally fictitious or spurious. Mind is a burdensome accretion on top of the Self or Aathman; only its elimination can bring true happiness. Investigate what "I" is. Then the mind, being only a bundle of ideas, disappears. Reality Shines eternally as the residue.

Q.: Desire for sensory experiences keeps cropping up in me. I am not able to concentrate my mind on vichara. Please tell me what to do.

B.: The idea "I" or aham vritti is only an arbitrary mental conceptualisation. Having no life of its own, it shines by the reflected light of the Self. You say "I" am not able to concentrate. You were not asked to concentrate on anything. See if such a thing called "I" exists. Scrutinise to see what it is. Try to examine it closely. To do this it is not necessary that "I" should concentrate on anything. Do not make "I" concentrate on anything. Make the "I" search for itself. Then it transpires that there never was anything called "I". That which remains upon "I" seeing that "I" does not exist is the One Perfect Reality; this alone is verily Jnana.

Q.: In practice how is all this to be accomplished? Is it only by means of vichara?

B.: Yes.

Q.: I have always imagined vichara to be meant for highly advanced ripe souls only. Will it not be too difficult for me to practise?

B.: The only difficulty is the idea of difficulty. Remain free of all ideas. Ideas choke the pure space of chidhakasam and convolute it into all sorts of bedazzling and befuddling imaginary shapes, names and forms. Do not permit ideas to lead you. Remain with "I-am" as "I-am". Then ideas cannot cause any perturbation.

Q.: If I should not think thoughts how will day-to-day life go on?

B.: Quite well- better than at present, in fact. Try it and see. [Even] in the absence of interference from thought, prarabdha automatically goes on peacefully executing all its destined tasks for the body. We imagine we have free-will; that is the reason for all our misery. What people imagine to be freedom- i.e., free-will is really bondage. When mind is dead, the myth of free-will has faded away and only the bondage of automatic acceptance remains: this is veritably the bliss of freedom beyond imagination.

Q.: Am I right in my understanding that thought-free consciousness is the Self, provided absence of thought is volitionless and effortless?

B.: No. It is only chidhabhasa, a reflected ray from the Self.

Q.: Then what about the actual Self?

B.: It cannot be comprehended by the mind.

Q.: How do I reach it, then?

B.: There is no reaching It. Surrender yourself to It and be absorbed by and dissolved in It, like a salt-doll in the ocean.

Q.: Can we practice vichara and sharanagati at the same time?

B.: Yes- it is the best approach.

Q.: When Polur Vittobha-swamigazl attained kaivalyam, it is said that Lord Shiva Himself personally arrived and took him to Kailas in a silver-chariot flown by horses with wings, and that the same magnificent vehicle was seen speeding across the air by Seshadri-swamigazl. Is there any truth in such things or is it all nonsense?

B.: It is as true as the world you see around you.

Q.: If I Realise the Self can I perform miracles like Jesus, Sai Baba and other Realised masters?

B.: Did those masters come and tell you, 'I have performed miracles.'? Others say this and that about them. They did not say anything about themselves but kept quiet. What does this signify? The miracles were not performed with effort, nor were they performed knowingly. They are natural gifts of God's Grace. Attempting to channelise them through any medium of reflection such as mind, intellection, volition, etc. will yield cataclysmic results for all concerned. The Jnani does not think, 'I am performing a miracle.'; there is no "I" sense in him.

Q.: The prophet Muhammad is said to have split the moon in 2.

B.: Likewise here also.

S>M>

Q.: My understanding of Ajata-advaita is only theoretical. Practically, how to gain Realisation of the Self?

B.: Realisation is nothing to be obtained anew- it is already there. Only remain free from the notion, 'I have not realised.' and every other thought. The mind is an apparent spurious accretion or outgrowth on top of the Self. It is only an appearance and it is not real. Cessation of thought-waves reveals the Self.

Q.: If it is only a question of keeping away from thoughts, it would be easy. Is it really that simple?

B.: Yes.

Q.: If that be so, attempting to obtain Realisation may itself be said to be an obstacle to Realisation, because aspiring for it obviously involves thinking about it.

B.: Exactly. There is no moment when the Self is not. Peace or Realisation is synonymous with stillness of mind. So long as doubts persist, or the feeling of non-Realisation, attempt to eradicate these thoughts by means of tracing them back to their source- i.e., the Self. How does it become possible for thoughts to arise? Thoughts arise on account of identification of the Self with the non-Self. When the non-Self disappears, the Self alone remains. Suppose we want to make space in a cramped room. How do we go about it? To make room it is enough that things are removed from there. Room is not brought in afresh; in fact, room is present even in the state of cramping.

Q.: If all thoughts are killed, will that be an inert state, or one of blankness?

B.: Absence of thoughts does not imply a blank. A blank cannot survive in isolation; there must be somebody to be aware of the same; else, who says later that he witnessed a blank? You were there during the blank; that is why you now recollect having witnessed the same. The same you who saw the blank then says now that he saw a blank. So, blanks come and go, but you ARE always. Knowledge and ignorance pertain to the mind; they are born of duality, whereas the Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance; it is the Source of Illumination itself. There is no possibility of seeing one Self with another Self. There are no 2 Selves. What is not Self is merely non-Self, which is imaginary- it cannot see the Self. The Self has no sight or hearing. It lies beyond these, all alone, as pure consciousness in which no localisation or other differentiation is possible. The quest for the Self is like the story of the woman who lost the necklace around her neck- or so she thought. She kept searching for it, only to discover in the end that it had never left her neck. Likewise, the Self is all along here and now, whether you search for it or not. Again, just as the woman feels as if the lost necklace has been regained when reminded of the fact that it has been around her neck all this while [during her frantic search for it], so also the removal of ignorance or the cessation of false identification of the Self with the not-Self will reveal the Self which is always present- here and now. This is called Self-Realisation. Realisation is nothing new. It amounts to elimination of ignorance and nothing more. Blankness is the perverse consequence that results from searching the mind with a particular intent or volition- you expect to find something but end up feeling disappointed. People want to see something new and glorify it as the Self. They expect phosphorescent designs, patterns of colourful, blazing light, etc. to appear, which they can then believe to be the Self or God. Such things can be manufactured by a skilled chemist in a well-equipped laboratory. Why come here for such things? People say, 'I seek the Self but I find nothing.'. I ask them, 'If it was really a state of nothingness, who witnessed that nothingness, then?'. 'Nobody.' comes the usual reply, and I respond, 'Who then is now standing before me, reporting that he spectated that nothingness? Is nothingness conversing with me now? You must have been there when nothingness prevailed, in order so as for you to now be able to remember that then nothingness prevailed. You must be here now, in order so as for you to now be able to report that nothingness was spectated by you then. So, you are always.'. But do people understand what is being suggested? They want to see something new; that expectation creates all the mischief. Holding on to simple, subjective awareness or consciousness of being is the certain means to regain the Self. There cannot be anything called nothingness or not-Self.

The Self IS always. Mind destroyed, the Self shines forth. The mind must be cut off, root, shoot and branch. You say you want to Realise the Self. Good-but who is the seeker? To whom has the thought presented itself, 'I want to Realise the Self?'. Find out who the thinker is, who the seeker is. Abide as that thinker. Then all thoughts will disappear. Instead of being swayed by thoughts, hold on to the thinker; this is the means to regain the ever-present Self. Even after all thought has been eliminated, the problem of localised consciousness- awareness subject to spatial and temporal limitations or body-consciousness- will remain. The problem of thought is to be eliminated by you; leave it to the Higher Power to eliminate the problem of the thinker. The pure ego, purged of thought, will collapse automatically into the Self. No further effort need be made for it. So long as false identification of the Self with the not-Self persists, doubts will keep on arising, questions will be raised, and there will be no end to all the rigmarole. Doubts will cease only if and when the not-Self is put an end to. Extirpation of the not-Self is the same as Realisation of the Self. Once the not-Self is for good done out of the way, there will remain no other there to doubt or ask. Try to solve your doubts within yourself. Words cannot satisfy you- only Direct Experience can do that. Direct Experience means subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly. You say thoughts cause you perturbation. What is the remedy? Hold on to the thinker and thoughts will disappear. Only when the thinker is forgotten do objects appear, do doubts arise in the mind. Remain as the thinker of the thoughts and thoughts will cause no more trouble.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that the Jnani communicates by Silence. How is it possible? What does it mean to communicate by Silence?

B.: Language is only a medium for communication of one's thoughts to another. It is called in only after thoughts arise; other thoughts arise after the aham vritti rises; the aham vritti is therefore the root of all conversation. The Jnani whose awareness is not impeded by any vritti has nothing to say. Since the Jnani abides as that transcendental, living void of awareness in which there is no scope for thought to arise, he understands those around him by means of the universal, unspoken language of silence. Silence is not inertness. Silence of the Beyond is eternal speech; it is perennial flow of language; it is interrupted by speaking. These mundane words of ours obstruct that mute language. There is electricity flowing in a wire; with resistance to its passage, it glows as a lamp or spins as a fan. In the wire itself it remains as mere latent energy. Likewise, silence is the eternal flow of language, obstructed by words. What one fails to know through conversation extending for aeons can be known in a trice in the presence of Silence, such

as in the case of Sri Dakshinamurti, and his four disciples. Silence is thus the loftiest and most effective language.

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between the state of Nirvikalpa and that of aham sphurana- if any? Which is the superior state amongst these 2, and which is the supreme state?

B.: Both are equally meritorious. In Nirvikalpa body-consciousness is usually absent. Nirvikalpa + body-consciousness = aham sphurana. Yogis try to eliminate body-consciousness by practising kevalakumbhaka for abnormally large spans of time- but the trouble with adopting such an approach is that the volition or intent to remain bereft of body-consciousness remains still to be tackled; for this reason, it is better to not try to forcibly eradicate body-consciousness, which, after all, is only a harmless upadhi once you have given up the notorious, delusory habit of false identification [of the Self with the not-Self]. All possibility of volition and effort must be destroyed before Jnana can dawn. As per the body's prarabdha, let the upadhi of body-consciousness drop off automatically. We need not bother about it, regarding it as any hindrance to be resolved or tackled, etc.; you need not try to destroy the body or somehow subsume it into nothingness- simply cease to identify or associate with it in any manner; that will do. Trying to get rid of the body implies paying further attention to the body- instead, channelise attention away from the body and into the Self; that is the thing to be done. As for the supreme state, it is the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani. It cannot be attained by sadhana. No effort can reach it. Surrender yourself to it unconditionally and you will be absorbed into it. Vichara is only to prepare the mind for unconditional surrender. If you can surrender absolutely, where is the need for vichara and where is the possibility- who would then be left to investigate?

Q.: Is the Self located on the right-hand side of the chest?

B.: Only till you admit you have a body. Do you?

Q.: Yes. How can I deny it? Does not Bhagawan see this body talking to him?

B.: The body does not say 'I am you.'. You say that you are it. When you have weaned yourself away from this erroneous attitude that you are somehow linked with the body, then you will know where the Self is. The Self is not anywhere; it IS.

B.: What about Sri Bhagawan's idea that the hridayagranti is represented by a physical spot in the body- if the Self is immanent only, does not this idea become invalid?

Q.: Discover the non-dual Self and we can worry about its relation to the body later if need be: then- not now. It is true that there is an orifice on the right hand side of the chest, fashioned like a tiny hole. This contraption remains

always closed, but it is opened by vichara- the consequence is that aham sphurana shines forth. However, all this is only from a relativistic point of view. In actual fact, the Jnani who abides in the state of Ajata-advaita is quite irrevocably lost to 'physical reality'. These explanations are not for him; they are formulated only to satisfy the curiosity of the man on the Clapham omnibus. Their truth is only as true as the truth of your own bodily existence, and no farther.

Q.: Will vivisection of the body by a skilled anatomist reveal the presence of this organ?

B.: No. It is on the subtle plane.

Q.: Well, using a microscope, then.

B.: I meant to say that in my experience it is purely a locus for accumulation of mental energy. It might not have any physical coefficient. However, a physical sensation of pulsation or throbbing might be felt at the region. The fact is- all these matters are not at all important. The thing to do, or rather un-do, is to Realise the Self. Whatever you experience is besides the point. Who is the experiencer? That is the critical question.

Q.: But what is the answer?

B.: Find out.

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between jagrat, swapna and sushupti?

B.: Those 3 states were created by Sri Gaudapada or others for the purpose of analytical exposition or classification only. 'Life on Earth is made of Plantae, Protista, and Animalia.' does not mean that there are exactly 3 beings[creatures] living on Earth responding to those names. The actual number of states is not finite- but there are only 2 basic gunas, tamogunam and sattvagunam; rajogunam is an amalgam of the other 2. Self-abidance is sattvagunam. Ignorance is tamogunam. If it is simple ignorance it is called shushkatamas; otherwise it is called rajas. Tamas is unsophisticated ignorance of the Self; rajas is ignorance which has diversified itself into countless patterns and structures; in actual fact there is no difference between them. Either the mind is Self-aware or Self-nescient; the former leads to manonasham or Jnana, whereas the latter leads to further entrapment in samsara. One's states of mind are actually never-ending. Just after consuming a heavy, agreeable meal, you feel pleasantly drowsy. That is a state. [smiling] Whilst listening to a- quite like 'Ramana Maharshi'- boring lecturer who does not interest you in the slightest, you start dreaming, but part of your attention is still fixed on the words of the lecturer without in the least focusing on the meaning thereof, you are vaguely aware that you are inside a classroom in your college premises, and bodily sensations are still felt, which



would not be the case in a dream experienced after having fallen asleep fully. That is a state. After receiving a piece of shocking news, for a while the mind becomes numb. That is a state. And so on and so forth. There is no end to the number of states. Why do you say [there are] only 3 states?

Q.: Jagrat, swapna and sushupti is an erroneous theory, then?

B.: Of course not. Who said so? I am only asking you to understand it correctly; it is not a list, but a classification system. But do not be concerned with all this theory. Rather Realise the Self and so put an end to all this; that is the only way to Peace from which no return is possible.

Q.: What is the difference between swoon and sleep?

B.: Sleep is sudden and overpowers one abruptly. A faint takes place in slower fashion and there is a slight tingle of resistance kept up all the while. Realisation is possible in a faint but in sleep it is impossible.

Q.: What is the state just before death?

B.: When the incumbent body gasps for breath the fact indicates that the person is unconscious thereof; another body is being held and the person swings to and fro between the 2 bodies. Whilst gasping, there is a distinct massive gasp at intervals and this indicates rapid oscillation between the 2 bodies. On account of the present attachment not having been completely eviscerated, rebirth has been brought about [by Ishwara, as inevitably ordained by the individual's karma]. I noticed it in the case of my mother and of Palanisamy. But all this happens in the gross realm only if the death is on account of internal causes. If a person is, say, guillotined, no such indication will be available.

Q.: Does the new body [which is involved when such a condition comes to prevail during the last few moments of a man's physical life] represent the next incarnation of the person concerned?

B.: Yes. While gasping, the person is in a dream-like state; he is not aware of his present physical environment. But why are you asking all these questions? Were you ever born? Let what is born worry about its death.

S>M>

Q.: "Just as gold might become articles of jewellery for the sake of beauty, similarly pure consciousness which is one becomes the enjoyer and the object of enjoyment, the seer and the object of vision, without disturbing its unity." says Sri Jnaneshvar in his work Amritanubhav. I find this verse perplexing. We make beautiful ornaments out of gold so that we may lend utility to the metal, facilitating it to be worn as a necklace, ring, and so on. If the design of the ornament pleases our eye, we appreciate the skill of the craftsman who manufactures the same. If gold remains merely in its ore-form, its pulchritude cannot be perceived. Only when jewels are made out of it can

we succeed in bringing out its true aesthetic worth. But is consciousness like this? Is not consciousness already beautiful in its pristine state? Will B. please explain this statement made by Sri Jnaneshvar for me?

B.: The idea of objects manifesting out of consciousness is provided unto seekers who happen to be neophytes in order so as to give them a working-hypothesis with which their intellectual inquisitiveness might stand satisfied for the time being. In actual fact, manifestation is impossible. Consciousness remains unmanifest always.

Q.: But I see diversity all around me. Is it all exclusively in my own imagination?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is it of any use investigating why such imagination has arisen?

B.: Instead, investigate to whom it has arisen and you will discover that it never arose.

Q.: Is it advantageous or wise to snap off ties with the family so that Realisation may be gained?

B.: In the work 'Maha Bhakta Vijayam' there is present a conversation which Sri Jnaneshvar has with his father concerning the actual meaning of Renunciation. Have you read the same?

Q.: Yes. I shall try to remain in the world like the eye of a dead sheep!

B.: [smiling] Good!

S>M>

Q.: Is it my own vasanas which create this world I see about me?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Including the other people I see in the world?

B.: Yes.

Q.: For vichara-marga is diksha necessary?

B.: Longing or craving to escape from samsara is the one and only diksha required in relation to this path.

Q.: How to cultivate such craving?

B.: No separate efforts are necessary for it; steadfast and relentless practice of vichara will take care of the requirement automatically.

Q.: My Guru is the Sankaracharyazl of Sringeri. Must I renounce him and accept Bhagawan as my Guru if I want my practice of vichara to culminate in success?

B.: Not necessary. If unequivocal vairagya is there vichara cannot fail to result in success. Perfect vairagya is the sole essential thing needed to Realise the Self.

Q.: What exactly is meant by vairagya?

B.: The intensity of one's desperation to escape from samsara.

Q.: What is samsara?

B.: One's mundane, apparent bodily existence.

Q.: Thoughts pertaining to the body's mortality are plaguing my mind. What is the remedy?

B.: Find out their origin and stay there, never to return thence.

Q.: What are the qualifications needed to successfully practice vichara?

B.: Only one- desperation to escape from samsara.

Q.: How to cultivate such desperation?

B.: Only by continuous practice of vichara.

Q.: It sounds cyclical.

B.: Stop theorising and start practising.

Q.: But how to know whether I shall succeed on the quest or not?

B.: No guarantees for success can be given.

Q.: Then where is the incentive to try?

B.: If the desperation I mentioned is there, the option to not try is sealed off. Then you will automatically succeed.

Q.: But to cultivate such desperation we must start the practice.

B.: True. Start.

Q.: But this state is said to be exceedingly hard to attain- so the odds stacked against me are high. It is improbable that a weakling such as me should succeed.

B.: That is your opinion. But even so, what is the harm in trying? What are you going to lose?

Q.: What is the auspicious hour to start the practice?

B.: Here and now.

S>M>

Q.: What sort of sick, perverted, deranged and depraved imagination was it that created this world? Look at all the suffering that torments this world. The diseases, the wars, the famines, the crimes... The Creator must be some diabolical wretch to have thought up of such a world to excruciate us with- do you agree with me, Mr. Maharshi?

B.: We create, we condemn.

Q.: Excuse me? Oh!- its that solipsism theory of yours again, I reckon...

B.: What you call world is nothing other than exclusively your mind.

Q.: But what is the proof that this theory of yours is correct, Mr. Maharshi? How can I ascertain its veracity for myself by myself? I am not blindly believing in anything.

B.: Who asked you to believe in anything? Only reason. When you are going through a dream, the experiences you are having then seem normal to you: it is only after waking up that you find out that you had been dreaming.

Q.: Everytime I dream a different dream when I go to sleep. But here why is the same dream taking place everyday and all the time? I mean, why is there continuity? Today morning I came here; the same Mr. Maharshi was seated on the same Sofa. It is now afternoon and nothing has changed. Tomorrow if I come here the same scene will be awaiting me. Isn't that so? Why?

B.: Don't you sometimes feel that you have memories when you are dreaming?

Q.: [uncomfortably] Yes.

B.: The memories you are now accessing are part of the mind's fabric of delusory imagination. Even the present is not Real. Past, present, future: these are all memories being played out in the mind. A roll of film is unwinded and permitted to run before the light of pure consciousness continuously being emitted from the Heart. Magnified images fall on the screen of anthakarana or subtle mind-space. The jivatman is successfully defrauded into believing that he is a body living in and experiencing physical space and time. He thinks that the source of his life or consciousness of being is the body and takes steps to protect and prolong its apparent existence. Meanwhile he creates new memories or attachments: new film is being exposed for the subsequent performance or show. This is how rebirth takes place. The film-roll is the jivatman's prarabdha. The light is the light of consciousness which emanates from the Self or Parabrahman.

Q.: So- even these words you are talking to me right now: its all going on within my head only?

B.: Yes.

Q.: So I am right now dreaming of the means to my own escape from the dream I am dreaming! Wait- what did I just say? Does that even make any sense?!

B.: [laughs]

Q.: But all this sounds completely crazy! Could it possibly be true and correct? So... Mr. Maharshi, you're just inside my head? You're not real?!

B.: Exactly. Reality alone could ever be Real.

Q.: But then what about your own point of view, sir? You are independently aware or conscious of being here, aren't you?

B.: The figure you see before you on the Sofa is nothing more than a figment of your own mind-generated delusory imagination: as is everything else. There is no 'me'. There is no cosmos. There is no anything. There is only you. You alone exist. You alone could ever BE. You alone ARE. You are the Self. You are the Self. You are the Self.

Even as he spoke these words, the master, without in the slightest altering the position of his head, first rotated his eyeballs so as to gaze at the ceiling; then

they slowly shifted their awe-inspiring gaze downwards, all the while steadily becoming increasingly cross-eyed, so as to stare pointedly into the Caucasian's eyes; a gentle, bemused smile playing upon his lips, he locked his crisscrossed eyes with those belonging to the stunned-looking Caucasian. The Caucasian's spine straightened up, his expression became convulsed in delight, and he uttered a shocked cry of joy. Then he closed his eyes and seemed to become absorbed in some sort of profound inner ecstasy. When he finally came to his senses again, he gazed fixedly at Bhagawan for sometime, tears streaming down his cheeks in torrents. Then he got up and tottered about the Hall for sometime like a drunk man, saying almost incoherently, and occasionally giggling like a child: ***'All the while, He was within me; fancy that! But know what? He is, but I'm not! Hey, the best part is that I was looking for Him... Heh-heh! All this time, I was searching for Him- can you fancy that, sir?! Searching! Heh-heh!'*** An astonished Chadwick asked him, 'Who's 'He'?' But the Caucasian paid no attention to the question. Instead he grabbed hold of Chadwick's hands and tried to dance with him, singing ebulliently,

Do they miss me at home, do they miss me?  
It would be an assurance most dear  
To know that this moment some loved one  
Was saying, "Oh, were he but here!"  
To know that the group at the fireside  
Were thinking of me as I roam,  
Oh yes, it would be joy beyond measure,  
To know that they missed me at home!  
When twilight approaches, the season  
That ever was sacred to song,  
Does some one repeat my name over,  
And sigh that I tarry so long?  
And is there a chord in the music  
That's missed when my voice is away?

But Chadwick yanked himself away in surprise; now the evidently crazed Caucasian grabbed the Shylock by the waist and went round and round on the spot with him, holding the latter's wrist with his other hand and keeping it outstretched, akimbo. The Shylock seemed to empathise with the madman's mood; he seemed to momentarily acquiesce. The master was beholding the spectacle with a joyous smile lighting up his face; the rest of the Hall were gazing up at the Caucasian with fearful expressions, as though he might next prance upon them and pluck their heads off. Now the Caucasian sang,

Admire pleasures and palaces though we may roam

Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home  
A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there  
Which seek through the world, is never met elsewhere  
Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home!

There's no place like home! There's no place like home!

Then he abruptly dumped the Shylock and presently rushed towards the Sofa; but the master's attendants who were standing at the ready seized him by the biceps brachii and held him back. At once B. said: 'Varattum vidungo.'

Reluctantly they loosened their grip, but still stood alertly poised to intervene should the Caucasian do anything considered unacceptable. The Caucasian went on muttering, 'I've gone Home; I've gone Home... thanks to Mr. Maharshi...'. He doddered right up to the Sofa, bent double, and planted his head right upon the master's feet, his hands clutching the sides of the Sofa for support. Then, before anybody could react, he sprinted out of the Hall, shouting, 'Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home!'. That was the first and last time I set eyes upon him.

For some moments a stupefied silence reigned in the Hall. Then-

Chadwick: [incredulously] Did Bhagawan just give that man Jnana?

B.: What is there to give or take? When the fruit is ripe it falls from the tree when there comes on a gust of wind.

C.: But he came here only today morning- I have never seen him here before!

B.: [smiles but does not say anything]

C.: I pray that the same Grace be extended unto me also.

B.: Don't you have It already?

C.: But I am unable to Realise the Self.

B.: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven..."

C.: But he came just now! [flabbergastedly] And he- but... he... he- just like that- walked out an Enlightened-being!

B.: [laughing at the Major's discomfited, indignant countenance] There is no judgement possible from outward appearances. It is the mind's extent of submission that counts. When ego or mind finally surrenders once and for all, the Self stands Revealed.

S>M>

E.Z.: Who's that chap, anyway?

C.: He didn't mention a name.

The question was posed to Bhagawan. Rotating his wrists, he flicked his hands in opposite directions and then dropped them, like a child indicating that he did not know. Nobody else knew either.

P>S>

I have observed that the master was uncannily able to move or pivot his eyes in eccentric, independent directions. Further, I have seen him with eyes closed, but never seen him blink. He had a certain other-worldly beauty and charm that had nothing whatever to do with his physical appearance. No description can really do him justice. I have seen more than a dozen photographs of his, but the ones taken by Mons. G. G. Welling, Bangalore, undeniably come closest to depicting visually what he looked like; however, even they are far removed from what it was actually like to be in the magical aura of his enchanting physical presence. It was as if the Hill Arunachala Himself had consented to wear a human form for sometime, for the sake of providing proper spiritual guidance to humanity. This conjecture of mine stands strengthened by the fact that those in the ashram on the night he died report that at the very moment of his death a streak of light was seen slowly moving from the bathroom in which he lay during his final days to give darisanam to the public, to the Hill behind.

S>M>

Q.: Campbell wrote: "All worldly shapes shall melt in gloom, The Sun himself must die, Before this mortal shall assume Its Immortality!" After Realising the Self, can a man enjoy the many simple pleasures that life has to offer, such as taking a leisurely stroll in a freshly mowed lawn?

B.: Why not? But such experiences will not be apart from the Self. In that state, the thought 'I am enjoying this.' cannot come. Just as no "I" would rise up to claim doership for the body's actions, no "I" would rise up to imagine that it is undergoing experience of pleasure or any other experience.

Q.: In the absence of the experiencing "I" or observer how can there be any experience or observation?

B.: The thing experienced, the act of experiencing and the apparent experiencer are all found to be patterns in the Self only. The Self is not affected by them. When you melt down ornaments made of gold, does anything happen to gold? Gold remains gold always. Likewise here. We will be able to understand properly only when we ourselves reach that state.

S>M>

Q.: What is the role of Love in Realising the Self?

B.: For Emancipation the chidjadagranthi must be sundered. Only Love can do this.

Q.: Then where is the need for vichara?

B.: Love and unconditional surrender are all one and the same thing. The object of vichara is to make the aspirant surrender completely, in the discovery that there is no such thing as "I". Vichara leads to absolute surrender, which is the same as Jnana. Jnana, Bhakti, Prema: all these are

different terms for one and the same entity, namely the Self. Not forgetting the Self but remaining absorbed in It always is known as bhakti. Azhugani-siddhar has elucidated his opinion in relation to the matter in the following fashion:

உன்னை மறந்தல்லோ உளுத்த மரமானேன்  
தன்னை மறந்தார்க்குத் தாய்தந்தை யில்லையடி  
தன்னை மறக்காமற் றாயாரு முண்டானால்  
உன்னை மறக்காமல் என் கண்ணம்மா  
ஓத்திருந்து வாழேனோ?

S>M>

When the master had left for his usual stroll on the Hill, I found Chadwick dolefully sitting by himself at the foot of a tree outside the Hall.

G.: Cheer up, Major. I am sure you will Realise the Self one day or the other!

C.: My great fear is that illness, infirmity, senescence or death should put an end to possibility of further sadhana on my part, even whilst I am yet to Realise... But I suppose I can always tell Death, 'Look here! Do you know who you are dealing with? I am a devotee of Sri Bhagawan, mind you!'; that ought to learn him something... and then he might think twice before whisking me off straight away!

G.: Have you forgotten, Major, the words of Sir Anthony Hope?

C.: What?

G.: "The Lion will hang you first, and think of all that afterwards!"

Both of us laughed.

G.: Why not sing a rhyme to cheer us up? 'Tis what you usually do when the blues hit you; I have seen that to be the case on more than 1 occasion... Oh! come on now, Major!

At first C. shook his head, smiling; but on some further cajoling persuasion:

By Arthur's dale today I went;  
I heard a heavy moan;  
I saw a lady lamenting sir,  
Sadly she cried Ohone!  
Ohone, alas! what shall I do,  
Tormented night and day!  
I never loved a love but one,  
And now he's gone away!  
But I shan't do for my precious love  
What ladies shrink from; by Jove  
No sir! not for all the rum  
In this world left undrunk by  
The silly, the sober and glum!  
For seven years shall come and go



Ere he can move back into my lair.  
Won't be neither a shoe on my foot,  
Nor a feather in my hair,  
Nor ever a coal nor candle  
To shine on my ale-mug's handle.  
She thought her love was on the sea,  
Fast sailing to Bee Horn;  
But he was in a quiet chamber,  
Hearing his lady groan!  
Be hushed, be hushed, my lady dear,  
I pray thee mourn not so;  
For I am deep sworn by the book  
To Bee Horn for to go!  
But just then B. was seen approaching down the Hill, and we scurried back  
into the Hall.

S>M>

The prominent 'Indiophile', Mr. G. H. Knowles, author of the best-selling "In the Grip of the Jungles", has arrived at the ashram today. He was greeted and received with profound affection by Mr. TKS; apparently he is given to the practice of visiting the ashram year after year. He seems completely taken aback to see the huge number of Caucasians in attendance in the Hall, for straightaway upon having set foot inside- 'Why;' exclaimed he jovially, 'when I came here last June this sky hadn't a single white bird soaring in her but me!'. He seemed cheerful and lively, and exchanged introductions and shook hands with the Caucasians in the Hall, one by one. He had been carrying with him multiple copies of 'Tales of Valour: the Master-Thriller Series no. 12', an April issue of a fiction magazine in which evidently a story contributed by him had been published; these were now distributed by him in such manner as to facilitate their landing in the hands of his new-found Caucasian acquaintances sitting in the Hall. 'Please be gracious enough to accept these as a token of my affection!' he declared. Then the master entered and all rose. As usual he tucked his towel under his right armpit and sat down on the Sofa. The attendant collected away his walking staff and kamandalu. He amiably gesticulated at the Hall to be seated. Mr. K. saluted the Maharshi with his palms joined together, and was greeted with a smile. Mr. K. placed something [a parcel wrapped up in brown-paper] he had brought as benefaction on the wooden-stool stationed for the purpose in the Hall. He told the master, 'They're hardtack-crackers; I thought they might be regarded a novelty in this part of the world. I know people generally offer fruits, but...'. 'Paravayillai.' came the response, and was translated for him. Then he asked:

K.: Last year when I was here, Maharshi spoke to me about a 'Being-consciousness', which he opined as being distinct from a 'rising-consciousness'. Can the difference be explained to me again please? I am not very clear about it still.

B.: Being-consciousness is the Self. Your feeling of being in existence may be known as rising-consciousness. The latter's falling on the jivatman's vasanas brings forth the phenomenon of reflection known as 'mind', which obscures Revelation of the former. If the former is the sun, the latter is one of his rays; the latter is known as mahat in Vedantic parlance. If mental attention is perpetually maintained on one's subjective awareness only, the reflection comes to an end and the Self or Absolute Consciousness is Realised or Shines.

K.: What is sakshi-bhava?

B.: The attitude that one is merely the Lord's instrument and therefore not the doer of the actions performed by one's body. Such self-asseverations may be necessary for beginners. The mature seeker already knows that he has nothing to do with the body. He is happy to let befall the body what may.

K.: What is the path of Love leading to Realisation? Is it appreciation of beauty in nature's bountifully multifarious creations?

B.: Mr. Churchill writes, '...though the love of beauty may be constant, beauty itself may change.'. So, beauty is fleeting, but Love is eternal. Love means to pay attention to the Self and nothing but the Self.

K.: But that sounds like selfishness.

B.: On the other hand, it is selflessness or bereftitude of ego. One who has given up the ego naturally Loves all of God's creation as his own Self, because there can be no others for him.

K.: What is the fundamental modus operandi underlying the investigation 'Who am I'??

B.: Transfer of attention from object to subject; further, tracing the subject back to his source; and then, having reached such source, remaining there once and for all.

S>M>

Q.: When I was younger my mother used to read out this rhyme to me: [reads aloud to the Hall from the book 'The Water-Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land-Baby by Charles Kingsley, with illustrations by W. Heath Robinson- Boston & New York Houghton Mifflin Company']

When all the world is old, lad,  
And all the trees are brown  
And all the sport is stale, lad,  
And all the wheels run down;

Creep home, and take your place there,  
The spent and maimed among  
God grant you find one face there,  
You loved when all was young.

Now I want to ask Bhagawan, is this good advice? I feel the world has betrayed me and deceived me. I no longer wish to remain in the world. I don't know where to go. I have nobody to turn to. Please help me.

B.: Trust God; He will show the way.

Q.: But I feel betrayed and humiliated by God. Why go and kneel before a God who fills your life with so much misery and misery only? There is no God. Satan has created the cosmos. I am sure of it.

B.: Have it your way then. Leave everything in Satan's hands. Let him wreck and tear apart your life to His heart's content. Don't bother, but always inhere in your true Self.

Q.: Which is?

B.: The Self cannot be described conceptually or in a way that would permit the intellect to understand Him. He cannot be known with the mind. Give up the mind and let Him Shine. Just LET GO of the mind and don't care about the consequences or whether there are any. Simply LET GO. This is Realisation.

S>M>

Q.: There seems to be a wide gulf or difference between the ideas traditionally enunciated by Marx and Engels, and Communism as it is being practiced today in the Soviet Union. Will B. agree?

B.: [no response]

K.: Such things may work in Russia, where people are intellectually as alike as peas in a pod. You can take this from me to be the gospel-truth about the matter: the greater the cultural-diversity amongst people belonging to a geographical region, the more remote the chance that Communism will succeed there in coming to be implemented and accepted as a form of government. It is not going to work in, say, Britain or France... We folks are highly conscious- not to mention proud- of our individuality!

B. smiled as soon as the final remark was delivered.

S>M>

Q.: Even after one or more persons die the world continues. If it were all only a dream, the death of one or more dreamers should in some way affect its continuity.

B.: When it is said that the cosmos is a dream, it means that it is your dream. It is not correct to think of the world as being a collective dream. The other people you see in your dream are also your own mental creations. 'You' as

you incumbently imagine yourself to be are unreal; what you actually ARE is Real, because Reality is your Self.

Q.: The difficulty lies in reaching the Self.

B.: There is no possibility of reaching the Self. Are there 2 selves according to you, so that with the one we can reach the other, or with the other the one? The only thing to do is to set aside the screen of avidya-maya obnubilating the Self. Then the Self alone is found to remain without a second.

Q.: What is this screen?

B.: The aham-vritti[the primordial mental modification of "I"].

Q.: If I get rid of this aham-vritti, would I too become a Jnani?

B.: "I" cannot get rid of "I". All "I" can do is to surrender itself so that the Self stands Revealed. Steadfast and incessant vichara culminates in absolute surrender, which is the same as Jnana or Emancipation.

S>M>

Q.: If God is omnipotent why does he allow evil to go on in the world? Does not God care about our suffering?

B.: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." What does it mean? Whatever it is that is born does invariably undergo suffering. What is the remedy? The Lord. 'I am He who has overcome the world.' means that one who has given himself up to the Lord in entirety need not bother about himself or the world anymore; since mental intervention or participation with regard to anything on his part has now wholly ceased, everything is taken care of for him by the same power that draws him inward from Within. The implication of 'I have overcome the world.' may be construed as being 'You may safely desert the world for my sake.'. In other words, the mind- together with all the content of its consciousness such as the world or the individual self- may be abandoned for the sake of attainment of the Self. If you find the world to be too intolerably full of suffering, abandon it and seek the Self. The beauty of the verse lies in the fact that you are not directly being asked to seek God; were you asked so, you might respond with the question, 'Why should I do so?'. So, instead of being told directly, 'Come to Me.', you are circumlocutiously told that there inevitably will be suffering in the world, and that God has already overcome the world- i.e., that He and He alone is free from suffering. What is the inference? 'To escape permanently from suffering, COME TO ME.' This is also explicitly stated in "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." God cannot be found in the world. God is not a component of the world. "My kingdom is not of this world..." If you want to find God, abandon the world and its delusory pursuits after illusory pleasures; seek Him and Him alone; then alone shall He Reveal Himself. Extroversion of mind is synonymous with world-

perception[jagat-drishti]. Draw the mind away from the world and fix it in the Self. Then there cannot be any suffering. The fact that the world is of the nature of suffering shows that it is not desirable to continue here. Let us

lose ourselves in the Self- i.e., let us GO TO HIM. Those whose minds have grown profoundly sensitive to the question of the world's suffering are meant to commence the quest for the Self.

Q.: St. Theresa has enunciated 4 stages by means of which the individual soul might attain union with God.

Chadwick: She's the lady-saint that famously used to address God as being her 'spouse'; isn't that the one you're talking about, sir?

Q.: Yes. It is my impression that in every one of her writings, she has unequivocally stressed the necessity for absolute subjection and subservience to God's will. This seems to have been her principal advice to those craving for union with the Divine.

B.: Yes. If one completely surrenders, no sadhana is necessary for him. Jnana comes looking for such a one.

At this point Mr. Knowles, of his own accord, excitedly extracted a book from his rather intimidatingly large rucksack, exclaiming, "Call this a co-incidence or what!". The volume extracted, I observed, was 'The life of St. Teresa of Jesus, of the Order of Our Lady of Carmel, written by Herself'. He held out the book for the questioner and Bhagawan to see. The book passed into the hands of the master. He seemed interested; soon- in a mere matter of seconds- he selected certain passages for the interpreter to read aloud to the Hall; presently the gentleman read out these; those I recollect, I reproduce hereunder, and only to the extent of accuracy in remembrance my admittedly frail faculty of memory permits, because I failed to gain access to the book later:

"I love neither the world, nor the things of the world; nor do I believe that anything that does not come from my Lord can give me happiness; everything else seems to me a heavy burden.

It is painful to me that our trust in God should be so scanty, and our self-love so strong, as that any anxiety about our own necessities should disturb us. The will must be fully occupied in loving, but it understands not how it loves; the understanding, if it understands, does not understand how it understands- at least, it can comprehend nothing of that which it seemingly understands: it does not understand because the realm of the Heart's Love is not a matter that could ever possibly be understood.

The will loves more than the understanding knows; but the understanding does not know that the will loves, nor what it is doing, so as to be able in any way to formulate description of it."

S>M>

Q.: Is there any harm in praying to God to grant me Realisation?

B.: No.

Q.: Will God fulfill my prayer.

B.: Provided you surrender to Him unconditionally.

Q.: What is meant by 'surrender'?

B.: 'Tis to cease to regard the ego as being worthy of any consideration.

Absolutely ceasing to care about anything is known as surrender. The mind which is burdened with cares has long forgotten what it is to Love; for this reason, one who will attain the apogee of Love, which is Realisation, must first surrender himself heart and soul, mind and body.

S>M>

Q.: How is it that without a mind, B. is able to conduct rational conversations with us and engage in many other tasks and functions besides?

B.: Causality is unknown to the Jnani; the Emancipated-one's actions therefore are always bereft of motive, purpose or volition. Bhagawan does not act at all. Action is alien to the Self; He is Life Itself, but yet absolutely motionless. He is simply AWARE. Other than fullness of Being-consciousness, which he abides as, he does not know anything. The body may act in the world or remain idle; He cannot know. The faculties of sensory-perception may remain inactive or function so as to take cognition of objects in the world; He cannot know. Being the Self, the Jnani is totally ignorant of anything and everything but the Self. He is referred to as the Witness-consciousness transcending space, time and causality; but that is exclusively from the point of view of objects with name, form and shape that take their origin in Him, subsist in Him, and dissolve back into Him, being merely appearances in Him, of Him and by reason of Him; He Himself has nothing to witness or see. The body might be working day and night like a steam-engine, but no karma can touch Him. His sensory-organs might be experiencing the greatest of pleasures, but He enjoys nothing. No matter what manner of work the body might be engaged in doing, He never does anything.

K.: Maharshi, please clarify this one thing for me: are you, or are you not, now talking to us?

B.: No. "I" am not talking to you.

K.: [reflectively] That's right. Maharshi is not doing any talking. Maharshi simply IS.

Chadwick: I am sometimes given to wondering how a Jnani's awareness of the Self could formerly have been obscured or obstructed by prior ignorance. Was there ever ignorance for a Jnani?

B.: No.

C.: Are Jnanis born Jnanis then?

B.: One's idea that one took birth is merely mental information. When mind is annihilated, there is nothing to falsely inform the Jnani that he was born. Therefore, the Emancipated-one abides in perpetuity as the Unborn, to which time, space and any other transformation or possibility of measurement is wholly alien. We point to the body of the Emancipated-one and give it the name 'Jnani', thinking that such person must have awareness of the Self. But what is the fact? Is there anybody who can both stand apart from the Self and yet know the Self? The only way to know the Self is to BE It. So, the Jnani is verily Jnana and nothing but Jnana. There are no Jnanis. Jnana IS, Jnana alone IS, and Jnana alone could ever BE.

K.: [in an over-awed cadence of voice] Maharshi, you inspire me. I also want to become great like you; I want to attain your same greatness; I want to become as great as you. I consider it my life's mission to emulate you. You are my idol, my super-hero. Please tell me what I should do to attain the same greatness that you have attained: you the incomparably great Bhagawan Ramana.

Chadwick: Impossible and inconceivable. How could anybody become our Bhagawan? He is God Absolute.

B.: [smiling] What is there in it? Only remain still[- i.e., summa iru].

K.: Maharshi, I would like to know how I shall get rid of all my sin.

B.: Original sin and original ignorance are all one and the same thing. To get rid of the one is to get rid of the other, and the other the one. Pursuing the investigation 'Who am I?' all the way to its successful culmination in Realisation, you will surely get rid of all your sin.

K.: Is the investigation 'Who am I?' easy or difficult?

B.: It is the easiest thing there can be. If attending to other things is readily possible for you, imagine how much more easier should be attending to yourself, and attending to yourself exclusively!

K.: Some say that it is exceedingly difficult.

B.: Pay no attention to their words. Do you trust Bhagawan or not?

K.: Implicitly and absolutely.

B.: Then never mind what others are saying. Regard only what is said here. Bhagawan [tapping right cheek with palm multiple times rapidly and then pointing to own face] says vichara is easy. Will you practice it or not?

K.: [eyes swimming in barely suppressed tears, voice choked and face convulsed with emotion] Yes, Bhagawan.

B.: [smiling] Good.

S>M>

Q.: Despite engaging in the practice of vichara for a prolonged span of time, I see no improvement. I have been investigating 'Who am I?' for several years. I see no result. What is the reason? Where am I going wrong? What am I doing wrong? Please help me.

B.: What is meant by vichara? Is it to intellectually analyse oneself along the lines of the question, 'Who am I?'?

Q.: Isn't that it?

B.: No. Vichara means effort to trace thought back to its source, culmination of which effort is discovery of such source as being the self-resplendent Heart- i.e., one's Self. Triumph in vichara has come about when effort is needed in order so as to leave the Heart rather than in order so as to plunge into It. If you incessantly hold on to the source of thought, there will come a time when emergence from such source becomes altogether impossible; reification of this state is what vichara-abhyasa seeks to achieve. Vichara means hunting for the source of thought so that we might abide exclusively and permanently thereas and therein- i.e., to practise vichara is simply this: seek whence within yourself it is that thought arises; having found such source, stay there once and for all.

Q.: Since the ego is said to emerge from the right-hand side of the chest, can we say that this is the source of thought? Shall I therefore concentrate on the right-hand side of the chest?

B.: Trace back thought subjectively, not conceptually. Do you need a mirror to enable you to ascertain that you exist?

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: Any sort of concentration of mind, be it upon the right-hand side of the chest or otherwise, is mental activity which cannot take you beyond mind. There is only one way to get rid of mind: that is to transcend or by-pass it. If you catch hold of the "I-I" consciousness that hypostatizes itself when the mind remains submerged in its source, and hold on to the same indefinitely, the mind will fade away of its own accord. This alone is the way to earn the undying state of Sahaja-stithi: from which there is no return possible. No amount of concentration of mind or other mental activity can result in Revelation of the Self.

Q.: How shall I search for the origin of the ego? Please explain to me in such way that I shall be able to understand.

B.: Whenever you find the mind wandering, pull it back by asking yourself 'Who am I?' and fix it in pure consciousness. 'Who am I?' is like a mongoose patiently but vigilantly waiting outside the termite-mound, so that when the snake should emerge, the animal can spring upon it, break its neck, and eat it. If the mongoose is resolutely determined to feast upon the snake, can



anybody save the snake from certain annihilation? If it remains inside, fearing for its life, it eventually dies out of starvation; if it emerges from the termite-mound to look for prey, it itself becomes prey and dies. This analogy becomes splendidly appropriate when the mongoose happens to be an aged creature. He would not have the stamina to kill a living snake. So, whenever the snake's head pops up, he hisses ferociously and the terrified snake beats a hasty retreat back inside. Eventually the snake, living in perpetual terror of being devoured, gives up the attempt to go outside and perishes inside the termite-mound out of starvation. Then the mongoose, sensing that the snake has given up its life, breaks open the mound and gleefully consumes his dead prey. Likewise, 'Who am I?' cannot by itself kill the snake or aham-vritti. Vichara is a watchman. When the rascal shows himself he drives him back inside, so that he eventually perishes on account of bereftitude of food to feed on- i.e., thoughts to think about or concepts to ruminate upon. Immediately when a thought presents itself, arrest its further progress by means of asking yourself 'To whom has this thought presented itself?' and then and there return your attention to being aware of the one who is having the thought- i.e., to subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly. This is how vichara-abhyasa should be deployed. [smiling] Is it clear now?

Q.: Yes. But without thinking thoughts is it possible to run the household or attend to office duties? Our day-to-day activities require usage of the mind.

B.: Do not speak from theoretical presumption. Try it and see. Do you know what your observation will be? In the absence of thought, work is found to go on even more efficaciously and efficiently than before.

Q.: They say a Guru is needed to Realise the Self. There is no Order of monks in this ashram. Where shall I go?

B.: Where is the need to go anywhere? BE as you ARE.

Q.: Without Guru's Grace there cannot be success on the quest.

B.: True. But such Grace is automatically vouchsafed unto him- and him alone- who sincerely goes on with his abhyasa. There is no need to separately look out for a Guru. Go on practising and the Guru will come to you. His form and shape would depend upon your mental predilections and predispositions. He may or may not be in the human form. It is unnecessary to fret over not being able to find a Guru. You go on with your practice- steadfastly and incessantly. See if the Guru comes in search of you or not one day.

S>M>

Q.: Does the world exist or not?

B.: What is your experience concerning the matter?

Q.: I see a world around me. But what is the truth? I heard that B. has said, 'The world and mind arise and set together as one.'. But what about the minds of other people? Is it a question of my own mind only? This world is home to countless people. What about these others?

B.: When you are dreaming, are you the only person in the dream?

Q.: No. But if the world is a dream, why the same dream everyday? Each night upon going to sleep, we dream a different dream. Here the world is the same day after day. What is the explanation?

B.: 'Swapna is short.', 'Jagrat is long.': these are arbitrary mental conceptualisations or modifications. They are merely mental notions. So far as the Absolute is concerned, they have no meaning. Have you pondered over the question of what is the measuring-scale you are using to judge the quantum of time which has passed? And what is time? These are all mental ideas: nothing more. The mind creates something it recognises as being time; the same mind which created time measures what it calls time. The same is true w.r.t. concepts involving space also. Space and time are myths.

Q.: Some practice vichara for a short while and succeed in Realising. Others try for decades; their efforts are rewarded only with failure. What is the explanation?

B.: What matters is extent of intensity of introversion of mind. There must be desperation to Realise the Self. The thirst to discover Reality, the yearning, the longing must burn brightly in the mind, burn with enough force to reduce the mind into ashes. Half-baked and half-hearted efforts are not going to get you anywhere. Once you know that all this is fiction, can you remain content until and unless Reality is gained? The more actually unacceptable to you the mundane existence is, the greater your chances are of Realising the Absolute Existence.

BLUTKEIM's Note: I am reminded of Jim Carrey's repeated attempts to escape from the Truman Show! It is only when he gives it[the quest to discover 'reality'] his all that he is finally able to escape from fiction and successfully reach 'reality', never before.

S>M>

Q.: B. makes the appeal, 'Mookilan munkattu... etc.'. But where is the need to show a mirror before a man without a nose? His eyes would be able to see each other, even without the need for any mirror!

B.: அடுத்ததான். For "I" to see Itself, no mirror is needed.

Q.: Many people devote their entire lives to the quest for Realisation of the Self. Most may ultimately meet with nothing but total failure. But B. coolly finished the job in just 27 minutes. How is it that the boy Venkataraman from Madurai alone was so lucky?

B.: How do I know? [in a voice quivering with barely suppressed emotion, eyes glistening with tears] I can only repeat Manikkavasagar's words:

மறைந்திட மூடிய மாய இருளை  
அறம்பாவம் என்னும் அரும் கயிற்றால் கட்டி  
புறம்தோல் போர்த்து எங்கும் புழு அழுக்கு மூடி  
மலம் சோரும் ஒன்பது வாயில் குடிலை  
மலங்கப் புலன் ஐந்தும் வஞ்சனையைச் செய்ய  
விலங்கு மனத்தால், விமலா உனக்கு  
கலந்த அன்பாகிக் கசிந்து உள் உருகும்  
நலம் தான் இலாத சிறியேற்கு நல்கி  
நிலம் தன்மேல் வந்து அருளி நீள்கழல்கள் காட்டி  
நாயிற் கடையாய்க் கிடந்த அடியேற்குத்  
தாயிற் சிறந்த தயா ஆன தத்துவனே  
கல் நார் உரித்த கனியே போற்றி  
காவாய் கனகக் குன்றே போற்றி !

The poet Muruganar, I observed, was quietly sobbing as these words were being uttered by the master.

S>M>

Q.: Having come before Bhagawan, how best shall I utilise his divine presence in such manner as would lead to accumulation of sufficient Grace to be able to Realise the Self?

B.: Keep your mind still. That will do.

Q.: I find it impossible.

B.: Then atleast stop thinking as and when- and as soon as- you catch yourself thinking, and at once return the mind to its nativistic state of pure awareness.

Q.: I am after all a man on the Clapham omnibus. Is it possible for me to cultivate this sort of perpetual alertness?

B.: With practice, yes.

S>M>

Q.: Some people have visions and dreams of Sri Bhagawan. Is it really Bhagawan or merely their own imagination conjuring up stuff for them to see?

B.: Even the figure you now see seated on this Sofa, which you call Bhagawan, is nothing but a figment of your own imagination. The Real Bhagawan is not to be seen. He abides as the Self of the seer.

Q.: It does not appeal in a good way to people when they are told that the world is just their own dream. Perhaps the statement 'The world is a dream.' is applicable to the Jnani's point of view, and not to that of the man on the Clapham omnibus.

B.: Everything depends solely upon one's weltanschauung. If you want the world to look real, it looks real to you. If you want the world to look like a mirage, it looks like a mirage to you.

Q.: But what is the actual nature of the world?

B.: There is no world. Absolutely none at all.

Q.: [apparently finds self at a loss to say anything]

B.: [smiling] It is incorrect to say that this is so only from the Jnani's point of view. From the Jnani's point of view, there can be no such thing as dream or not-Reality. To the Jnani, everything is Real, because everything is verily Himself the one and only Self. The idea of the world being a dream is only an preliminary-level hypothesis meant to be delivered into the ears of inquisitive neophytes on the path who desire to be given some sort of explanation as regards the appearance of the world. One who is serious about discovering his true Self will not permit his mental tranquility to be disturbed on account of the appearance, disappearance or non-appearance of the world. For one who is contented with, as and in the Self, what does it matter whether the world appears or not? The Jnani does not see the world as a dream. He sees it as the Self. Or rather, He Himself abides as the world, because the world is not found by Him to be apart from His own Self. When Jnana dawns, all that exists and all that appears is found to be only the One Immutable Self. Can there be anything apart from the Self?

Q.: But again I raise the point that all this is only from the Jnani's perspective of view. It will not hold good for the ajnani.

B.: The Jnani sees no one as ajnani. All are verily only Jnanis in His sight. All are Enlightened. Where is ignorance?

Q.: But I am an ajnani.

B.: No. You think that you are an ajnani.

Q.: If I abandon that thought, can I too become a Jnani?

B.: Abandon all thought. Jnana is found to already be there. Effort is made not to Realise the Self but only to un-Realise the not-Self. How to Realise that which is already here and now?

Q.: If the Self is already here and now, why am I not aware of the same?

B.: Because your attention is devoted to other things- for example, extroversion in the form of thought. If you give up being aware of [what is] not-Self, you can easily Realise the Self.

S>M>

Q.: I want to wind up my business and permanently settle down in Tiruvannamalai. That way I can always be with Bhagawan. Sathsangam with Bhagawan will, I am sure, help me to speedily Realise the Self.

B.: What is meant by sathsangam with Bhagawan? It is only Aathmasangam with your own Self.

Q.: They say that company of saints is helpful for Realisation of the Self.

B.: Yes. But He can only show the way. The presence of the Sage cannot serve as a substitute for your abhyasa; it ought to not be used as an excuse for staying away from abhyasa. The horse can only be led to the pond. If it feels thirsty, it is for the horse to drink and quench itself of its thirst. Can anybody drink on behalf of the horse? Will that satisfy the horse's thirst?

S>M>

Q.: Who qualifies to be a devotee of Bhagawan Ramana? And who does not?

B.: All.

Q.: What qualities should be ideally present in one whose aspiration it is to Realise the Self?

B.: Frenzied, fanatical, maniacal longing or yearning to escape from illusion and discover Reality[யதார்த்தத்தை அறியவேண்டும் என்னும் அதிதீவிர பசி]. Or, intense motiveless Love for God[காரணமறியா அதிதீவிர இறைபக்தி]. Either way, absorption in the quest must be so intense that it allows you no scope to possibly think about anything else. One's faculty of attention must be absorbed in the quest so totally and comprehensively that there must remain or arise no possibility of thinking about anything else. Transformation of the mind into THAT to which "I" actually refers is certainly no joke. It needs total commitment and utterly unswerving dedication no matter what.

Q.: Why then does Bhagawan's poem say, 'Aathma-viddhai ayye athi sulabham...'?

B.: [turning to Sri Muruganar with an indulgent smile] Explain!

M.: [hesitates for sometime, but upon seeing that B. would not be relenting]

The Self is self-evident. To see objects effort is needed; whereas the Self is effortless Bliss. So, certainly Jnana is the easiest of all attainments, because it does not involve [necessity for] doing anything. What can be simpler and easier than summa-irutthal? The difficulty comes only to a mind that has attachments; these draw it outwards into the web of delusory pursuits again and again. Effort is needed only to conquer and ruin these attachments; only after their extirpation is the Self Revealed. So, Jnana is inherently easy because of It being self-spontaneous; we make it difficult and say that we have to attain it by means of expending effort because our view is obscured by our mental attachments. So, erasing the mental attachments that veil Jnana may be challenging; but in Jnana Itself there can be no difficulty whatever.

Q.: But why should God make the quest for the Self so hard?

M.: Who knows? Is it open to our puny selves to divine the mysteries of His ways? Why concern ourselves with never-ending questions? Let us surrender to Him once and for all and be done with it. Let us be like Thirunavukkarasar in our attitude and all our problems stand solved:

அன்றேஎன்றன் ஆவியும்  
உடலும் உடமை எல்லாமும்  
குன்றேஅனையாய் என்னை ஆட்  
கொண்டபோதே கொண்டிலையோ  
இன்றோர் இடையூறு எனக்குண்டோ  
எண்தோள் முக்கண் எம்மானே  
நன்றேசெய்வாய் பிழை செய்வாய்  
நானோஇதற்கு நாயகமே .

The master smiled sweetly upon having heard utterance of these words. But the questioner was evidently far from being satisfied.

Q.: If I surrender to Him, will He save me from re-birth?

M.: How can you have surrendered and yet say that you desire freedom from re-birth? One who has surrendered would have no desire left in him for Emancipation. So, let us be like Sekkizhar in our attitude:

இறவாத இன்ப அன்பு வேண்டிப்பின் வேண்டு கின்ர்  
பிறவாமை வேண்டும் மீண்டும் பிறப்புண்டேல் உன்னை என்றும்  
மறவாமை வேண்டும் இன்னும் வேண்டும்நான் மகிழ்ந்து பாடி  
அறவாநீ ஆடும் போதுஉன் அடியின்கீழ் இருக்க என்றார் .

Q.: So, surrender means that I should not care even for my own Emancipation?

B.: Yes. For one who has genuinely surrendered himself unconditionally to the Lord, heart and soul, mind and body, no abhyasa is necessary. Jnana comes searching for him.

S>M>

Q.: I have heard Bhagawan is of the opinion that if Guru's Grace is absent one cannot achieve Realisation no matter how many austerities or how much penance one has performed. Is it so?

B.: Yes.

Q.: I am a worshipper of Lord Shiva. Is that not enough to secure unto me Emancipation? I am aware that B. does not initiate anybody. Where am I to go looking for a Guru? Anyhow, what exactly is this 'Guru'? Is it God in human-form?

B.: Lord Shiva Himself elucidates the meaning of the word 'Guru' thus:  
'Gukarashchandhakaroehi rukarastaeja uchyate ajnanagrasakam brahma gururevana samshayaha; gukarafprathamam varno mayadi gunabhasakaha rukaroesti parabrahma mayabhrantivimochakam.'

Q.: What is the significance of the Guru in helping one to Realise the Self? How best shall one make use of the Guru in one's efforts to obtain Realisation of the Self?

B.: This is what Lord Shiva Himself has said in response to a similar query posed unto Him: 'Adhakaenapradatavyam gurusantoshakharanam guroraradhanamkuryataha yathpirayathat nivaedhayat; shareeram arthamsarvasvam sadhgururubhyonivaedhayat yenoddhatamaidamsarva tasmaishreeguravaenamaha.'

Q.: So, the Guru's actual identity is that He is God Himself?

B.: Lord Shiva Himself says: 'Bhyaenedamdarshitam tattvam chittachaityadikam tathaa jagratsvapnasushuptyadi tasmai shreegurave namaha; yasya jnanamidamvishvamadrushyam bhinnabhedataha sadhaikarooparopaya tasmai shreegurave namaha; sarvakalavideshaeshu svatantro nishchalaha sukhi akhandaikarasasvadatrupto hi paramo guruhu.'

Q.: Sri Bhagawan seems to be in constant communion with Lord Shiva! Does Lord Shiva also suggest that for Emancipation, we must pursue the investigation 'Who am I'?

B.: He says that attention must be maintained at the source of thought perpetually, in order so as to win Emancipation: 'Tasyavalokanam prapya sarvasamgavivarjitaha ekaki nispruhaha shantah sthatavyam tatprasadataha; gurupradatah svatmanyat maramanirikshanataha samata muktimarghena svatmajnanampravartate; gurupadhishtamargaena manaha siddhimtukaryathaha anityam khandayetsarvam yatkimchidatmagocharam.' Vichara also has the same aim: to have the entirety of your mental attention stay at the source of thought constantly and incessantly.

Q.: I find peace of mind in your physical presence. Can it be had whilst I am away from here also?

B.: Peace is always there. Only we spoil it by allowing the mind to stray away from its source. Vichara is a gentle tool for returning the mind to its source each time it wants to stray away from its origin, the Heart. When the mind is merged in the Heart there is peace. When it has left the Heart there is restlessness and discordance. Thought is the villain who ruins man's fundamental state of fathomless peace. Free yourself from thought and you shall have peace.

S>M>

Q.: Can a Jnani feel fear? Is it possible?

B.: [no response]

M.: Thirunavukkarasar has answered your question in the following words: 'மண்பாதலம்புக்கு மால்கடல்முடி மற்றுஏழ்உலகம் விண்பால் திசைகெட்டு இருசுடர் வீழினும் அஞ்சல் நெஞ்சே.'

S>M>

Q.: When bad things happen to me in life what should I do?

B.: Thank God for it.

Q.: What?!

B.: Yes. When good things happen, you thank Him. When bad things happen, why not adopt the same vein of response?

S>M>

Q.: Is Bhagawan a pacifist? Or, does he believe in the concept of 'just war'?

B.: Whom shall we fight against? Who seeks to win against whom, and why?

Q.: Meaning that everything is vested in the Self only?

B.: Yes.

Q.: The man on the Clapham omnibus cannot reasonably be expected to comprehend such lofty ideas.

B.: All understand the language of Love.

Q.: Some burn with hatred for their fellow men.

B.: Never mind others. Look to yourself.

Q.: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' What is this Word? Is it God's name?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What is His name?

B.: AH-EH or AH-AM or IL-AH: the meaning is the same; it is 'I-AM'. "I" is another name for the Self.

Q.: Is "I" the same as "I-AM"?

B.: No.

Q.: What is the difference?

B.: "I" is the Absolute. It cannot assert "I-AM". Mahat or "I-AM" is known as Ishwara; it is the light of the Self prior to the same undergoing any reflection. The light of the Self or "I-AM" consciousness falls on the jivatman and produces the phenomenon of reflection we call 'mind' or 'ego'. The jivatman is nothing but the aham-vritti. The aham-vritti includes all other chitta-vrittis, which are merely modifications of the one single vritti known as the aham-vritti. The destruction of the aham-vritti is known as Jnana. It is also known as chidjadagranthibhedham. The aham-vritti is not Real. It is a phantom-like ghostly entity that manages to thrive because we do not pay adequate attention to it. If we look closely at it, it will disappear- or rather, in discovering that itself does not exist, never did exist, and cannot exist, it vanishes once and for all. It seems to exist only because we pay attention to things other than "I". If the mind pays attention to itself exclusively, it turns out that there is no such thing as 'mind'. This alone is Emancipation.



Q.: 'The Jnani's actions are not the result of considered, rational thought. He acts spontaneously.' What is the meaning?

B.: It is like a radio-receiver. When the singer's performance is terrible, the ignorant man curses the receiver. When the singer's performance is commendable, he praises the receiver. Is it not absurd?

Q.: Well, then: where is the transmitting-station or broadcasting-station for the Jnani? The Absolute Parabrahman is not engaging Himself in any communication, I presume.

B.: [laughs] Yes, that is the great mystery. But the question never arises from the Jnani's point of view, because He never does anything. I am always motionless and actionless. I see no others. But 'others' say that 'I' am acting. What is to be done?

S>M>

Q.: Since the Self is always in Nithyasakshatkaram [the state of Eternal Realisation], the question of Realisation arises only for the jivatman. Am I correct?

B.: What is the use of indulging oneself in all these polemics? There is no end to it. It is better to find out who the jivatman is. We talk of Realisation. Whose Realisation?

S>M>

Q.: Every night before I go to bed I chant Psalm 139:23-24. Is it a lucrative practice?

B.: Yes: mean what you say. If you surrender yourself to Him unreservedly, thereafter He leads the way. They say, 'God helps those who help themselves.'. He also helps those who are in no position to help themselves: provided they surrender to Him in entirety. God or Guru never forsakes one who has unconditionally surrendered. In the same Psalm you mention, it is sung: 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.' So, surrender to Him and lo! behold: He shall never leave your side.

S>M>

Q.: In the West they think that 'Mind' is the highest principle. How to convince the folks back at home that the true Self lies hidden behind the mind?

B.: You first Realise and then we can worry about the rest later.

S>M>

Q.: Vichara seems to be like peeling an onion-bulb. The skins are cast away but nothing is gained in the end.

B.: [laughing] When it comes to the onion atleast after removing the outer-most skin the subsequent layers can be eaten!

Q.: Why, I thought B. disapproves of onion as being prohibited food-stuff! How can onion be regarded as sathvick-food? It emits an unruly odour which causes one's eyes to shed tears.

B.: It loses its maliferous odour completely when fried in விளக்கெண்ணெய் .

9th September, 1936

For the most part of today I was unable to go to the ashram. Bhagawan asked me to fetch by way of purchase roots of the shathavari plant from a herbs-dealer who put up his wares in different parts of the town on different days. The sarvadhikari gave me 3 annas; this meant I was to purchase 3 annas worth of roots and take them back to the ashram as soon as possible. I was not inordinately delighted with the chore, but still agreed to do it because I knew who it was for. I had been given the task because the herbs-dealer sometimes spread out his wares at the inception of the street where I was incumbently put up. But today he was missing there; everyday he went and squatted at a different place, spreading out his condiments before him on a piece of khaki-coloured canvas. He himself would not sit on the canvas; I know not why; he would unwind the raggedly towel around his head, spread it on the floor, and seat himself on it; at the end of the day, the towel would be back on the head, and he would gather up his inexpensive wares in a little brown bundle, and carry it away in the crook of his arm, fondly hugging it to himself as if the thing were his new-born baby. He would invariably leave when the sun's light began to fade; perhaps he could not afford a kerosene-lamp. After making inquiries, I finally found him today near the Ammani Ammal gopuram, bought the necessary item and made to return to the ashram. The sun was not merciful, but the fact notwithstanding I walked to the ashram because I did not like to haggle with the town's contumelious "tanga-walas". All along the way my thoughts were with poor Major Chadwick, for whose sake this purchase had been made. He had been suffering for the past few days from an acute and relentless attack of dysentery, forcing him to keep away from the Hall and stay amidst vegetation on the nethermost slopes of the Hill. B. noticed his unusual absence from the Hall and sent for him. Feeling sorry for his plight, a gentleman known as Lakshmanan, a Congress worker from Pondicherry and a devotee of the master, has volunteered to take care of him. The gentleman is apparently an ace at practicing Ayurvedic remedies. He told the master that he had the other ingredients but needed just one more: shathavari roots. The task was assigned to me. Evidently since

I am neither eating nor sleeping at the ashram, the sarvadhikari did not relish giving me work; but consequent to the fact that I sincerely felt sorry for Chadwick, I agreed to help him by fetching the roots. As I walked towards the ashram my thoughts were with Chadwick. He was a war-veteran from the Great War. He could lead a comfortable life in England. Yet he had opted to mortify himself in this manner, all for his love of the master. I wondered if I had been born as a Caucasian and were to be in the retired Major's position, I would still be interested in Bhagawan- probably not, I thought to myself, for I must be honest in my self-appraisal. I would read books by and about him, certainly. But personally come and stay here and get attacked by dysentery? No. The Major- did he feel bored here? It was a question that sometimes popped into my head whilst I set eyes upon his towering frame. He did not have many friends here- 5 at present, at most. Bhagawan, the Shylock, B.'s rudraksha-adorned attendant, Mr. TKS and myself. Was it proper to include the master in this list, since his State was Transcendental? I do not know, but certainly the master was more than a friend to Chadwick. One did not leave England and come to some corner of an unknown land in order so as to be in the vicinity of "a friend". How much joy did B.'s presence fill him with? Evidently exceedingly a great deal much, because he had never turned back and left. The surprising thing was that even before he had met B., he had decided that he would stay with him till the end; in other words, at the time of leaving England, he had been determined to leave Her for good! And what about his other friends? The rudraksha-adorned attendant, he told me, was an extraordinary fellow. Although his actual name was something else, the master called him Annamalai the moment he set his eyes on him and so this was his name at the ashram. Since he is executing more than 1 construction project here, I assumed he was a professional engineer who had come to serve Bhagawan; but Chadwick astonished me by saying that he had never been to school. Chadwick had also made me au courant with many other fascinating details appurtenant to this man's life, which he knew owing to the fact that they were staunch friends: he had come to the ashram a decade back and had been assigned to work as B.'s attendant; in a week or so, he had grown tired of his role and had left; but poverty had forced him to return; he came back to the ashram and clasped hold of the master's feet in a gesture of solicitation of pardon, since he had discourteously left without telling anybody; the moment he made contact with B.'s flesh, he heard the sound of a bell ringing inside his body followed by the master's voice reciting the shloka, 'Chandanam sheethalamloke chandanath apichandramaha chandrachandanayormadhye sheethala sadhu sangathihi'. That very moment, owing no doubt to B.'s grace, memories of his previous lives returned to him.

In his previous life he had been Mr. William Talman, the great English architect who had single-handedly re-built much of that country after it stood thoroughly scrowdged by the great fire that totally conflagrated it during the 17th century. Yet while he remembered all his previous architectural knowledge, he could not recall how to speak the English tongue. The master smiled at him and told him that henceforth, he should take care of all the building-works at the ashram. Mr. Talman, that is Annamalai-swami, agreed eagerly. Although de facto on that day he had ceased to serve as the master's attendant, he did not relinquish the post altogether: he helped the master by rubbing oil all over his body whenever the latter needed to take anointment with an oil-bath. Mr. Talman being a fellow Englishman and fellow devotee of the Maharshi, I thought, it was natural that immense affinity should develop betwixt the soldier and the architect; everyday they even shared the same room nocturnally. It had happened thus: when Chadwick had moved into the ashram, the sarvadhikari had asked Annamalai-swami to vacate his room so that the towering Caucasian should exclusively be able to stay inside it. Although the architect-attendant immediately endeavoured to comply, the benignant-hearted Major did not wish to see another inconvenienced for the sake of fortification of his own comfort; so, to the surprise of one and all, he summarily announced that he would like to share the room with Annamalai-swami. For some reason, Chadwick said, B. never permitted this architect-attendant to spend any time in the Hall. This has been my observation also: as soon as he entered, he would be sent out on a fresh building assignment, or to the care of some structure that stood out as being in need of repairs. My own surmise is that his desire during his lifetime as the original Mr. Talman to construct buildings for God Himself is being played out in this life; B. wants his desires to fulfill themselves out fully so that there can be no more birth for him; thus he keeps him busily engaged in construction work all the time so that this desire can be exhausted sooner and he can attain Moksha expeditedly. Chadwick has remarked to me more than once, "I wonder whether Annamalai-swami regrets the fact that he is unable to spend as much time in the Hall with the master as a regular attendant would be able to.". This remark on the Major's part betrays how deeply sensitive his nature is, though he seems casual and insouciant on the outside; he puts himself in the shoes of another and then wonders about that person's problems from his perspective! The Major had once rescued Annamalai-swami from a grave crisis that had gathered itself together so as to be able to pounce upon him. More than a year back, a group of devotees constituting the ashram's agglomeration-of-managing-committees had decided that Annamalai-swami was to be regarded as being a villain because he was wasting the funds of the ashram by

unnecessarily constructing grandiose buildings that in their opinion the ashram would never feel need for. They asked him to stop all his construction work and surrender his responsibilities to them; henceforth, they said, he would have to be content with being the master's attendant. Annamalai-swami refused. The irate group asked him on whose authority he was putting up buildings left, right, and centre inside the ashram premises. Annamalai-swami replied that he was acting on his own authority. The gentlemen constituting the group secretly conferred amongst themselves and decided that the police must be called in the middle of the night to have Annamalai-swami ejected from the ashram. The actual fact was that Annamalai-swami was putting up the many buildings he was constructing here only because B. had privately asked him so to do; moreover the master had told him that he must never disclose the fact that he was acting under his orders, but must always pretend that he was acting of his own independent volition. Annamalai-swami told nobody, but Chadwick had guessed that he would not be engaging himself so strenuously were not the master's orders behind it all; he asked him if that were not so; on being confronted with the question from his dear friend, Annamalai-swami laughingly admitted that the Major's surmise had been correct. Now, the group discreetly contacted Chadwick and told him not to be surprised if a police-man knocked on the door of his cottage in the middle of the following night. Chadwick asked for the reason and was horrified when informed of it. He told the group that the entire idea of putting up so many elaborate buildings one after the other on the ashram premises was Bhagawan's. The gentlemen were initially skeptical but later, in a dilemma as to whether to believe the earnest-sounding Major or not, asked Annamalai-swami if it were not so. Annamalai-swami, not one to break a promise of confidentiality he had made to the master, stubbornly maintained that he was doing everything solely of his own accord. The group then went to the Maharshi himself in order so as to get matters clarified. But Bhagawan would not even look in their direction. Chadwick arrived in the Hall at that moment and said to the master agitatedly, 'They are planning to forcibly evict Annamalai-swami from the ashram...'. That very moment the Maharshi thundered, 'The moment Annamalai-swami is forced to leave the ashram, I will also go away.'. The group, upon hearing these words, went away quietly and never made any further attempt to disturb the construction-work going on in the ashram, realising that it was indeed the master who must have issued orders for all these works to be carried out; soon after it had become common knowledge in the ashram that Annamalai-swami was merely carrying out Bhagawan's orders in executing all his elaborate building-projects; thereafter nobody dared to comment on how resources were being wasted in putting up

huge buildings when smaller ones would suffice. Chadwick had told me of all these little interesting incidents, and more, whilst I sometimes visited him during the late evenings in his little cottage, which he happily shared with Annamalai-swami during the night. Some of his other anecdotal rambles I recollect were- a] When the Major had first arrived in the ashram, he had prostrated in front of Annamalai-swami, imagining that the latter was Sri Maharshi! b] Soon after Chadwick moved into the ashram, a letter addressed to the master arrived from one Arunachala Mudaliar living in town; it carried the complaint that Chadwick was regularly and clandestinely purchasing beef from a vendor in மத்தளக்காரன் தெரு, secretly roasting or barbecuing the same on a fire he lit every Sunday near Palakoththu, and everyday consuming it inside the ashram precincts, silently sitting next to Bhagawan's mother's samadhi whilst so doing; the letter was also signed by one Gopal Rao, a former manager of the ashram! c] Bhagawan once told the story of how in the early days of the ashram there was a big fight between one Dhandapani-swami, a former manager of the ashram, and the sarvadhikari. Dhandapani-swami became excessively enraged and tried to push the sarvadhikari into the agatthiyar-theertham. The sarvadhikari would have drowned if the master had not scooped up from the ground some cow-turd and flung the same squarely at Dhandapani-swami's face. The humiliated Dhandapani-swami stopped fighting at once. Bhagawan had then explained to one and all present there that his intention was not to insult Dhandapani-swami, but only to ensure that sannyasis in general did not acquire a disreputable or reprehensible name [for causing to drown those of their kind]. With these and other thoughts roaming around on the inside of my head, I entered the Hall and prostrated to the master as usual. Then I told him that I had procured the required roots. The master acknowledged the fact with a smile and stretched out his hand for the condiment. He held it close to his face, smelled it carefully from various angles, remarked, 'It is of marvellous quality- thoroughly dried, with no fungus infestation; good...', and handed it over to me so that I could give it to the sarvadhikari, which I then did. "It is precisely for 3 annas- is that not so?" he said good-humouredly, "Good fellow! See how much he has given for 3 annas...". I was then asked to hand over the same to Mr. Lakshmanan; I went to the cow-shed, where I was told he could be found. He was tending to a sick cow, administering unto the uncertain, reluctant animal a frothing and foaming herbal decoction; it was attempting to withdraw its head away from the bucket into which the man was pushing it, coaxing it to drink what I guessed would be some not-delicious substance of his own contrivance and manufacture. I was asked to hold the unfortunate animal's snout, which I did. Mr. Lakshmanan fastened a rope

around the cow's head, and her mouth was now confined to the bucket. "This is what we must do with the rebellious mind.", he remarked to me grimly as I handed over the roots to him. But the moment he finished saying it, the cow violently tilted her head, and most of the mixture splashed out of the bucket. We heard a familiar laugh, and it was Bhagawan! He caressed the cow gently and she relaxed her mouth into the bucket. He waited for a minute. Then he took the rope off, but the cow made no attempt to extract her mouth from the bucket. "No, this is what we must do with the mind." he said, and Mr. Lakshmanan smiled feebly. I laughed. Then we went back to the Hall. As we approached, my ears pricked up, for somebody was saying the Führer's name. Mr. Knowles was reading out from some magazine he was clutching in his hands: '**...judge that the sufferings imposed on Jews are unjustified, thus reserving to himself and Hitler, as Germans, the right to judge themselves.**' Presently the master entered and all rose, although he motioned everybody to remain seated as he was walking in. It was then given unto Mr. Knowles to understand that the Maharshi had no objection to the man continuing to read out whatever it was that he had been reciting at the time of the master's temporary absence from the Hall. So, looking meaningfully at the Shylock, Mr. Knowles went on- **How little Professor Verweyen is informed of the affairs of his own country, and how feeble is his sympathy with the persecuted Jews, contrary to his profession of it in the body of his letter, is obvious from his allegation that "all those sufferings Jews receive their salaries, only their spoiling influence upon politics, arts, and so on is taken away from them". The fact is that Jews of administrative and civil services were not only heartlessly dismissed without pension or compensations, but the large funds remitted from abroad for the relief of destitute Jews in Germany long remained confiscated by the "Aryan" Government, to say nothing of the deprivation of most of the Jews of their rights of citizenship and their properties. The late General Secretary for Germany writes that "the so-called persecution of Jews in Germany has not been a primary act, but is in answer to the persecution of non-Jews by Jews, that means their predominance in theatres, literature, commerce and so on". It beats my "wisdom" to understand how predominance in theatres and literature can be called persecution- jealousy-provoking should be the appropriate term- and how can the 1 persecute the 99. It is inconceivable that a Theosophist, who has pledged himself to Universal Brotherhood, allows his political bias to stand in the way of constructive, humanitarian work undertaken by his fellow-Theosophists by dubbing it with the elusive names of politics. I hope, in conclusion, that there will come about a**

**change of attitude on the part of the Professor and his sympathisers, if any, to help the German nation to rise from its present parlous moral situation and to return to prosperity through the spiritual path of real "Wisdom, Brotherhood and Justice".** 'There,' he finished triumphantly. The Shylock looked severely beleaguered and exasperated. 'Right upto today I'm heartily satisfied with that letter I wrote; I'm not saying it wasn't written by me.' he said; 'But where in the world it supports the cause of the Hamizrakhy, I totally fail to-' But he continued no further, for at that precise moment a gigantic distraction entered the Hall and rushed straight at the master. It was a hefty youth wearing nothing but a slender loin-cloth and brandishing a thick bamboo-stick. Before anybody could even think of doing anything to thwart him, he sat next to B. on the Sofa, put his arm over the master's shoulder, shook him vigorously, and screamed out aloud, 'We are both Jnanis, worship us, you silly morons!'. One of the attendants said ruefully, 'Oh! It is you again!'. Both attendants rushed out of the Hall and in less than a minute returned with Annamalai-swami. 'Oh! You have returned!' said the youth to the architect-attendant. 'Those are the words I am supposed to be saying to you!' exclaimed Annamalai-swami with a laugh. Then there began a tug-of-war. The attendants caught hold of the man's stick, which he seemed reluctant to let go of. Using their hold on the stick, they dragged him to the entrance, threw him out, and shut the door; since he was holding the Sofa with the other hand, the Sofa together with the Maharshi on it also moved, automatically, near the door. B., who had been impeccably serene all this while, got up with a laugh and the Sofa was moved back to its place in the Hall. But the man was now spitting through the window; so all the windows, too, were closed and we sat there in semi-darkness. The sealed egresses were opened again only after 45 minutes! The Shylock asked B., 'Has this man already come here?'. B.: [laughs] Yes! He has got the idea that he is also a Jnani, but nobody is respecting him or worshipping him. So, he is coming and sitting here so that his ego may feel appeased. What can we do? Can we say it is wrong? All are verily Jnanis...

S>M>

A somewhat deprecatory article about Bhagawan has appeared in some English periodical published at Madras; it is said B. has been compared to 'the wonderful Wizard of Oz' and to the clever tailors who trick an aged king into believing that he is wearing magnificent articles of clothing in H. C. Andersen's story, 'the Emperor's new clothes'. Allegedly the master is accused of convincing people that they are already Jnanis, making them become dangerous, deranged lunatics; whereas the state of Jnana, asseverates the author, can genuinely dawn only after a long period of



practice, the Maharshi nonchalantly tells all people who care to pay him a visit, 'There is nothing to do. Summa-iru. You are already Enlightened.'. There is much excitement amongst devotees of the master. He wants to peruse the article, but the only copy has been secreted away or destroyed by somebody, probably by an excessively zealous devotee. The issue in question pertains to the previous fortnight and so now nothing can be done, since copies incumbently on sale would only be the current issue.

S>M>

E.Z.: Where is the will located in the sheaths of the jiva?

B.: Will is only a manifestation of the aham-vritti; it desires for various objects and therefore provokes or propels the jiva into action[karma]. Will or volition is inherent in the aham-vritti. In which sheath is it located? It must be where the 'I'-sense is, namely, in the vijnanamayakosha. Vijnanamayakosha is the sheath which contains or which is the manifestation of the 'I'-sense; it is where the self-conscious individual wills and determines. But why do such questions arise? Why should we be troubling ourselves to know all these matters? Did you know anything in sleep? Was the desire to know anything present in sleep? Were you not happy in sleep? Intellectual analyses of how the mind functions is not going to help you in any way. There is no point in endeavouring to satisfy such curiosity. One doubt arises and is cleared. But then the next one arises and that too has to be cleared, and so on. Doubts keep on coming without end. No purpose is served by means of asking such questions. Any answer to such questions could only ever be further mental information, and is therefore bound to be useless and worthless by default. What we should be concerned with is the true nature of 'I', which is the pivot of all these sheaths and worlds. The true 'I' is the Supreme Reality.

E.Z.: But what exactly is meant by 'will'?

B.: I have just said that will or volition is synonymous with the aham-vritti or 'I'-thought. The thought 'I' arises and thereafter all other thoughts arise. It is possible for other thoughts to arise only after the rise of the thought 'I'. In the absence of the thought 'I', no other thought could possibly subsist. All other thoughts are only modifications of this one thought 'I'. Get rid of this one thought 'I' and the game is finished. Mind is simply pure consciousness to which the thought 'I' has been added; if the same be deducted, there is Liberation. Can there be will without the 'I'? Will is comprised in the 'I'. The 'I'-thought is located in the vijnanamayakosa; will is included in the same. Annamayakosa is the gross-body sheath. The senses with the prana and the karmendriyas form the pranamayakosa. The senses with the mind and the jnanendriyas form the manomayakosa. The mind is formed of thoughts only.

Idam is the object and aham is the subject; the two together form the vijnanamayakosa.

E.Z.: For Realisation is it necessary to get rid of the will?

B.: Yes. When mind goes will goes along with it.

S>M>

Q.: Both Bhagawan and JK deny they are Gurus. But they do act as Gurus; that is my observation. Why do Jnanis exhibit this sort of paradoxical behaviour?

B.: Really the Guru is the Self within. External manifestations are for those too weak to make direct use of the Guru within.

Q.: "One who has the option not to Realise will never Realise." Is it true?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What does it mean?

B.: Mind cannot kill mind.

Q.: Then how to get rid of mind?

B.: By unconditionally surrendering it to the Self.

Q.: Then what about vichara?

B.: We can never know That by which we know. The only thing to do is to surrender ourselves to It without reserve and then keep quiet. If total surrender stands achieved, vichara is not necessary- neither is anything else. Complete surrender is another name for Jnana or Emancipation.

S>M>

Q.: After investigating 'Who am I?' I find that blankness prevails. What do I do?

B.: Did you exist or not whilst the blankness mentioned by you prevailed? It is only because you existed then that you now are able to recollect having experienced something at that time. Is that correct?

Q.: Yes.

B.: So, blanknesses come and go, but YOU always ARE. For YOU there is neither coming nor going. YOU ARE now as YOU always WERE and YOU will BE always as YOU ARE now. Is there any change in YOU, who are one and identical with the light of beingness of the Self? No. So, hold on to that YOU and do not be swayed by transitory, fleeting ephemera. Phenomena come and go. Do not bother about what has an origin and an end. Hold on to that which is changeless and absolute even in all that is changing and relative. Simply put, remain as That-which-IS and all your problems are over.

Q.: It needs effort to remain without thinking.

B.: In the beginning, yes. But as you practice more and more you will find the thought-free state to be the natural state and the state in which there are thoughts to be the alien state. Whatever it is that we practise, that becomes

the svabhava of the mind. It is we who determine what the mind's svabhava should be.

Q.: But everything is said to be pre-destined.

B.: Free will holds the field in association with individuality and is as real as the ego. Whilst the ego lasts, so does free will.

S>M>

Q.: What is the relationship between body-consciousness and "I"-consciousness?

B.: What IS, is only consciousness. Since consciousness is not different from subjective awareness, it is known as "I"-consciousness. Consciousness + upadhis = qualified or conditioned consciousness. For example, consciousness + dehatma-buddhi = body consciousness. In consciousness alone there is no variation. Changes take place in upadhis only. Red-hot iron can be hammered into any shape you want. What changes? Is there any change in the fire that imparts malleability to the iron? One more example which can be given is that of actors performing on a stage. There is a lantern which illumines the stage for the audience to see; without light therefrom no play can be seen at all; light from the lantern shines before the play commences, and continues during and after it. Many plays are performed in concatenation or succession but nothing happens to the lantern; it goes on shining light.

Q.: What am I? An actor in the play or the lantern?

B.: Why ask me? Find out!

S>M>

Q.: I feel fear when I come into Bhagawan's presence. Why?

B.: [laughs] Does this look so terrifying?

Q.: I am telling the truth. What is the reason for my fear? Please tell me.

B.: Men fear to lose objective knowledge because they think that if everything material is lost, they also will be lost. But consider the state of sushupti; in this state you ARE; apart from that there is no anything. Do you not exist in sushupti? Are you unhappy in sushupti because everything is lost? No: to the contrary, you are quite content and happy. So, what is the inference? Extrinsic accretions bring you not joy, but misery. Stay away from them and remain happy. Then there will be no cause for fear. People want 'peace of mind' from Bhagawan. Is Bhagawan vending peace of mind for 4 annas a kilogram? The term 'peace of mind' is a misleading, oxymoronical expression. So long as there is mind, there cannot be peace. Relinquish or discard the mind and be at peace.

S>M>

Q.: How to get rid of attachment toward the body?

B.: Reflect on the inevitable fact that it will perish one day. Inter faeces et urinam nascimur. So, why at all harbour attachment towards this body which is made of potentially putrid substances? The body is not you. You are That-which-IS.

Q.: Then how did I get this body- and why?

B.: The insentient body is altogether innocent. He is not the culprit. Does he say, 'Here I am! I am your body; I am you.'? Did he even once say so? No. It is we who confound ourselves with the body. We take ourselves to be the body and think we suffer when it feels pain. Pain and pleasure are both imaginary. The body is already a dead body. Can it say, 'I am experiencing pain.' or 'I am experiencing pleasure.'? The "I"-sense is not even remotely connected to anything physical. Being of the nature of consciousness, it emanates from the Self only. So, really there is no body but for the mind.

S>M>

Q.: Is mind an obstacle to Realisation?

B.: It is only through the mind that the Self is found. Continuous search for what the mind is results in its disappearance. Then only the Self remains.

S>M>

Q.: If I eat your ucchishtam will I also become a Jnani? The elders have spoken highly of consuming the Guru's ucchishtam- have they not?

B.: The elders may have failed to anticipate that in today's generation, many people act only after assuring themselves of reward and return, and not out of unbridled, blind Love. What to do?

S>M>

Q.: St. Dominic emphasized upon the advantage of using the Sacred Rosary to repeat the Lord's name. Does the Maharshi approve of this path? Does it lead to Realisation of the Absolute Self?

B.: Mentally keep on repeating the name until only that thought is left.

S>M>

Q.: Continuous vichara makes the mind fatigued. What must be done to overcome this problem?

B.: Plunge yourself in the nectarous ocean of bhakti.

Q.: And when that becomes tedious?

B.: Get back to vichara.

S>M>

Q.: What was Ishwara doing before He created this cosmos? Was He engaged in making preparations to destroy the previous one? Why this cycle of destruction and creation? What is the ordinal position of this cosmos?

B.: One can only quote St. Augustine:

**See, I answer him that asketh, "What did God before He made heaven and earth?"; I answer not as one is said to have done merrily (eluding the pressure of the question), "He was preparing hell (saith he) for pryers into mysteries." It is one thing to answer enquiries, another to make sport of enquirers. So I answer not; for rather had I answer, "I know not," what I know not, than so as to raise a laugh at him who asketh deep things and gain praise for one who answereth false things.**

S>M>

Q.: If I surrender myself without reserve to God, am I not responsible for what happens afterwards?

B.: Don't bother what happens afterwards; there is no need to concern oneself with what happens afterwards. The truth is that perfect surrender does not have any 'afterwards'. St. Ignatius has said:

**To give, and not to count the cost,  
To fight, and not to heed the wounds,  
To toil, and not to seek for rest,  
To labor, and not to ask for any reward,  
Save that of knowing that we do thy will.**

Once the ego is completely lost, one's actions are automatically God's.

S>M>

St. John has written-

**As a sick man loses the desire for, and the taste of all food, and the colour vanishes from his face, so the soul in this degree of love loses all pleasure in earthly things, and all desire of them, and, like one in love, changes its colour. The soul does not fall into this languishing state if the vehement heat descends not into it from above, which is the mystic fever, according to the words of the Psalmist, 'Voluntary rain shalt Thou separate, O God, to thine inheritance, and it was weakened, but Thou hast perfected it.' This languishing and fainting away as to all things- it is the first and earliest step to God- I have already explained, when I spoke of that annihilation to which the soul is brought when it begins to stand upon the ladder of contemplative purgation, when it finds no comfort, pleasure, nor support anywhere.**

So, is Jnana a kind of sickness?

B.: It is a kind of madness. The ordinary man involves with his vishayavasanas and poorvasamskaras whilst the Jnani ignores them utterly. That is the difference between them.

S>M>

Q.: Mr. T. H. Huxley has written, "There is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is, when the garment of make-believe, by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features, is stripped off." Does Bhagawan agree with this view?

To this the master did not respond at all.

S>M>

Q.: Bl. Martin de Porres of Lima is said to have walked through doors. When an epidemic swept through the group of monks he was staying with, the doors to the chambers they were staying in were kept locked because of the prevailing protocol appurtenant to quarantining of sick persons; but feeling intense compassion for them, he prayed to the Lord, they say, and was blessed with the ability to walk through the doors leading into their chambers, so that he could heal them equally miraculously by means of placing his hand on their heads. Can we say that those wielding such powers are Jnanis?

B.: Not all siddhars are Jnanis. Jnana-siddhi is the loftiest- and in fact the only Real- siddhi. So, all Jnanis are siddhars. But not all Jnanis have thaumaturgic powers[aihika-siddhis]; it depends on their prarabdha.

S>M>

Q.: How does viveka differ from vairagya?

B.: Mere intellectual discernment of the real from the unreal is not of any great use. The unreal must be totally shunned. One's vasanas must be incinerated to the point of complete annihilation in the fire of vairagya; otherwise rebirth cannot be successfully avoided. Viveka may stop with intellectualisation and mental contemplation of the truth. But without vairagya Jnana cannot be achieved.

S>M>

Q.: Summa-irutthal or the investigation 'Who am I?'- which is the quickest and most efficacious route leading to Realisation of the Self?

B.: As and when thoughts arise, or whenever you feel slothful, languidious, languorous or lassitudinous, ask yourself 'Who am I?' so that you can return to the state of summa-irutthal; otherwise remain as you are- i.e., summa iru. Summa-irutthal is the goal of [all] our effort to remain without [any] effort. When summa-irutthal has become permanent and natural, it matures automatically into Realisation. What does it mean to say that one is in the state of summa-irutthal? When the mind is completely submerged in the Heart, one is said to be in the state of summa-irutthal. When it is no longer possible for the mind to emerge from or leave the Heart, the person is said to have Realised the Self. When the jiva's latent vishayavasanas and poorvasamskaras have not yet been totally destroyed, Realisation is not possible; in the case of such jivas, when the mind submerges itself in the Heart it is invariably bound to forsake it also eventually; such temporary or reversible submergence is known as aham-sphoorti or vritti-jnana.

Submergence never to rise again is Emancipation or Sahaja-jnana. Sahaja-jnana cannot exist side-by-side with vasanas. Summa-irutthal is in both vritti-

jnana and Sahaja-jnana. What then is the difference? In both the mind is kept in total submergence in the Heart, but in vritti-jnana the mind's distinctive identity is kept unimpaired and not harmed, whereas in Sahaja-jnana the mind is totally ruined and destroyed; for this reason, in the case of one whose vasanas still lie dormant in obnubilation of the Heart, after sometime the experience of vritti-jnana is lost and one's mind starts wandering and meandering again; whereas in the case of one who has altogether relinquished all his vasanas, vritti-jnana goes on to mature into Sahaja-jnana. The investigation 'Who am I?' is a tool with which to retire into the state of summa-iruttal. To shake off thoughts and keep torpidity away: these are essential if one wants to get rid of the mind; for this purpose vichara is suggested. Vichara is a gentle, safe and effective tool for coaxing the mind back into its nativistic state of summa-iruttal. Summa-iruttal is the way to Jnana. Vichara is the way to summa-iruttal.

Q.: What is swapna-sakshatkara? I heard B. talking about it last week but could not understand what he was saying.

B.: Some deceive both themselves and others into believing that they are Jnanis. They falsely imagine themselves to be Jnanis. They themselves honestly believe that they are Jnanis. The Real Jnani can never say, 'I am a Jnani.'. Have you not heard of the proverb: "SOMEBODY WHO IS PRETENDING TO BE ASLEEP CAN NEVER BE WOKEN UP." ?

Q.: Is it wrong to believe that I am the Self?

B.: Is it the Self who believes Himself to be the Self? If not, who is the impostor or doppelgänger who, not being the Self, falsely pretends to be the Self or imagines himself to be the Self or believes that he is the Self? The Self is the Impersonal Absolute. There is no question of Him believing or disbelieving in anything. So, the Self never does any believing or imagining or asseverating. For this reason, that which believes in anything cannot be the Self. You say that you believe that you are the Self. This proves that the 'you' who is engaged in the act of believing is not the Self. So- who are you, who believe yourself falsely to be the Self? Aham-brahmasmi does not mean that the ego is the Self. It only means that so far as the Jnani is concerned, the Self is the same as Parabrahman. The mahavakyas can practically hold good only after the ego-self has been fully extirpated. The meaning of the mahavakyas could only ever be 'potential-truth' as far as the ajnani is concerned. Aham-brahmasmi means that the true "I" is Parabrahman and nothing but Parabrahman. The mahavakyas must be understood in the correct spirit. Their intention is not to arrogate the ego to the stature of Parabrahman, but to remind man that there is a Self available for experience beyond the petty ego, and that this is the same as Parabrahman or Absolute

Reality. The ultimate goal of all the sacred-books is to facilitate the aspirant to trace his mind back into its source, the Heart. What is the aim of life? Mukthi. What is Mukthi? It is to irrevocably merge the mind in the Heart, irretrievably leaving it there to perish once and for all.

Q.: I am swayed frequently by the many tempting distractions this world has to offer.

B.: The world is nothing but information manufactured, and not sensed or discerned, by one's sensory perceptivities. Sensory information does not have an external origin. The cosmos is projected by and from your own mind only.

S>M>

Q.: What is B.'s motto that he likes to give to spiritual aspirants?

The master remained silent but somebody shouted from the back of the Hall, 'I think it is "Stop smoking; Keep walking."; isn't that so, Bhagawan?'. The master laughed shortly but did not otherwise respond.

Q.: Is that so?

B.: Tobacco is an insidious poison. It is better to give it up and make do without it.

Q.: What about walking?

B.: Yes. Keep walking around this Hill. It brings about all sorts of benefits.

Q.: I have enough worldly wealth and have no craving for more. Please tell me whether going around the Hill will bring me peace of mind.

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: In caricatures of Lord Shiva we see that he has been depicted as being an anthropomorphic person with 3 eyes, all of which happen to be in the opened position. Does it mean that if man also opens his 3rd eye, he would become one with, or the same as, Lord Shiva Himself?

B.: Yes.

Q.: The 3rd eye is the ajna-chakra. Am I correct in saying so?

B.: The 3rd eye is that source which coruscates that light which illumines the other 2 eyes and facilitates them to see. Light from the Heart is caught or reflected by one's vishayavasanas and poorvasamskaras, giving rise to the phenomenon of reflection that is referred to as 'mind'. The air that flows through a flute is the same, but the instrument produces many mutually distinguishable sounds based on which holes are covered and which left uncovered at any given point in time. Likewise, such phenomenon of reflection as afore-mentioned is capable of producing multiple personalities depending upon the nature of those impurities which catch the light of mahat and so cause reflection. Mahat itself is pure subjective awareness and nothing but that; its source is the self-resplendent Heart. If one were to suppose that



the Self could be compared to the sun, mahat might be compared to a ray of light proceeding therefrom. The 3rd eye is the infinitesimally minuscule point at which mahat is caught by the individual's mental traits of personality, leading to emergence of that which is known by us as 'mind'. While it is true that this point has no spatial or temporal manifestation on the relativistic-plane, it draws attention to itself when the mind is in the state of sphurana, and one perceives it then to be on the right-hand side of the chest, 2 digits to the right of the median. However, all this is true only from one's present point of vantage. When mind is dissolved and washed away in the all-consuming fire of Jnana, the body is also irretrievably lost; then the question of the 3rd eye's location cannot possibly arise.

Q.: How to open this 3rd eye?

B.: Clearing subjective consciousness of all of its contents and making it shine by itself and of itself tantamounts to opening of one's 3rd eye.

Q.: How is that to be done?

B.: By eradicating all of the mind's vrittis. Other vrittis are only modifications of the aham-vritti. If the aham-vritti is killed, our work is finished.

Q.: How to kill the aham-vritti?

B.: By means of it discovering that itself, the discoverer, has no existence.

Q.: Practically, what am I to do?

B.: Investigate, 'Who am I?'

S>M>

Q.: What is the way leading to Emancipation?

B.: Total, permanent, effortless and volitionless submergence of mind in the Heart.

Q.: What is Emancipation?

B.: From the present stand-point, one may say that it is deliverance from samsara. But the fact is that there is no such thing as bondage or liberation. What is, is and continues always to be. That which is not never could be. The truth was beautifully summarised by Sri Krishna-paramathmazl when he said, "nasathovidhyathaebhavonabhavovidhyathaesataha".

Q.: But can it be denied that samsara or ajnana appears real to those who are experiencing it?

B.: First and foremost, ask yourself who the experiencer is. After finding out the answer to this question, let us raise other questions if need be.

S>M>

Q.: Yesterday night I had a dream in which I am a 16 year old newly-married virgin-girl. Strangely, the dream did not surprise me although I am a 74 year old man in real life. In the dream, I am lying on a bed whimpering like a baby, with all my clothes on. Lord Shiva, my husband, arrived on the back of his

bison. He asked me to remove my clothes and spread my legs, so that He could inseminate me with His Seed of Grace. But fearing that the process might be painful, I did not comply and started crying. Shiva started to go away but I prayed to Him to remain by my side, because He looked so beautiful that I felt like looking at Him for all of time to come. He asked, 'What is the purpose of marrying me, then, if remaining as a virgin is what you would prefer? If the womb of your mind remains closed to [the phallus of] my Grace, how can the Seed of Jnana enter and cause fertilisation?'. I responded, 'My Lord, what am I to do? I want to be drenched by the ambrosial nectar of your Grace; I want to immiscibly drown in the ocean of Jnana that is your true essence; but I am too afraid of pain to be able to do anything. Please do not neglect me. I do not want to waste away like this, pining and yearning in my unconsummated Love for you. Please take pity on me. Even without my co-operation, please do whatever is necessary of being done. You are my only Salvation. Please use force to ravish, subjugate and conquer me. My contumacious, truculent mind, I know, is unwilling to let you work upon me- but please do not spurn me. I am willing to be enraptured in your bliss, even if in statu nascendi it might involve pain at the time of breaking down initial resistance upon my side. Even if I endeavour to stop you from proceeding, please overrule and overpower me, so that I stand forcefully inseminated by your blissful ambrosia of Jnana. Please be harsh and unrelenting in your effort to Fructify me. Please embrace me so tightly that I am never able to slip away from your clutches before my virginity stands totally annihilated by your infinitely potent manhood. Even if, consequent to the unbearable pain undergone by me initially, I try to push you away, please do not let go of me.'. But Shiva was still not convinced that I was ready for the experience of tasting his true essence- i.e., the ambrosial nectar of Jnana. I begged and pleaded with Him but to no avail. Finally, I sang to Him Bhagawan's mana-malai. When I reached the words, '...kadhiraatthamvaitthu amudhavayai thira...', my wish was finally fulfilled. Minutes later I woke up sweating but trembling with joy. I know it is B. who appeared in my dream as Shiva. I wonder whether He will confirm what I am saying...

B.: [smiling widely] What is there for me to say? You have said everything. You have said everything. You have said everything.

S>M>

Q.: What is the significance of the saying, 'initium sapientiae timor Domini'?

B.: The implication is, if one recognises the fact that really it is the Higher Power which is in charge of everything, one has taken the first step towards cultivating undying peace. It may please you to understand that 'fear' here does not mean terror. It means recognition of the fact to oneself that really it is God who does everything, good or bad.

Q.: But according to you God is the Impersonal Absolute, to which action is alien.

B.: Ishwara is as real as the jiva who doubts His existence.

Q.: What is the nature of Ishwara?

B.: Randomness.

Q.: But karma is not random. It is systematically allocated based upon the merit and demerit appurtenant to each and every action.

B.: Why is it that people see patterns as being antagonistic to Randomness? Patterns and Randomness always do co-exist. In many parts of the world, snow-flakes drop down from the sky during the cold-season. Many of those who have studied them tell us that no 2 crystals are alike in shape. Yet, all of them are purely randomly shaped. Patterns are seen by you because you have something in you that goes out to see them. There is some intellectual modification in you that makes their perception possible. No pattern is inherent in anything. It is man who discerns patterns in Randomness. Really there are no rabbits living on the moon.

Q.: So, human behaviour is also perfectly random?

B.: Yes.

Q.: It follows that free-will is totally mythical and fictitious.

B.: Exactly.

Q.: Why then does it appear to exist?

B.: To whom is the appearance? That one unto whom the appearance presents or manifests itself: he is also totally mythical and fictitious.

Q.: So I don't exist at all?

B.: YOU exist. But that which you take yourself to be does not.

S>M>

Q.: Is it possible that the truth is that nobody can really Realise the Aathman in Its Entirety? Different Realised-masters give out different teachings. Perhaps they are like the 10 blind men that went to 'see' an elephant. Maybe only if we can put together their views can we arrive at a consensus as to what Absolute Truth is.

B.: There is nothing to Realise. Truth cannot be approached at all; the very attempt to approach It will impede you from moving closer to It and push you farther and farther away, down into the odious, fetid quagmires of futile thought and imagination. The thing to do is to surrender yourself without reserve.

Q.: There is only one Self according to Bhagawan. Who is to surrender what, and to whom?

B.: Will you admit that your state is now different from that which was in your deep sleep?

Q.: Yes.

B.: How then can you use non-dualistic terminology to describe your condition? Surrender is only of the not-Self, which never existed. It is like pinching some panaivellam from a statuette of Lord Vinayakar made out of panaivellam and offering the same as naivaedhyam to the same statuette of Lord Vinayakar. There is no meaning in it. Still, since ignorance must somehow come to an end, one is suggested to offer oneself upto God. Does He need anything from you? Everything is verily already Himself. Can there be anything apart from Him?

S>M>

Q.: Rao Sahib Abraham Pandithar says as follows in his book, 'Karunamirtha Sagaram on Srutis: A Treatise on Isaitthamizh, which is one of the main divisions of Mutthamizh': "**The theory, modes and notation in present use throughout the whole of India are derived from that taught originally by the earlier Sanskrit musicians; but owing to the south of India having been less disturbed by internal commotions and having been more subject to Hindu rule than either Deccan or Northern Province, the science of music would seem to have been maintained and cultivated long after the original art had been lost in the north. Hence Southern India music or as it is more usually called Carnatic, bears as far as we can judge, a very close resemblance to what the Sanskrit must have been, and in many cases we can clearly trace the development and refinements introduced from time to time upon the original ragas.**" Is it true that what we call Carnatic-music today is in essence merely a tinkered version of what the invading Aryans brought with them from their Avestan motherland of ஐர்யாநம்விஜம்? How much originality can reasonably be claimed for Carnatic-music?

B.: Did you personally go and witness them invading territory and capture the same on cinematograph-film?

Q.: It is obvious to me that the dark-skinned brutes who today constitute a vast bulk of the population of southern India must have learnt to mimic language and other aspects of human culture from somewhere. Where else could they have learnt it from? Their Aryan masters must have taught them. I don't think there could be any other explanation. How can apes learn human culture in the absence of human influence in the form of training?

Mr. TKS.: Sir, I beg to inform you that you are sadly mistaken. Tamil, as a matter of fact, is the most ancient language in the world. It was spoken in Lemuria long before Sanskrit was ever conceived of-

A lengthy debate raged on in the Hall following these exchanges, but B. did not participate in the same; the said debate, into which a small piece of comic relief was introduced by cycle-Pillai, the chief-gardener of the ashram who presently happened to peep into the Hall upon having heard the raised voices

emanating from therewithin, with a smartly delivered comment of his in English, is not recorded by me here owing to considerations appurtenant to the spatial aspect.

S>M>

Q.: What is the benefit obtained by going around this Hill? Does it help to introvert the mind?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Supposing a materialist were to go around the Hill simply out of curiosity- what then?

B.: Fire burns upon contact whether one believes in its ability to burn or not.

Q.: Will vichara lead to acquisition of preternatural abilities- such as shrinking the body down to the size of an atom and then back again, walking on water, healing the sick by a touch of the hand, handling fire on one's bare hands without having to suffer injury, bringing back dead people to life and so on and so forth?

B.: No.

Q.: How to get these abilities? What meditation techniques to be followed to obtain them? Where are some rare herbs on this Hill which can bestow such abilities when brewed into potion, allowed to congeal into leghiyam and regularly ingested?

B.: Why do you want these powers?

Q.: Not for myself, but to help the suffering world. If I join as your disciple and serve you faithfully for 3 decades, will you grant me such powers? Certainly I will serve the world in your name only.

B.: Jnana-siddhi alone is worth striving for. Other siddhis are swapna-siddhis. Does anything [gained] in a dream remain true on waking?

S>M>

B. was mostly a silent person; if anybody had questions, he would more often than not respond: unless the question happened to be an outright ridiculous one[as indeed many were]; largely, he never went out of his way to talk to any individual; but the one immediately noticeable remarkable thing about him was that he seemed to emanate a certain unique, perceptible, palpable radiation of peace and well-being from his person. This sensation that one felt was not something that could be explained away as being jugglery or sleight-of-hand tricks. In his presence one felt that the wrong-doings of this world belonged to some other, distant universe, in no way connected with our own; around him, the world lay carelessly strewn about on the floor, always ready to be picked up for the usual nonsensical rigmarole of intellectual anatomization the next instant should one choose so to do, but yet totally forgotten. He was in this world yet not of it. Whether they understood Ajata-

advaita or not, 1 thing is certain: those who sat at his feet day after unswerving day understood the meaning of the word 'Grace'. His body spoke the language of mute Love without talking. No matter what they were or were not engaged in doing at the moment, his delicate hands moved or were stationed in a way that made one want to watch them always; they seemed to employ a language of their own. Now I come to strongly suspect that the stories of old concerning noble rishis who lived in this land in ancient times might not be fiction after all. His visitors and devotees are rapidly increasing in number, although he has no desire for fame- in fact, his temperament is that he does not like attention being drawn towards himself; he is of a reticent and shy nature. Never once did I or to my knowledge anybody else spot him claiming something special for himself; when asked if he was an avatar, he denied it. He is a unique and exotic creature and nobody will ever succeed in understanding him fully. If my opinion were to be solicited appurtenant to the matter, I will, for the sake of academic consistency, say that I have heard that the only other person to ever have walked this planet who emits this kind of magnetic charisma without in the slightest meaning so to do would be the inimitable JK. But while the teaching is of course the same, he is all logic. I am confident that the master's Love cannot be found anywhere else. How many forlorn souls he has redeemed by virtue of the manumitting power of his unselfish Love God alone knows.

S>M>

Q.: B.'s stuthi-panchakam is a masterpiece- a work of possibly unparalleled literary genius. My doubt is, if even the vijnanamayakosha is destroyed in the jivanmukta without leaving behind the slightest trace, how is it that B. was able to write such splendid poems in praise of Lord Arunachalaeshwara? Or is manonasham complete only when the jivanmukta attains videhamukti? If poornamanonasham is attained only at the time of dropping the body, we must concede that videhamukti is superior to jivanmukti- am I correct?

B.: Having come here, people do not want to know about themselves; instead they want to know all about jivanmukti and videhamukti. There is no bandham; where is the scope for mukti? It is like searching for the correct and appropriate prescription for the strength of curvature of the corrective lenses worn by Santa-claus in his golden pince-nez.

Q.: I want to know how B. is able to write poems, engage visitors in philosophical conversation, and in general handle day-to-day life without making use of a mind. How is it made possible?

B.: First and foremost, what do you mean by 'mind'?

Q.: I really have no idea. B. must kindly himself tell me the answer to this question also.

B.: There is no entity by name 'mind'. Only Self exists. But merely acquiring conceptual understanding of this truth is useless; it has to be Realised. As for the Jnani's state, why depend on me for explanations? Realise and see for yourself first-hand.

Q.: Jnana-marga is said to be the most difficult of all.

B.: There is only 1 difficulty- that is this idea of difficulty. Get rid of this idea also and be at peace.

Q.: JK says that Freedom means total absence of ideas.

B.: Quite so.

10th September, 1936

Frau Wanda Dwynoshchev passed around the Hall photographs which had been taken by her party whilst they had been on a pilgrimage to the Amarnath-cave temple in Kashmir; these were shown to the master also.

W.D.: They prevented us from photographing the lingam inside.

B.: [laughing] Yes, if everybody becomes content with looking at photographs, will not the number of persons actually visiting that place dwindle? Anyhow, by your grace, we have all seen Kashmir without having to undergo the trouble of travel.

W.D.: I wish to go to the Kailasam mountain. Shiva is said to be living there.

B.: Where one goes or does not go and what he does or does not do: all this is left wholly to prarabdha. We cannot act as we please; there is a destiny governing everything. Even if you do visit Kailasam, after that there will still remain many more places yet remaining to be visited that excite your curiosity in a similar manner. Even if you finish visiting all pilgrimage-sites on the earth comprehensively, there will always remain other worlds for you to explore. Knowledge implies ignorance of that which lies beyond what is known.

Knowledge is always limited. Knowledge and ignorance are merely mental modifications. The Self is free from both. Appar was decrepit and old and yet began to travel to Kailasam. Another old man appeared on the way and tried to dissuade him from the attempt, saying that it was enormously difficult to reach there. Appar was however obdurate and said that he would risk his life in the attempt. The stranger asked him to dip himself in a tank close by. Appar did so and found Kailasam then and there. Where did all this happen? In Tiruvayyar, nine miles from Tanjore. Where is Kailasam, then? Is it within the mind or outside it? If Tiruvayyar be truly Kailasam, it must appear so to others as well. But Appar alone found it so. Similarly it is said of other places of pilgrimage in Southern India that they are the abodes of Siva, and devotees have found them so; for it was true from their standpoint. What is the inference? Everything is within; there is nothing without.

S>M>

Q.: How long does it take a man to be reborn after death? Does rebirth take place immediately after death or some time thereafter?

B.: You do not know what you were before birth, yet you want to know what you will be after death. Do you know what you are now?

Q.: I am awareness that is conditioned by limited knowledge. Is that right?

B.: Who is it that says 'I'? Awareness, plain and pure, is not capable of making the assertion or asseveration 'I', nor any other. Conditioned knowledge such as 'I am so and so.' is only information registered in the brain and therefore it also by itself is not capable of making the assertion or asseveration 'I', nor any other. But when these two combine, the 'I'-sense is somehow mysteriously found to emerge. Destruction of this 'I'-sense is the objective of our efforts. You ask about rebirth. Birth and rebirth pertain only to the body. You are identifying the Self with the body. It is a wrong identification. You believe that the body was born and will die, and therefore that you had a beginning and are going to have an end. The body is only an appearance in you. Ornaments made out of gold are melted and recast several times in order so as to make new ones. Does anything happen to the gold? Know your real being and all doubts and questions cease. Birth and rebirth are mentioned in the sacred-books only to make you investigate the question and find out that there are really neither births nor rebirths. Birth relates to the body and not to the Self. Remain as the Self and no perturbation can trouble you.

Q.: But first there is a necessity to shake off maya, it is said.

B.: What is maya?

Q.: Attachment to worldly objects and desires.

B.: In sushupti was there any world to trouble you? In sushupti were you attached to any objects or bothered by any desires?

Q.: No.

B.: Yet you existed in sleep. Is that right?

Q.: Yes.

B.: You are now therefore the same one that was in sleep.

Q.: Yes.

B.: In sleep did the question of maya, or any other question, arise? Why does it then arise now?

Q.: Because there was no mind in sleep.

B.: Exactly. The world and our attachment to it are therefore illusory mental creations. They have nothing to do with the actual Self.

Q.: But I was ignorant in sleep.

B.: Who says now that he was ignorant in sleep? Is he not ignorant now? Is he a Jnani? Ignorance is now mentioned by the ego. But there was no ego in



sleep. What right does the ego have to talk about a state in which it did not exist at all?

Q.: What is the state of the Self in sleep?

B.: He has only one state; that is, He IS. He does not raise any doubts and he does not know anything. He is therefore free from ideas; he does not feel imperfect or impure. So, he is free from suffering.

Q.: Even a dead body is unaware of suffering. Is a cadaver a Jnani?

B.: The cadaver does not raise questions about its birth and death. It is silent and motionless. Therefore it is at peace. But consider your case. You want to know this, that and everything else. Therefore there is no peace in you. You raise questions because they arise in the mind. The mind wants to give you something to do all the time. It does not permit you a single moment of peace. But in sleep you were quiet, happy and peaceful. You exist now and you existed in sleep. Now there is imperfection because there is the aspiration or desire to get or acquire something. Why was there no imperfection in sleep? It is the same you who was in sleep who is also now. What is the difference?

Q.: In the jagrat state I exist with a mind.

B.: Exactly. Mind is the reason for all mischief. The pure Self is simple Being. It does not associate itself with objects. It does not assume that differentiated consciousness[consciousness which gives rise to subject and object] which is found in the jagrat state. What you now call consciousness in the present jagrat state is associated consciousness, requiring brain, mind, body, etc. to depend upon. But in sleep consciousness persisted without these.

Q.: But I do not know the consciousness that was in sleep.

B.: Mind can never know or understand no-mind. Mind cannot possibly comprehend what the experience would be like in and of its own absence. You say, 'I am not aware of the state that persisted in sushupti.'. But who is not aware of it? You admit 'I am'. You admit 'I was' in sleep. That continuous state of being is the Self.

Q.: Do you mean to say that sleep is Self-Realisation?

B.: It is the Self. Why do you mention Realisation? Is there a moment when the Self is not Realised? If there be such a moment when the Self is occluded by nescience, the other moment might be said to be one of Realisation. But there is no moment when the Self is not nor any moment when the Self is not realised. Why then ask whether there is Realisation in sleep? There is Realisation always. Even now you are Self-Realised.

Q.: I do not understand what you are trying to tell me.

B.: Because you are identifying the Self with the body, you ask, 'What is the Self?'. Give up this wrong identity and the Self is revealed.

Q.: Please help me; I want to know how to get rid of maya and moha.

B.: By remaining as you are in sleep. In sleep there is neither maya nor moha. In sleep there are no attachments and no misery. Now all these have come into play. What is the remedy? In sleep you were aware of simple nescience; there were no objects to claim your attention. Now remain simply aware and do not permit any object or thought to claim your attention. That is the way to attain the bliss of the sushupti state in the jagrat state. Then there will be no trouble with maya or moha or world. What is your real nature? It is to BE. Therefore, BE and do not bother about anything else.

Q.: How did the ego come about?

B.: To whom has it come about? If the Self be Realised, it will be known that there never was any ego. If you Realise the Self objects are not perceived. That is the way of getting rid of maya. Maya is not objective, in order so that it could be got rid of in any other way.

Q.: As far as I can see it, it is impossible to Realise the Self until one has completely succeeded in preventing the occurrence of thoughts. Am I correct?

B.: No. You do not need to prevent other thoughts. All thoughts have their root in the first thought, which is the aham-vritti. In deep sleep you are entirely free from thoughts, because the 'I'-thought is absent. The moment the 'I'-thought rises on waking, all other thoughts rush out spontaneously. The thing to do therefore is to catch hold of this leading thought, the 'I'-thought, and dissect it. See who or what this 'I' is. Thus give no chance for other thoughts to cause any distraction. Now do you understand the true value of vichara and its efficacy in bringing about Jnana?

S>M>

Q.: What is the reason for birth?

B.: " பொருளல்ல வற்றைப் பொருளென்று உணரும் மருளானாம் மாணாப் பிறப்பு ."

Q.: Is Realisation attained by means of expenditure of effort or is it vouchsafed unto man by Divine Grace as a gift?

B.: The latter.

Q.: Then what is the use of our abhyasa?

B.: Effort is made to introvert the mind until such introversion alone has become one's perpetual, effortless and natural state of mind. Only to the wholly introverted mind is Realisation possible.

Q.: Does Realisation dawn automatically upon the perfectly introverted mind?

B.: The perfectly introverted mind would be raising neither this question nor any other; such a mind desires neither Realisation nor anything else.

Q.: Meaning that the perfectly introverted mind is of itself in the state of Realisation?

B.: No: that was not the intended meaning. Realisation is the state of dead-mind; a perfectly introverted mind might not be moving but it is still alive.

Q.: How then does Realisation dawn upon the perfectly introverted mind?

B.: First reach that state of perfect mental introversion and see if such questions or any other arise in you then.

Q.: So the aspiration to Realise the Self should also be discarded!

B.: Exactly.

Q.: If everything goes, what remains?

B.: You.

Q.: So Realisation really implies losing everything?

B.: Yes; the loser is also lost. What comes let come; what goes let go; see what remains; this is the method of Realisation.

S>M>

Q.: How is it that Sri Bhagawan is so profoundly well-versed in Christian theology?

B.: By means of having attended Bible classes whilst at school.

Q.: Christian or Biblical Relics such as the Ark of the Covenant, the Holy Grail, the Staff of Moses and so on and so forth: are they purely physical objects or do they also have some sort of esoteric metaphorical significance?

B.: The latter: but why say that there is esoterism involved? The aspect of esoterism or involution becomes involved when we try to wrangle out of Scripture a strain of interpretation that we want to fulfill the role of reaffirming our pre-existing foundation of belief constituted by conceptual knowledge. The meaning of these Relics is clear as a midsummer sky: it is that God recognises the fact that it is human nature to err, and allows for our various misdemeanours; He gives us repeated chances to mend ourselves, to come back to the Right-path again. "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." The Jews committed the blasphemy of idolatry by worshipping the golden calf and as a result the tablets of commandment were destroyed; yet God arranged for new ones to be made. Why? Because the chance is always given to repent and reform; there is no eternal damnation. We continually make efforts to depart and deviate from God's plan for us, but even though we neglect and reject His Love with such relentless pertinaciousness, "he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee". The meaning of the quest for the Holy Grail, the quest for the Ark of the Covenant, and so on and so forth is only this: it is the quest for everlasting Union with God Himself. We are undoubtedly undeserving, but His Clemency is always available unto ourselves nonetheless: should only we

consent to partake of it. Never is anything forced down your throat. Those who go astray will also turn back one day. Only, those who have spent a long time travelling in the wrong direction will have to spend a long time to even return to that same fork upon which they made the wrong decision. Mercy means that the Right-path will always remain open; it does not mean that those who have made a wrong turn can begin at the beginning again without reversing their direction and compensating for the [distance of] wrong track traversed. Suppose you want to go from Madras to Tiruvannamalai; but blinded by ignorance you are wrongly journeying towards Nashik; when you understand that you have made a mistake, you must turn the jutka around and come all the way back; the road leading from Madras to Tiruvannamalai will always remain open, but you must first arrive on that road. Likewise is it with God's Grace.

Q.: What is the meaning underlying the illustration given by Sri Bhagawan? I am unable to understand his parable.

B.: Mind must undertake a long journey of self-purification before it becomes fit for Realisation of the Self. There are many pitfalls along the way. It is quite easy to lose one's way. If one loses one's way, he must of his own accord trace himself back all the way to where was before the mistake was made. Thus we see that mistakes on the path are enormously costly in terms of effort, time and energy. One single tiny ostensibly-innocuous trifling train of thought, if chased after out of momentary temptation, can lead to a sequence or series of seemingly never-ending births; as many births shall then have to be taken to reach the former status quo. Shaking off one's vasanas is no joke. They will not come away so easily. Determined, adamant, practice and effort is necessary. All of King Arthur's knights try to Realise the Holy Grail; only 3 glimpse It; one returns to worldly life having taken a glimpse; another, upon having beheld It, enters into monkhood so that he might remain contemplating its beauty and grandeur always for the rest of his days; one and only one Realises It: Galahad. He alone is pure enough to achieve the quest; he alone has achieved it. Why does he wish to die having seen the Sacred Chalice? Because the Relic has in Galahad accomplished its mission and ruined for good what little 'I'-sense was left there; others are awed and wonder-struck by it, but no consummation takes place. Why? The Relic is the same relic; but only Galahad was mentally pure enough to invoke its power to the brim and thus bring about his consummation or Realisation.

Q.: Likewise, many visit Tiruvannamalai; but not many manage to attain the the same spiritual greatness that Sri Bhagawan has by means of setting foot in this place!

B.: Ripeness of mind [pakkuvam] is necessary. Those who are ripe find the Guru automatically- i.e., without having to search.

Q.: What is the edible substance 'mannah', which the Bible mentions?

B.: It is the grain known as 'quinoah'.

Q.: I have never heard of it.

B.: It seems that it is cultivated today only in the Peruvian-republic.

Mr. Knowles: I vaguely remember that this fact was mentioned in the book, 'The Queen of Sheba and her only son Menyelek: being the history of the departure of God and His Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, and the establishment of the religion of the Hebrews and the Solomonic line of Kings in that country; a complete translation of the Kebra Nagast with introduction, by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge.'; sadly, I have not brought that book along with me; I am therefore unable to read out from it. How unfortunate! Certain relieved sighs were discharged in the Hall like puffs of steam-engine smoke escaping their vents in a sudden burst; for Mr. Knowles was often proving himself to be a nuisance to those in the Hall who had come to meditate quietly in the master's presence; he was occasionally reading out passages from books loudly, because he often insisted on supplementing the master's answers to visitors from a little library he had brought along with him in a canvas-rucksack; yesterday he had been severely boring the Hall's attendees in the afternoon by reading out from the rather unappetizing book, 'Journey to Ararat; by Dr. Friedrich Parrot; translated by W. D. Cooley', followed by the equally tedious 'Memoirs, illustrating the history of Jacobinism; written in French by the abbé Barruel, and translated into English by the Hon. Robert Clifford'.

S>M>

Q.: We are always journeying forwards through time; is it possible to journey backwards? I have always pondered over this question. In the fictitious account 'A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court', a man from the United-states receives a severe blow to the head and finds himself the next minute to have been transported to medieval England. Is there any siddhi that would make such a thing actually possible? In medieval times, life must have been altogether peaceful and without hassle; I wish I could visit those times, or better, settle down there permanently; this has always been a profoundly cherished fantasy of mine.

B.: If you do manage to go back to those ages miraculously, please do make it a point to come back to your friends in the present and tell them what you heard in response to the question, 'Are you happy?', posed to the people you found back in those times. It is a myth to suppose that one epoch was a happier time than another. People have always had worries and problems. It

is like the incident wherein the Buddha asks a woman to collect mustard-seeds from a house which has never witnessed death. All have problems, even the humblest ant. The thing to do is to throw the burden on the Higher Power and then go on about one's life. Mark Twain himself lost everything he had on the Paige Compositor; did he not go on with life? Do not seek to escape from life; you cannot. The thing to do is to surrender the sense of personal individuality to the Almighty and carry on with life; this is the only way to peace of mind and not travelling to medieval England or medieval Ireland.

S>M>

Q.: During their war with the immensely fierce and barbaric Yemassee-tribe in 1715, the British colonists of South Carolina are said to have been faced with the worst savagery: the Indians are said to have decapitated hundreds of soldiers, scalped their heads, mounted the heads on wooden-poles driven into the ground, and kept the scalps as trophies; they were angry because the British had taken many of their women and children away as slaves, for the Indians had failed to pay up their debts in deer-skin after having purchased from the British firearms. The observation one is able to glean from such instances is that violent conduct seems to run in the blood of all non-Christianised peoples. Can we validly conclude, from our observation of behaviour of those belonging to various civilisations extant around the world today, that without the benign influence of Christianity, man would be a barbarous brute now, devoid of those qualities precisely that we understand as being exquisitely human?

B.: "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." All faiths entreat man to embrace good and stay away from evil; but is there anything special about the Christian faith? To some minds, Christ has an irresistible fascination. Why? People of all sorts are attracted by and drawn into a Jnani's presence, even after he has passed away in the body.

Chadwick: I remember reading about the Yemassee Indians as a boy, in the book 'The Yemassee: a romance of Carolina; by W. Gilmore Simms'.

S>M>

Q.: It may be morally wrong to slaughter animals so that we might eat of their flesh, but what is the harm in eating dead animals that have died a natural death?

There was no response from the master.

Chadwick: The Bible explicitly forbids this in Deuteronomy: "Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself..."

S>M>

Q.: Is the benefit of the Jnani's presence [sannidhi] available even after he has left the body?

B.: Those who have established with him a bond of unselfish love and affection whilst he was in the flesh will find that the same continues even after his mortal body has dropped off.

Q.: Oh! this is the very assurance I was looking for; I now feel supremely elated!

The master smiled compassionately.

S>M>

Q.: Sri Ramakrishna chose Swami Vivekananda to continue his mission; but here Sri Bhagawan is yet to establish a monastic order, leave alone nominate anybody to be its future head-of-operations; why is this so? Does not Sri Bhagawan believe his message to be important to the spiritual regeneration of this decadent world? Should not his teachings be carried to and shouted at the 4 corners of the world, in order that it might benefit from them and appropriately mend itself for the better?

B.: Those who feel the need for Bhagawan's 'teachings' will be reached out to by those very 'teachings'. "Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled." What is the meaning? As far as the spiritual path is concerned, it is hunger that manifests food: the hungrier the better.

S>M>

Q.: In the Old Testament of the Bible, God is often depicted as a cruel, vengeful entity. Does it behoove Almighty God to behave in such rancorously vindictive manner? Should He not in His munificent Grace pardon us our errors?

B.: Pardon cannot be automatic; only those who sincerely repent will be pardoned.

Mr. Knowles: In the book 'Some account of the writings and opinions of Clement of Alexandria; by John Kaye, D.D., Late Lord Bishop of Lincoln.', the question presently put forth by you, sir, has been answered in the following manner:

Clement proceeds to combat the error of those heretics, who inferred from the passages of the Old Testament, which represent God as threatening and chastising, that he could not be the same God of mercy and goodness Who gave the Gospel. "There is nothing," he says, "which the Lord hates; for He does not hate anything, and yet wish what He hates to exist ; nor does He wish anything not to exist, and yet cause the existence of that which He wishes not to exist ; nor does that exist which He wishes not to exist. If the Word hates anything, He wishes it not to exist ; but nothing exists of which God does not cause the existence ; nothing, therefore, is hated by God, or by the Word, for both are one, viz. God. For He has said, ' In the beginning the Word was in God, and the Word was God.' If, then, He hates nothing which

He has made, He loves it ; especially man, the most beautiful of the works of creation, an animal capable of loving God. God loves man ; the Word loves man ; and he who loves anything, wishes to benefit it. But that which benefits is better than that which does not benefit. But nothing is better than the Good. The Good, therefore, benefits : God is confessed to be good ; God therefore benefits. But the Good, inasmuch as it is good, does nothing but benefit : God therefore benefits universally. But He does not benefit without caring for man ; nor does He care for, without watching over man. That which benefits by choice or deliberation is better than that which benefits, but not by choice ; but nothing is better than God. To benefit man by choice is nothing else than to watch over him : God, therefore, cares for and watches over man : this He shows by acts; for He guides man as a child by the Word, Who is the genuine coadjutor of the love of God towards man. The Good is not said to be good, because it has virtue : in like manner as Justice is said to be good, not because it has virtue (for it is virtue), but because it is good in itself and by itself. That which is expedient is said to be good also on another account ; not because it pleases, but because it benefits. On all these accounts Justice is good, both as it is virtue and as it is eligible of itself: not because it pleases ; for it aims not at gratifying by its judgments, but distributes to each according to his deservings. That which benefits follows that which is expedient. Whatever description you give of the Good, the same will apply to Justice ; both equally partaking of the same qualities, and being consequently equal and like to each other. Justice therefore is good. You will perhaps ask, If God loves man and is good, why is He angry ? why does He punish ? " Clement, in answer to this objection, compares the discipline to which the Christian is subjected, to the severe and unpleasant remedies to which the surgeon and physician have recourse. " Reproof is like a medicine which softens the callosities of the affections, and purges the impurities of an intemperate life, and levels the tumours of pride, and reduces man to a sound and healthy state. Admonition is, as it were, the diet of the diseased soul, counselling what it should take and what it should avoid. All these things tend to safety and perpetual health. To censure is a mark of good-will, not of hatred. The enemy and the friend alike reprove : but the former in derision, the latter in good-will. The Lord does not upbraid men through hatred ; He has even suffered for us, whom He might destroy for our sins. When God threatens or chastises, He does it for the good of man : no argument, therefore, can thence be drawn against the Divine goodness. Plato was of opinion that they who are justly punished for their transgressions, are benefited by the punishment, because their souls are amended ; consequently in his estimation Goodness and Justice were compatible. The threatenings of God are striking proofs of His



goodness : He threatens in order to deter men from sin. If we wilfully persist in sinning, the fault is our own : we choose punishment. In punishing us, God is not moved by anger, but considers what is just; and it is not expedient that what is just should be left undone on our account. God wishes not to look upon that which is evil, for He is good ; while He purposely averts His eye, wickedness springs up through man's unbelief. In Him who is good, inasmuch as He is essentially good, there must exist hatred of evil. Wherefore I admit that God punishes unbelievers (for punishment is for the good and benefit of him who is punished ; it is the bringing back to rectitude of that which has swerved from it), but I do not admit that God wishes to avenge Himself; for vengeance is the retribution of evil for the benefit of the avenger ; and He Who teaches us to pray for those who insult us cannot desire to avenge Himself." Clement further shows that in Scripture the epithets of good and just are alike applied to God. But he seems to say that the appellation of good belongs more particularly to God as the Father; that of just to God as the Word or Son, because He is to judge the world. Christ addresses the Father as the Creator of the world, and calls Him God ; but the Gnostics themselves allowed that the Creator of the world was just. Clement's conclusion is, that the course pursued by God in His discipline of men is various ; but always designed for their salvation. The Pedagogue bears testimony to the good; He invites to better things those who have been called , and arrests in their career those who are hastening to sin, and exhorts them to turn to a better life. In continuation of the same subject, Clement says that the Paedagogue adopts at different times different measures in order to save His children. He admonishes, He reproveth, He rebukes, He convinces, He threatens, He heals. He promises, He gratuitously gives. But whatever measures the Pedagogue adopts, they are all directed to one object, the salvation of mankind. Sometimes He uses gentle, sometimes rougher remedies. " They who are sick," Clement proceeds, " need a Saviour ; they who have wandered, a guide ; they who are blind, one who shall lead them to the light ; they who thirst, the living fountain, of which he who partakes shall thirst no more ; the dead need life ; the sheep a shepherd ; children a Pedagogue; all mankind need Jesus." "All these offices the Paedagogue performs for man. If, therefore, He addresses them through their fears, it is not because He is not good as well as just ; but - because mere goodness is too often despised, and it is consequently necessary to hold out the terrors of Justice. There are two kinds of fear; one accompanied by reverence, such as children feel towards their parent ; the other by hatred, such as slaves feel towards harsh masters. The Justice of God is shown in His reproofs ; His goodness in his compassion. There is no incompatibility between justice and goodness. The

physician who announces to the patient that he has a fever, has no ill-will to him : nor is God, Who convinces man of sin, unfriendly to him. God of Himself is good : but He is just on our account : and just because good. He has displayed His justice to us through His Word, from the time that He became Father. For before the creation was, He was God, He was good : and on this account He chose to be Creator and Father : and in this relation of love originated justice ; He caused the sun to shine (in the natural creation), He sent down His Son (in the spiritual creation). The Son first announced from heaven that justice is good, when He said, ' No one has known the Son but the Father; or the Father but the Son.' This reciprocal and equally poised knowledge is the symbol of primitive justice. Justice then descended to men : in the Letter and in the Body, in the Word and in the Law, constraining mankind to a saving repentance ; for it is good. If then thou art disobedient to God, blame thyself who bringest the judge upon thee." Having shown that the passages of Scripture, in which God holds out threatenings, are not inconsistent with His goodness, because they are manifestly designed to lead men to repentance, Clement proceeds to quote other passages in which God aims at effecting the same object by the language of exhortation, and counsel, and encouragement, and benediction. Praise and reproof are to be used as the instruments of reforming men, according to their different dispositions and circumstances. God uses both, and is equally good, when He praises and when He reproveth.

S>M>

Q.: Is God continuously taking care of the world- or did He create it and thereafter simply abandon it to its fate, whatever that might be?

B.: You are seeking firm assurance that God is perennially overseeing your life and that He is in charge of the same: is that right?

Q.: Yes.

B.: Then surrender unto Him without reserve. You cannot both retain your individuality and yet meaningfully ask that you must remain within His fold.

Q.: If I ought not to remain apart from Him, why then did He create me?

B.: He never says that He is apart from you; it is you who say that you are apart from Him.

Q.: So the feeling of separateness from God is illusory?

B.: Yes. You believe and you asseverate 'I'; therein lies the error. The 'I'-sense needlessly and fictitiously appears to cause separation from the Divine where in fact there is none. In giving up this fraudulent 'I'-sense lies wisdom and peace. What alone IS: that let it BE.

Q.: Can we function in the world normally without thinking thoughts and taking decisions? If the mind is kept always absorbed in trance, how is one to

continue living in the world and attending to its numerous attention-soliciting affairs?

B.: Surrender to Him and so let Him show the way. After genuine surrender, one's actions are based on intuition, not reasoning.

Q.: Is it unnecessary then to use one's intellect?

B.: Leave your intellect in His hands; let Him do with it as and whatever He sees fit to; that is what is meant by surrender.

S>M>

Q.: Does not desire for fame and glory haul man astray, and away from the path leading to Realisation? How may we insulate ourselves against the danger of becoming victimised by such desires? What is the means to avoid arrogance and remain humble always?

B.: Only craving for union with the Almighty brings about genuine humility or subsidence of the ego; endeavouring to remain humble is only another form of arrogance.

Mr. Knowles: Your question, sir, is answered in this book hereasunder:

[reading out as follows from the book, 'The Works of Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo: a new translation; Edited by Marcus Dods, D.D.; Volume I: The City of God']

There is assuredly a difference between the desire of human glory and the desire of domination ; for, though he who takes overwhelming delight in human glory will also be prone to aspire earnestly after domination, nevertheless they who desire the true glory even of human praise strive not to displease those who judge well of them. For there are many good moral qualities, of which many are competent judges, although they are not possessed by many ; and by those good moral qualities those men press on to glory, honour, and domination, of whom Sallust says, " But they press on by the true way." But whosoever, without possessing that desire of glory which makes one fear to displease those who judge his conduct, desires domination and power, very often seeks to obtain what he loves by most open crimes. Therefore he who desires glory presses on to obtain it either by the true way, or certainly by deceit and artifice, wishing to appear good when he is not. Therefore to him who possesses virtues it is a great virtue to despise glory ; for contempt of it is seen by God, but is not manifest to human judgment. For whatever any one does before the eyes of men in order to show himself to be a despiser of glory, if they suspect that he is doing it in order to get greater praise, - that is, greater glory, - he has no means of demonstrating to the perceptions of those who suspect him that the case is really otherwise than they suspect it to be. But he who despises the judgment of praisers, despises also the rashness of suspectors. Their salvation, indeed, he does not despise,

if he is truly good ; for so great is the righteousness of that man who receives his virtues from the Spirit of God, that he loves his very enemies, and so loves them that he desires that his haters and detractors may be turned to righteousness, and become his associates, and that not in an earthly but in a heavenly country. But with respect to his praisers, though he sets little value on their praise, he does not set little value on their love ; neither does he elude their praise, lest he should forfeit their love. And, therefore, he strives earnestly to have their praises directed to Him from whom every one receives whatever in him is truly praiseworthy. But he who is a despiser of glory, but is greedy of domination, exceeds the beasts in the vices of cruelty and luxuriousness. Such, indeed, were certain of the Romans, who, wanting the love of esteem, wanted not the thirst for domination ; and that there were many such, history testifies. But it was Nero Csesar who was the first to reach the summit, and, as it were, the citadel, of this vice ; for so great was his luxuriousness, that one would have thought there was nothing manly to be dreaded in him, and such his cruelty, that, had not the contrary been known, no one would have thought there was anything effeminate in his character. Nevertheless power and domination are not given even to such men save by the providence of the most high God, when He judges that the state of human affairs is worthy of such lords. The divine utterance is clear on this matter ; for the Wisdom of God thus speaks : " By me kings reign, and tyrants possess the land." But, that it may not be thought that by " tyrants" is meant, not wicked and impious kings, but brave men, in accordance with the ancient use of the word in another place it is most unambiguously said of God, that He " maketh the man who is an hypocrite to reign on account of the perversity of the people." Wherefore, though I have, according to my ability, shown for what reason God, who alone is true and just, helped forward the Romans, who were good according to a certain standard of an earthly state, to the acquirement of the glory of so great an empire, there may be, nevertheless, a more hidden cause, known better to God than to us, depending on the diversity of the merits of the human race. Among all who are truly pious, it is at all events agreed that no one without true piety - that is, true worship of the true God - can have true virtue ; and that it is not true virtue which is the slave of human praise. Though, nevertheless, they who are not citizens of the eternal city, which is called the city of God in the sacred Scriptures, are more useful to the earthly city when they possess even that virtue than if they had not even that. But there could be nothing more fortunate for human affairs than that, by the mercy of God, they who are endowed with true piety of life, if they have the skill for ruling people, should also have the power. But such men, however great virtues they may possess in this life, attribute it solely to

the grace of God that He has bestowed it on them - willing, believing, seeking. And, at the same time, they understand how far they are short of that perfection of righteousness which exists in the society of those holy angels for which they are striving to fit themselves. But however much that virtue may be praised and cried up, which without true piety is the slave of human glory, it is not at all to be compared even to the feeble beginnings of the virtue of the saints, whose hope is placed in the grace and mercy of the true God.

S>M>

Q.: St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, has written as follows in his 'Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians'; the translated words stand having been formulated by J. B. Lightfoot, Lord Bishop of Durham, author of 'The Apostolic Fathers':

Now He that raised Him from the dead will raise us also; if we do His will and walk in His commandments and love the things which He loved, abstaining from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing or blow for blow or cursing for cursing; but remembering the words which the Lord spake, as He taught. Judge not that ye be not judged; Forgive, and it shall be forgiven to you; Have mercy that ye may receive mercy; With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again; and again. Blessed are the poor and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God. The statement gives the impression that through the redeeming power of Christ, his faithful followers also may be resurrected from death and awakened into Eternal Life; is it really so? If I Love Lord Jesus devoutly with all my heart, can I also be brought over into Eternal Life and shall I also be resurrected after my death?

B.: Resurrection need not necessarily carry any connotation of physicality. Resurrection simply means blossoming into Absolute Life- i.e., Life in which there can be no meaningful scope nor possibility for [occurrence of] death. Yes: those who Love Him unselfishly and steadfastly will Realise Him; there can be no doubt about the matter. The point of Love is to once and for all lose oneself in the Beloved.

S>M>

Q.: Is everything made out of God only?

B.: Yes.

Q.: In that case, the rapist, the forger, the arsonist, the thief, the murderer and so on and so forth: these, also, are in substance God and God only.

B.: Yes.

Q.: But does not this idea sound disgusting to hear and therefore impossible to assimilate?

B.: Ideas pertaining to good and evil are merely our own mental concepts; they are not available in the Absolute.

Q.: If there is no such thing as good or evil, can we then commit all sorts of sins?

B.: Sins beget consequences; you will be repaid with hefty interest.

Mr. Knowles: Sir, in this book, namely 'The Writings of Origen; translated by Rev. Frederick Crombie, M.A., Professor of Biblical Criticism, St. Mary's College, St. Andrews.', your question has been answered

hereasunder[reading out as follows from such book]-

The highest good, then, after the attainment of which the whole of rational nature is seeking, which is also called the end of all blessings, is defined by many philosophers as follows : The highest good, they say, is to become as like to God as possible. But this definition I regard not so much as a discovery of theirs, as a view derived from holy Scripture. For this is pointed out by Moses, before all other philosophers, when he describes the first creation of man in these words : " And God said, Let us make man in our own image, and after our likeness;" and then he adds the words : " So God created man in His own image : in the image of God created He him ; male and female created He them, and He blessed them." Now the expression, "In the image of God created He him," without any mention of the word "likeness," conveys no other meaning than this, that man received the dignity of God's image at his first creation ; but that the perfection of his likeness has been reserved for the consummation, - namely, that he might acquire it for himself by the exercise of his own diligence in the imitation of God, the possibility of attaining to perfection being granted him at the beginning through the dignity of the divine image, and the perfect realization of the divine likeness being reached in the end by the fulfilment of the [necessary] works. Now, that such is the case, the Apostle John points out more clearly and unmistakeably, when he makes this declaration : " Little children, we do not yet know what we shall be ; but if a revelation be made to, us from the Saviour, ye will say, without any doubt, we shall be like Him." By which expression he points out with the utmost certainty, that not only was the end of all things to be hoped for, which he says was still unknown to him, but also the likeness to God, which will be conferred in proportion to the completeness of our deserts. The Lord Himself, in the Gospel, not only declares that these same results are future, but that they are to be brought about by His own intercession. He Himself deigning to obtain them from the Father for His disciples, saying, " Father, I will that where I am, these also may be with me ; and as Thou and I are one, they also may be one in us." In which the divine likeness itself already appears to advance, if we may so express ourselves, and from being merely similar, to become the

same, because undoubtedly in the consummation or end God is "all and in all." And with reference to this, it is made a question by some whether the nature of bodily matter, although cleansed and purified, and rendered altogether spiritual, does not seem either to offer an obstruction towards attaining the dignity of the [divine] likeness, or to the property of unity because neither can a corporeal nature appear capable of any resemblance to a divine nature, which is certainly incorporeal ; nor can it be truly and deservedly designated one with it, especially since we are taught by the truths of our religion that that which alone is one, viz. the Son with the Father, must be referred to a peculiarity of the [divine] nature. Jerome, in his Epistle to Avitus, No. 94, has the passage thus : " Since, as we have already frequently observed, the beginning is generated again from the end, it is a question whether then also there will be bodies, or whether existence will be maintained at some time without them when they shall have been annihilated, and thus the life of incorporeal beings must be believed to be incorporeal, as we know is the case with God. And there is no doubt that if all the bodies which are termed visible by the apostle, belong to that sensible world, the life of incorporeal beings will be incorporeal." And a little after: "That expression, also, used by the apostle, ' The whole creation will be freed from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God' (Rom. viii. 21), we so understand, that we say it was the first creation of rational and incorporeal beings which is not subject to corruption, because it was not clothed with bodies ; for wherever bodies are, corruption immediately follows. But afterwards it will be freed from the bondage of corruption, when they shall have received the glory of the sons of God, and God shall be all in all." And in the same place : "That we must believe the end of all things to be incorporeal, the language of the Saviour Himself leads us to think, when He says, ' As I and Thou are one, so may they also be one in us' (John xvii. 21). For we ought to know what God is, and what the Saviour will be in the end, and how the likeness of the Father and the Son has been promised to the saints ; for as they are one in Him, so they also are one in them. For we must adopt the view, either that the God of all things is clothed with a body, and as we are enveloped with flesh, so He also with some material covering, that the likeness of the life of God may be in the end produced also in the saints ; or if this hypothesis is unbecoming, especially in the judgment of those who desire, even in the smallest degree, to feel the majesty of God, and to look upon the glory of His uncreated and all-surpassing nature, we are forced to adopt the other alternative, and despair either of attaining any likeness to God, if we are to inhabit for ever the same bodies, or if the blessedness of the same life with God is promised to us, we must live in the same state as that in

which God lives." All these points have been omitted by Rufinus as erroneous, and statements of a different kind here and there inserted instead (Ruaeus). Since, then, it is promised that in the end God will be all and in all, we are not, as is fitting, to suppose that animals, either sheep or other cattle, come to that end, lest it should be implied that God dwelt even in animals, whether sheep or other cattle ; and so, too, with pieces of wood or stones, lest it should be said that God is in these also. So, again, nothing that is wicked must be supposed to attain to that end, lest, while God is said to be in all things, He may also be said to be in a vessel of wickedness. For if we now assert that God is everywhere and in all things, on the ground that nothing can be empty of God, we nevertheless do not say that He is now "all things" in those in whom He is. And hence we must look more carefully as to what that is which denotes the perfection of blessedness and the end of things, which is not only said to be God in all things, but also " all in all." Let us then inquire what all those things are which God is to become in all. I am of opinion that the expression, by which God is said to be "all in all," means that He is "all" in each individual person. Now He will be "all" in each individual in this way : when all which any rational understanding, cleansed from the dregs of every sort of vice, and with every cloud of wickedness completely swept away, can either feel, or understand, or think, will be wholly God ; and when it will no longer behold or retain anything else than God, but when God will be the measure and standard of all its movements ; and thus God will be " all," for there will no longer be any distinction of good and evil, seeing evil nowhere exists ; for God is all things, and to Him no evil is near : nor will there be any longer a desire to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on the part of him who is always in the possession of good, and to whom God is all. So then, when the end has been restored to the beginning, and the termination of things compared with their commencement, that condition of things will be re-established in which rational nature was placed, when it had no need to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ; so that when all feeling of wickedness has been removed, and the individual has been purified and cleansed, He who alone is the one good God becomes to him " all," and that not in the case of a few individuals, or of a considerable number, but He Himself is " all in all." And when death shall no longer anywhere exist, nor the sting of death, nor any evil at all, then verily God will be " all in all."

S>M>

Q.: Would it be correct to say that vichara and concentration on the right-hand side of the chest are one and the same practice?

B.: This is like the long-standing belief that the goose barnacle gives birth to the barnacle goose.



Q.: So such a view is totally absurd?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What is the relationship subsisting between jnana-vichara and the Heart, which latter forms the subject-matter that constitutes the object of the former's effort?

B.: On the seabed of the oceans surrounding the Indian-subcontinent, there lives a peculiar, colourful animal known in English as the 'peacock mantis shrimp'; this creature is related neither to the peacock, nor to the mantis, and nor to the shrimp; yet it has been given such name because it resembles each of these 3 inasmuch as certain specific characteristics are respectively concerned. Likewise, the Heart has nothing to do with our efforts to discover the same, and Shines all by Itself in Perfect Isolation; yet we use terms such as 'heart-center', 'jnana-vichara', and so on, in order so as to facilitate our supposed understanding; but any understanding we think we possess appurtenant to Realisation is unequivocally ridiculous nonsense. Self cannot be understood or apprehended by what is not-Self; for not-Self does not exist at all; on the other hand, to know Self is to BE Self; and therefore, Self does not [even] know Himself; He simply IS. So in this sense we can say that knowledge of Self is impossible. He cannot be reached at all. All that is possible to do is to surrender unto Him and keep quiet. "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day..." If one's mind stands relapsed into total silence or stillness from which no return is possible, Salvation or Realisation this very day is certainly assured unto one.

S>M>

Q.: How shall I keep fear and worry at bay? By nature I am such that even the tiniest amongst unfavourable circumstances fills me with enormous fear. What shall I do? I have been this way from the days of my earliest childhood. I have been diagnosed by a physician as suffering from an 'psychoneurosis stemming from feelings of insecurity'. All conventional remedies have failed to bring forth meaningful result. Please help me.

B.: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" So, learn to trust in God and He will be with you always.

Q.: But the moment I try to turn towards God, my own mind mocks me, saying that I am wasting my time endeavouring to converse with a fictitious non-entity. Please give me a pragmatic measure to overcome fear.

B.: Hereafter, whenever you feel fear, think of me and you will be alright.

S>M>

Q.: That gentleman who has photographed Sri Bhagawan with a camera built by the great Mr. Abraham Bogardus himself- I fail to recall his name- where is he? He was here yesterday. I have brought some money now so that I can buy some prints of Sri Bhagawan's photograph from him.

B.: Krishnasamy left yesterday evening. But he may have left some prints at the office. You may contact the sarvadhikari.

Q.: It is my intention to meditate for 3 hours everyday during brahmamuhurtham, the method being this: I want to stare fixedly into the eyes of Sri Bhagawan in the photograph and chant his name repeatedly within my mind. Will this method be efficacious so as for the purpose of bringing about Realisation?

B.: Why stare at a photograph? Here I am; stare at me as long as you like! The Hall erupted in jocular laughter; both the master and the questioner laughed heartily.

S>M>

Q.: Is turning one's body invisible a true hallmark of Jnana?

B.: Somebody has told you so and you are convinced of it; now if I tell you otherwise will you listen?

Chadwick: If this opinion were to hold true, Mr. Harry Houdini would be the greatest Jnani the world has seen; how many times he has publicly disappeared from view!

Q.: But the Jnani's body is said to become invisible owing to the force of Jnana operating in and through it, since his kundalini and prana have both become submerged altogether in-

B.: Alright. Ramana Maharshi hereby solemnly declares that he is an ajnani; does this satisfy you? Or should I give it in writing?

The questioner fell silent at once.

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that somebody once craftily administered poison to Sri Bhagawan?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Did not Sri Bhagawan notice the fact and throw it away at once?

B.: Sri Bhagawan noticed the fact and swallowed it at once.

Q.: Oh! but why?

B.: In those days I was not in the habit of refusing anything given to me to eat.

Q.: Did the poison have no effect?

B.: It dissolved away all my gums.

Q.: Was the rascal who did the evil deed handed over to the police or not?

B.: No.

Q.: Oh! but why not?

B.: [smiling] You all come here and ask me Mukti; he has tried to give me Mukti. We should appreciate his efforts, not condemn them.

The questioner looked stunned.

S>M>

Q.: Has Sri Bhagawan heard of the curious case of Mr. Phineas Gage?

B.: Yes. What is your doubt?

Q.: If vasanas are stored on the right-hand side of the chest, why did the man's behaviour change after that accident? His personality traits became totally altered on account of extensive brain-damage; he became violent and psychopathic; whereas earlier he was a mild-mannered man.

B.: The quality of image derived from a film-projection system is a function of both the quality of the projection-mechanism or projector-machine and the quality of the film passed through it; suppose the lens used within the projector-machine is cracked or scratched, certainly the picture is affected.

Q.: But Sri Bhagawan says that the brain in itself is also only a projection of the mind.

B.: Yes; where is the contradiction? The appearance of the lens being characterised by presence of aberration also is recorded only on the same strip of film.

Q.: Then which is that ultimate source of all light or illumination, which is never itself part of any projection, but only causes the same?

B.: The Self.

Q.: So all this is just a film-show?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Who is the director?

B.: You are!

S>M>

Q.: Bhagawan says that Jesus was a Jnani. Why did he not teach vichara?

B.: He did teach vichara.

Q.: We do not find him teaching vichara in the Bible.

B.: It is not there in the Bible, but there is an apocryphal-text attributed to St. Thomas, in which Jesus discusses it.

Q.: I have read the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas; it certainly contains no such thing; rather, it discusses the visit of the apostle to Cranganore, a small town in the Malabar coast near Trichur.

B.: The work mentioned by me is an even earlier text; it is currently in the hands only of a few secret-brotherhoods around the world; it is not in the domain of public knowledge.

Q.: My curiosity is now aroused; please show me this work if it is here.

B.: The Dutch-gentleman Dr. Gaulternus showed me a portion of the work, which he had inscribed into his diary from the original manuscript, which seems to have been composed in the Coptic tongue. The diary was not left behind him here. For reasons not expressed by him, he was at some anxiety that strangers must not peek into it. He himself, he said, had been enormously privileged to ever have been permitted to set eyes upon it by the elite-members in the Pasadenian Theosophical Lodge, to which he apparently belongs. The work, according to him, contained some 275 sayings of Jesus, but no other information. All those sayings which appeared to him to contain some shade of mystical advaitic import he has brought here in his diary, to show me, in translated form. This document has evidently been preserved by their brotherhood carefully through the centuries since the time of the Christ; always these artefacts had been kept a secret, because hundreds of other such documents had been burnt and destroyed by the Church, condemning them to be heretical.

Q.: So did Jesus also ask his followers to ask themselves and investigate 'Who am I?', just like Bhagawan? Is that what these verses state?

B.: There was a verse which said, 'By means of following backwards to see with an in-pointed mind wherefrom the notion[or idea] of 'I' springs, and by means of turning away from that which is outside, plunge the mind into that which is inside itself and Shining as its own source; then the Kingdom of Heaven will be made manifest unto you.'. What is this if not vichara?

Q.: But is not 'Who am I?' explicitly mentioned?

B.: Vichara does not mean repeating like a well-trained parrot, 'Who am I?', 'Who am I?'. Mind seeking its own source incessantly is vichara. The question 'Who am I?' is only the linguistic component of the actual investigation; as you progress more and more in introverting the mind, the need to ask yourself the question repeatedly is obviated, and the mind plunges itself into the Heart the moment it directs itself inward.

Q.: So the question 'Who am I?' is actually unnecessary after a certain stage of spiritual maturity has been reached, although the investigation itself must never be abandoned till the Self stands Realised?

B.: That is correct.

Q.: Please mention some other sayings of Jesus from this mysterious work.

B.: The first saying I observed in the diary runs thus: Whomsoever shall Realise interpretation in respect of these sayings: he shall be consummated unto the Holy Ghost forever and forever; and he shall never partake of death.

Q.: Please mention atleast 5 more verses.

Bhagawan then wrote the following on a piece of paper and the same was circulated around the Hall; these are the master's actual English words:

□ When you behold him that was born twice, once out of a woman's womb and thereafter again out of the blazing fire that is kindled by means of mind fornicating itself into its Mother, fall down flat upon your face, and kiss the dust of such a one's feet: for no man is He, but My Father in Heaven come in disguise.

□ The treasure of the Kingdom of Heaven which I bequeath unto you cannot be seen with the eye nor heard with the ear; neither can it be touched with the hand nor can it be thought of by the mind; it is not fleshy, but is made of the Holy Ghost; all men who forsake the world for My sake shall deserve to inherit It; and all men who abandon themselves fully to the Mercy of My Father in Heaven shall drown and lose themselves in It.

□ When you have made two One, then: your inside shall be as your outside and your outside shall be as your inside; your above shall not be below anyone and your below shall not be above anyone; if were a man you shall not act masculine and if you were a woman you shall not act feminine; your eyes shall see nothing and your ears shall hear nothing, for you shall have neither eyes nor ears, but they shall as you are passing by say, 'There goes the man that sees all things and hears all things, for nothing is hidden from his omniscient wisdom.'; you shall be dead to His creation but awake in My Father in Heaven; with your eyes He shall see; with your hands He shall embrace; with your feet He shall tread the dust of the earth; in your image He shall Shine; for then you have entered the Kingdom of my Father in Heaven.

□ I stand in the midst of the world, and I find to my sorrow that all are drunk, with the result that none thirst in the heart; then did my soul convulse in agony to spectate that fearful spectacle and I did swoon; for the sons of men have forgotten that empty have they come into the world and empty are they destined to depart from it; drunk with themselves, these children of My Father have forgotten Him, who begat them after His own Ghostly likeness and who is their Life, and now seek to wander about in intoxicating ripe vineyards which are overhanging with dreams, for all of time to come; yet behold! I have come from My Father in Heaven to awaken them from their drunkenness, that they might throw away the vines of illusion that snare them; I cry to them in grief, 'Oh! you heavy burdened souls, will you not rein in your minds?'

□ There is that within you which if made to Shine will save you from death; if you imagine that you know not that you have it, this which

*you imagine that you know not that you have will kill you again and again.*

Q.: Will Sri Bhagawan please explain the import of these verses to us? What is the meaning of them?

B.: [smiling] What is there for us to say? Each understands according to his own capacity. "...strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age..." Works such as this are meant to lend themselves necessarily to a diverse range of interpretations, by their very intrinsic design; we must not choke them by endeavouring to narrow their relevance and confining them to one particular strand of meaning only. Let each take out of these treasures what he is wont to.

Chadwick: These verses are so beautiful. I wish they would form part of the Bible.

B.: Bring your Bible.

It was brought; after trimming the latter in size, the master pasted the sheet on which he had written the verses on the last page of Chadwick's Bible, which was blank; the object was handed back to the Caucasian and he beamed with happiness.

S>M>

Q.: Is God's Grace available for all, with which to Realise the Self?

B.: Yes. "...upon whom doth not his light arise?"

Q.: Then why do I not Realise the Self?

B.: Because you are looking the other way. Why complain of darkness after closing your eyes? See the sun and there is no darkness.

S>M>

Q.: Is it possible to shift one's consciousness of being to somewhere outside of the body?

B.: [laughing] Shall we deposit the same inside a steel-vault and keep it safely under lock and key?

Q.: Kindly pardon my ignorance and show me the way to Truth.

B.: By its intrinsic nature consciousness alone does not by itself suffer from any limitation or bondage; it is always free and uninhibited. That which complains of suffering or embodiment is not consciousness itself but exclusively the faculty of intellection or ratiocination, which otherwise goes by the name 'mind'. Judge now for yourself where the fault should lie. Mind is an spurious layer of accretion occluding consciousness; it is simply a wrong habit and nothing more. Give up this habit of moving away from the source and the source is regained.

Q.: But how to unlock consciousness and make it free, since it is now locked into this body of flesh?

B.: By refusing to pay one's vasanas any attention, therefore leaving them to fade away of their own accord. Vasanas are not made of stone; they are only repetitive mental habits. With firm practice they can be conquered and destroyed. The body has taken birth only owing to one's vasanas; the body is a vehicle by means of which one's vasanas might be endeavoured to be satisfied. Can there be any actual satisfaction? Suppose you long to drink a glass of rose-sherbet; just at that moment somebody happens to give you one, and, delighted with your good fortune, you drink it with great pleasure. But what has happened to your craving to drink rose-sherbet? Has it become quiesced? No. After drinking it there is some momentary satisfaction for the time being; thereafter, again, [the next day] the craving returns, now stronger than before. So, attempting to tackle a desire by means of endeavouring to satisfy the same is like pouring kerosene on a fire thinking that we are going to extinguish the same. There is only one thing to do with vasanas, and that is to cease to pay them any attention; then they will fade away of their own accord. It should be understood that vasanas cannot limit or entrap consciousness itself in any way; consciousness alone remains Emancipated always. What feels that it is in bondage: only for this entity is there bondage; upon investigation this entity is found not to exist. So, really there is no bondage at all anywhere at any time. When fire heats up a metal-ball, the ball glows bright red; thereafter it is hammered into the required shape. The fire in the ball does not receive any hammering; yet were there no fire no hammering would be possible. The knot of the heart [hrudhaya-granti] shatters itself when the mind stands divested of all its vasanas; this unfastening is called Liberation by the buddhists, but consider whether there is any meaning in assigning unto it that name: who stands Liberated? Was there ever any bondage for pure consciousness? Does the Self stand in need of Liberation? Since the ego is destroyed in dawn of Realisation, we cannot meaningfully say that it stands Liberated. So, we see that the concept or idea of Emancipation really does not stand up to scrutiny at all. You are not advised to give up vasanas so that you may acquire anything new in return, but only because giving up vasanas is the only way to Realise Eternal Peace. S>M>

Q.: Is the chronicle of Jewish history given in the Bible historically accurate?

B.: Why are you asking me this question? Mr. Flinders Petrie has tried all his life to determine the answer by digging one site after another; go ask him.

Q.: So it is useless to study the past and endeavour to speculate about the future?

B.: Certainly yes.

Q.: Why so, may I ask?

B.: Yesterday you said 'now'. Tomorrow you are going to say 'now'. First successfully find out what this ever-present 'now' is; after doing so we may, if required, devote attention to past and future: if then they still remain.

Q.: How did Moses part the sea with his staff? Are not such narratives absurd? Are they not mere fibs with which to deceive the innocent, the simple-minded and the credulous?

Chadwick.: It is possible for men of God to wield perfect control over the elements.

Q.: In that case, sir, ask your Maharshi to wave his staff about; make the Hill yonder hover a few inches off the ground for only 1 minute: and then I will accept that the supernatural does exist.

C.: The Maharshi does not require any certificate from you.

B.: It is not wrong to maintain a rationalistic outlook; but one must not be selectively rationalistic, or occasionally so; for would it not amount to self-betrayal to every now and then, when adversarial situations present themselves, forsake one's creed of remaining a rationalist in the face of every circumstance? To be rational and logical is good: it must be kept up always. For instance, why mourn the dead? Were you not aware that, or do you not understand that, all die one day?

The Caucasian retired into a broody silence upon having heard these words.

S>M>

Q.: How shall a sincere Christian lead a Righteous life?

B.: By surrendering his life unto Jesus and perfectly abiding by the Lord's will; give up your will entirely so that His alone might prevail; let Him win and win over you.

Mr. Knowles: The answer to your question, sir, is given in this book, namely 'Christ's Object Lessons by Ellen G. White'; it is hereasunder: [reading out as follows-]

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us, He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. The guests at the marriage feast were inspected by the king. Only those were accepted who had obeyed his requirements and put on the wedding garment. So it is with the guests at the gospel feast. All must pass the scrutiny of the great King, and only those are received who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness. Righteousness is right-doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do.



The works show whether the faith is genuine. It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness. The truth is to be planted in the heart. It is to control the mind and regulate the affections. The whole character must be stamped with the divine utterances. Every jot and tittle of the word of God is to be brought into the daily practise. He who becomes a partaker of the divine nature will be in harmony with God's great standard of righteousness, His holy law. This is the rule by which God measures the actions of men. This will be the test of character in the Judgment. There are many who claim that by the death of Christ the law was abrogated; but in this they contradict Christ's own words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. . . . Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." It was to atone for man's transgression of the law that Christ laid down His life. Could the law have been changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died. By His life on earth He honored the law of God. By His death He established it. He gave His life as a sacrifice, not to destroy God's law, not to create a lower standard, but that justice might be maintained, that the law might be shown to be immutable, that it might stand fast forever. Satan had claimed that it was impossible for man to obey God's commandments; and in our own strength it is true that we can not obey them. But Christ came in the form of humanity, and by His perfect obedience He proved that humanity and divinity combined can obey every one of God's precepts. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." This power is not in the human agent. It is the power of God. When a soul receives Christ, he receives power to live the life of Christ. God requires perfection of His children. His law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of all character. This infinite standard is presented to all that there may be no mistake in regard to the kind of people whom God will have to compose His kingdom. The life of Christ on earth was a perfect expression of God's law, and when those who claim to be children of God become Christlike in character, they will be obedient to God's

commandments. Then the Lord can trust them to be of the number who shall compose the family of heaven. Clothed in the glorious apparel of Christ's righteousness, they have a place at the King's feast. They have a right to join the blood-washed throng. The man who came to the feast without a wedding garment represents the condition of many in our world to-day. They profess to be Christians, and lay claim to the blessings and privileges of the gospel; yet they feel no need of a transformation of character. They have never felt true repentance for sin. They do not realize their need of Christ or exercise faith in Him. They have not overcome their hereditary or cultivated tendencies to wrong-doing. Yet they think that they are good enough in themselves, and they rest upon their own merits instead of trusting in Christ. Hearers of the word, they come to the banquet, but they have not put on the robe of Christ's righteousness. Many who call themselves Christians are mere human moralists. They have refused the gift which alone could enable them to honor Christ by representing Him to the world. The work of the Holy Spirit is to them a strange work. They are not doers of the word. The heavenly principles that distinguish those who are one with Christ from those who are one with the world have become almost indistinguishable. The professed followers of Christ are no longer a separate and peculiar people. The line of demarcation is indistinct. The people are subordinating themselves to the world, to its practises, its customs, its selfishness. The church has gone over to the world in transgression of the law, when the world should have come over to the church in obedience to the law. Daily the church is being converted to the world. All these expect to be saved by Christ's death, while they refuse to live His self-sacrificing life. They extol the riches of free grace, and attempt to cover themselves with an appearance of righteousness, hoping to screen their defects of character; but their efforts will be of no avail in the day of God. The righteousness of Christ will not cover one cherished sin. A man may be a law-breaker in heart; yet if he commits no outward act of transgression, he may be regarded by the world as possessing great integrity. But God's law looks into the secrets of the heart. Every act is judged by the motives that prompt it. Only that which is in accord with the principles of God's law will stand in the Judgment. God is love. He has shown that love in the gift of Christ. When "He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," He withheld nothing from His purchased possession. He gave all heaven, from which we may draw strength and efficiency, that we be not repulsed or overcome by our great adversary. But the love of God does not lead Him to excuse sin. He did not excuse it in Satan; He did not excuse it in Adam or in Cain; nor will He excuse it in any other of the children of men. He will not connive at our sins or overlook our defects of

character. He expects us to overcome in His name. Those who reject the gift of Christ's righteousness are rejecting the attributes of character which would constitute them the sons and daughters of God. They are rejecting that which alone could give them a fitness for a place at the marriage feast. In the parable, when the king inquired, "How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" the man was speechless. So it will be in the great Judgment-day. Men may now excuse their defects of character, but in that day they will offer no excuse.

S>M>

Q.: The Biblical story of the great deluge is entirely unoriginal; I maintain that it is borrowed from earlier legends and stories that people of the region were circulating amongst themselves in the era during which the Genesis account was composed in Hebrew. In the book 'The Chaldean account of Genesis; by George Smith' we clearly see this to be the case. Likewise, all major Religious-texts around the world suffer from some such inconsistency or another. If we take the case of the Vedas, in one place it is said that the cosmos sprang out of water; in another ether is said to be the source out of which everything has emerged. Why these conflicting accounts?

B.: These creation-myths are meant to satisfy the curiosity of those who want to know where the cosmos came from.

Q.: Where did it come from?

B.: There is no 'it'. For those unable to accept this statement as fact, we have to say that the cosmos is a solipsistic projection of the mind. The latter standpoint is not actually correct, because it imparts a degree of reality to the phenomenon known as mind. Mind does not exist at all.

Q.: Where do all my thoughts come from then?

B.: Exactly. Search for this source and then you will understand for yourself the truth about the world.

S>M>

Q.: If I surrender unto God without reserve, will He thereafter show me the way ahead?

B.: Yes. "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path." Provided you have genuinely surrendered yourself to Him without reserve once and for all, He will guide you thereafter by means of manifesting Himself within you as an inner intuition. However, this intuition should not be deliberately put to the test or otherwise studied or examined for its own sake; if such curiosity or inquisitiveness arises on your part, such intuition ceases automatically. God cannot be understood with your faculty of logic; any such attempt will end in futility only.

Q.: Shall we abandon the intellect?

B.: Deploy it so as to Realise the Self.

S>M>

Q.: Some maintain that after Realization the notion of multiplicity no longer exists; they say that once a rope which was mistaken as being a snake is known to be a rope thereafter there can no longer continue or emerge the illusion of its being a snake. However, another school holds that even after Realization the appearance of manifestation remains although it is known to be illusory. They cite the appearance of silver in mother-of-pearl. There is no silver really, but even though one knows this the silvery appearance remains. Which school is correct according to Sri Bhagawan?

B.: The former; but the only way to actually ascertain for yourself is to Realise and See for yourself whether there is possible any multiplicity in that state. Why should you take my word for it?

Q.: But I observe that Sri Bhagawan does perceive the world around him. He now sees me talking to him, he sees Mr. Knowles seated to my right, clutching his canvas-rucksack close by himself, he sees Mr. Chadwick seated some distance behind me, he sees all the other persons in this Hall, he sees the Hall Itself, and he sees the scenery outside through the window. All these objects are separate elements; they are all distinct from each other; how can we say that there is no multiplicity and that there is only One? Is it not illogical and silly so to say?

B.: Suppose you are watching this whole scene, that you have just described so elaborately, on a screen, as an image projected from a projector-machine. Now what do you say? Are there multiple objects on the screen?

Q.: There are no objects there at all.

B.: Exactly.

Q.: How can this world be compared to a cinema-screen? The images in the cinema-screen cannot move of their own accord; they have no free-will. The way the camera moved whilst the picture was being photographed: that is exactly how the picture is shown on the screen. In this world, however, we can move our eyes in any direction and look at anything we wish for as long as we please; we possess free-will.

B.: Yes; that is the mistake which everybody is making.

Q.: I do not understand.

B.: You yourself have now admitted that the only difference between a picture shown on a cinema-screen and this world is the element of free-will. Free-will is a myth. So the world is in fact a cinema-show.

Q.: How can we say that there is no free-will? See: I lift my left hand. [does so] Now I lift my right; now I wiggle my thumb. [does so] Do not these actions

originate out of my free-will? Suppose I had decided to move my legs instead of my hands?

B.: But you did not! [laughs] What you think is also subject to total predestination. 'A man can do what he wants, but not want what he wants.' is what Schopenhauer has correctly discovered. Absolute freedom lies in Realising that you actually have absolutely no freedom at all. The only way to total freedom is through total bondage. Only in actually discovering that freedom is impossible does bondage to the Self dawn; bondage to the Self alone deserves to be called genuine Freedom. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Predestination is quite altogether renitent; it cannot be trifled with.

Q.: All this sounds complicated to understand.

B.: That is because you are still believing 'yourself' to exist; quit this mistaken belief; instead, actually exist: in other words, BE. Instead of asseverating 'I', remain as 'I', and therefore obliterate all scope for asseverating 'I'.

Q.: I do not understand what I should do.

B.: Don't do anything; is that not what I am trying to say?

Q.: Should I keep my body still as a statue?

B.: Who bothers whether the body is idle or locomoting? There is no need to bother about the body; let it act as prarabdha may suit it. YOU remain as you ARE.

Q.: But- who am I?

B.: [smiling] Exactly. Find out.

Q.: But Bhagawan just said that 'I' does not exist.

B.: Bhagawan does not say, 'Believe that 'I' does not exist.'. Who then harbours that belief? Is it not ridiculously risible? You were never asked to believe in the fact of your non-existence; believing in the fact of one's own non-existence is the same as continuing to spuriously exist so that such fatuous belief may continue to be harboured, or continuing to harbour such fatuous belief so that continuance of one's spurious existence may be rendered operational in furtherance. You were asked not to exist as a person or personalityhood, so that you may BE. If Spirit is to Shine, the person must die. You cannot have both the ego and Realisation of the true Self. Why? Because Self is nothing but the state of no-ego.

Q.: Practically speaking what shall I do to Realise?

B.: Vichara is the way.

S>M>

The master, Mr. T.K.S., myself and Mr. Subbaramayya were standing near the ashram's cow-shed. The master asked Mr. T.K.S. whether Azhugunni-siddhar

had written any letter to the ashram explaining the reason for him not having paid a visit to Bhagawan in quite some time.

T.K.S.: No: we have not received any such communication.

B.: Write to him and find out what the matter is. Usually he visits once in every fortnight. What has happened?

Mr. Subbaramayya: How scrumptiously heart-warming to observe that Bhagawan is taking so much scrupulous care to see to the welfare of a devotee!

B.: [amusedly] He is linked up with me in some mysterious way. Once whilst we were in Madurai, we had gone to the Vaigai as usual to play silambam during midnight-time. When we returned, Venkatraman's father was waiting for us and caught us red-handed; he had discovered his son's absence from his bed. In fact, to prevent just such an occurrence all of us would prepare decoys on our respective beds before setting out from home: we would arrange pillows in the shape of an anthropomorphic body and cover them with linen sheets, so that anybody seeing that form in the semi-darkness should think that it was a boy sleeping. Yet on that day somehow the mischief was discovered by Venkatraman's father. He caught us just as we returned into our houses and raised a big hue and cry. The next day morning, I felt sharp pains across my back. Wondering about the matter, I came outside the house and beheld a terrible spectacle: Venkatraman was hanging upside-down from the fig-tree in front of their house, and his father was flogging him with the whip that is used on horses. He was shouting and screaming but his father went on for 45 minutes before becoming finally too exhausted to continue further. He dropped the whip and went inside the house. I went there and untied him. Seeing the blood oozing from my body as well, he thought that my family also had dealt with me severely, and we expressed our condolences unto each other. I did not reveal unto him the truth; to this day he does not know. Nobody had lain a finger on me, but every blow that was received by Venkatraman fell on me also.

Q.: Bhagawan, being Christ-like, takes on the suffering of sinful humanity upon his own shoulders.

B.: There was no volition in me that such a thing should happen. The previous night I had prayed to God that Venkatraman should not suffer from any painful consequences as a result of having been caught by his father; in the morning this event occurred.

Q.: Was Bhagawan's prayer fulfilled?

B.: Yes. He told me that miraculously he had felt no pain, although he was bleeding from his wounds; but this body felt severe pain.

Q.: How amazing! But nowadays Bhagawan is not showing his siddhis to the public gaze; are they being worked in secret?

B.: Yes.

Q.: If they were worked openly, all of humanity would come to Ramanasramam and be benefitted.

B.: That is why they are being worked secretly.

TKS.: I gather that this same Mr. Venkatraman is the person whom Bhagawan fondly addresses as 'Azhugunni-siddhar'.

B.: Yes.

Q.: Why that name?

B.: He bursts into a torrent of tears whenever he sees me, and weeps profoundly for some time before subsiding.

Q.: What is the reason on his part for such eccentric behaviour? One should be happy to see Bhagawan.

B.: I was told that he once had a dream in which this body contracts throat-cancer and dies in the year 1950.

G.: What ridiculous nonsense! He must have read the biography of Sri Ramakrishna and his mind has superimposed that information unto Sri Bhagawan's person within his imagination, and so spewed forth such dream. For how could Sri Bhagawan ever die? Cancer, indeed!

B.: Indeed! How could Bhagawan ever die? For He was never born.

Q.: But certainly the body of Bhagawan is invulnerable to death: yes?

B.: Let those who see that body discuss that question.

S>M>

Q.: What does the saying mean, 'The more the humility, the vaster the greatness.'?

B.: The more the ego subsides, the more peaceful shall we have become. Outward pretension of being a humble person is not true humility. Actual humility is the same as non-arising of the ego under any circumstances. Only those who are perfectly peaceful on the inside can truly deserve to be called great. Why? Because the most difficult achievement in the world or out of it is to merge the mind in its source once and for all, Realising Perfect Peace from which no return is possible.

Q.: How shall I cultivate humility?

B.: Only those who have Realised the Self can know what 'humility' actually means; others merely talk about it without knowing what it is.

S>M>

Q.: What is sanchara-samadhi?

B.: It is the effect produced upon the mind consequent to the sannidhi [geographical proximity] of a Jnani's physical presence in the vicinity.

Q.: What error have I committed? I feel no such thing. I am sitting right beneath Bhagawan's Sofa.

B.: Gunpowder ignites with a single spark, whereas damp firewood takes a long time. Likewise here.

Q.: How long must I stay here so that I am able to obtain the experience of Enlightenment from Sri Bhagawan?

B.: Bhagawan is not keeping your Enlightenment under lock and key. It is for each person to reflect on the truth and Realise for himself. Bhagawan can only point the way. He cannot Realise on your behalf.

Q.: Why has God made Jnana so difficult? Does He not want others to attain His Exalted State?

B.: Who said that Jnana is difficult?

Q.: Everybody says so.

B.: Consider for yourself whether there is any meaning in saying such a thing. To see other objects which are outside oneself and understand them, the mental faculty which goes by the name of intellect is necessary, as also good physical eyesight. Whereas for Jnana it is enough for the mind to be turned in towards the Self. Jnana does not involve any work for the mind. It is therefore the easiest of all attainments. Every infant is born a Jnani; the ego develops and ossifies only later.

Q.: Just now Bhagawan said that Jnana is 'the most difficult achievement in the world or out of it'. Now he says the opposite thing.

B.: To inhere in the Self by oneself is indeed the easiest thing there is. What is not so easy is to eradicate one's vasanas. Yet patient toil will see its result one day.

S>M>

Q.: Is Sri Bhagawan an expert in silambam?

B.: So it was said of this when this was in Madurai.

Q.: Did Sri Bhagawan ever play silambam after coming to Tiruvannamalai?

B.: Yes- once. It was when we were at Skandasramam. My boyhood-friends Mani Aiyer and Vembu Aiyer came to visit and stayed for a few days. They insisted that we should again play the sport after these many years had passed. I was not eager to join; but they went on persuading, so that I finally agreed. We played for an entire day after going to a secluded spot on the Hill. No proper instruments were available; so, small tree-trunks, stripped of bark and branches, were used.

Q.: Doubtless Bhagawan won all the while.

B.: [no response]

S>M>



One of the lady-cooks in the ashram cautiously approached the master and spoke thus unto him in tremulous fashion:

Q.: Echammal showed me the hand-crafted Sri Chakra that Sri Bhagawan has given to her sister Venuammal for worship. I would also like one. I have brought some colour-pencils and sheets of ledger-paper. Please make me also one.

The master whispered something unto the attendant and he took her outside and seems to have told her something; she came back inside with a cheerful look on her face and never mentioned the matter again, to the Hall's knowledge.

S>M>

Q.: How did nescience come to occlude Reality?

B.: This point is being clarified in this Hall once a day. For Him there never can be any ignorance or bondage; neither can there be Emancipation nor Liberation. These are only our mental concepts and they are wholly alien to Him. He is unaware of anything except the peace or bliss of His natural state of Jnana. The question of Realisation arises to the ego only and never to the Self. Ignorance can never defile or blight even the remotest fringes of the Self. The Self is nithya shudda bhudda mukta- i.e., He is in Eternal Realisation. The Sun knows only to Shine; does He bother about the question of in how many places reflected images of Him are formed? There is only one Sun which Shines forever and forever; the number of reflected images which mirror him can be infinite; they have no power to tarnish him. One image may be reflected in muddy water; another in honey; yet another in a drop of dew; and so on and so forth; but although the quality of the reflected images vary according to the nature of the medium on which they happen to be formed, the Sun remains always as He was always: perfect and therefore perfectly aloof. The reflection can never be competent to ascertain or apprehend the original; the reflection must cease before the original might be Revealed. In the case of the individual, the light of the Self falls on the vasanas and produces the phenomenon of reflection that we refer to as mind. When there are no more vasanas left for there to be any reflection against, reflection comes to an end as against itself; there is no change in the Source and It continues to Shine as always. This is the sum and substance of everything an aspirant for Realisation needs to be aware of.

Q.: Even after Realisation a trace of mind is said to be left behind, to be eradicated at the time of death of the Jnani's body.

B.: That mind is inferred by others because they identify the Jnani with the body; he himself is not aware of any such thing.

Q.: Without a mind, body-consciousness and world-consciousness would be impossible; but: if Bhagawan is stung by an insect, is there no sensation? does not Bhagawan see me sitting in front of him and talking to him? Does it not mean that a trace amount of body-consciousness and world-consciousness are left behind even after Realisation?

B.: To be aware that an insect is biting me and to be aware that you are talking to me, there has to be available here an localised sense of 'I'; but I am not there. I perished long ago. Only Reality exists.

Q.: Then, if there is nobody residing within Bhagawan's body, who is now speaking these words to me at the present moment?

B.: That is the great mystery. However, since Bhagawan is not seeing the body, the question [as to the identity of the entity that lives within the Jnani's body, animates it and governs its functions] never arises from his point of view.

Q.: When Bhagawan sees his own body, what then does he see?

B.: Bhagawan does not see anything at all. He merely IS.

Q.: What about the body reclining on the Sofa? It has eyes; I am assuming that they are functioning well. What do those eyes see?

B.: This same Hall; but I am not seeing anything. I AM. Therefore I am not here. You will come to know this state for yourself only when you yourself Realise your Self. Until then you will be arguing about in circles, like a dog pointlessly chasing its own tail.

S>M>

Q.: What is Reality?

B.: It is not as a subject perceiving an object; Reality is that which is Absolute.

Q.: Are there grades, levels or stages in or of Reality?

B.: No; but there are levels of experience thereof; these are only mental.

Q.: How does one move on from experience of Reality to Reality Itself?

B.: The quest of Grace will of its own accord take you deeper and deeper, provided you surrender to Self or God unconditionally.

Q.: How long does it take to Realise the Self?

B.: For the mature soul it should take no time at all.

Q.: In that case, how long does it take to acquire the requisite [spiritual] maturity?

B.: It depends upon how far the aspirant has already journeyed yet.

Q.: How far have I come now?

B.: [smiling] You have come to Ramanasramam!

The Hall roared with laughter.

Q.: Please deliver a serious response.

B.: What makes you think my response now was a frivolous one?

S>M>

Q.: Is it ever possible for man to be worthy of God?

B.: No. That is why Realisation is suggested.

S>M>

Q.: What good do sages ever do to the world? They go away to secluded places and remain rooted to a single spot without moving and without doing anything; how does this help the world?

B.: The help might be imperceptible; yet it is there.

Q.: What help?

B.: It cannot be measured objectively.

Q.: But can be felt subjectively?

B.: Yes.

Q.: I feel it not.

B.: So you think.

Q.: So I am being helped unbeknownst unto myself, but the fact cannot be ascertained by means of empirical measurement?

B.: Yes: that is correct.

S>M>

Q.: I am chanting Subrahmanya-bhujangam everyday. Yet, sadly, God does not bless me with His Grace in the slightest.

B.: Is it not said, 'sadhabhavyaehruthsarojaeguhamtham'? What other reward do you expect? Do you expect gold and silver coins to pour down from the sky through the roof of your house? Our reward for worshipping Him is His constant availability within the cavern of the Heart as the sphurana of the Self; dive within and Realise: for that is how to seize the reward for worshipping the ever-gracious Almighty.

S>M>

Q.: When is it that Arthur Avalon visited Sri Bhagawan?

B.: He came on a day's visit, at the beginning of last year. He was not known to anybody here. Is he known to you?

Q.: He was; he passed away this year in January.

B.: Oh-Ho!

Q.: Is it news to Bhagawan?

B.: Yes. He was a well-behaved soul; he stayed here only for 1 day. Immediately he came, he gifted to the ashram a big set of books authored by himself. [points to one of the book-cases in the Hall]

Q.: I am interested to know what conversation Bhagawan and him had.

B.: He wanted to know whether the technique of Realisation could be approached by means of harnessing kundalini-shakti and coaxing the same to traverse up the spinal-cord, in order so that all the chakras within the body

vibrated in perfect harmony and synchronisation with one another and with Parashakti; and also whether such method could advisably be used in conjunction with the practice of vichara.

Q.: What was Bhagawan's response?

B.: 'Vichara alone will suffice.'

Q.: Did he ask anything else? He was always such a fascinatingly curious soul.

B.: He asked whether the intellect survives Realisation.

Q.: The answer being?

B.: No.

S>M>

Q.: It is said, 'Asthutharaesminshikhare dhrusyathevatabooruhaha siddhavesshassa dhaivasthe yasyamoolae maheshwaraha gyasyacchayathi mahathisarvadha mandalamruthihi lakshyathe vismayoepathraihi sarvadha dheva manavaihi.'. Where is this tree on the Hill? I should like to see it.

B.: One can see it only if destined, not otherwise.

Q.: But suppose one were to proceed up the Hill with a large group of persons, each setting out in a different direction; surely one of them will be able to find this tree; it must be somewhere upon the Hill.

B.: Only those who are destined to see it will be able to see it.

Q.: Suppose 2 persons are standing before the tree side-by-side, and only 1 amongst them is destined to catch sight of the tree: does Bhagawan mean to say that the 1 who is destined to see it will see it, whereas to the other who is standing next to him the tree shall be invisible?

B.: Yes.

Q.: That sounds totally absurd and nonsensical.

B.: There are things in the world which defy logical comprehension. Even the appearance of the world does not make sense logically. Somebody sees the world and he asseverates, 'I see the world.'. All know what is meant by 'seeing' and what is meant by 'world'; but what is this thing known as 'I'? People are curious about all sorts of things; but strangely the curiosity to know themselves does not overtake them. The moment an all-consuming curiosity to know the actual import of 'I' overtakes one, Salvation is assured unto him. First tackle and solve this great curiosity, namely that of 'I'; thereafter we may move on to fulfill other curiosities, if the need is still felt then. There is no end to objective knowledge; all such knowledge is merely mind-generated delusion and nothing else. One who has Realised his Self will never attach undue importance to any stream of objective knowledge. Suppose inside a dream you are a student studying in a reputed University; with immense hard-work you manage to obtain a scientific-graduation; then you wake up and

laugh at yourself. Now consider: what happened to all the knowledge acquired in that University? It was all dissolved away into nothingness the moment you woke up from the dream. So, whilst objective knowledge is certainly required to function in the world, do not attach undue importance to it and do not be fascinated by it or obsessed with it. That knowledge alone is truly worthy which is knowledge of the substratum underlying seer, sight and seen: that is knowledge of the Self.

S>M>

Q.: Can one lead a life that is totally dependant upon Grace from moment to moment?

B.: Why not?

Q.: But practically speaking, is it really possible? Will God take care of all my requirements if I give up my individuality?

B.: Provided one has surrendered without reserve [unto the Higher Power].

Q.: How to achieve such surrender?

B.: Cease to imagine yourself as being the ego and remain as you really ARE.

Q.: So the ego is in fact simply an imaginary entity?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Why then does it appear so real?

B.: Because of the long-established habit of cherishing one's individuality.

Q.: How to break this habit?

B.: Steady introversion of mind is required; the same is possible only with continuous abhyasa.

Q.: Which is the most efficacious abhyasa that can be followed?

B.: Vichara.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that by means of adopting the nayakinayakabhava, God may be easily Realised.

B.: Arunagirinathar has sung:

விறல்மார னைந்து மலர்வாளி சிந்த மிகவானி லிந்து  
வெயில்காய

மிதவாடை வந்து தழல்போல வென்ற வினைமாதர் தந்தம்  
வசைகூற

குறவாணர் குன்றி லுறைபேதை கொண்ட கொடிதான  
துன்ப மயல்தீர

குளிர்மாலை யின்க ணணிமாலை தந்து குறைதீர வந்து  
குறுகாயோ

மறிமா னுகந்த இறையோன் மகிழ்ந்து வழிபாடு தந்த மதியாளா  
மலைமாவு சிந்த அலைவேலை யஞ்சவடிவே லெறிந்த அதிதீரா

அறிவா லறிந்து னிருதா ளிறைஞ்சு மடியா ரிடைஞ்சல்  
களைவோனே

அழகான செம்பொன் மயில்மே லமர்ந்து லைவா  
யுகந்த பெருமாளே .

Observe the yearful longing and the immense pain of separation discernible in the words. What do we infer? Bhakti is no joke. Bhakti and Jnana are both equally difficult paths. Bhakti is the mother of Jnana. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

Q.: Can we follow both the bhakti and jnana margas at the same time?

B.: Certainly; it is altogether advisable so to do. Do we not walk on 2 legs?

S>M>

Q.: What is wrong with acquisition of objective knowledge, and does such amassment lead one astray from the path leading towards Realisation?

B.: The thirst for objective knowledge is a vasana; furthermore, just like any and every other vasana it obstructs Revelation of the Self. It might be understood by one that objective knowledge is mental information; such knowledge is by no means permanent and it is certainly not real. Endeavour to know that which is indestructible and immortal instead of chasing after fleeting appearances which are perishable and transient. In dreams we learn or imbibe so many facets of information; after waking up we sometimes find that we are able to recollect them even in their entirety, but in the present life they appear irrelevant and pointless. So, the desire to acquire [further and further] objective knowledge does lead to repetitive births. One cannot function in the world with absolutely no sort of objective knowledge; therefore, limit the same to howsoevermuch is absolutely unavoidably necessary. What are you going to do getting to know all sorts of things? What happens to all this information learnt by you in the state of deep sleep?

Q.: It remains latent in the brain; is that correct?

B.: You say so now; but not in the state of sleep itself. The state of deep sleep is anterior to the states of jagrat-swapna. These incidents going on now are currently dreamt by you in sleep only. Learn that you are now fast asleep. In turn this sleep is ignorance of Self. So, forgetfulness of Self is the first layer of sleep; object-perception or dreaming is a second layer of nescience superimposed over the first. You say that information appurtenant to the world and its perceiver are stored in the brain; but what brain? The brain, the rest of the body and the whole of the cosmos are all information only: fictitious information, that is to say; such spurious information is stored exclusively within the mind, and mind in turn is merely a poor reflection of the self-resplendent Self. Realisation appears difficult only owing to one's vasanas; if all vasanas are gotten rid of Realisation can be had in a trice.

Q.: How to kill off these vasanas which seem to pose such a definite obstacle to my Realisation?

B.: Introverting the mind is the way.

Q.: This seems to be a vicious cycle.

B.: Start the practice somewhen and proceed from there. Theorising, speculating or hypothesising will not help.

S>M>

Q.: Should my personality be completely destroyed before I can Realise the Self?

B.: Yes; one who would be eligible to Realise must have no likes or dislikes.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The rebirth mentioned by Jesus is rebirth into spirit. When a man ceases to identify his self with body, mind and its individual tastes and preferences, he no longer cares whether he is holding a lump of clay or a block of gold; everything is the same to him; such a man's mind is thoroughly denuded but not yet dead. By God's Grace even this finally remaining trace of mind is pulled into the Heart and obliterated there, so that Jnana dawns.

Q.: So, Jnana is always a gift from the Almighty?

B.: Yes. It is not possible to obtain the same[-i.e., to acquire Realisation] as a matter of right. Realisation is not your birth-right.

S>M>

Q.: The prominent art-historian Mr. A. K. Kumarasamy has made the observation that Advaita-vedanta has parallels in the writings of an ancient Greek thinker and philosopher named Plotinus. Were the ancient Greeks also aware that it was possible for a man to Realise his actual Self by means of introverting the mind and plunging the same in its source?

B.: Apparently yes; they called it 'Henosis'. All deep-thinking minds inevitably arrive at the same conclusion: namely that there is a fundamental Reality supporting seer, sight and seen, and that this alone actually exists.

Q.: Is the doctrine of the Hypostatic-union of God and man in the Christ correct?

B.: Only from our point of view. From the point of view of the Christ, he would not have been aware of anything other than the Self.

Q.: Who is that infamous, misguided Christian priest who tried to convert Sri Bhagawan and baptise him?

B.: [laughs] Oh! You have heard that story. He is a good and pious man; his name is Geevarghese. He felt that I had attained Christ-consciousness and was abiding perpetually in the Christ; and that if I accepted baptism my Union with the Father would stand completed; but I did not show any interest; so he went away after lecturing for sometime. He has now become the mooppa-

karthavyan[papal-authority] of the Malankara Church: in English the title is mentioned as 'Catholicos and Metropolitan of the East'.

Q.: It is all owing to the good fortune of having met Bhagawan; of this I am sure.

B.: Are you attempting to praise me by saying such things? Do you think I am going to feel happy, thinking 'Ah; what sweet words of praise they pour into my ears!?' Having come to the ashram and entered into this Hall, if somebody goes and sits quietly in a corner without saying anything, that is the best help that they can do for me. Realisation of the Self cannot be had by means of talking about It.

Q.: Jesus has also said, "I receive not honour from men."

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: A long while ago I have met this Christian bishop by name Mr. Geevarghese, who was just now mentioned by Sri Bhagawan; he was then in the clergy of the church at Kadamattum, near Moovattrupuzha.

B.: I doubt if it is the same person.

S>M>

Q.: When a man finally Realises the Self after having put in immense efforts unto such end, what would his feelings be?

B.: Laughter.

Q.: Arising from the exultation of having finally attained the Goal?

B.: No. You will laugh at yourself for having put in so much effort to discover something that is so utterly obvious and self-evident.

Mr. Knowles: He might in all likelihood feel this way: [reading out as follows from the book, 'Parsifal: A Mystical Drama by Richard Wagner; Retold in the Spirit of the Bayreuth Interpretation by Oliver Huckel']

I come to him whose piteous moans of pain

I heard long years ago, nor understood.

The guileless One went forth from thee a boy,

Impetuous, fierce, who did not know himself;

He comes again a man with tenderest pity,

And deep experience and heart enlightened,

To be the healer of the stricken King.

But long the course by which I learned the way,

And bitter all the wanderings, where sin



Had laid its snares, and sought to curse my soul.  
Many the perils and right fierce the strife,  
Yet clung I to the pathway of the right.  
And at the last I won the sacred Spear  
By God's good mercy and His boundless love.  
But even with the Spear within my hands  
Oft came a fearful dread upon my heart,  
Lest I might lose this treasure that He gave  
Into my keeping, for never durst I use  
This sacred Spear in battle-blows or strife,  
It was for healing wounds, not making them,  
And so in many a fight I took the wounds  
From other weapons, but profaned this never.  
I bring it home virgin and undefiled,  
And consecrate it to its healing work.  
Thus does it gleam before thee, even now,  
The wonder-working power, the sacred Spear!

S>M>

Q.: I have heard that as a result of having entered into and thereby violated an Egyptian Pharaoh's tomb, the gentleman Lord Carnarvon is said to have died under mysterious circumstances; the tomb apparently has carried some magic-spell to ensure that those who were endeavouring to violate the same suffered sudden and excruciatingly painful deaths. Likewise, does violating a tomb of a Jnani carry similar, grave consequences?

The master did not respond.

Chadwick: They say that the gentleman mentioned by you died from an infected mosquito-bite; but could anybody die merely because a mosquito has bitten them?

E.Z.: The reason I read about in the papers was, I recollect, pneumonia. If there indeed was a curse attached to the tomb, all who entered should have been killed; but did this ever happen?

Q.: Perhaps the curse was intended to affect exclusively the first man who set foot inside the tomb.

C.: It is quite possible that the Egyptians were adept at this sort of thing too, knowing what they are capable of; just take a look at the gigantic pyramids constructed by them. The quarries they used to source their blocks of limestone from were located approximately 1000 miles away from the building-sites of the pyramids; how did these people move these hefty blocks over such huge distances without any modern machinery at their disposal to help them?

Q.: It is said that their gods helped them.

E.Z.: The gopurams of the Bruhadishwarar-temple at Tanjore are said to have been erected with the aid of Indra's heavenly elephant, Airavatam. Such legends are found everywhere, not merely with Egypt.

Q.: The Egyptians had many peculiar beliefs; for instance, they believed that every person was made of the following 3 components:

- i) the physical body,
- ii) the bahe, or personality or ego or mind, and
- iii) the kahe, or life-force or spirit or soul.

C.: Is this idea not a parallel of the Vedantic model of how the jiva is constituted? What does Sri Bhagawan say?

B.: Vedanta does not admit existence of anything besides the Aathman.

Q.: But what about the empirical plane?

B.: There is none.

Q.: Then what is to account for these experiences of the jagrat and swapna states?

B.: Even when they do appear they are not apart from the Self. The truth is that the world appears as a passing shadow in a flood of light; the shadow can never be traced, because when you turn your head to look in its direction, what you will see is only pure light.

C.: Meaning that is to say, we ourselves are the source of all illumination?

B.: Quite so. Ignorance is synonymous with appearance of a world that is seen.

Q.: Bhagawan also sees this world just like we others do. Where lies the difference?

B.: There can be no world available for Bhagawan to see; for those unable to understand this we have to say that the world manifests itself as an appearance in the Jnani's own Self. I am not the body on the Sofa; I am not even within this body. I simply and merely AM; and that is all there is to it.

S>M>

Q.: Some persons go on writing God's name, or some other phrase associated with God, such as 'Sri Ramajyam' for instance, on one note-book

after another and say that such practise on their part will fetch unto them Salvation or Emancipation. Is this true?

B.: The same is a good practise for securing concentration of mind; but one must surrender to God if one requires His Salvation.

Q.: Sri Ramakrishna has said that by means of feeling restlessness for Him alone can God be Realised. He has compared the devotee's lust for God-Realisation to a child's longing to be hugged by its mother.

B.: Restlessness means constant and incessant effort to introvert the mind and make it steadily stay in its source, which is the Heart. Pertinacious perseverance is the key to success. One cannot meaningfully expect Realisation overnight. Rome was not built in a day. "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

Q.: It is said that by means of doing good karma, we can successfully get rid of bad karma. Is this true? Will engaging in altruistic pursuits liberate me from karma?

B.: No; it will embroil you further and further in fresh vasanas.

Q.: Is then philanthropy a thing to be avoided?

B.: If you can engage in it without the slightest trace of feeling that you are the doer, then it will be alright; otherwise stay away.

Q.: "For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me." I have the fear that I shall be abandoned and neglected in old-age. Who will take care of me when I am an old-man? My wife passed away long-ago. My elder son is settled in Dehradon and my younger son is living in the Straits. I cannot contact them or learn of their whereabouts; they have stopped writing to me. What can I do? I do not know what to do. I thought of joining your ashram and becoming your disciple, but I sincerely know that I cannot discipline myself adequately to leading a life in an ashram; if I were to join and then thereafter be discovered doing something inappropriate, that would become an embarrassing problem; so that option is also not available. Please advise me as to what I am to do. Already I am developing health complications; for example, my knees hurt when I walk for more than 10 minutes. As time progresses, I am aware, my condition shall only worsen. I admit that I do not have much faith in God, whom I think is a fictitious entity. Please do not think too badly of me for saying this. Please tell me what to do.

B.: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Give up identifying with the body and the person. Remain as the Self. Body, mind, intellect, faculty of logical ratiocination and so on: know that these are accretions occluding the

Self, whilst themselves remaining never apart from the Self. Give up these useless accretions and remain as pure Self. Then old age, ill health, etc. will never bother you.

Q.: Can the ego then be given up in one stroke, so that Parabrahman or the Impersonal Absolute stands Realised here and now?

B.: Drop the bodily and other mental identifications and then do not care what happens afterwards. Why should you be bothered about the Realisation of Parabrahman? Leave Him alone. He can take care of Himself. You remain without leaving the state of denuded-mind [nivrityana-manam] and that will do. We need not bother about Realisation. It will happen automatically once the ego has subsided. The thing to do is to ensure that the ego does not raise at all. For this vichara is the most gentle and most efficacious means. The solution to each and every one of your problems is to see who it is that has them.

S>M>

Q.: What is the significance of Mt. Arunachala in bringing about Brahmajnana?

B.: Anadhirantharahithaha shivaha shonachalakruthihi yuvayosthapasa dheva varadhanaya samstithaha sakruth sangkeerthithae nakni shonadhririthi mukthidhae sannidhi saryam kamanam jnayathaechagha nashanam.

Q.: So, if intense longing for God or Emancipation from samsara is there, that [such longing] will of itself show the way to Realisation?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: What is samsara? Is it something undesirable? If so, how is one to avoid the same?

B.: Samsara is the same as perception of world, and perception of world is the same as the apparent existence of the 'I' which carries out and imagines itself to be responsible for such perception. The world and mind arise and set together as one; therefore they are in fact the same thing. Appearance of mind or world prevents one's true Self from Shining-forth; therefore the same must be set aside at any cost. How shall we avoid samsara? Anything we do to escape will only make the net tighter and tighter. Remaining absolutely still is the one and only way out of the labyrinth known as samsara; you can exit the game only by means of keeping away from participating. Mind cannot be found with mind. No amount of mental activity could ever lead to Revelation of the Self. Only total stillness of mind can bring it about. Do not fight with mind; transcend it.

Q.: What is the meaning of the saying, 'Jnanamaevachakshus.'?

B.: It means that Jnana can never be an object of perception.

Q.: It is said that continuously maintaining subjective-consciousness without thinking is the same as Jnana or Realisation.

B.: The given statement is not correct. Your experience of subjective consciousness is merely that of reflected consciousness. With thought the reflection takes place on turbulent waters. Without thought the reflection takes place on placid waters. That is the only difference. In either case such experience of the Self is not original: it is a reflection of the Self. The actual Self cannot be reached by or with mind at all. All that is possible to do is to surrender oneself to it without reserve.

Q.: Does total surrender lead to Realisation for certain?

B.: The surrendered mind cannot raise questions.

Q.: I am yet to surrender; thus I ask.

B.: Surrender and see; that is the only way.

S>M>

Q.: When a person dies, whither goes the contents of their mind, and what happens to all the information stored within that mind?

B.: One's vasanas are inevitably and invariably carried forward into future births; but memories are usually erased. However, sometimes memories are also carried forward. In certain unusual cases, we see young children speaking languages and claiming acquaintanceship with persons that they could not possibly know; we find that such stories are widely reported in the popular press; not all such claims are hoaxes. Mind or ego may be compared to a bubble floating atop the ocean; whether the bubble bursts or remains whole, it cannot remain apart from the ocean; the bubble is only an appearance in the ocean; the ocean is the only existing substance behind all the phenomena associated with it such as foam, waves, bubbles, etc.; bubbles come and go but the ocean remains forever. Likewise the Self is the permanent screen on which all this fleeting drama of phenomena is taking place. Nothing ever happens to the Self: It remains always as It ever is. The Jnani knows that the phenomena that we see around us are not apart from the Self; in other words, there is no such thing as an 'object', and there cannot be anything 'happening'.

Q.: What is the purpose of life? Further, what is special about life? Can life be created in a laboratory, for instance? Or can only God create life?

B.: By its intrinsic design, the biological apparatus known as the body has only 2 purposes: propagation or furtherance or continuation of sustenance of life in that particular body and propagation of the numerical strength of the species- i.e., reproduction. The body arrives into the world equipped or preprogrammed for these 2 purposes, and will desperately endeavour to fulfill them by any means possible. All this is as far as the body is concerned; but

are you the body? The body is comprised in You and it is only an appearance in You, who are in fact the imperishable Self. The Self cannot have any purpose, because the Self being non-dual, neither the question of the purpose of its existence nor any other question can arise respecting it. The body's twin purposes I have just mentioned. Your question, however, is this: 'What is MY purpose?'. You have assumed that there is an entity living within the body known as 'I'; on the basis of that ridiculous assumption you are asking me what the purpose of this 'I' is. What can be said to you? The personalityhood or ego or 'I' that is imagined by itself to be local to the body or to be functioning from within it or as being co-eval with it does not exist at all; how then can the question of the purpose of its existence arise? Since 'I' does not exist, questions appurtenant to it are pointless. It is like asking, please tell me what is the prescription for the strength of curvature of the corrective lenses worn by Santa-claus in his golden pince-nez. What answer can be given? During my childhood, my grandmother regularly pointed at the moon and fed me food. I wanted to know who was living on the moon. She pointed to a shape appearing in the moon and told me that it was her mother; she told me that her mother was on the moon making vadais with which to feed crows and other birds. I wanted to know whether the vadais were ulutthavadais or paruppuvadais. For a few minutes the poor old lady could think of nothing to say and everybody burst out laughing upon having beheld her bewilderment. Your question about the purpose of life reminds me of this incident. Whose life? First find out the answer to this question and other things will take care of themselves automatically. As for artificial creation of life, who knows what tomorrow's scientists will invent? The body is a collection of organic compounds structured in a specific way; it is designed to replicate itself over time so that the same chemical footprint endures into the future. Can such a clever combination of chemicals be brought about by means of artificial synthesis inside a laboratory-environment? Perhaps. Who can tell? Science makes progress everyday in leaps and bounds.

Q.: Can such hypothetical life-forms created inside a laboratory possess consciousness? Or can only God instill consciousness or life in matter, which is otherwise inert?

B.: There is only consciousness and no such thing as matter. However, what you are asking is whether the faculty of object-perception- i.e., ignorance of Self, can deliberately be created. 'Can a mind be created?' is your question.

Q.: Yes.

B.: It might be possible. Do we not read that Vishwamitra all by himself created a new heaven for Trishanku to live in? But generally the power to create minds- i.e., create ignorance lies with Brahma and Brahma alone. The

Self cannot be created. What is created is only imagination, which in itself is imaginary, like the square root of the number (-1); it may be observed that such imagination too must be within and of the Self only and cannot be apart from it. So, really maya is nothing but Reality.

Q.: I am talking about science, not myth. Why is the Maharshi talking about Brahma, etc.?

B.: How do we know that these gods do not exist?

Q.: While I accept the reality of Parabrahman, I am well aware that these gods with name and form are only stories told to entertain small children; does the Maharshi really mean to say that Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are floating out in the depths of the cosmos somewhere? How can we be expected to believe in such things? Is it not silly? [laughs]

B.: It is only as silly as all this. [waving hand around the Hall]

S>M>

Q.: Whilst in Madurai Bhagawan seems to have become aware of some kind of feeling that he was being possessed by a spirit; this feeling he has termed as 'avesam'; what exactly is this feeling of avesam?

B.: Avesha or samavesha is a Sanskrit word; one of its meanings is 'absorption' or 'penetration'.

Q.: But what exactly did Bhagawan feel whilst he was at Madurai?

B.: I felt as though I were being consumed or devoured by something on the one hand, whilst on the other the sensation of dissolving away into nothingness was distinctly perceptible to that same entity which felt as though it were being so consumed or devoured; I felt as though some spirit were breaching and penetrating into my beingness in order so as to dissolve the same and absorb it back into itself.

Q.: What is this spirit? Is it the Self? Is the ego then apart from the Self?

B.: From the point of view of the ego, the ego might imagine itself to be separate from the Self; in actual fact there is nothing apart from the Self. The Self encompasses the ego; the ego is only an appearance in and of the Self, which is the only thing that actually is capable of existing and exists.

Q.: What is the consequence of suicide?

B.: What harm has the body done? The ego is the culprit and not the body.

The body is merely an imaginary creation of the ego. Killing the body does not kill the ego; but killing the ego makes the body vanish.

Q.: But Bhagawan still has a body.

B.: Not from His point of view.

S>M>

Q.: Should we follow strictly whatever has been laid down in and by the text, 'Manusmriti'? Should society function on the basis of the varna-system only?

B.: Is it given to you and me to decide upon these matters? If there is a world there is also a destiny guiding it. Let each one take care of himself and the world will take care of itself.

Q.: I am currently engaged in translating Abhinavagupta's Tantraloka into English. I would please like Sri Bhagawan to write a preface for the work. Kindly do oblige me.

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: Is loss of body-consciousness a necessary pre-cursor to experience of that which Bhagawan refers to as 'aham-sphurana'?

B.: No. People long for an experience of absence of body-consciousness without understanding the simple fact that what is not permanent is not worth striving for. Even if you were to happen to remain plunged in nirvikalpa-samadhi for a 1000 years, thereafter you would still have to return to experience the jagrat-swapna-sushupti triad as usual if the vasanas have not been destroyed. Desiring for nirvikalpa-samadhi is simply yet another vasana and yet another distraction or diversion from the straight path [of vichara that is characterised by the fact of its] leading directly towards Realisation. Why do you hanker after nirvikalpa-samadhi? Because within your mind you regard it as the highest spiritual experience possible whilst still retaining the ego; while as a matter of principle we can say that such a view is not incorrect, why do you wish to retain the ego? The ego is a mischievous thief. He is ruining your natural state of incessant happiness. Rather than wanting to taste what it would be like to be divested of one's mind for a brief span of time, or rather than permitting the ego to encourage itself to taste what its own absence for a while would be like, rid yourself of the ego once and for all; then you will be at peace forever. It is not nirvikalpa-samadhi that is the goal, but destruction of vasanas. If all vasanas are destroyed, only samadhi remains. Any samadhi that is experienced whilst one's vasanas are still alive could only ever be a transient, ephemeral experience. Do not aspire for that which comes and goes. Rather set your sights on That which never moves. Jnana should be our ambition and be satisfied with nothing less than That.

Q.: What is the meaning of the expression, 'premapoornathayajnanam'?

B.: It means that Jnana is nothing but Love.

Q.: Love of what?

B.: Jnana is simply Love; It is not love of or love for anything.

E.Z.: In That state can there be remaining anything apart from the Self, in order so that it might bear any love for anything?

S>M>

Q.: Does Sri Bhagawan teach solipsism?



B.: Solipsism discusses the interdependence between the world which forms the object of perception and the mind that is carrying out the act of perceiving or becoming or remaining aware of such world; it postulates that the world does not exist apart from the mind; so far the theory is right; for as a matter of actual fact mind and world are simply the same thing. But it is necessary to go even further. Find out whether this thing known as 'mind' exists; you will find it a myth. There is really no such thing as mind; that which is experienced to subsist during the state of deep sleep is the only Real entity.

Q.: Sometimes Bhagawan says that mind must be destroyed; now he is saying that mind already does not exist.

B.: All that is meant is that the appearance of there being such a thing known as mind must be overcome and uprooted; mind cannot be destroyed because there cannot be any such thing known as 'mind'; what never existed can never be destroyed; so, all that is possible to do is to transcend the illusion of there being or subsisting such a thing known as 'mind'.

Q.: Does Sri Bhagawan stand in support of nihilism?

B.: Deliberately practising nihilism might not lead to desirable or pleasant consequences; however, the Jnani's outlook may be said to be nihilistic in that it is morally ambivalent.

Q.: Does the Jnani then fail to distinguish between good and evil?

B.: He knows that both are vested in the Self only.

Q.: This is only another, clever way of saying that good and evil do not exist in the Jnani's weltanschauung; is that right?

B.: Yes.

Q.: I am interested in properly understanding how a Jnani perceives the world; please explain it to me.

B.: The only way to truly know is to yourself Realise Jnana.

S>M>

Q.: When St. Alexander of Bergamo was about to be decapitated, it is said, the executioner's arms became mysteriously paralysed, so that the saint was facilitated to escape such grim fate. Do these miracles happen by God's Grace or are they owing to the occult powers possessed by the concerned saint?

B.: As far as the Jnani is concerned he is not conscious of being in possession of any powers; all events and occurrences in his life are entirely the result or by-product of God's Grace; he has no volition or desire and he does not pre-meditate what is to occur or abstain from occurring in his life. People say that saints perform all sorts of miracles; but from the point of view of the saint himself no miracle is taking place, or, in other words, everything seems to be miraculously occurring. The Jnani does not asseverate 'I am

working miracles.' or 'I am a worker of miracles.'. He does not even know that such powers are manifest in him. As far as he is concerned, he is wholly awake in and to the Self and sound asleep to anything and everything else.

Q.: Just like the Prussians were crushed at the battle of Lübeck and forced to unconditionally surrender to their belligerent French opponents, I face wholesome defeat each and everytime I endeavour to sink the mind in the Heart. Why is this the case with me?

B.: It is because of the aspiration or ambition to Realise the Self that is present within your mind.

Q.: So that also must be eradicated in order so as for Realisation to dawn?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Can Realisation be had then without making efforts to Realise?

B.: As far as the method of vichara is concerned, the effort to get rid of thought [-in other words the investigation 'Who am I?'] becomes necessary only when thought manifests itself; otherwise remain as you ARE. You are currently under the impression that it is you who are responsible for fulfilling the quest of Realising the Self; but what I say unto you is that you can hand over that responsibility also to God and remain at ease. Why should you burden yourself unnecessarily? Surrender to Him without reserve and be at peace. It is not your aspiration to Realise that leads to Realisation but exclusively the Lord's Mercy. That being the case, why not hand over your burdens to Him here and now?

Q.: Can surrender guarantee Realisation?

B.: Nothing can. Resign yourself to His Clemency. That is the only way. This approach is stated simply thus: 'anyathasharanamnasti tvamaeva sharanam mama'. The Absolute cannot be reached at all. The one thing that is possible of being done is to give oneself upto It without reserve.

S>M>

It was late evening in the Hall. A young Caucasian spoke up thus-

Q.: They say that it is permitted to sing songs before Bhagawan in this Hall; I also want to sing before Bhagawan; for a long time I have been entertaining this desire; only now do I speak up; please grant me permission.

The master only smiled in response; but that was enough for the man with which to proceed on:

*Oh! what a little moonlight can do to you*

*When you are in love and your heart is fluttering!*

*All day long you hear yourself stuttering*

*Because your poor tongue fails at uttering*

*'I love you.': those 3 words magical and earth-shattering.*

*Oh! do wait awhile until a little moonbeam*

*Comes peeping through the corner of a rafter  
Just when you are bored as a full-bellied raptor;  
You shall not be able to resist his charm,  
And all you shall say is, 'Shall we get cosy and warm?';  
And when you have voraciously kissed him,  
And said unto him that you have sorely missed him,  
He shall depart the way whence he came to see you,  
Leaving you to wonder, how is it that like a kitten I mew;  
And oh! what a little moonlight can do to you!*

The master's smile widened; but many in the Hall looked aghast and scandalised.

S>M>

Q.: If I meditate for 18 hours a day uninterruptedly, shall I be able to Realise the Self in 6 months time?

B.: No.

Q.: But why not? I am quite serious about the quest.

B.: What advantage is obtained as a result of meditating for 18 hours a day if at the end of each day such meditation has managed to bring about exclusively 1 consequence: establishing you a little more deeply in the conviction that it is you who are meditating?

S>M>

Q.: Was Jesus the Messiah of Judaism?

B.: No matter whichever way the answer is given, there will always be arguments for and against it. If called to debate the issue, those belonging to the Jewish faith might produce evidence from the Tanach to show that he was not and then proceed to explain on the basis of such evidence why [they firmly believe] he was not; and those belonging to the Christian faith might produce evidence from the Bible to show that he was and then proceed to explain on the basis of such evidence why [they firmly believe] he was; and there will be no end to the velitation. So, let us leave such academic debates to the academicians, and remain firm in our faith. If you within you heart yearn to believe that he was the Messiah, what is preventing you from so doing? Why are you yourself going about digging in search of age-old historical-records in order so as to discover academic-material that would threaten to overturn your faith? There is only 1 way to determine if he was the Messiah or not: ask your heart; if your heart longs and aches to accept him as being the Messiah, then he indeed was the Messiah; if your heart is filled with bitter cynicism and skeptical disbelief, then there was no Messiah. The ball is perennially in our court; we can either open our heart to God or we can prefer to remain tight-fisted; the choice is always ours.

The questioner seemed to have become somewhat tearful upon having heard the master's response.

S>M>

Q.: What does Sri Bhagawan think about super-powers or siddhis?

B.: The true siddhi is to remain fixed in the Self; other siddhis are like dreams. Indestructible Peace is the only worthy attainment in life. A man will succeed in Realising the Self only when he has nothing left to lose. This being the case, will these extraneous acquisitions by way of siddhis lead him any closer towards Realisation? In order to Realise one must give up everything that is contained within his mind and keep quiet; do you think that learning to practise siddhis attenuates the mind or aham-vritti? Many have lost their way owing to their attraction for these super-powers; feel no affection for them. The sage who has become established in Reality by means of Realising the Self will never be deluded by any lure for siddhis.

Q.: But it is said that siddhis come automatically to Jnanis.

B.: There is no generalisation possible; it depends according to his prarabdha; but it has to be remembered that the Jnani's experience of his existence is formless, limitless consciousness; so, he has already accomplished the highest siddhi; it does not matter to him in the slightest whether these other siddhis or super-powers come to him or not; if they come he is not going to think 'they have come to me'; if they do not come he is not going to think 'they have not come to me'. The Jnani is not bothered about presence or absence of siddhis; he is not even bothered about presence or absence of the body. In our ignorance, we think that Jnanis with siddhis are superior in spiritual might to Jnanis who possess none. It is not so. Super-powers or no super-powers, there is no change in the Jnani's Jnana-siddhi. Jnana is the same for all. Other matters or factors are governed by prarabdha. We say that the Jnani's prarabdha is such-and-such, but this is only from our point of view. Those who see the Jnani's body infer that it must be subject to prarabdha; but the Jnani does not himself see the body; so, how can the question of prarabdha arise for him? The truth is that upon Realisation of the Self the triple-karma comes to an end. The Jnani is not bothered what happens to the body; he is content to remain as the Self. Even if the body were to be bound hand and foot and thrown in the middle of the ocean, he remains unconcerned.

S>M>

Q.: Will completely ignoring the mind and all of the various thoughts spewed forth by it result in Realisation?

B.: Do not try to force yourself to ignore the mind; that is simply another activity for the mind. Instead, naturally remain without paying any attention to the mind. This will come only with long practice. Do not go on brooding over

the long road that must needs lie ahead. Live in the present always; make the most out of 'now' and the rest will happen automatically.

S>M>

Q.: Near Salem there is a temple dedicated to Lord Kodhandaramar; the same is located in a small town known as Ayodhyapattinam, which is only about 3 miles from Salem. I visited this temple last week. Standing inside the sanctum sanctorum[garbhagruham] of the temple, near the idol of Sri Kodhandaramar, I suddenly chanced to see Sri Bhagawan's face instead of and in place of the stone-face of the idol. The apparition vanished as suddenly as it had appeared. I felt exceedingly delighted on that day. Today when I visited the temple here, I thought the same thing would happen whilst I was standing near the sannidhi of Lord Arunachaleshwara; but I was disappointed. Are these visions real or are they mere hallucinations or phantasmagoria?

B.: Anything seen cannot be real; this is the simple truth that even a child can understand. Do not expect to have visions and such things repeated. Instead, bring your mind to rest in the Self.

Q.: No matter howsoevermuch I try, my mind keeps wandering. What shall I do?

B.: Take up any one strong thought to the exclusion of any and every other; patiently trace this one thought back to its point of origin in the Heart, so that ultimately it also disappears, leaving only the Self behind. The most fruitful thing to do is to catch hold of the thought 'I' and trace it back. All other thoughts are strung like a necklace of beads on the 1 single thought 'I'. Investigate what this 'I' is. Continuous search for what mind is leads to its disappearance.

S>M>

Q.: It is said, 'Di immortales virtutem approbare, non adhibere debent.'. Is it right?

B.: Yes. Virtue is not intrinsically available in the mind; the same has to be cultivated. The mind is generally a store-house of all sorts of ignominious tendencies [brashtasamskaras: mental motivations which endeavour to separate one from the natural state of Self and thereby lead astray]; these must be eliminated before there can be any virtue. There is only 1 true virtue and that is to abide in the Self. Men chase after wealth, fame, and sensory-pleasures; but do these pursuits give them any peace? No. When they want, they endeavour to attain; when they attain they want more and so on it goes endlessly. Peace lies not in fulfillment of want but in absence of want. Desires and the aham-vritti share a cohabitative relationship: it is a mutual symbiosis that thrives between the two. Desire fuels the aham-vritti's sustenance and growth; and the aham-vritti provides a place of accommodation and

nourishment for desire. How to break this vicious-cycle? Guru's Grace brings it about.

Q.: Please bestow your Grace on me.

B.: It is automatically showered upon all who care to receive it.

Q.: How shall I receive it?

B.: By means of remaining permanently submerged in the Heart.

Q.: Speaking pragmatically, what is the best method of obtaining Sri Bhagawan's Grace?

B.: Absolute surrender is both the means and the goal. Endeavouring to surrender is sadhana; surrender is another name for the Self.

Q.: At this very moment what is preventing me from basking in the Glory of the Self?

B.: The mind's objectifying tendency, which is the same as the mind itself. The mind desperately wants to cling on to its contents; but the mumukshu should resolutely go on emptying them until only Reality remains. Realisation is not something which is to be obtained afresh. Removal of one's pre-existing samskaras is termed as Realisation. If we want to make space in a room, space is not to be brought in from outside; it is enough if we throw out all the garbage inside the room.

Q.: They say that Realisation comes easily to brahmins; is it true that brahmins will find it easier to Realise the Self compared to others? Does Realisation come more readily to those who belong to the Aryan-herrenvolk?

B.: Oho! Dulce bellum inexpertis. Another man's life appears sweet to those who have never experienced the same for themselves. Whether a man is born into a brahmin-family or panchamabandham-family or any other sort of family, he invariably must undergo suffering in order so as to obliterate his vasanas. Destruction or relinquishment of vasanas inevitably does cause pain or agony no matter what the man's biological-constitution might be.

Discarding all of one's age-old vasanas is the one and only means to Immortality. Vasanas force a man to ceaselessly endeavour to continue life in the body; but [all of] such attemptation ends only in death finally, and is therefore wholly futile. On the other hand, one who has given up his vasanas and thereby also his desire to continue holding on to the body will awaken into Eternal Life. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

S>M>

Q.: The mind sometimes becomes partial and tender towards children, possibly because of their innocence; and this gives it yet another excuse to wander about. What shall be done?

B.: Hold on to the Self. Why think of children and their innocence?

Mr. Knowles: In the book 'The Praise of Folly by Desiderius Erasmus', this is what we find written: [reading out as follows-]

Who knows not that the first scene of infancy is far the most pleasant and delightsome ? What, then, is it in children that makes us kiss, hug, and play with them, and that the bloodiest enemy can scarce have the heart to hurt them ; but their ingredients of innocence and Folly ? Of which nature out of providence did purposely compound and blend their tender infancy, that by a frank return of pleasure they might make some sort of amends for their parents' trouble, and give in caution as it were for the discharge of a future education ; the next advance from childhood is youth, and how favourably is this dealt with ; how kind, courteous, and respectful are all to it ? and how ready to become serviceable upon all occasions ? And whence reaps it this happiness ? Whence indeed, but from me only, by whose procurement it is furnished with little of wisdom, and so with the less of disquiet ? And when once lads begin to grow up, and attempt to write man, their prettiness does then soon decay, their briskness flags, their humours stagnate, their jollity ceases, and their blood grows cold; and the further they proceed in years, the more they grow backward in the enjoyment of themselves, till waspish old age comes on, a burden to itself as well as others, and that so heavy and oppressive, as none would bear the weight of, unless out of pity to their sufferings.

S>M>

Q.: Many religious-faiths around the world stress upon the need for sacrifice in order so that one might endear oneself to the Almighty. Does Sri Bhagawan recommend that we make any sacrificial-offerings unto God?

B.: Give up the ego and that will do. That is what all faiths recommend at their deepest-core: relinquishment of the ego. " யானென தென்னுஞ் செருக்கறுப்பான் வானோர்க் குயர்ந்த உலகம் புகும் ."  
"Vihayakamanyaha sarvanpumamshcharathinihi spruhaha nirmamo nirahankaraha sa shanthimadhigacchati."

Q.: The Self is described as 'kasminnubhagavovijnathae sarvamidham vijnatham bhavati'; that means there must be nothing hidden from the Jnani. So, can Bhagawan without any effort bring himself to know what is happening in distant countries?

B.: 'Everything is known as being the Self.' is how the verse is correctly interpreted. What is the use in knowing what is happening in far-off places without knowing even that which is the closest and most intimate being: the Self? If the Self be Realised, there cannot then appear anything apart from the Self and therefore possibility for objective knowledge vanishes. The Jnani's ignorance is perfectly fathomless- i.e., infinite, because it is not

possible for the Jnani to know anything. He is That out of which all mental modifications, including the one which goes by the name of knowledge, are fabricated; how then could it ever be possible for Him to know anything? So, immaculate ignorance alone deserves to be known as Jnana. If all objective knowledge is forgotten and erased, only Jnana remains. Can Jnana know anything? Jnana, being perfectly non-dual, does not even know Himself. The faculty of knowing implies duality and therefore imperfection. In Reality there can be neither duality nor imperfection. "Lailahaillallah." There is no god but God. So, knowledge is impossible as far as the Self is concerned.

Q.: Aristotle spoke about the 'first uncaused cause' when he discussed the Absolute.

B.: The Self is neither caused by anything nor does It cause anything.

Q.: Then what is to explain the appearance of the cosmos?

B.: Cosmos? What cosmos? There is no any cosmos.

Q.: I see a world around me. I seek to know where it came from.

B.: What do you mean by 'I'?

Q.: That which sees the world.

B.: What do you mean by 'world'?

Q.: That which I see.

B.: So you yourself admit that seer and seen are in fact the same thing.

Q.: Yes, but what is that thing?

B.: Find out.

Q.: You know the answer. Please tell me the answer.

B.: There is no such thing.

Q.: But my experience is totally to the contrary.

B.: Again I can only ask: you say 'my'; what do you mean by 'I'?

Q.: I do not know.

B.: Who does not know?

S>M>

Q.: What is the significance of worshipping the Sri-chakra or Sri-yanthra?

B.: Let those who worship the same bother about its significance. Why are you asking?

Q.: Is it not foolish to worship idols? Did those idols ask to be worshipped?

B.: Did your body ask you to clothe and feed it? Why then do you do so?

Q.: A body, being a biological-entity, has requirements that must be satisfied.

B.: The body putrefies whereas the idol does not do so; that is the only difference between the two.

S>M>

The master asked the Shylock the meaning of the term, 'Kaynayeenharah.'



E.Z.: It means, 'Let the evil-eye stand repudiated.'. It is a phrase in the Ashkenazi-tongue. Where did Bhagawan come across it?

B.: I heard the Polish gentleman Mr. Freeman talk about it; apparently Sri Gandhiji had praised him for something; the gentleman out of force of habit had immediately uttered this phrase, whereupon Gandhiji immediately wanted to know what the meaning thereof was; when it was told unto him, he seems to have laughed and said, 'Yes, I have cast the evil-eye upon you; you may go to Sri Ramana Maharshi's ashram to exorcise yourself!!'

Both the master and the Shylock laughed.

11th September, 1936

Q.: India was once the land of Vedic-glory, but now our educated youth are becoming gradually Westernised; thus they are losing their own local and indigenous cultural-identity. Is this not a tragedy? What solution does Sri Bhagawan suggest for this problem? Is there any remedy at all?

The master did not reply, but-

Mr. Knowles: That is correct, sir. Educated Indians are largely switching over to Westernised-lifestyles; it pains me to see it; but what is to be done? Will they listen to reason?

Q.: How many Greek-scholars have visited India and spoken highly of her beautiful culture; alas! to see it fade away like this does indeed grieve the heart and wring it to bursting-point.

K.: In this book [holding in hand the book 'Philostratus: the Life of Apollonius of Tyana; the Epistles of Apollonius and the Treatise of Eusebius; with an English Translation by F. C. Conybeare, M.A., Late Fellow and Prelector of University College, Oxford.'], behold how highly this land has been praised: [reads out as follows from the book clutched in his hands-]

It is now time to notice the river Hyphasis, and to ask what is its size as it traverses India, and, what remarkable features it possesses. The springs of this river well forth out of the plain, and close to its source its streams are navigable, but as they advance they soon become impossible for boats, because spits of rock alternating with one another, rise up just below the surface; round these the current winds of necessity, so rendering the river unnavigable. And in breadth it approaches to the river Ister, and this is allowed to be the greatest of all the rivers which flow through Europe. Now the woods along the bank closely resemble those of the river in question, and a balm also is distilled from the trees, out of which the Indians make a nuptial ointment; and unless the people attending the wedding have besprinkled the young couple with this balm, the union is not considered complete nor compatible with Aphrodite bestowing her grace upon it. Now they say that the

grove in the neighborhood of the river is dedicated to this goddess, as also the fishes called peacock fish which are bred in this river alone, and which have been given the same name as the bird, because their fins are blue, and their scales spotty, and their tails golden, and because they can fold and spread the latter at will. There is also a creature in this river which resembles a white worm. By melting down they make an oil, and from this oil, it appears, there is given off a flame such that nothing but glass can contain it. And this creature may be caught by the king alone, who utilizes it for the capture of cities; for as soon as the fat in question touches the battlements, a fire is kindled which defies all the ordinary means devised by men against combustibles. And they say that wild asses are also to be captured in these marshes, and these creatures have a horn upon the forehead, with which they butt like a bull and make a noble fight of it; the Indians make this horn into a cup, for they declare that no one can ever fall sick on the day on which he has drunk out of it, nor will any one who has done so be the worse for being wounded, and he will be able to pass through fire unscathed, and he is even immune from poisonous draughts which others would drink to their harm. Accordingly, this goblet is reserved for kings, and the king alone may indulge in the chase of this creature. And Apollonius says that he saw this animal, and admired its natural features; but when Damis asked him if he believed the story about the goblet, he answered: "I will believe it, if I find the king of the Indians hereabout to be immortal; for surely a man who can offer me or anyone else a draught potent against disease and so wholesome, will he not be much more likely to imbibe it himself, and take a drink out of this horn every day even at the risk of intoxication? For no one, I conceive, would blame him for exceeding in such cups." At this place they say that they also fell in with a woman who was black from her head to her bosom, but was altogether white from her bosom down to her feet; and the rest of the party fled from her believing her to be a monster, but Apollonius clasped the woman by the hand and understood what she was; for in fact such a woman in India is consecrated to Aphrodite, and a woman is born piebald in honor of this goddess, just as is Apis among the Egyptians.

Q.: I seem to recollect that Apollonius was a contemporary of the Christ Himself.

K.: Right you are, sir. His patterns of thinking were altogether distinctive and unique for the time; for instance consider the following passage: [now picking up the second volume of the same book and reading from it-]

Now all men are the slaves of nature and of law ; the willing slaves of nature, as the unwilling ones of law. But it is the duty of the wise in a still higher degree to lay down their lives for tenets they have embraced. Here are

interests which neither law has laid upon us, nor nature planted in us from birth, but to which we have devoted ourselves out of mere strength of character and courage. In behalf therefore of these, should anyone try to violate them, let the wise man pass through fire, let him bare his neck to the axe, for he will not be overcome by any such threats, nor driven to any sort of subterfuge ; but he will cleave to all he knows as firmly as if it were a religion in which he had been initiated. As for myself, I am acquainted with more than other human beings, for I know all things, and what I know, I know partly for good men, partly for wise ones, partly for myself, partly for the gods, but for tyrants nothing. But that I am not come on any fool's errand, you can see if you will ; for I run no risk of my life myself, nor shall I die at the hands of a despot, however much I might wish to do so ; but I am aware that I am running a risk in connection with persons of whom the tyrant may accuse me of being either the leader or the accomplice ; let me be whatever he likes, I am content. But if I were to betray them by holding back or by cowardly refusal to face the accusation, what would good men think of me ? Who would not justly slay me, for playing with the lives of men to whom was entrusted everything I had besought of heaven ? And I would like to point out to you, that I could not possibly escape the reputation of being a traitor. For there are two kinds of tyrants ; the one kind put their victims to death without trial, the other after they have been brought before a court of law. The former kind resemble the more passionate and prompt of wild beasts, the other kind resemble the gentler and more lethargic ones. That both kinds are cruel is clear to everybody who takes Nero as an example of the impetuous disposition which does not trouble about legal forms, Tiberius, on the other hand, of the lethargic and sluggish nature ; for the former destroyed his victims before they had any suspicion of what was coming, and the other after he had tortured them with long drawn out terror. For myself I consider those the crueller who make a pretence of legal trial, and of getting a verdict pronounced in accordance with the law ; for in reality they set them at defiance, and bring in the same verdict as they would have done without any real trial, giving the name of law to that which merely ekes out their own spleen. The very fact of their being put to death in legal form does but deprive the wretches so condemned to death of that compassion on the part of the crowd, which should be tendered like a winding sheet to the victims of injustice. Well, I perceive that the present ruler cloaks his tyranny under legal forms. But it seems to me that he ends by condemning without trial ; for he really sentences men before they enter the court, and then brings them before it as if they had not yet been tried. Now one who is formally condemned by a verdict in court, can obviously say he perished owing to an illegal sentence,

but how can he that evades his trial escape condemnation by his own conscience ? And supposing, now that the fate of such distinguished persons also rests on me, I do manage to run away from the crisis which equally impends over them and myself, what can save me no matter where I go on all the earth from the brand of infamy ? For let us suppose that you have delivered yourself of all these sentiments, and that I have admitted their correctness and acted on them, and that in consequence our friends have been murdered, what prayers could I offer in such a case for a favourable voyage ? What haven could I cast anchor in ? To whom could I set out on any voyage ? For me thinks I should have to steer clear of any land over which the Romans rule, and should have to seek men who are my friends and yet do not live in sight of the tyrant, and that would be Phraotes, and the Babylonian, and the divine Iarchas, and the noble Thespesion. Now supposing I set out for Ethiopia, what, my excellent friend, could I tell Thespesion ? For if I concealed this episode, I should prove myself a lover of falsehood, nay worse, a slave ; while if I frankly confessed all to him, I could only use such words as these: O Thespesion, Euphrates slandered me to you and accused me of things that are not on my conscience ; for he said that I was a boaster and a miracle-monger, and one that violated wisdom, especially that of the Indians ; but while I am none of these things, I am nevertheless a betrayer of my own friends, and their murderer, and utterly unreliable and so forth ; and if there is any wreath for virtue, I come to wear it, because I have ruined the greatest of the Roman houses so utterly, that henceforth they are left desolate. You blush, Demetrius, to hear such words; I see that you do so. What, then, if you turn from Thespesion to Phraotes and imagine me fleeing to India to take refuge with such a man as he ? How should I look him in the face, and how should I explain the motive of my flight? Should I not have to say that when I visited him before, I was a gentleman not too faint-hearted to lay down my life for my friends ; but that after enjoying his society, I had at your bidding thrown away with scorn this divinest of human privileges. And as for Iarchas he surely would not ask me any question at all when I arrived, but just as Aeolus once bade Odysseus quit his island with ignominy, because he had made a bad use of the gift of a good wind which he had bestowed on him, so Iarchas, I imagine, would drive me from his eminence, and tell me that I had disgraced the draught I there had from the cup of Tantalus. For they require a man who stoops and drinks of that goblet, to share the dangers of his friends. I know, Demetrius, how clever you are at chopping logic, and this, I believe, is why you will tender me some further advice, such as this : But you must not resort to those you have named, but to men with whom you have never had anything to do, and then your flight will be alright ; for you will find it easier to

lie hidden among people who do not know you. Well, let me examine this argument too, and see whether there is anything in it. For this is how I regard it : I consider that a wise man does nothing in private nor by himself alone ; I hold that not even his inmost thoughts can be so devoid of witness, that he himself at least is not present with himself; and whether the Pythian inscription was suggested by Apollo himself, or by some man who had a healthy conscience, and was therefore minded to publish it as an aphorism for all, I hold that the sage who 'knows himself,' and has his own conscience as his perpetual companion, will never cower before things that scare the many, nor venture upon courses which others would engage upon without shame.

S>M>

Q.: The Star of David, containing an intersection betwixt two triangles, is said to signify a mystical union between man and God; likewise in Hinduism we have the Shiva-lingam, where the Lingam is inserted into the Yoni to convey the idea that there must always prevail perfect union between Shiva and Shakti. The idea of union with the Divine seems to have prevailed across all ancient cultures; why then do we say that India is unique when it comes to spirituality?

B.: "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." The ego is a fleeting, transient and completely unreal entity; if scrutinised we find that it does not exist at all; what is then left as the residue is only the Absolute. So, the existence of the individual self is not accepted here. There is no question of attaining union with the Divine; there is nothing besides the Divine; the Divine alone exists; there is no multiplicity. Even at the present moment what exists is only the Self and nothing but the Self. Duality is impossible. Those who say that we must attain 'union with the Divine' are deluding themselves. Who is that one who is going to merge with the Divine? He is the 'I': but what is this 'I'? Investigate this first and find out the answer. Thereafter we can wonder about how to make this 'I' attain 'union with the Divine'.

Q.: But it is said that in searching for the Goal there is duality, but in the Goal Itself there is no duality.

B.: The given statement is not correct. I have just said that duality is impossible.

Q.: But my present experience is that of duality; is that not right?

B.: Whose experience is it?

S>M>

Q.: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "... that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Does it mean that the world

should be renounced? Should we all go forth penniless into the streets, having abandoned our homes and families? Should we support ourselves by begging only?

B.: Renounce the renouncer and everything will be alright. You want to give up everything, but not yourself? Give up yourself and everything is given up in one stroke. That is the way, not escaping from one's family and moving into the jungle, etc..

Q.: But solitude is necessary for obtaining Realisation; is that not right?

B.: Solitude means mental silence- i.e., absence of ego.

Q.: St. John Bosco has suggested that criminals in society should be tackled through love and not punishment. Does Bhagawan agree? How shall we reform those who habitually oriented or predisposed towards crime?

B.: If you are wearing yellow-tinted eye-glasses, everything appears yellow to you; if green-tinted ones everything green, and so on. Likewise, each one sees a different world according to his own predilections and opinions. No two persons see the world in exactly the same way. You say that there are criminals in society, and that something must be done about the matter. But why do you see a person as a criminal? "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." The way [for one] to reform the world is to successfully reform oneself in such a way that the world appears [unto him to be] full of perfection to the brim.

Q.: It cannot be denied that society is filled with problems; these will not go away simply because we wish them to go away. We must take action so as to constructively reform society. Remaining idle is not going to achieve anything.

B.: In that case, act; who is stopping you?

Q.: But I am only a puerile weakling. What can I do? Yet I have the desire that I must join Gandhiji's movement and contribute to making the world a better place to live in. I want to develop spiritual powers, with which I am going to transform the world. Please tell me what to do.

B.: Gandhiji has surrendered unconditionally to God. Let us follow his example first and later see what we must do about other matters if the need still remains then.

Q.: So if one surrenders unconditionally, God takes care of his life and he need not do anything?

B.: First surrender and see.

S>M>

Q.: Please enlighten us as to what is the meaning of the following seemingly violent verses from the Bible:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Does it mean that to be a true Christian I must abandon my family and become a hermit? And why shall we hate our own family-members?

B.: These verses make use of a highly emphatic figure-of-speech which is known in English as 'hyperbolic-sayings'. They are intended to convey the general meaning that one must not have any attachments in or towards the world, because it is not real. "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts..." Worldly attachment produces only bitter disappointment in the end; further, such attachments should be avoided by those seeking to fulfill the spiritual-objective of Realisation. Why? Attachments strengthen the individual's vasanas, and so long as even a single vasana remains Realisation is impossible.

S>M>

Q.: Vasanas are said to be of 2 kinds: bandha-vasanas and bhoga-vasanas; the former is said to characterise ajnanis and the latter Jnanis.

B.: All these meritless concepts are [in English] 'polemics'; they are debated so that people may entertain themselves or pass the time by means of discussing such concepts. There are no objects in the Jnani's world. How can he then make use of any vasanas? To deploy vasanas a mind is necessary, which can first project and then perceive imaginary objects; such mind would thereafter assume itself to be seer of those illusory objects. Object-perception, we thus see, is a mental process. This being the case, how can the Jnani see anything and how can he do anything? Where is the other for him, so that he can see that other or perform action with it? All is only Himself. So, action being impossible, all vasanas have become sterile in him. His mind has

become a barren wasteland in which nothing can possibly sprout. His vasanas are merely wasted memories and they cannot cause future births; since he regards them with calm amusement, these memories are said to be bhoga-vasanas in his case. They are only memories of past likes and dislikes and nothing more. The word 'vasana' implies attachment. Where there is no attachment there is no vasana. Saying 'bhoga-vasana' is silly and oxymoronical; it is like saying 'ice which is not cold'.

Q.: Can a Jnani feel pleasure and pain?

B.: No.

Q.: Can he feel passion and exultation?

B.: No.

Q.: Can he feel sorrow and fear?

B.: No. Mind is needed for all these; mind can feel; no-mind cannot feel because there is nobody there who can feel anything.

Q.: Sometimes B. becomes emotional whilst narrating stories from mythological sources; I have even observed him to cry like a sentimental old woman on these occasions.

B.: In Me there is no change. The Jnani is like a clean mirror. The mirror may reflect a broken window-pane, but in the mirror itself there is no maim. Likewise the emotions you observe in me are spontaneous and natural; there is nobody from within or without who is directing them. That is why it is said that the Jnani is like a dried-up leaf blown hither and thither by the wind. Does the dead-leaf care in which direction it is being blown about? Does it wonder where it is going to eventually end up? Does it become flustered when somebody steps on it or burns it? The Jnani is alive in the flesh only in name. The fact is that he passed away long ago. When you observe the night-sky, some of the stars you are seeing are actually not at all there at present, because science has made the discovery that light travels at an extremely high but still finite speed; the light you are now seeing might have been emitted by a star many millions of years ago; with respect to the present time the star might have collapsed a long while ago; when you gaze into the magnificent vastness of the night-sky, it is the past that you always see. Likewise with the Jnani. Really he died long ago. All this can be understood only when you yourself Realise.

S>M>

Q.: Mr. Benjamin Franklin has made the astute observation that "a ploughman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees". Likewise, can we say that a sannyasi who has not annihilated his attachments of mind is certainly worse off compared to a householder who is able to restrain his mind from wandering?



B.: You are right.

Q.: There are certain religious-faiths in the world which espouse practices of corporal-mortification-technique so that the mind may be purified and ultimately the Self Realised; these include starving the body of food and water for days on end, flogging it with a cattle-whip, kneeling for hours together in the hot sun, and so on and so forth. Is there any use in such observances? Do they truly help one to Realise the Self?

B.: Whilst such observance is being acquiesced, for that same duration of time the mind is stunned into a state of submission; thereafter its regular or usual rambunctiousness returns. How long will you go on whipping yourself? Such methods are unable to find a permanent solution to the problem of mind. There is only 1 permanent solution and that is 'Who am I?'

Q.: It obviously requires steady and unrelenting mental perseverance to practise 'Who am I?'. How can we meaningfully say that it is a technique that can be followed successfully by the man on the Clapham omnibus?

B.: Those who need It badly enough get It. Others go on talking about It.

Q.: But I have heard that Sri Bhagawan is of the opinion that desire to Realise the Self is an obstacle standing in the way of Realisation.

B.: Use that one particular desire to wipe out all other desires. Finally, abandon that one desire also.

Q.: After everything has been relinquished and abandoned, what then remains left behind: does anything remain?

B.: Yes- You remain.

S>M>

Dried and shrivelled roots of the plant 'bristly-taiga' are brought for the master as a present. He insisted that the same should be handed over to the ashram's kitchen so that the extract can be added to the subsequent day's rasam. The gentleman who had brought along such present explained that it was an expensive herb brought especially for the master's use.

B.: Whatever is given here is equally shared by all. You think that the Maharshi is restricted or confined to this body; therefore you put forward these demands. The Maharshi is everywhere and he is in all bodies that are seen by you. Is it this body exclusively that is the Maharshi? If so, the Maharshi is worthless and therefore not worthy of any consideration; thus he does not deserve the gift brought by you; on the other hand, if you wish to give something to that which actually is the Maharshi, all must receive a share, because the Maharshi is equally in all.

The man stopped arguing and responded meekly saying that he would himself presently deliver the roots to the staff in the kitchen.

B.: Do not do so. They will not know what it is or what to do with it. They will either try to quietly throw it away or leave it somewhere indefinitely until it has become rotten and useless. Let it remain here. I shall myself attend to it and see to it that its extract finds place in tomorrow's rasam.

The man beamed with joy to hear the words.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that the brahmins of India are really jews who immigrated into this land from the Judaeen kingdom a long while ago, fearing persecution from their neighbours the Babylonians who attacked them frequently and fiercely. Is it so? Are the brahmins really jews?

B.: Supposing they are: what difference would that make to you?

Q.: The jews are supposed to be God's chosen people for delivering the inhabitants of the earth from sin; therefore it is said that there is something special about them.

Chadwick: But has not Jesus already fulfilled that role? "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Q.: Does it mean that, since Jesus has paid the price for our collective sin, we need not atone for our sins individually? Are all our sins automatically pardoned, then?

B.: Those who cause [pain or] injury [to other living creatures] cannot escape the karmic consequences; they will necessarily have to face them at one point of time or the other in the future. It is like Newton's third law.

S>M>

Q.: The sport of ஏறுதழுவுல் is unnecessary cruelty inflicted on bulls. Does Sri Bhagawan agree?

B.: There is no harm in it provided the bull is treated in a respectful manner.

Q.: But the bull by nature is a calm and placid animal; why should we make it run hither and thither by means of subjecting it to aggravation and duress?

B.: Your thinking is that the bull is an animal having a rudimentary biological existence, whereas you imagine yourself on the other hand to be a creature with a highly advanced intelligence. But what is the fact? The bull is not a stupid animal. It understands that it is playing a sport, and infact enjoys participating in the game just like people do. If the animal is taken good care of and accorded proper respect, there is no harm in the sport.

S>M>

Q.: In the days of old, many Christian theologians have been burnt at stake as heretics for propounding the solipsistic-proposition that the cosmos is merely a projection of one's own mind. Is the ideal Christian weltanschauung compatible with the solipsistic point-of-view?

B.: What is the essence of all religious faith? It is to abide by God's will and remain perpetually surrendered unto Him. It is for relinquishment of individuality that all abhyasa is made; it is to coax a man into giving up his individuality that all religious faiths have come into being. The Christian faith is no exception. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." So, let us first surrender ourselves unto Him without reserve. Thereafter whatever happens is His responsibility, not yours. If you be apart from Him you must ascertain whether the world you are living in is in itself objectively real or whether it is only a mental projection; but if you be absorbed in Him, such inquisitiveness would have no locus standi to arise at all.

K.: Your statement is entirely correct, good sir. Hundreds of persons were murdered at the stake by the Church, simply for harbouring beliefs that the papal authority at the time considered as being heretical. In the book 'Life and Teachings of Giordano Bruno: Philosopher, Martyr, Mystic; 1548-1600; by Coulson Turnbull', we find the following passage: [reads out thus]- Bruno was charged with the assertion that animal as well as human lives proceeded from a process of dissolution. This may have been a misunderstanding of his bold hypothesis of the natural origin of the organisms. The philosopher who accepted a manifest order of the human race knew also between the animal and human soul only stands a difference of development, all embodying the one Being. These and many other doctrines were attacked. The Court was opened promptly, and most of the provinces of Italy were represented by their delegates in the early part of the trial. Bruno, on being interrogated, gave an account of his wandering life, his occupations and works. He calmly and with great dignity unfolded to this terrible tribunal his doctrine, its principles and the logical consequences. Serenely he spoke of the universe, how there were infinite worlds in infinite space, how all things in all forms and species were divine. He tried to explain the unity of all things, the dependence and interdependence of all things, yet the existence of God in all. With a spirit not broken by silence and torture, he refused to recant. After nine months in prison in Venice, Bruno, manacled, was conveyed to the Bridge of Sighs, through the lagoons to Ancona, where he remained incarcerated until the prison of the Roman Inquisition received him. The translator of "Gli Eroici Furori" aptly quotes, in his excellent introduction to that

work, a poem that seems strangely prophetic. Did Bruno feel the loneliness of his prison and the sufferings in the torture chamber when he wrote:

"By what condition, nature or fell chance,  
In living death, dead life I live?"

Or yet further from the same work we read:

"The soul nor yields nor bends to these rough blows,  
But bears, exulting, this long martyrdom,  
And makes a harmony of these sharp pangs."

The wise man fears not death, yea there may be times when he seeks death, or at least goes peacefully forth to meet it. The day for the burning was fixed to take place February 16, in the year 1600. Clement VIII was about to hold his jubilee, and pilgrims and prelates from all parts of Italy were present. The morning arrived. In the Campo dei Fiori, a flower market, the pyre was made. Bruno, scarcely fifty years old, with thin, emaciated face, with dark, fiery eyes, the forehead luminous with lofty thought, his poor body frail, showing signs of fearful torture, his hands in chains, his feet bare, in early morning with slow steps walked toward the funeral pile. Signor Levi gives, in his book on the life of Bruno, an account of how he received the sentence of death passed upon him. "You, O judges! feel perchance more terror in pronouncing this judgment than I do in hearing it." Bruno's holy murderers could not comprehend him. The sun shone brightly that early morning. The fire was lighted. The flames leaped up, mixing with the beautiful sun-beams. The rest is easily told. Bruno stood in the midst of the flames with his arms crossed, his head raised, his eyes open. A calm, steady look rebuked in its gentleness his ignorant and misguided tormentors. When the flames curled cruelly around him, he winced not. Even in his last moments an idolatrous monk thrust through the blaze a crucifix, but the dying martyr turned his head aside, more in pity than aversion. "He was the first in all the world who died for truth without the expectation of reward." When the body was consumed a monk took a handful of the ashes and scattered them to the winds, and a month later the Bishop of Sidonia presented himself at the Treasury of the Pope and demanded two scudi in payment for having degraded Giordano, the heretic. So to thee, noble Bruno, thou prophet of science, we in gratitude remember thee, and in humble service again recall thy noble thoughts. It is to thy courage that we owe a great debt of gratitude, for laying the foundation for positive science. Thou prophet of insight, the fatal fire that freed thy immortal spirit is dead, but thy spirit has already set many a heart aflame with new ambition and has cheered many a pilgrim on the Path !

S>M>

Q.: It is said that once a man perfectly surrenders to God, thereafter all his actions become those of God. Is it true?

B.: Yes; absolute surrender kills the ego; thereafter the man is completely under the sway of God's will; he becomes a mere puppet or instrument in the hands of the Divine.

Mr. Knowles: It says the same thing in the book 'Meister Eckhart by Franz Pfeiffer, Leipzig, 1857; Translation with some omissions and additions by C. De B. Evans'; please listen to me carefully whilst I read hereasunder: [reads out as follows from such book-]

*When a man is quite idle, when his intellect is at rest within him, then God takes up the work : he himself is the agent who produces himself in the passive intellect. What happens is this. The active intellect cannot give what it has not got : it cannot have two ideas together, but first one and then the other. What though light and air show multitudes of forms and colours all at once, thou canst only observe them one after another. And so with thy active intellect, which resembles the eye. But when God acts in lieu of thy active intellect he engenders many images together in one point. Suppose God prompts thee to some one good deed, thy powers are all proffered for all virtuous things, thy mind being straightway set on good in general. All thy possibilities for good take shape and come into thy mind collectively, focussed to one point. Clearly this is not the work of thine own intellect which has in no wise the perfection nor plenitude for it ; rather is it the work and product of him who has all forms at once in himself. As Paul says : 'I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me; in him I am undivided.' Know then, the ideas of these acts are not thine own : they belong to the author of thy nature who has planted therein both their energy and form. Lay no claim thereto, for it is his not thine. True, thou receivest it temporally, but it is gotten and born of God beyond time, in eternity above images. Thou wilt say, perhaps : From the moment my intellect is divested of its natural activity and no longer has either form or action of its own, what is preserving it ? It must have a hold somewhere ; the powers, whether memory, intellect or will, are bound to have some lodgment somewhere, some place to work in. The answer is this. Intellect's object and sustenance is essence, not accident, just pure unadulterated being in itself. On descrying something real the intellect forthwith relics upon it, comes to rest thereon, pronouncing its intellectual word concerning the object attained. As long as intellect fails to find the actual truth of things, does not touch bedrock in them, it stays in a condition of quest and expectation, it never settles down to rest, but labours incessantly to trace things to their cause, that is, it is seeking and waiting. It spends perhaps a year or more in research on some natural fact, finding out what it is, only to*

*work as long again stripping off what it is not. All this time it has nothing to go by, it makes no pronouncement at all in the absence of experimental knowledge of the ground of truth. Intellect never rests in this life. However much God shows himself in this life it is nothing to what he really is. Truth lies in the ground, but veiled and concealed from the intellect. And meanwhile the mind has no support to rest on as on something permanent. It gets no rest at all, but goes on expecting and preparing for something still to come but so far hidden. There is no knowing what God is. Something we do know, namely, what God is not. This the discerning soul rejects. Intellect, meantime, finding no satisfaction in any mortal thing, is waiting, as matter awaits form. As matter is insatiable for form, so is intellect unsatisfied except with the essential, all-embracing truth. Only the truth will do, and this God keeps withdrawing from it step by step, purposing to arouse its zeal and lure it on to seek and grasp the actual causeless good : that, not content with any mortal thing, she may clamour more and more for the highest good of all. But thou wilt say ; 'Alas, Sir, you laid so much stress on our quieting our faculties and now this calm resolves itself into yearning and lamenting : to a muckle moan and clamour for something not possessed, which puts an end to peace and quiet. This may be desire or purpose or praise or thanksgiving or any of their brood, but it is not perfect peace and absolute stillness.' I answer that, when thou hast emptied thyself entirely of thine own self and all things and of every sort of selfishness and hast transferred, united and abandoned thyself to God in perfect faith and complete amity, then everything that is born in thee or that enters into thee, external or internal, joyful or sorrowful, sour or sweet, is no longer thine own at all, but is altogether thy God's to whom thou hast abandoned thyself. Tell me, whose is the spoken word ? His who speaks it or his who hears it ? Though it fall to the hearer it really belongs to the speaker, to him who gives it birth. The sun, for example, throws out light into the air and the air receives the light and transmits it to the earth. Now, although the light seems in the air, it is really in the sun : the light is actually from the sun, originating in the sun, not in the air : the air entertains it and passes it on to anything that can be lighted up. And so with the soul. God begets in the soul his child, his Word, and the soul conceiving it passes it on to her powers in varied guise, now as desire, now as good intent, now as charity, now as gratitude, or as it may take thee : It is his, not thine at all. What is thus wrought by God take thou as his and not thine own, as it is written, 'The Holy Ghost asketh in us with unutterable yearnings.' He prays in us, not we ourselves. St Paul says, 'No one is able to say Lord Jesus Christ, except in the Holy Ghost.' Above all, lay no claim to anything. Let go thyself and let God act for thee and in thee as he pleases. This work is his, this Word is his, this birth is his and all thou art to*

boot. For thou hast abandoned thyself and art gone out of thy faculties and thy personal nature. God installs himself in thy nature and powers when, self-bereft of all belongings, thou dost take to the desert, as it is written, 'A voice crying in the wilderness.' Let this eternal voice cry on in thee at its sweet will and do thou be a desert in respect of self and creatures. Maybe thou wilt say : 'But, Sir, what must one do to become this desert, void of self and creatures ? Should one stay waiting for God all the time and do nothing oneself or should one do something between whiles, such as praying or reading or some good occupation like going to church or studying the Bible ? Not, of course, taking things in from without, but everything from within, from one's God. Besides, is there not something we miss by neglecting these things ?' My answer is this : Outward works were instituted and appointed for the purpose of directing the outer man to God and training him to ghostly life and virtues lest haply he should stray out of himself into ineptitudes : to act as a curb upon his inclination to run away from self to things abroad ; so that when God shall choose to work in him he shall find him close at hand and not first have to fetch him back from things gross and alien. The greater is the pleasure in external things the harder work it is to leave them ; the stronger the love the sharper the pain when it comes to parting. All pious practices - praying, reading, singing, watching, fasting, penance, or whatever discipline it be were contrived to catch and keep us from things alien and ungodly. Suppose one feels God's spirit is not working in one, but rather that one's inner man is God-forsaken, that is the proper moment for the outward man to exercise the practical virtues, and particularly such as are most feasible and useful to him ; not for his own selfish ends, but that, respect for truth preserving him from being led away by what is gross, he may stick straitly to God who will not need to seek him far afield, but will find him there at hand when he chooses to return and carry on his own work in his soul. But given that a man has genuine experience of the interior life, then let him boldly drop all outward disciplines, even those practices which thou art vowed to and from which neither pope nor prelate can release thee. From vows made to God no man can excuse thee : such vows are a bond between thyself and God. But supposing one has taken solemn vows of fasting, say, or prayer or pilgrimage, then on entering some order, one is released from them forthwith : in the order, obligation is to goodness as a whole, to God himself. And so I say here, Whatever one's vows to manifold things, initiation into the real interior life releases from them. While the interior experience lasts, maybe a week, a month, a year, no hours are neglected by the monk or nun, for God who occupies them will also answer for them. On returning to himself the religious shall perform his vows for the time present, but the time elapsed and lost, as

*thou dost think, 'tis no business of thine to make good. God makes good any time he takes up. Think not to make it good by any act of creature, for the smallest act of God outweighs all the work of creatures put together. I am speaking here of clerks and those enlightened souls who are illumined by God and by the scriptures. But what about the poor profane who, ignorant of corporal discipline, has assumed some vow or other, praying or the like ? My view is this. If he finds it hampering and that he draws much higher God and much more easily without it, let him boldly give it up, for whatever brings nearest to God is the best. Paul implied this when he said : 'But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.' Vows taken before priests, vows of marriage, for example, are very different from these other obligations which amount to solemn promises of oneself to God. Vows taken with the laudable intention of binding oneself to God are for the moment the best way. But supposing that we find a better way, a way we feel and know to be much better, then the first may be deemed null and void. We read in the gospel that when our Lord was twelve years old he went with Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem into the temple ; and when they went out, Jesus remained behind in the temple without their knowing it. And when they reached home and missed him, they sought him among acquaintances and among strangers, among their kindred, and among the multitude, and found him not ; they had lost him in the crowd. So there was nothing for it but to return whence they were come ; and when they got back to their starting-point, into the temple, there they found him. If thou wilt find this noble birth, verily thou must quit the multitude and return to the starting-point, into the ground out of which thou art come. The powers of the soul and their works, these are the multitude : memory, understanding and will, these all diversify thee, therefore thou must leave them all : sensible perception, imagination and everything wherein thou findest thyself and hast thyself in view. Thereafter thou mayest find this birth, but, believe me, not otherwise.*

S>M>

Q.: But God is said to be a volitionless being; so, how can He direct and control our behaviour, or even cast any influence upon the same?

B.: It is only from our point of view that this question, or indeed any other, arises at all. As far as the Self is concerned manifestation never took place. He the Impersonal Absolute has neither motive nor volition. He is always unruffled and untroubled. Yet if the existence of the relative plane is admitted, the existence of Ishwara also has to be admitted. Ishwara also has no personal will, but the duty to allocate karma is His. Since He ordains the Jnani's prarabdha also, He is said to direct and preside over the activities of the Jnani; it is only in this sense that Ishwara wields control over the Jnani;



thus, the sacred-books go on to say that the actions of the Emancipated-one are those of God Himself. In actual fact, whomsoever it might be, Jnani or ajnani, everything goes on according to prarabdha or predestination exclusively and free-will is mythical; yet this is not apparent except in cases wherein there is no individuality available with which Reality might be veiled. It has to be remembered that these discussions are not for the Emancipated-one; he has no doubts; all this is only from the point of view of those who see the Jnani's body and identify him with it. The Jnani himself is not aware of being attached to, or localised in relation to, a body or any other aspect of form or gross-matter; the Jnani's existence is perfectly bodiless even whilst he is yet to shed the body. Ishwara's role in the scheme of the cosmos lies only in proper carry-forward, allocation and set-off of karma; He is not otherwise interested in what is going on in the world. In the Jnani's world even Ishwara does not exist. Nathathrasuryobhati nachandratharakam nema vidhyutho bhanti kutho ayamagnihi thamaeva bhanthamanubhati sarvam thasyabhasa sarvamidhamvibhati.

Q.: The shloka contradicts itself. The first line implies that no objects exist but the Self alone exists. On the other hand, the second line implies that objects derive their power to exist from the Self.

B.: The first line refers to the Jnani's state. The second line is meant for others who ask, 'Whence did arise this vast world, that I now see around me?'

S>M>

Q.: I find 'Who am I?' to be excessively strenuous; sometimes I become fed-up with it.

B.: Never mind. Keep on going. If you pause to reflect, you will feel frightened. Do not balk when faced with suffering. Your suffering is taking you towards a good end. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Vasanas do cause some amount of pain as they are being scorched or fried in the light or radiation of the Self. But never mind. Stoically go on and till you altogether rid yourself of your burden keep going. That is the only way. The architect Francesco Borromini constructed a corridor in a palazzo in Rome which has been so designed by him that those seeing it from a distance are tricked into believing that it is much longer than it actually is. Likewise with the ego; if you keep staring at it you will feel frightened by the distance that you think must needs be traversed by you in the time lying ahead.

Q.: How much distance actually does lie ahead?

B.: It is not necessary to know it. Resign yourself to God's Mercy and go on with your abhaysa. Entrust yourself wholly to His will. Everything will come aright in the end.

S>M>

Q.: When I spectate all the various injustices going on in the world, I feel frightened and disturbed, for I feel that God must have abandoned this world: because such is the profuse degree of iniquity characterising the sorry state of affairs we find here. Frequently such thoughts overwhelm me and I do not know what to do. On account of repetitively thinking in this manner, my physical health has also markedly deteriorated. Please show me a way out.

B.: Have you ever had any willingness to engage yourself in undertaking activities aimed at bringing about changes that would usher in betterment of society?

Q.: No.

B.: Then give up the idea that there is anything that can be done by you to change the world; thus, what cannot be helped is not worth pondering over. Your problem is not society; society will take care of itself. Your problem is yourself. Your own mind has now become bellicose and hostile towards you; that is why you do not know what to do. You are mistakenly endeavouring to extrapolate your problem-of-mind to the outside world and say that the same is filled with shortcomings; it is like commenting that the patient's state of health is critical after measuring his temperature with a thermometer that has just suffered immersion in hot-water. When your mind is peaceful and calm, then behold the world and tell me how it is. The world really partakes the nature of the mind that observes it, because observation and creation are one and the same activity. The mind observes as it creates or creates as it observes: it is all the same thing no matter how we wish to put it. There is no world in deep sleep and there is no mind; it is admitted by you that you were peaceful and happy then. Now you are perturbed, miserable and unhappy according to you. Yet it is the same you who slept who are now under the impression that you are awake. The one sleeping is not different from the one now thinking that he is awake. You are always the same you. What is the change that has arisen between the state of deep sleep and the present state? It is the rise of the ego or aham-vritti. This ego is the killer of our happiness. The ego is a thief who is stealing away or misappropriating your happiness. If he is exterminated all unhappiness or discontent will vanish. How to get rid of him? Suppose you are standing in the middle of a football-field. You see your own shadow ahead of you and run towards it to catch it. No matter how many times you come circling around the football-field, can you ever succeed in accomplishing your mission? No. Why not? Because the position of the shadow is inextricably linked with that of yourself. When you move the shadow moves along with you; so, there is no point in running. What then to do? Stay still, bend down and touch the ground with a finger; then you

will have succeeded in touching the shadow. Likewise with the ego. No amount of mental activity could ever result in Revelation of the Self. Being absolutely still is the only way to do it. Volition acquiesced and effort expended in order so as to remain still are also obstacles. Simply BE. That is the way out of all your misery.

S>M>

Q.: Was Sri Bhagawan's name originally Venkatraman or Venkateswaram?

B.: When this was born the name Venkateswaram was given. However, at the time of enrolling this in school, the name given to the authorities at the school was, for some unknown reason, Venkatraman, and this name began to be used everywhere thereafter.

Q.: Which name does Sri Bhagawan himself prefer?

B.: What am I to do with names?

S>M>

Q.: Some maintain that since the Self perennially stands already Realised here and now, no effort is necessary to Realise the same; further, these mischief-mongers proclaim that it is Bhagawan himself who teaches so!

B.: What is to be done? Those who possess discerning intellects: let them ascertain for themselves what is truth and what is absurdity.

Q.: What about the simpleton?

B.: If he has completely surrendered himself in Bhagawan, Bhagawan guides him aright.

Q.: So the Self remains in a state of being occluded by ignorance until He is Realised?

B.: No. For Him there cannot be any ignorance. Ignorance is from the point of view of the jiva only. In fact, ignorance is simply nothing but the jiva himself. Destruction of jivabodham is the same as dawn of Realisation. When we say that no effort is needed to Realise the Self, we mean that effortlessness or effortless abidance in the beingness of the Self is definitely required. Effort means thinking. Sleepless-thoughtlessness and effortlessness are one and the same. The state of 'no-effort' is necessary and sufficient to Realise the Self; but what is this state? Complete absence of effort refers to complete absence of both thought and sleepiness. Total absence of effort is the hallmark of Realisation.

Q.: So, all our efforts are, as a matter of fact, directed towards the single objective of becoming totally effortless.

B.: Quite so.

S>M>

Q.: I have been diagnosed with a strange disease known as 'narcolepsy-cataplexy'. At the time of waking up from sleep, I am fully conscious of my

surroundings and environment, but I am unable to move my body; it seems to have become completely paralysed. I fall often asleep without any conscious control during the time of day. Whenever I fall asleep, be it night or day, I am seized by all sorts of terrible nightmares. I am suffering from this disease for the past 4 years. I have tried all sorts of remedies and cures, but without the slightest effect. I have finally come to Sri Bhagawan hoping that he would cure me. I pray to him that he should not disappoint me.

B.: Do not go on mentally asseverating to yourself: 'I am suffering from disease.', 'I am suffering from disease.', and so on. Remain without the thought that you are suffering from disease, and the disease might take care of itself without intervention on your part. Also, make good use of your time spent in this place: come around the Hill as many times as you possibly can before returning to your own place.

Q.: Will performing girivalam around Tiruvannamalai make me alright again: shall I be cured?

B.: First do it and see.

S>M>

There is a discussion going on in the Hall concerning the practical utility or otherwise of 'the Palmer-method' of practising writing the latin script, as disseminated by the A. N. Palmer Company.

B.: What is more important is to learn how to wipe out the letters of one's destiny from one's brow.

Q.: But Bhagawan always opines that prarabdha is unalterable and incommutable.

B.: Yes- that is as far as the body's fate is concerned. Prarabdha is helpless to afflict the Self.

S>M>

Q.: Browning wrote:

What is he but a brute

Whose flesh has soul to suit,

Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?

To man, propose this test-

Thy body at its best,

How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

How shall we set apart man from beast- excluding by means of deployment as factor for discernment the obvious anthropomorphic criterion, I mean?

B.: Man who has not Realised his actual Self is the same as beast- probably he might be worse; for an animal would not understand the seeming technicalities of Ajata-advaita, but man has been endowed with an intellect and is therefore certainly able to do so. Despite being told the truth, if a man

chooses to pay no attention to the same and goes on leading a life of ignorance, how can he not be worse than an animal, which, according to us, is a creature incapable of understanding [Ajata-advaita]?

Q.: So it is every man's bounden duty to Realise his true Self?

B.: Since evidently the question has arisen in your case, you may take it to be so.

Q.: What is the punishment for failing in this duty?

B.: Suffering, which is synonymous with samsara.

S>M>

Q.: Fitzgerald wrote:

...whether wake or dreaming, this I know,  
How dreamwise human glories come and go;  
Whose momentary tenure not to break,  
Walking as one who knows he soon may wake,  
So fairly carry the full cup, so well  
Disordered insolence and passion quell,  
That there be nothing after to upbraid  
Dreamer or doer in the part he played;  
Whether tomorrow's dawn shall break the spell,  
Or the last trumpet of the Eternal Day,  
When dreaming, with the night, shall pass away.

What is the acid-test for evaluating whether I am dreaming or awake at this very moment?

B.: Do you see anything?

Q.: Where am I supposed to see?

B.: At this very moment, do you happen to be seeing anything?

Q.: Yes, of course; I am gazing at Bhagawan's face, and the Sofa against which he happens to be reclining and upon which he happens to be seated.

B.: If anything is being perceived, you are certainly dreaming.

Q.: So I have now dreamt up this Hall and all the people inside it, Bhagawan himself included?

B.: Is there any doubt in the fact?

Q.: Does the same thing apply to everybody in the Hall?

B.: Excepting the body on the Sofa, yes.

Q.: Are then multiple people projecting forth precisely the same dream from their respective brains?

B.: No. You alone exist.

Q.: But why me in particular?

B.: [laughing] Why is this simple matter so hard to understand for so many people? Everything is an illusion. Wake up!

Q.: Poe wrote:

Take this kiss upon the brow! and, in parting from you now,  
Thus much let me avow; that you are not wrong, who deem  
That my days have been a dream; yet if hope has flown away  
In a night, or in a day, in a vision, or in none,  
Is it therefore the less gone? All that we see or seem  
Is but a dream within a dream. I stand amid the roar  
Of a surf-tormented shore, and I hold within my hand  
Grains of the golden sand- how few! yet how they creep  
Through my fingers to the deep, while I weep- while I weep!  
O God! can I not grasp them with a tighter clasp?  
O God! can I not save one from the pitiless wave?  
Is all that we see or seem but a dream within a dream?

So, is there layer after layer of illusion that must successively be peeled away before Reality can be gained? Is there any end to it or does illusion keep on coming as we go on unravelling, like Draupadi's vastram? Is all this a dream within a dream, as the poet says?

B.: Yes. Ignorance of the Self is the first dream; within that a second dream called sleep appears; sleep is knowledge of simple nescience. In this second dream a third appears; jagrat-swapna is the name given to this state; in jagrat-swapna the jiva's nescience is no longer simple: it is diversified or variegated into a cosmos or world; again in jagrat-swapna two further dreams appear: the jiva, and everything that he thinks or imagines himself to be perceiving. The jiva himself is nothing but not-Self or ignorance of the Self. So, our poet Mr. Poe is quite correct: it is a case of dream within dream within dream. How does one endeavour to awaken oneself? See who the dreamer is. That is all that is really needed. Dreams might be multiple and nestled one within another but ignorance is only one: the common thread of 'I' or aham-vritti running through all of them; if that is eradicated, all illusion is shattered in that same instant. A necklace of beads is ruined simply by cutting the thread in a single place; likewise here.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that the Jnani simply takes one look at a person and is instantaneously able to ascertain from his eyes the entire history of not merely this but also all previous life-times of his. Is it true?

B.: If it is the Jnani's prarabdha to help that other person, it may so happen.

Q.: Why is it that the Jnani helps one person to Realise the Self but not the other?

B.: It is not the Jnani's decision to choose whether he wants to bestow Realisation or not; he does not possess any volition in order so that he might

choose one way or the other. If the fruit is ripe, it falls with a gentle shake of the tree. Spiritual-ripeness[pakkuvam] is everything. Once the mind has given up all its vasanas and is ready to sink into the Heart, the rest is only a matter of time and hence no matter at all. The important thing is to purge the mind of its long-standing vasanas.

Q.: Are then the vasanas embedded in my mind the only barrier standing between myself and my Realisation?

B.: Thinking that Realisation has yet to be attained, or that it is some exotic goal to be reached at some point of time in the future: know that this also is a vasana.

Q.: Can then the Self be Realised in the absence of our motivation to obtain Realisation?

B.: Total absence of motivation[sankalpa] is a sine qua non for Realisation.

Q.: Any effort made to reach That state seems to lead us away rather than towards That state.

B.: Yes. He cannot be reached.

Q.: What then shall I do?

B.: Surrender yourself to Him and resign yourself to His Mercy once and for all and be done with it.

S>M>

Q.: Can I convince the mind into ceasing to develop thoughts? Can I reason with my mind and ask it to stop generating thoughts? Would that be a good method of getting rid of thoughts?

B.: Thoughts cannot be combated with more thoughts. The only way to remain free from thoughts is to go to their source and stay there once and for all.

Q.: Jesus said that it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it would be for a rich man to Realise God. Shall I give up all my possessions then and move into some remote forest uninhabited by mankind?

B.: Do you suppose then that objects are the reason for your misery? Objects are only mental creations. In actual fact, there never can be any such thing as an object. What is condemned is not objects themselves but only our mental attachment towards them. Objects are cognised or perceived only because we are mentally attached towards them. Why see objects? Is it necessary at all? Remain as the subject and then there will be no need to see any object. Remaining as one's own Self, no object-perception can be possible. There is no need to go into any forest. Remain where you are and remain as you are.

Q.: But solitude is necessary for Realisation; am I correct?

B.: Yes, but mental solitude is what is needed. What is mental solitude? It is the state of jagrat-sushupti. The individual is alert and awake to the Self but

asleep to everything else even whilst the world continues to be perceived.

Q.: How does the Guru bring about this state in those who endeavour to inculcate unto themselves from him the same?

B.: Simply by silently demonstrating that That state is actually possible.

Q.: Will not attending lectures, reading books, etc. be helpful in obtaining divine illumination?

B.: It is said of the Guru, brahmanandham paramasukhadham kevalam jnanamurthim dvandvatheetam gamana sadhrusham thathvamayasyadhi lakshyam ekam nityam vimalam achalam sarvadhi sakshibhootam bhavatheetam thrigunarahitam sadhgurum tham namami.

Q.: But not all can understand the import of the Jnani's silence.

B.: True.

Q.: Well, what then shall we do?

B.: We shall not do anything.

S>M>

Q.: Why do some persons fail so lamentably despite making earnest efforts to Realise the Self?

B.: One must hold fast to the mental pursuit 'Who am I?' to the exclusion of every other mental activity; only then is success rendered possible, and not otherwise.

Q.: If I go on asking myself 'Who am I?' all day to the exclusion of every other activity, who will take care of my family, and how shall I earn a living so as to be able to financially support myself and my family-members?

B.: Worldly-activity and vichara should go on side-by-side.

Q.: Impossible. Vichara aims at eliminating thoughts whereas thinking thoughts is essential if worldly-activity is to go on.

B.: After some practice, you will discover that the mind effortlessly abides in the blissful beatitude of the Self whilst the body automatically carries on with its allotted activities according to its prarabdha.

Q.: It is hard to understand how this could be possible.

B.: That is because you are under the mistaken impression that it is the mind which is responsible for governing, controlling, administering and executing the activities of the body. In other words, you still believe in free-will. Free-will is a myth. There is no such thing called free-will. The mind spuriously pretends that it is in-charge of the body's actions, which are in fact always going on of their own accord. By taking on such false or fictitious sense of responsibility, the mind tricks itself into believing that it is real and that it exists. Do not make the mistake of taking the mind's presumptions and presuppositions seriously or for granted; examine them ruthlessly and watch with glee as they break into pieces. Mind is only a wrong notion or



assumption. If examined or scrutinised closely, it fails or breaks down or fades away. Constant inquiry into the question of what mind is leads to its disappearance. Who asked you to take the mind's existence for granted? See if it exists. In the irrevocable discovery that it does not, you will lose yourself once and for all. This self-destruction is known as Jnana. Remain fixed in the Self and worldly-actions will go on of their own accord.

Q.: How will they go on unless I perform them?

B.: You remain as you are and let the body go on with its destined duties.

Q.: This may be possible for the Jnani; others need their minds to tell their bodies what to do.

B.: Just now you were told not to take the mind's existence for granted.

Q.: If there is no mind, then all are verily Jnanis.

B.: Exactly.

Q.: In practice we do not find that to be the case.

B.: Only those who think they have a mind are afflicted with the disease known as mind; mind is an imaginary disease.

Q.: How to remain free from such imagination?

B.: Why are you asking for a formula for it? There is no formula. Remain as That-which-IS. What could be more simple? Yet for those who are not able to understand this, we have to say that vichara is the principle means to Realise the Self.

Q.: So in actuality the simplest way is to really- ?

B.: Be as you are.

S>M>

Q.: Can mind exist without Self?

B.: No. Everything is comprised within the Self only: therefore we say that what exists is the Self and nothing but the Self.

Q.: Can Self exist without mind?

B.: There is no meaning in this question. Self can never be aware of any such thing called 'mind'. Self is never aware of anything; neither is he unaware of anything. He simply IS. Awareness and unawareness are mental functions; they have nothing to do with the Self. There is no multiplicity in Him.

Knowledge and ignorance are both alien to him. He remains all alone, in perfect bliss and perfect peace. The Self is known as sadchidhanandam, but the best term by means of which to refer to Him would be Paramashantam.

Q.: Do we exist in your world?

B.: No.

Q.: Then what use is there in treating you as a god and praying to you?

B.: The Guru's sannidhi is enough to take care of the needs of all his devotees. He has no sankalpa so that he might show favoritism towards the

one and neglect the other. Guru's Grace is like an ocean. How much you carry away depends exclusively upon the capacity of the container you have brought with yourself. What purpose is served in bringing a container the size of a thimble and then grumbling about the parsimoniousness of the ocean?

Q.: The container stands for the mind; is that right?

B.: Yes. If you want Realisation, open up your mind to the Self.

Q.: I suppose the ideal devotee simply jumps into the ocean and has done with it; he would not bother himself to bring containers and cauldrons.

B.: You are correct!

Q.: I have the fear that if mind is destroyed the person would become motionless and stone-like; he would become a mere vegetable.

B.: This thought comes about because the self is still identified with body, mind and intellect. When you know that you are not the body, why do you fear that something untoward and unpleasant will happen to the body?

Q.: What will happen to me if the body be destroyed?

B.: Whatever has had a beginning is also going to have an end. The body was born and the body shall inevitably disappear one day. But were you ever born?

Q.: I am unable to abandon the common-sense point-of-view which suggests that I was born into this world.

B.: A little practice will make you think differently.

S>M>

A certain Malayali barrister, Mr. John from Travancore, who claims to have been one of the important organisers of Sri Gandhiji's satyagraha-agitation at Vaikom, spoke to the master thus:

Q.: The social-reformer Mr. E. V. Ramasamy has travelled to Europe and Russia to understand the various political philosophies practiced in those countries and also to explain to the world the aims and objectives of the Dravidian Self-respect Movement. Likewise it will be better if Bhagawan undertakes a world-tour to explain his Ajata-advaita school of philosophy to audiences around the globe and also to understand the various schools of philosophy in vogue around the world that endeavour to explain why we are all here. What does Bhagawan say? If he is worried about the funding-aspect, he need not personally take the trouble to raise the required money; I have friends at Madras who will see to it that the necessary steps are taken.

However, you must shift your ashram to Madras. Who will come all the way to this useless desert? There is nothing here except rocks and shrubs.

Moreover, the heat is also unbearable. Further, this place has no significant reputation of any kind; it is shrouded in obscurity. Why should such an illustrious man as yourself live in such oblivion?

B.: When I was living in the Virupaksha-cave I was happy. Those days there was no Ramana Maharshi to spoil my happiness. Now all of a sudden somebody known as Ramana Maharshi has dropped out of the sky, and I am assumed to be him. Who is this Ramana Maharshi? Has anybody seen him? Where is he and why is he troubling me? I simply am a poor begging sadhu. What could I have to possibly say to the world? Ever since this Ramana Maharshi business commenced about a decade ago, I am being bombarded with questions: ***what is the nature and purpose of man's existence? why are we born into the world? how shall man endeavour to know God?*** What do I know of such things? What am I to do [when confronted with such questions]? I am not a philosopher, but merely a poor begging guttersnipe [pandara-paradesi]. I am not the person you are looking for; you may seek elsewhere.

Q.: I thought so. I thought highly of you after having read Brunton's book. Now I realise that probably Brunton faked the book's contents. Well, thank you, sir, for not wasting my time any further; for you have told the truth that you are nothing but a glorified beggar, simply one of the many in this god-forsaken place. Good-bye, Mr. Ramana- or should I say, Mr. Pandara-paradesi? He mockingly made a short, contemptuous bow and left the Hall. There was a pin-drop shocked silence in the Hall. The master laughed.

B.: I am helpless to do anything for him. That is why I sent him away. Mr. E. V. Ramasamy will doubtless be able to supply him with better guidance.

S>M>

Somebody has apparently commented that Tiruvannamalai is a small, boring town, having no modern amenities and no avenues of entertainment such as cinema-theatres or concert-halls. This remark now reached the master's ears. He laughed and said jocularly-

B.: Why did you not take up the matter with the gentleman from Masulipatnam, Mr. Ganapatram Shukla, who was here last week? He is a fond acquaintance of Mr. R. V. Naidu's family, which owns and manages Gaiety Talkies at Madras; had you talked to him and conveyed unto him your angst over the fact that there is no cinema-theatre in this place, he might have become interested in persuading them to build one here!

Q.: Why does Bhagawan make such inauspicious and blasphemous suggestion? To have such things here would indubitably ruin the sanctity of this sacred spiritual place.

B.: Oh! is that so?

Chadwick: What's that, there is a cinema at Madras? Great Scott, what a surprise; I never dreamed of the possibility!

Q.: [disparagingly] Are you fond of going to the pictures, sir?

C.: Aeons ago, I used to be. Just before making arrangements to move into India, I tried to set time apart to watch Mr. Hitchcock's 'The Man Who Knew Too Much'; but somehow my plans did not work out and I missed my chance to see it.

E.Z.: Oh! what a pity. It is a magnificent picture from a profusely talented director.

Q.: Why are such frivolous and pointless matters being discussed in Bhagawan's sacred presence? Have we forgotten that this is a place meant for solemn self-absorption?

B.: Does Self-absorption imply that we must sit like a stone in one place without any activity?

Q.: When body is at rest, mind will also be at rest; when body is active, mind will also be active; therefore, by means of keeping the body idle, we shall be facilitating ourselves to ensure that the mind remains fixed in its source, which is the Self.

B.: Oh! is that so?

S>M>

Q.: "...dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." What is the point of everything if everybody is inevitably going to die one day? Why live at all if life ends only in death? Why not refuse to live?

B.: Have you made any covenant with anybody to live so that you might now contemplate breaking the same? It is our fault that we happen to be born. Since there are vasanas available to obnubilate the Self and cast the veil of illusory ignorance [avidya-maya] over it, they unfailingly catch the light of the Self and reflect it. Whose fault is it that there are these vasanas? Vasanas are only mental patterns and they have no life of their own. It is ourselves who encourage and pamper them to go on surviving. Plunge the purified mind in the Heart and then see if there is any trouble on account of or owing to vasanas. Death of mind is Eternal Life. The mind will die only by means of subjection to constant submergence in the light of the Heart, which is the same as the blissful beingness of the Self. Refusal to live means embracing death; embracing death is to merge the mind in its source. Only by means of embracing death can we awaken into Eternal Life. So, refusal to live, or in other words, refusal to permit the mind to emerge from its source is, as mentioned by you, the way to Emancipation. Refusal to live does not imply starving the body of food but starving the mind of thought.

S>M>

Mention was made in the Hall of Swami Vedhachalam, who had changed his name to Maraimalaiyadigazl owing to his fondness of the Tamizh-language and aversion towards the Sanskrit-tongue. The master was asked which

language was closer to his heart, Tamizh or Sanskrit, since he had composed poetry in both. He smiled and kept quiet.

S>M>

Q.: When did the uttharadikari of the Siddhaganga Mutt at Tumkooor, Swami Shivakkumara, come to visit Sri Bhagawan? I read an interesting article in Prabuddha Bharata or some other magazine concerning itself with matters of Vedantic-interest about his visit to Sri Bhagawan; I was deeply moved by the same; therein Bhagawan is concretely stated to be the same as the jyoti that is lighted every year at the top of this Hill.

B.: He came about 4 years ago. He said that he had abandoned his academic pursuits and formally accepted விரக்தித்துவம் [vow of renunciation of the family-way of life] for the sake of serving in the Mutt; he further asked me what I thought about it.

Q.: What did Bhagawan say to him?

B.: That it was the right thing to have done.

Q.: But usually when people, including myself, ask him, Bhagawan responds by saying that formal vows of renunciation are not at all necessary for Realisation.

B.: Yes; where is the contradiction? His prarabdha lies that way; yours lies this way.

S>M>

Q.: The former Governer of Madras, Thomas Munro, is said to have had a vision of Sri Venkatachalapathy in the flesh and blood when he visited Thirupathy. He was obviously a Christian, yet God has blessed him with His Grace, although he belonged to another, foreign faith. I am doing poojai to Sri Venkatachalapathy everyday in my home. Yet when I visit Thirupathy, I see only the stone-idol and not anything else. Why is this so?

B.: Purity of mind is what matters, not the question of which faith one belongs to or does not belong to.

Q.: What is purity of mind?

B.: Absence of worldly attachment in the mind.

Q.: God gives some people the strength and purity of mind to see Him; others he ignores. Is this just?

B.: Who are we to judge Him? When even you think you can do as you please, why should not He likewise do as he pleases?

Q.: So it is not possible to find reasons why things happen as they do?

B.: God's Will is the only reason.

Q.: In that case, everything is governed by fate only.

B.: Yes. Ducunt volentem fata nolentem trahunt.

S>M>

Q.: "I know only one thing, and that is that I know nothing." What does this quote from Socrates mean?

B.: It means that complete ignorance alone could ever qualify to be referred to as true knowledge.

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: Jnana is total absence of objective knowledge. The Jnani is not merely aware of the Self; he is that awareness. For him there cannot be anything to know or make known. He lives in That state in which knowledge is not possible. Knowledge is only a vritti of the mind, because knowing is merely a mental activity. There is no mind in the Self and therefore the Self is free from both knowledge and ignorance. Knowledge and ignorance are both imaginary accretions to be cleared away in order so as for the Real Self to stand Realised.

Q.: "Men who competently organize society for productive labour entitle themselves thereby to rule it." Does Sri Bhagawan agree with this quote from Claude Henri de Rouvroy?

B.: First let us rule ourselves successfully by means of reining in and destroying our recalcitrant, intransigent and insurgent mind. Once this has been successfully accomplished, we can thereafter move on to accomplishing other objectives. How can one who has not learnt to control himself succeed in controlling others? On the other hand, having succeeded in controlling oneself, what else remains to control or rule over? The Emancipated-one rules over all without any effort.

S>M>

Q.: I feel that I am separate from the Self. I also feel that the Self is covered up or occluded with ignorance.

B.: If the Self were really covered up with ignorance, It would be conscious of being in bondage; but is that the situation that happens to prevail? No. The Self is free and happy. He does not complain of any separateness. Who then is it that asseverates that he is separate from the Self? Look for him. Can he be found? No, because he never existed.

Q.: "Just as little is seen in pure light as in pure darkness." said Hegel. Is the Self then a state of blankness?

B.: There are no objects to be seen in the Self. But that does not mean that it is a blank. If there be a blank, there must also be somebody to be aware of the blank and asseverate, 'I see a blank.'. Who is there in the Self that can make this asseveration or any other? Subject means seer of object. Object means that which is seen by subject. So, they are intertwined and cannot be defined independently. There is neither subject nor object in the Self and the Self can be neither. The Self does not see because there is nothing for Him to

see. The Self cannot be seen because there is not a second self besides the Self, so that the two might glimpse each other or exchange greetings. What is, is only That One.

Q.: Where is He?

B.: He is You.

Q.: That is not my experience. I am trapped inside this puny human body. How can I be the formless Reality? It is absurd.

B.: Abandoning this, That is Realised. You cannot have both the ego and the Self. Give up the ego and the Self Shines automatically.

Q.: What are the practical steps by means of which Realisation might be gained?

B.: There is no need to look for a formula. Give up the mind or ego in one stroke and it is finished. In other words, perfect surrender is both the means and the goal.

Mr. Knowles: Sir, in this book, namely 'A Buddhist Bible by Dwight Goddard', your question has been answered as follows: [reading out thus-]

Mahamati then asked the Blessed One, saying: Pray tell us, Blessed One, what clear understandings an earnest disciple should have if he is to be successful in the discipline that leads to self-realisation? The Blessed One replied: There are four things by the fulfilling of which an earnest disciple may gain self-realisation of Noble Wisdom and become a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva: First, he must have a clear understanding that all things are only manifestations of the mind itself; second, he must discard the notion of birth, abiding and disappearance; third, he must clearly understand the egolessness of both things and persons; and fourth, he must have a true conception of what constitutes self-realisation of Noble Wisdom. Provided with these four understandings, earnest disciples may become Bodhisattvas and attain Transcendental Intelligence. As to the first; he must recognise and be fully convinced that this triple world is nothing but a complex manifestation of one's mental activities; that it is devoid of selfness and its belongings; that there are no strivings, no comings, no goings. He must recognise and accept the fact that this triple world is manifested and imagined as real only under the influence of habit-energy that has been accumulated since the beginning less past by reason of memory, false-imagination, false-reasoning, and attachments to the multiplicities of objects and reactions in close relationship and in conformity to ideas of body-property-and-abode. As to the second; he must recognise and be convinced that all things are to be regarded as forms seen in a vision and a dream, empty of substance, un-born and without self-nature; that all things exist only by reason of a complicated network of causation which owes its rise to discrimination and attachment and which

eventuates in the rise of the mind-system and its belongings and involvements. As to the third; he must recognise and patiently accept the fact that his own mind and personality is also mind-constructed, that it is empty of substance, unborn and egoless. With these three things clearly in mind, the Bodhisattva will be able to enter into the truth of imagelessness. As to the fourth; he must have a true conception of what constitutes self-realisation of Noble Wisdom. First, it is not comparable to the perceptions attained by the sense-mind, neither is it comparable to the cognition of the discriminating and intellectual-mind. Both of these presuppose a difference between self and not-self and the knowledge so attained is characterised by individuality and generality. Self-realisation is based on identity and oneness; there is nothing to be discriminated nor predicated concerning it. But to enter into it the Bodhisattva must be free from all presuppositions and attachments to things, ideas and selfness.

S>M>

A packet of 'Eno's Fruit Salt' is gifted to Sri Bhagwan. The attendant placed it on the shelf near the master's Sofa, and was promptly rebuked.

B.: Everybody should receive a tumblerful after the afternoon-meal tomorrow.

S>M>

A Caucasian gentleman from Zandvoort, Holland, asked:

Q.: According to Sri Bhagawan, which is the most beautiful poetry ever composed?

The master initially remained silent as though he had not heard; after a while a certain book was handed over to Sri Muruganar and the master asked the poet to read out to the Hall a certain section thereof specified by him. It was Manickavasagar's famous poem நீத்தல் விண்ணப்பம். Muruganar, however, could not read beyond the first few verses. He became choked with emotion, and then, unable to contain himself, burst into tears. Subsequently he prostrated in front of the Sofa and quietly exited the Hall.

B.: You may peruse the Panniruthirumurai if you are interested in undertaking a study of devotional literature appurtenant to Saivasiddhantam.

Q.: Is this Saivasiddhantam the school of philosophy taught by Sri Bhagawan?

B.: Bhagawan does not stake claim to any school, and there are no systematised methods of discipline leading upto Realisation. A school of philosophy is a collection of ideas that contains answers to many metaphysical questions; as such therefore it is only theory. Actual Realisation requires introversion of mind. Believing in ideas will not lead to Emancipation, which is the state of perfect freedom from all ideas. Realisation does not come from philosophy; at best philosophic thought can lead to craving for



Realisation, which is useful because it helps to get rid of all other desires, finally itself vanishing prior to the dawn of Realisation. Surrender is more important than intellectual profundity.

Q.: I pray to God regularly but I have the feeling that He pays no heed to my prayers.

B.: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Q.: If I am a sinner, how may I be pardoned?

B.: Give yourself upto Him without reserve and resign yourself in entirety to the fact that He rightfully might do with you as He pleases.

Q.: Is the doctrine of original sin correct?

B.: Original sin or the forbidden fruit is nothing but the aham-vritti. "For the wages of sin is death..." The ego causes repeated experiences of birth, which is indeed the condition that deserves to go by name of death. When we say that sin causes death, it is meant that individuality causes entrapment in samsara.

S>M>

A Caucasian gentleman from Xanthi, Greece, asked:

Q.: Do extra-terrestrial forms of life exist? Are living organisms anywhere to be found other than our planet? Is life unique to this planet, or is there life going on unobserved by us in other parts of this immeasurably vast wilderness known as the cosmos? If life does exist in outer space, would it ever become possible for us humans to establish contact with such extra-terrestrial life-forms?

B.: When you say 'life', what exactly is it that you mean? In actual fact, everything is alive. Why should the meaning of the term be restricted to bundles of organic chemicals which resist Entropisation and which are capable of producing copies of themselves? There cannot be anything that does not have life in it, that is not alive. Life alone is possible. The Self is verily nothing but Life Itself; everything is comprised within the Self only; the implication, therefore, is that everything is equally alive.

Q.: So the distinction between living and non-living things is fictitious or imaginary?

B.: Yes.

Q.: There do undoubtedly walk this earth those who derive perverse pleasure out of carrying out acts of intentional and deliberate perpetration of harm unto others who are innocent and helpless. Why does God permit such wicked people to inhabit this world? Do such iniquitous souls exist in the world on

account of God's will or in spite of it- and either way, what sort of God is He? Is He evil and omnipotent or is He good and powerless? Even granting that the world is merely a dream, why should the dream contain so much unpleasantness?

B.: If the world were an ideal place, the desire to transcend it through the sole possible means of Realising the Self would never arise.

Q.: So God has introduced evil in the world exclusively so that the desire to Realise the Self ought to be instilled in man?

B.: You may take it to be so. However, good and evil are only mental hypotheses or conjectures. They have no place in the Self. Do you see good and evil in the state of deep sleep?

Q.: Some people say that drugs transport them to an alternate, deeper plane of consciousness than what is possible to be experienced in the states of waking and dream. Is there any factual basis to these claims? Is it possible that there could be some merit to such claims? Surely not all such claims could be fiction?

B.: What is the motive underlying consumption of these substances? The man wants to escape from the individual self which has ruined his happiness and enshackled him to ceaseless misery. He craves for the bliss of no-mind, and tries to obtain it by hook or by crook. Effort ought certainly to be made to escape from the sense of individuality, but it must be in the right direction. Only annihilation of all vasanās can bestow permanent peace. Drugs might be able to offer a simulated experience of the splendour of vrittijnanam, which is otherwise known as spandabhrâjasamâdhi; however, the same can only be a weak imitation which further is temporary and fleeting in nature, lasting until the effect of the drug wears off. Those are unable to afford gold wear imitation-jewellery. Likewise, those who do not actually have the strength of mind to attain the state of spandabhrâjasamâdhi try to make do with drugs.

Q.: I have heard of nirvikalpasamâdhi. What is this spandabhrâjasamâdhi?

B.: It is a technical term for aham-sphurana.

Q.: And what is that, pray?

B.: It means that the mind is completely exposed to the blissful light of the Self, and remains wholly immersed therein instead of wandering outwards.

Q.: What is the difference between savikalpasamâdhi, nirvikalpasamâdhi, spandabhrâjasamâdhi, and sahasrasamâdhi? Also, how do these differ from manolayam? Further, how is manolayam different from sushupti?

B.: The first involves holding onto a single thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts; it involves deliberate effort put in by the mind. The second and third do not involve any effort on the part of the mind; spontaneously the mind remains plunged in the Self. In the second, body-consciousness may be lost

and therefore awareness of the world is not maintained, because both the form and content of the mind are temporarily lost. In the third, body-consciousness and worldly-awareness are not suspended, because while the content of the mind is temporarily lost, its form is not affected. As for the fourth, it cannot be described or explained at all; it is the state of the Jnani, wherein the mind is not merely submerged in Self but altogether destroyed. To all outward appearances the Jnani might seem to be functioning just like the man on the Clapham omnibus does, but that is not his experience; really, he is not doing anything. Nirvikalpasamâdhi is spoken of highly by some persons, but the same is not conducive for destruction of vasanas. Mind must be kept on the one hand plunged in the Self and on the other permitted to of its own accord come naturally to the conclusion that vasanas are an obstacle to genuine peace; that is why spandabhrâjasamâdhi is preferable. Even after a 1000 years of remaining in nirvikalpasamâdhi, the person at the time of emerging therefrom will still have the same traits of individuality that he possessed at the time of entering into such trance; therefore his samâdhi has failed to Emancipate him. Nirvikalpasamâdhi, although it is spoken of so highly by many pandits throughout the length and breadth of India, cannot bring about manonasa; nor is it an acid-test to determine whether a given man is a Jnani or not. Nirvikalpasamâdhi dissolves the mind in the Self without killing the vasanas; therefore as far as Emancipation is concerned, there is no use in practising the same. You also asked about manolaya. It is not significantly different from sushupti. In the state of jagrat-swapna, the mind's creations are concrete and firm in that they are organised into identifiable shapes or forms; in manolaya the vasanas are projected hazily as vague ideas and motivations; in sushupti the vasanas are withheld from projecting themselves. In a film-projector, the film being exhibited remains as it is, but if the lens is not properly focused, the image appearing on the screen seems hazy or blurred. Likewise here. The vasanas of the individual remain the same, but they take on varying degrees of grossness [sthulyam] at different times. The world projected during jagrat seems more solid or stable compared to the world projected during swapna; the world projected during swapna seems more solid or stable compared to the world projected during manolaya; and so on and so forth. In 'Die Traumdeutung', Herr Freud postulates that dreams contain the realisation of our unfulfilled desires. This demonstrates that jagrat, swapna, manolaya and so on are really the same single state, which is dominated by the content of one's vasanas and samskaras. One might go on having these discussions, but there will be no conclusion to argument. These are all 'polemics'. They are not useful to know as far as the goal of Realisation is concerned. It is enough to know the Self.

These questions will never trouble the Jnani because he knows that whatever appears cannot be different or apart from the Self, which is the sole Reality.

Q.: When there is bliss beyond imagination available in Parabrahman, why does man always shun Reality but relentlessly continuously and adamantly chase after the many illusory pursuits proffered unto him by this fleeting, mirage-like world?

B.: Because the world is mistakenly thought to be objectively real in itself.

Q.: How shall I convince myself that the world is merely a mistaken delusion?

B.: You need not do any such thing. Simply go on working with the mind and the rest will fall into place automatically.

Q.: Without Guru's Grace Realisation cannot be had. Is that not so?

B.: That is correct.

Q.: How shall I find my Guru? Is Sri Bhagawan my Guru? I have been attached to the image of Jesus since when I was a child. Can it be said that Jesus is my Guru?

B.: Yes.

Q.: But Jesus is not to be found in the flesh and blood now; he passed away centuries ago.

B.: Never mind. He lives on within your heart. By inhering in the essence of your own heart, you will Realise His Sacred Heart.

Q.: Can we now surrender to Jesus as if he was still alive in the flesh and blood?

B.: Certainly.

Q.: I am a sinner. Will he repudiate my love for himself?

B.: Never. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." He has given his life for you. Will he ever forsake you now?

Impossible. Has not Chaucer written thus:

*...loveth him, the which that right for love  
Upon a cros, our soules for to beye,  
First starf, and roos, and sit in the hevene a-bove;  
For he nil falsen no wight, dar I seye,  
That wol his herte al hoolly on him leye.  
And sin he best to love is, and most meke,  
What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?*

Q.: Yes, but where shall I find Him?

B.: Within the Heart as the Heart.

Q.: How shall the Heart be reached?

B.: There is no reaching It.

Q.: Then what shall I do?

B.: Surrender to it without reserve.

Q.: If I surrender, shall I be saved?

B.: The surrendered mind will not raise this or any other question.

Q.: But I am yet to surrender.

B.: That is the problem. Surrender here and now and be done with it once and for all.

S>M>

Q.: What is the significance of the shalagramam-stone? Is there any point in worshipping a mere block of stone and then childishly pretending that the same is God?

B.: Did anybody ask you to worship so?

Q.: No, but what about those who do worship so? Should they not be brought around to face the truth that there is no point in what they are doing?

B.: Never mind. You take care of yourself and the world can take care of itself.

Q.: Bhrigu Maharshi is said to have cursed Lord Shiva, with the result that he is worshipped on the earth not in his anthropomorphic form but only in his linga-roopam form. Is it true? Why should the omnipotent Lord Shiva be affected by the curse of this mischievous sage? Did Shiva not have the strength to resist the curse of the sage?

B.: Let Bhrigu and Shiva worry about what happened between them. Let us mind our own business.

Q.: Why did Bhagawan bury his mother? She was a widow. How can she be regarded as a sannyasi?

B.: Let her come and complain if she likes. You need not bother about it. Mind your own business.

Q.: Many ladies visit this place. Why are you sitting shamelessly like this? What pleasure do you obtain in remaining almost nude? Atleast wear a vaeshti. Shall I buy you one? I do not mind the expenditure.

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: The Mahamrutyunjaya-mantra [thrayambakamyajamahe, etc.] is said to bring about immortality. Is it so?

B.: If its import be Realised.

Q.: For sandhyavandanam, can the same be chanted in place of the Gayathri-mantra?

B.: Ensure that you change the avahaya, anushtana and samapana mantras accordingly.

Q.: What benefit is gained by making this improvisation?

B.: [smiling] You wanted to do it and therefore it was suggested unto you that you do it correctly. Now you are yourself asking what the need is for doing so.

S>M>

Q.: The springs at Manikaran are said to be able to cure one of all diseases in the body. Is it so?

B.: The body is the one and only disease and there are no other diseases.

Q.: How to overcome the urge to masturbate oneself?

B.: If the desire for Emancipation is strong, other desires will not arise.

Q.: How to get rid of one's abhinivesha?

B.: It cannot be done by means of wishing for it to go away. A strong yearning for Emancipation and strong disaffection towards samsara are both highly necessary.

Q.: Upasni Maharaj has said that one must abandon the totality of one's life in God's hands and leave it at that.

B.: Quite so.

Q.: Was the prophet Mohammed a Jnani?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

A parcel was brought into the Hall which was neatly wrapped up in brown-paper. On the outside there was pasted the inscription, 'We pay our humble respects to the Maharshi, who is held by us in profound esteem in every conceivable way; respectfully yours, Ananthakrishna Chetty, Badrinarayana Chetty and Padmanabha Chetty, Perumal Chetty & Co., China Bazaar Road, Madras.'. The parcel was opened. It contained a quantity of godhumai-halwa wrapped in banana-leaf. Another parcel also had arrived from the same source: this one contained a marriage-invitation together with a letter fervently pleading that the master must attend the wedding-ceremony without fail, for, the epistle went on to say, the festivity would be incomplete without the Maharshi's presence. The marriage was scheduled to take place during November, and at Madras. The Maharshi was expected to arrive there a week before the actual event had been organised to commence, so that they could find the time to attend on him and take care of him properly. All travel arrangements would be taken care of by them; all the Maharshi was required to do was to indicate his assent by asking the ashram to write a letter to them saying that the requisite train-tickets could be booked. They considered Maharshi to be higher than their kuladheivam and would be severely disappointed if he for any reason could not come. The Maharshi would be well taken care of during his stay with them; every requirement of his would be satisfied even before he enunciated it.

B.: [to Mr. TKS] Write to them thanking them for their warm hospitality, but also tell them politely that the Maharshi is not in the habit of leaving Tiruvannamalai. Here, hand over the halwa at the kitchen; it must be distributed during tomorrow's meal.

TKS.: It is the same party that sends the ashram a copy of the 'Hoe & Co.' diary on the occasion of every English new-year unfailingly, is it not?

B.: Yes, the same. They own a pencil-manufacturing firm at Madras, it seems.  
S>M>

Q.: The philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus is known to have remarked, 'Ever-newer waters flow on those who step into the same rivers.'

B.: Quite so.

Q.: What is the significance of the statement?

B.: Ideas of familiarity are merely mind-generated delusions. Constant change is the nature of the cosmos. Changefulness is the one and only thing that does not change. If one wants permanence, there is no use looking outside oneself. The substratum of Reality supporting the cosmos is the one and only permanent thing.

Mr. Knowles: The same idea has been expressed in the book, 'The Fragments of Parmenides; translated into English hexameters, with introduction and notes, by Thomas Davidson'; listen as I read out from it for you: [reads out as follows-]

*Never I ween shalt thou learn that Being can be of what is not;  
Wherefore do thou withdraw thy mind from this path of inquiry,  
Neither let habit compel thee, while treading this pathway of knowledge,  
Still to employ a visionless eye or an ear full of ringing,  
Yea, or a clamorous tongue; but prove this vexed demonstration  
Uttered by me, by reason. And now there remains for discussion  
One path only : That Being doth be- and on it there are tokens,  
Many and many to show that what is is birthless and deathless,  
Whole and only-begotten, and moveless and ever-enduring:  
Never it was or shall be; but the all simultaneously now is,  
One continuous one ; for of it what birth shalt thou search for?  
How and whence it hath sprung? I shall not permit thee to tell me,  
Neither to think: ' Of what is not,' for none can say or imagine  
How Not-Is becomes Is ; or else what need should have stirred it,  
After or yet before its beginning, to issue from nothing? ,  
Thus either wholly Being must be or wholly must not be.  
Never from that which is will the force of Intelligence suffer  
Aught to become beyond being itself. Thence neither production  
Neither destruction doth Justice permit, ne'er slackening her fetters;  
But she forbids. And herein is contained the decision of these things ;  
Either there is or is not; but Judgment declares, as it needs must,  
One of these paths to be uncomprehended and utterly nameless,  
No true pathway at all, but the other to be and be real.*

*How can that which is now be hereafter, or how can it have been?  
For if it hath been before, or shall be hereafter, it is not:  
Thus generation is quenched and decay surpasseth believing.  
Nor is there aught of distinct; for the All is self-similar always.  
Nor is there anywhere more to debar it from being unbroken ;  
Nor is there anywhere less, for the All is sated with Being;  
Wherefore the All is unbroken, and Being approacheth to Being.  
Moveless, moreover, and bounded by great chains' limits it lieth,  
Void of beginning, without any ceasing, since birth and destruction  
Both have wandered afar, driven forth by the truth of conviction.  
Same in the same and abiding, and self through itself it reposes.  
Steadfast thus it endureth, for mighty Necessity holds it-  
Holds it within the chains of her bounds and round doth secure it.  
Wherefore that that which is should be infinite is not permitted;  
For it is lacking in naught, or else it were lacking in all things.*

S>M>

Q.: Man knows that accumulating material wealth is not going to help him in any manner on his death-bed; yet he goes on doing so. Why is this?

The master did not respond, but-

Mr. Knowles: The same question, kind sir, has been explored in this excellent book, that is to say, 'The Methods of Ethics by Henry Sidgwick, Sometime Knightbridge Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Cambridge'; kindly pay attention whilst I read it out to you: [reads out as follows-]

***It certainly seems more natural to men, at least in the main plan and ordering of their lives, to seek and consciously estimate the objective conditions and sources of happiness, rather than happiness itself; and it may plausibly be said that by relying on such estimates of objects we avoid the difficulties that beset the introspective method of comparing feelings : and that the common opinions as to the value of different sources of pleasure express the net result of the combined experience of mankind from generation to generation : in which the divergences due to the limitations of each individual's experience, and to the differently tinged moods in which different estimates have been taken, have balanced and neutralised each other and so disappeared. I do not wish to undervalue the guidance of common sense in our pursuit of happiness. I think, however, that when we consider these common opinions as premises for the deductions of systematic egoism, they must be admitted to be open to the following grave objections. To commence with, it forms the subject-matter of our observation that Common Sense gives us only, at the best, an estimate true for an***



*average or typical human being : and, as we have already seen, it is probable that any particular individual will be more or less divergent from this type. In any case, therefore, each person will have to correct the estimate of common opinion by the results of his own experience in order to obtain from it trustworthy guidance for his own conduct : and this process of correction, it would seem, must be involved in all the difficulties from which we are trying to escape. But, secondly, the experience of the mass of mankind is confined within limits too narrow for its results to be of much avail in the present inquiry. The majority of human beings spend most of their time in labouring to avert starvation and severe bodily discomfort : and the brief leisure that remains to them, after supplying the bodily needs of food, sleep, etc., is spent in ways determined rather by impulse, routine, and habit, than by a deliberate estimate of probable pleasure. It would seem, then, that the common sense to which we have here to refer can only be that of a minority of comparatively rich and leisured persons. But again, we cannot tell that the mass of mankind, or any section of the mass, is not generally and normally under the influence of some of the causes of mal-observation previously noticed. We avoid the " idols of the cave " by trusting Common Sense, but what is to guard us against the " idols of the tribe " ? Moreover, the common estimate of different sources of happiness seems to involve all the confusion of ideas and points of view, which in defining the empirical method of Hedonism we have taken some pains to eliminate. In the first place it does not distinguish between objects of natural desire and sources of experienced pleasure. Now we have seen that these two are not exactly coincident indeed we find numerous examples of men who continue not only to feel but to indulge desires, the gratification of which they know by ample experience to be attended with more pain than pleasure. And therefore the current estimate of the desirability of objects of pursuit cannot be taken to express simply men's experience of pleasure and pain : for men are apt to think desirable what they strongly desire, whether or not they have found it conducive to happiness on the whole : and so the common opinion will tend to represent a compromise between the average force of desires and the average experience of the consequences of gratifying them. We must allow again for the intermingling of moral with purely hedonistic preferences in the estimate of common sense. For even when men definitely expect greater happiness from the course of conduct which they choose than from any other, it is often because they think it the right, or more excellent, or*

*more noble course ; making, more or less unconsciously, the assumption (which we shall presently have to consider) that the morally best action will prove to be also the most conducive to the agent's happiness. And a similar assumption seems to be made without adequate warrant as regards merely aesthetic preferences. Again, the introduction of the moral and aesthetic points of view suggests the following doubt : Are we to be guided by the preferences which men avow, or by those which their actions would lead us to infer ? On the one hand, we cannot doubt that men often, from weakness of character, fail to seek what they sincerely believe will give them most pleasure in the long-run : on the other hand, as a genuine preference for virtuous or refined pleasure is a mark of genuine virtue or refined taste, men who do not really feel such preference are unconsciously or consciously influenced by a desire to gain credit for it, and their express estimate of pleasure is thus modified and coloured. But, even if we had no doubt on general grounds that Common Sense would prove our best guide in the pursuit of happiness, we should still be perplexed by finding its utterances on this topic very deficient in clearness and consistency. I do not merely mean that they are different in different ages and countries that we might explain as due to variations in the general conditions of human life : but that serious conflicts and ambiguities are found if we consider only the current common sense of our own age and country. We can make a list of sources of happiness apparently recommended by an overwhelming consensus of current opinion : as health, wealth, friendship and family affections, fame and social position, power, interesting and congenial occupation and amusement, including the gratification, in some form, of the love of knowledge, and of those refined, partly sensual, partly emotional, susceptibilities which we call aesthetic. But if we inquire into the relative value of these objects of common pursuit, we seem to get no clear answer from Common Sense unless, perhaps, it would be generally agreed that health ought to be paramount to all other secondary ends : though even on this point we could not infer general agreement from observation of the actual conduct of mankind. Nay, even as regards the positive estimate of these sources of happiness, we find on closer examination that the supposed consensus is much less clear than it seemed at first. Not only are there numerous and important bodies of dissidents from the current opinions : but the very same majority, the same Common Sense of Mankind that maintains these opinions, is found in a singular and unexpected manner to welcome and approve the paradoxes of these dissidents. Men show a*

***really startling readiness to admit that the estimates of happiness which guide them in their ordinary habits and pursuits are erroneous and illusory ; and that from time to time the veil is, as it were, lifted, and the error and illusion made manifest. For, first, men seem to attach great value to the ample gratification of bodily appetites and needs : the wealthier part of mankind spend a considerable amount of money and forethought upon the means of satisfying these in a luxurious manner : and though they do not often deliberately sacrifice health to this gratification common sense condemns that as irrational still one may say that they are habitually courageous in pressing forward to the very verge of this imprudence. And yet the same people are fond of saying that " hunger is the best sauce," and that " temperance and labour will make plain food more delightful than the most exquisite products of the culinary art." And they often argue with perfect sincerity that the rich have really no advantage, or scarcely any advantage, over the comparatively poor, in respect of these pleasures ; for habit soon renders the more luxurious provision for the satisfaction of their acquired needs no more pleasant to the rich than the appeasing of his more primitive appetites is to the poor man. And the same argument is often extended to all the material comforts that wealth can purchase. It is often contended that habit at once renders us indifferent to these while they are enjoyed, and yet unable to dispense with them without annoyance : so that the pleasures of the merely animal life are no greater to the rich than to the poor, but only more insecure. And from this there is but a short step to the conclusion, that wealth, in the pursuit of which most men agree in concentrating their efforts, and on the attainment of which all congratulate each other, wealth, for which so many risk their health, shorten their lives, reduce their enjoyments of domestic life, and sacrifice the more refined pleasures of curiosity and art, is really a very doubtful gain, in the majority of cases ; because the cares and anxieties which it entails balance, for most men, the slight advantage of the luxuries which it purchases.***

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between avadhoota and athiashrami?

B.: The avadhoota is a Jnani who lives as a wandering monk; he cannot be found in one place for more than a few days at a time. It must be noted that it is all the same to the Jnani whether he lives as a part of a household or as an avadhoota. Whatever his place of residence or circumstances might be, he is and remains always non-attached. It is the onlooker who classifies Jnanis into avadhootas and householders. When asked to which ashrama the avadhoota

belongs, we say that there is a special ashrama for him known as athiashrama, since he cannot be conveniently placed within any of the four conventional ashramas. The fact is that such questions are irrelevant from the Jnani's own point of view; only the onlooker finds any meaning in them.

S>M>

Q.: Has Sri Bhagawan heard of the curious case of Mrs. Myrtle Corbin, the woman born with 4 legs?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Does God deliberately permit such curiosities to take place or are these mere random occurrences?

B.: Everything is random because everything takes place within Randomness only.

Q.: In that case my birth was also a random occurrence.

B.: Yes.

Q.: But on the other hand it is said that it is unfinished karma which is responsible for causing birth.

B.: Karma also is subject to Randomness only. People are deluded into thinking or assuming otherwise owing exclusively to the fact that they believe free-will to exist. How can free-will exist? Whose free-will is it?

Q.: The ego's.

B.: But what is this ego? In other words, to the question 'Who am I?' what is the answer?

Q.: Please tell us.

B.: The disappearance of the questioner is the only answer. It is not that the ego is suddenly made to disappear upon Realisation. The ego really never was. Such a thing as ego can never exist. Even now ego is not. Realise it.

Q.: But how?

B.: The ego arises only by means of holding onto you. Hold yourself and the ego will not arise.

S>M>

Q.: There are those who say that Christianity is a fabricated religion; according to these same critics, the actual teachings of the historical Christ were the same as the Buddha's; later, they say, fraudsters edited the gospels to suit their own ulterior, political ends, so that Jesus was made to look like a literal god, whereas as a matter of actual fact he was only a spiritual teacher like the Buddha or like Sri Bhagawan. Chesterton has pointed out this fact as follows:

**Said the King of the East to the King of the West,  
I wot his frown was set,**

'Lo, let us slay him and make him as dung,  
It is well that the world forget.'  
Said the King of the West to the King of the East,  
I wot his smile was dread,  
'Nay, let us slay him and make him a god,  
It is well that our god be dead.'  
They set the young man on a hill,  
They nailed him to a rod;  
And there in darkness and in blood  
They made themselves a god.

Are such allegations correct?

B.: It cannot be denied that Jesus wanted men to discover God within themselves. If the Bible were to be considered as the only source for referencing his words from, then we shall have to admit that only a small fraction of his actual sayings have survived. However, certain brotherhoods around the world seem to have collected in secret, for dissemination amongst their own brethren, manuscripts wherein is found inscribed many sayings of Jesus that the Church would never be in agreement with. I came to know of this fact only recently, when a certain Dutch-gentleman who visits this place now and then, Dr. Gaulthernus, showed such works to me; he did not leave them behind here, but upon incisive perusal I found that the Messiah's message was not to ask people to wait for his second-coming or any such thing, but to facilitate people to Realise Reality here and now. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is within you. Realise It.

Q.: So, the teaching of Jesus is the same as that of Sri Bhagawan's and the same as that of the Buddha's?

B.: All exhort you to dismiss the world as illusion, turn within and Realise the changeless Self. Do it: because it is in your best interests to do so. Never mind whether the Buddha said it or whether Gaudapada said it or whether Adhishankara said it or whether I say it. Do not obsess yourself over the messenger. Instead focus your attention on the message. When the post-man delivers an urgent telegram, which is more important to you: the question of what the telegram says or the question of whether the post-man is wearing sandals or boots? [smiling] Let the post-man wear what he likes. You concern yourself with the telegram.

S>M>

Mention was made in the Hall of the tragic demise of a certain Mr. R. E. Howard, an amateurish writer who used to contribute frequent articles to the United-states magazine Weird Tales. He had committed suicide because his mother had fallen into a coma; the very next day his mother had also passed away. Bhagawan was asked whether the mind left open psychic channels of communication even when the body was in a coma; otherwise how could the mother come to know her son had passed away, and accordingly bring about her own prompt extinguishment? Could two jivas be tied together so strongly that the death of any one amongst them automatically brought about the death of the other?

B.: Yes; it is possible. They say that when Karna was slaughtered on the battlefield, Kuntidevi came to know of her own accord that one of her sons had died; she did not require to be told; at once she rushed to the battlefield. We think that these ideas run contrary to the scientific-spirit, but nonetheless, such things do happen even today evidently.

S>M>

Q.: Who qualifies to be your devotee and who does not?

B.: Anybody can be a devotee. Why not? All are in the Self only, whether they happen to be aware of the fact or not. So, we are all devotees of the Self whether we are prepared to admit the fact or not. 'I am one; he is another.'; if this thought is kept at bay, we have succeeded in turning out to be a devotee of the Self.

The man handed a short, red-coloured, repetitively knotted rope to the Maharshi.

Q.: I purchased this outside the Temple today morning. Please tie it around my wrist to show that you have indicated that I am your devotee.

B.: No, it is not necessary to do so. There is no requirement for outwardly symbols. It is enough that the heart be ripe to blossom into the truth. Moreover, if one is obliged all will ask.

Q.: Is idol-worship necessary?

B.: There is nothing wrong in it.

S>M>

Q.: In the Muir Woods forest in California, there are said to be trees still in existence which are supposed to be more than 300 years old. Were such extremely ancient trees found here also when Sri Bhagawan first came to Tiruvannamalai?

B.: [no response]

Q.: When the RMS Titanic sank in 1912, more than 1200 lives were lost. Why did God forget to show mercy to these people?

B.: [no response]

Q.: Will the human race ultimately destroy itself completely on account of destructive warfare?

B.: [no response]

Q.: What is the special significance of the shell of the ocean-dwelling creature, Nautilus Pompilius, and why did the same find a place in the living-room, at the mantelpiece, of so many numerous Victorian households belonging to the upper-middle class of that era?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: Kipling wrote-

***The careful text-books measure  
So that all who build beware  
The load, the shock, the pressure  
Material can bear.***

***So, when the buckled girder  
Lets down the grinding span,  
The blame of loss, or murder,  
Is laid upon the man.***

***Not on the Stuff but the Man!  
But in our daily dealing  
With stone and steel, we find  
The Gods have no such feeling  
Of justice toward mankind.***

***To no set gauge they make us-  
For no laid course prepare-  
And presently overtake us  
With loads we are unable to share  
For alas! they are too merciless to bear.***

Poe wrote-

***Get thee back into the tempest  
And the night's plutonian shore!  
And my soul from out that shadow  
That lies floating on the floor  
Shall be lifted- nevermore!***

My case has now become likewise. I feel as though I am living inside an unending nightmare. No matter what I do, things always go wrong in my life. What shall I do? My life has become haunted.

B.: Abandon the idea that it ought to be any different and thereby be at peace.

S>M>

Q.: It is said, acharyathpadamadhatte padamsishyaswamedhaya padamsabrahmacharibhya seshamkalakramenacha. Does it apply to Realisation also?

B.: Yes; there are as many Gurus for the earnest mumukshu as there are particles of sand on the sea-shore- i.e., tending towards uncountability. The acharya, one's own intellect, passage of time, abidance in the Self: these are examples. The earnest seeker learns from anything and everything. All incidents and occurrences in his life are lessons for him to learn from. There is something to be learnt from anything and everything, as illustrated in the story of Dattathreya. There is no end to learning; learning is spontaneous and automatic; also, it is not avoidable. Even upon encountering the worst crisis imaginable, one must have the tranquility of mind to calmly tackle the problem in detached fashion.

Q.: Shakespeare wrote, 'And worse I may be yet. The worst is not so long as we can say "This is the worst."'

B.: Quite so.

Q.: Voltaire is known to have remarked, 'It is difficult to free fools from the chains they revere.'

B.: [laughs] Yes, we have to admit the truth of that statement.

S>M>

The following piece is read out in the Hall from some magazine of religious interest; the same is widely appreciated by everybody seated in the Hall, including the master:

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with Jesus. Many scenes from my life flashed across the field of my memory; in each of those scenes, I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, but at other times there was only one. This fact filled me with trepidation because I noticed that during the particularly excruciating periods of my life, when I had been suffering from anguish, bereavement or humiliation, I could see only one set of footprints, so I tearfully said to the Lord, "You promised me, Master, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always; but I have noticed that during the most torturous periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you the most, have you not been there for me?" The Lord replied, "The times when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you in my arms."

S>M>

When the master is gone for his usual walk on the Hill, the topic of discussion in the Hall turns to works of art. Each one must name his most favourite three paintings and most favourite three poems. It was my turn and this is the answer I gave, simply conjuring up whatever came into my head right at that



moment: The Titan's Goblet by Thomas Cole, The Head of St. John the Baptist by Giovanni Bellini, and Charon Crossing the Styx by Joachim Patinir; How Do I Love Thee? by E. B. Browning, Sympathy by P. L. Dunbar, and When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be by John Keats. Next, the choices were all put to vote. Echo by Christina Rossetti [Chadwick's preliminary selection] was chosen to be the best amongst all the poems mentioned presently; whereas St. Jerome in His Study by Albrecht Dürer [Mr. Knowles's preliminary selection] was chosen to be the best amongst all the paintings mentioned presently.

S>M>

Q.: I read the following poem in the book, 'The Tea-table Miscellany: A Collection of Choice Songs, Scots and English; by Allan Ramsay'; it reminded me of Sri Bhagawan's face at once:

We all to conquering Beauty bow, and  
Its pleasing Power admire ;  
But I never knew a Face until now,  
That like yours could inspire.  
Now I may say, I met with one that  
Amazes all Mankind ;  
And like Men gazing on the Sun,  
With too much light am blind.  
Soft as the tender moving Sighs,  
When longing Lovers meet ;  
Like the divining Prophets wise,  
And like new blown Roses sweet :  
Modest, yet Gay; Reserved, yet Free ;  
Each happy Night a Bride ;  
A Mien like awful Majesty,  
And yet no spark of Pride.

B.: Oh! Is that so?

S>M>

Q.: Kannappar plucked out his own eye so as to please the Lord, who was without doubt exceedingly dear to him. Can such fanatical or maniacal acts of devotion really bring about Realisation?

B.: Are you planning on plucking out your eye in order so that you might have Realisation?

Q.: No.

B.: Then why do you bother about the question?

Q.: Each faculty of sensory-perceptivity is said to contain the power of one of the five elements of nature within itself; is this true?

The master did not respond, but-

Mr. Knowles: Indeed it is, kind sir, as it says in this book; please pay attention whilst I read out the relevant content from it appurtenant to your question:

[reads out as follows from the book 'Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic; by the famous mystic Henry Cornelius Agrippa Von Nettesheim; Counselor to Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, and Judge of the Prerogative Court; edited by Willis F. Whitehead.'-]

It is the opinion of some divines that God did not immediately create the body of man, but by the assistance of the heavenly spirits compounded and framed by him; which opinion Alcinous and Plato favor, thinking that God is the chief creator of the whole world, and of spirits, both good and bad, and therefore immortalized them; but that all kinds of mortal animals were made only at the command of God; for, if he should have created them, they must have been immortal. The spirits, therefore, mixing Earth, Fire, Air, and Water together, made of them all, put together, one body, which they subjected to the service of the soul, assigning in it several provinces to each power thereof; to the meaner of them, mean and low places: as to anger, the midriff; to desire, the womb; but to the more noble senses, the head- as the tower of the whole body- and then the manifold organs of speech. They divide the senses into the external and internal. The external are divided into five, known to every one, to which there are allotted five organs, or subjects, as it were, foundations; being so ordered that they which are placed in the more eminent part of the body, have a greater degree of purity. For the eyes, placed in the uppermost place, are the most pure, and have an affinity with the nature of Fire and Light; then the ears have the second order of place and purity, and are compared to the Air; the nostrils have the third order, and have a middle nature betwixt the Air and the Water. Then the organ of tasting, which is grosser, and most like to the nature of Water. Last of all the touching is diffused through the whole body, and is compared to the grossness of Earth. The more pure senses are those which perceive their objects farthest off, as seeing and hearing; then the smelling, then the taste, which doth not perceive

but that which is nigh. But the touch perceives both ways, for it perceives bodies nigh; and as sight discerns by the medium of the Air, so the touch perceives, by the medium of a stick or pole, bodies hard, soft and moist. Now the touch only is common to all animals. And it is most certain that man hath this sense, and, in this and taste, he excells all other animals; but in the other three, he is excelled by some animals, as by a dog, who hears, sees and smells more acutely than man; and the lynx and eagles see more acutely than all other animals and man. Now the interior senses are, according to Averrois, divided into four, whereof the first is called common sense, because it doth first collect and perfect all the representations which are drawn in by the outward senses. The second is the imaginative power, whose function is, seeing it represents nothing, to retain those representations which are received by the former senses, and to present them to the third faculty of inward sense, which is the phantasy, or power of judging, whose work is also to perceive and judge by the representations received, what, or what kind of thing that is of which the representations are; and to commit those things which are thus discerned and adjudged, to the memory to be kept. For the virtues thereof in general, are discourse, dispositions, persecutions, and flights, and stirrings up to action, but in particular, the understanding of intellectuals, virtues, the manner of discipline, counsel, and election. This is that which shows us future things by dreams, whence the fancy is sometimes named the phantastical intellect. For it is the last impression of the understanding, which, as saith Iamblichus, is that belonging to all the powers of the mind, and forms all figures, resemblances of species, and operations, and things seen, and sends forth the impressions of other powers unto others. And those things which appear by sense, it stirs up into an opinion; but those things which appear by the intellect, in the second place, it offers to opinion; but of itself it receives images from all, and, by its property, doth properly assign them, according to their assimilation; it forms all the actions of the soul, and accommodates the external to the internal and impresses the body with its impression. Now these senses have their organs in the head, for the common sense and imagination take up the two forward cells of the brain, although Aristotle placeth the organ of the common sense in the heart; but the cogitative power possesseth the highest and middle part of the head; and, lastly, the memory the hindmost part thereof. Moreover, the organs of voice and speech are many, as the inward muscles of the breast betwixt the ribs, the breasts, the lungs, the arteries, the windpipe, the bowing of the tongue, and all those parts and muscles that serve for breathing. But the proper organ of speech is the mouth, in which are framed words and speeches, the tongue, the teeth, the lips, the palate and the like. Above the sensible soul, which

expresseth its powers by the organs of the body, the incorporeal mind possesseth the highest place, and it hath a double nature- the one, which inquireth into the causes, properties, and progress of those things which are contained in the Order of Nature, and is content in the contemplation of the truth, which is, therefore called the contemplative intellect. The other is a power of the mind which, discerning by consulting what things are to be done and what is to be shunned, is wholly taken up in consultation and action, and is therefore called the active intellect. This order of powers, therefore, Nature ordained in man, that by the external senses we might know corporeal things, and by those internal the representations of bodies, as also things abstracted by the mind and intellect, which are neither bodies nor any thing like them.

S>M>

Q.: The philosopher Marsilio Ficino is said to have remarked, 'Labor so that you may be good and shine with beauty; suddenly all things are good and shining with beauty for you.'

B.: Yes; the best way to reform the world is to reform yourself in such a way that the world as it is appears to be filled with perfection to the brim and nothing but perfection. If you think you are good and beautiful, the world also appears likewise. *Vincit qui se vincit.*

Q.: Philosophers living in medieval Europe seem to have been familiar with Advaitic-doctrine; says the *Tabula Smaragdina*, 'Quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius, et quod est superius est sicut quod est inferius, ad perpetranda miracula rei unius; et sicut res omnes fuerunt ab uno, meditatione unius, sic omnes res natae ab hac una re, adaptatione.'

B.: Why first falsely admit the existence of multiplicity and then take steps to explain it all away as belonging to or forming part of Unity? Where is above and where is below? Above whom? Below whom? Can there be anything apart from the Self?

Q.: I see a world around me and desire to know where it came from.

B.: You say 'I'. If you find out what this 'I' is, everything will become clear to you and the true nature of the world will then be known. The world is the same as the one who imagines himself to be perceiving it. Mind and world are same.

Q.: Why is it said that the ego is like a caterpillar-worm?

B.: Observe this worm closely. It relinquishes its grip on the leaf it happens to be presently holding on to only after taking hold of the subsequent leaf. The mind exhibits the same behaviour. The present thought is abandoned only after taking hold of the subsequent thought. The mind's true nature is known only when it is out of contact with thoughts and objects. The mind is the same as its objectifying tendency; if this tendency is killed, the mind sinks into its

source, the Heart, and disappears there once and for all. The essence of the mind is only awareness or consciousness. However, when the ego overclouds it, it functions as reasoning, thinking or perceiving. The universal mind, not being limited by the ego, has nothing outside itself and is therefore only aware; that is what the Book of Exodus means by 'Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh'.

Q.: Is it meaningful to approach God by the path of love, Him being a non-dual entity?

B.: Certainly. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." It is true that God is non-dual; but you admit that you are now enmeshed in duality; so long as this delusion persists in you, there is nothing wrong in worshipping God dualistically. One illusion is used to uproot another. An elephant dreams of a lion and wakes up on account of fright. Is the lion imaginary or real? The lion was part of the dream and therefore he existed only within the elephant's imagination; yet without him the elephant would never have woken up. Likewise here. The Guru or God is not apart from you. He is also the Self just the same as you are and everything is. But as long as you continue to remain attached to this imaginary world presented by the senses, mistaking it to be really there, so long the imaginary Guru or God is also needed to continually remind you that everything is an illusion. When you wake up from the dream, everything is found to be the Self only and there is no multiplicity to be found anywhere.

S>M>

Q.: Vir sapit qui pauca loquitur, it is said. Why does the Jnani remain absorbed in silence always?

B.: There is no use in attempting to portray with words That which words cannot possibly depict. The Jnani who has already conquered everything does not stand in need of anything from anybody. Semper inops quicumque cupit. The Jnani is the richest man on the earth because he is the poorest; he possesses nothing and desires nothing.

Q.: Non est ad astra mollis e terris via, it is said. It would appear that becoming a Jnani is no easy joke; it seems to require decades of rigorous mental training.

B.: The effort is also part of the dream.

Q.: Is even the desire for Realisation an obstacle to Realisation?

B.: Yes. Etiam capillus unus habet umbram. But you may use that one desire to get rid of all other desires; however, finally abandon that one desire also in order so as for Realisation to dawn.

Q.: Vichara seems a difficult practice to me. Yet some evidently take to it with relish.

B.: Fabas indulcet fames. Si vis pacem, para bellum.

Q.: Does my Realisation help others?

B.: There are no others in Realisation. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it."

S>M>

Q.: In Hinduism, what is the special significance of the tree ficus religiosa?

B.: Those who believe in such traditions follow them by means of making pradakshina around the foot of the tree, smearing it with turmeric-paste and vermilion-powder, etc.; each one does according to whatever it is that suits him. There cannot be any uniform approach that suits and fits everybody under the sun. Each one does precisely as he sees fit.

Q.: Which is the best method for obtaining Realisation?

B.: It depends upon the mental temperament of the individual concerned.

Q.: Which is the most direct method?

B.: Vichara.

Q.: Is it difficult to practice the same?

B.: Machiavelli has said, 'Where the willingness is great, the difficulties cannot be great.'

Q.: Is God always with me, even if I were to happen to spurn him or forget him or shun him?

B.: How can that be? "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." If you will care to remember God, God will care to remember you.

12th September, 1936

Q.: It seems a bit difficult to swallow or digest the idea that the individual self does not exist at all.

B.: Yes, that is the illusion.

Q.: How to stop the mind from perceiving objects?

B.: In sleep there are no objects perceived; does it mean that the state of Jnana and the state of sushupti are one and the same? Physical perception or non-perception of objects matters nothing. What is important is to remain without attachment to objects. In the state of Jnana, physical perception of the world may or may not continue, but either way the Jnani remains unaffected. It is immaterial to the Emancipated-soul whether the world appears or not. Since there is no localised subject in the Jnani, there cannot be any objects for him to perceive. The body may still continue to perceive the world around it, but that is not the Jnani's business to bother about, because he ceased to identify with the body long ago. Mere absence of body-consciousness is not Jnana; otherwise, falling asleep would be enough to Realise Jnana. When mind is still immature enough as to perceive or register objects, Jnana cannot

possibly dawn. Perception by eyes is not the same as perception by mind; the former is harmless whereas the latter indicates presence of nescience. An image can be formed upon a photographic-plate only when duration of exposure and measure of aperture are kept within reasonable limits. If exposed continuously and thoroughly, the plate becomes totally exposed and no image will then be discernable. Likewise with the mind. Continuous and thorough exposure to the light of the Self will make the mind unable to register objects, eventually killing it altogether. Then alone does Realisation dawn.

Q.: What is the light of the Self?

B.: Beingness, which is the essence of the mind. The effort made or motive present to inhere the mind in the beingness of the Self also betrays the presence of ignorance. Inherence in the Self should be effortless, motiveless, volitionless and perfectly natural. People talk of cultivating or acquiring happiness. Happiness is the natural state. It is ourselves who overrule the same and choose to be unhappy instead. Whose fault can it be? The bliss of the Self is always available with you, if only you would seek the same earnestly.

Q.: But B. opines that effort made to Realise indicates presence of ignorance.

B.: Until inherence in the Self has become effortless, let it be with effort.

Q.: Is it true that ejaculation of semen lowers one's spiritual prowesses?

B.: It is mind that matters. A mind obsessed with seeking fulfillment of animal-passions will not be able to concentrate on the Quest.

S>M>

Q.: The mughal emperor Aurangazeb is said to have forcibly converted thousands of brahmins into moslems. Is it not wrong?

B.: [no response]

Q.: Will even a single moslem convert to Hinduism? It is punishable by death for a moslem to do so, according to their law. Why then do Hindus alone become a scapegoat for such things? What sin have we committed?

B.: [no response]

Q.: After we throw out the British, next the moslems should be thrown out of the country. Only then can we live in peace. Am I correct?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: Should the mumukshu deliberately shun or avoid company of fellow humans, and endeavour to live in isolation?

B.: Where you live or do not live is not upto you to decide, but left to prarabdha. The only freedom you have is to decide what you want to do with your mind: whether you turn it inwards or outwards.

Q.: Ruskin wrote:

*She sat beside me yesterday  
With lip, and eye, so blandly smiling,  
So full of soul, of life, of light,  
So sweetly my lorn heart beguiling  
That she had almost made me gay  
Had almost charmed the thought away  
Which, like the poisoned desert wind,  
Came sick and heavy over my mind,  
That memory soon mine all would be,  
And she would smile no more for me.*

Will reflecting constantly upon the transient nature of man's, or rather my own, existence on the earth be helpful in bringing about Realisation?

B.: It may be a good aid for those who are neophytes on the path. Total disenchantment with samsara is necessary before any progress can be made in relation to the matter of working towards Realisation. If the goings-on of the world are still succeeding in arousing your interest, where is the scope for achieving Realisation? There cannot be both world and Realisation. Why? Because it is absence of world that is referred to as Realisation.

Q.: Should I then silently sit in a single place like a stone, without paying any attention to the world?

B.: As to the question of whether you want to move about or remain seated in a single place, the same can never be your decision to make; all that is left to prarabdha; it is never ourselves who decide whether the body remains seated in a single place or keeps moving from place to place. Get rid of the idea that there is a 'you' who is responsible for actions performed by the body, or who is capable of controlling and governing its actions. Remain without 'you' the ego and remain as the Self that you really are.

Q.: But how?

B.: Surrender the ego in one stroke and be done with it. You may give up this and that of "my" possessions, but if, instead, you give up "I" and "mine" all is given up at a stroke and the very seed of possession is destroyed. Thus the evil is nipped in the bud or crushed in the germ. However, it cannot be denied that vairagya must be exceedingly strong in order so as to be able to do this; the craving to do it must be akin to the craving of a man who is held under water to rise to the surface and breathe. Absolute surrender is spontaneous Realisation. One who has surrendered without reserve will not care whether he obtains Realisation or not; nothing would matter to him anymore. That is the state of bliss beyond imagination.

S>M>



Q.: Just like Bhagawan, I also want to radiate out into my surroundings contentment, tranquility, peace, harmony and unassailable happiness. How shall I achieve my objective?

B.: Does Bhagawan think, 'I must make happy those around me.'? Remain without any volition[sankalpa] and see how happy you are.

Q.: I have duties, commitments and responsibilities. They cannot be abruptly abandoned.

B.: They need not be. Let the body go on fulfilling its designated role. You remain permanently submerged in the Heart.

Q.: Is it really possible to remain steadfastly fixed in the Self all the while whilst the body goes on fulfilling its various tasks and functions?

B.: Yes!

S>M>

The German entrepreneur Heinrich Schliemann has demonstrated that Homer's *Iliad* reflects actual historical events, by means of carrying out archaeological excavations at various places. Likewise, it would be better if we had somebody in India who could come up with evidence to show that the events comprising the Ramayana and Mahabharata actually took place. What does Bhagawan say?

B.: In what way do you stand affected whether they took place or did not take place?

S>M>

The book 'Der Aufgang der Menschheit: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Religion, Symbolik und Schrift der Atlantisch-nordischen Rasse; by Herman Wirth' is mentioned in the Hall. The author has mentioned in the book that the people of Königreich-Preußen were actually demi-gods who had forgotten their divine abilities and powers and therefore become mistaken to be normal humans by the rest of the world; they were fallen angels, who, unbeknownst to themselves, were really god-like creatures; their land of origin was the lost continent of Atlantis, which was a real place that had once existed on the planet, but had subsequently been devoured by the tumultuous seas. These Nordic-Atlantians were a special race on the earth. They were entitled to territorially expand throughout the world, replacing other populations with their own, using violence if necessary. The present German government is exhorted to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Nordic-Atlantians obtained their rightful position as the Master-race on this planet; for, such position was theirs by inherent right. The master was asked to comment on these strange ideas contained in this book.

B.: If the idea is actually attempted to be implemented, all hell will break loose.

S>M>

Q.: Lord Byron wrote:

*What is the worst of woes that wait on age?*

*What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?*

*To view each loved one blotted from life's page,*

*And be alone on earth, as I am now.*

What shall I do? All those who were dear to me once are now dead.

B.: With whom did you come into this world?

Q.: I came alone.

B.: Alone also shall you go.

S>M>

Q.: Why is it said that Bhagawan primarily teaches through his silence? What does Bhagawan's silence mean?

B.: Herr Wittgenstein has put it thus: 'Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen.' Further, Herr Hamann has said, 'Je länger man nachdenkt, desto tiefer und inniger man verstummt und alle Lust zu reden verliert.'

Q.: Yes, but what is that thing which cannot be spoken of?

B.: It is as It is: It is what It is: It is That alone which IS. Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh.

Q.: Is it my self?

B.: It is the One Self. There is neither me nor you. The Self is selfless; He does not belong to anybody. How can anybody stake claim over Him?

Q.: What about the personal gods, say Rama or Krishna? Do they exist?

B.: They are precisely as real as you are in this body.

S>M>

Q.: The experimental field of study known as 'noology' seeks to explain the link between the mind and the physical world. Is there really any such link?

B.: Mind and world are the same thing.

Q.: How so?

B.: The essence or ousia of the world is only mind; again, the essence or ousia of the mind is only Self. So, everything is within the Self only, whether you call it mind or world or anything else. Mind is not an entity independent of or apart from the Self. It is born in the Self, it is contained in the Self and it perishes in the Self. So, it cannot remain apart from the Self.

Q.: What is the Self?

B.: The Self is the Absolute.

Q.: What is the Absolute?

B.: The Self! [laughter in the Hall]

S>M>

Q.: In his book *Sein und Zeit*, the German thinker Heidegger laments that philosophy has attended to all the beings that can be found in the world,

including the world itself in its entirety, but has wholly forgotten to ask the fundamental question of what being itself is.

B.: Quite so.

Q.: Anaximander suggested that everything we perceive is derived from an endless, unlimited primordial mass, subject to neither old age nor decay, that perpetually yields the energy which makes manifestation possible.

B.: Manifestation is impossible; Reality remains unmanifest always.

Q.: But I see a world around me!

B.: What is that "I"?

Q.: I don't know.

B.: Who does not know?

Q.: [does not say anything]

B.: That is the answer!

S>M>

Q.: They say that those who harbour positive thoughts in mind invite positive happenings into their lives, whereas those who harbour negative thoughts likewise invite negative happenings. Is this true?

B.: Perhaps. But only absence of thought yields perfect bliss.

Q.: St. Ignatius is said to have practised a certain form of meditation wherein he would mentally visualise himself as being a spectator physically present at the scene in relation to the various events that took place in the life of Jesus. Is the same of any use?

B.: It may be helpful for beginners. The purpose of all such practices is to keep diverse thoughts at bay and the mind continually riveted in one thought or one set of thoughts to the exclusion of every other thought or kind thereof as the case may be.

S>M>

Q.: Some people Realise the Self without much effort as happened in Bhagawan's case. Others toil and toil; yet they fail miserably. Can we say in conclusion that the Self is partial in selecting whom He wants to bestow Emancipation upon?

B.: No. When the sun rises, some buds blossom into flowers; others wither away. Who is to blame therefore? Can we blame the sun? All jivas receive the same Grace from the Self; some use it whilst others do not. The Self is always readily available to be Realised, here and now. Only introvert your mind and plunge it in the Heart.

Q.: Is the Guru's physical proximity needed for Realisation?

B.: Guru is not physical; neither are you.

Q.: Should I wait for the incumbent thought to subside before putting to myself the question 'Who am I'?

B.: Do not wait for a thought to completely unfurl before interrogating yourself with the question 'Who am I?'. Supposing you are bitten by a poisonous serpent, will you permit the snake-venom to spread throughout your body before endeavouring to administer antidote?

Q.: Some people are attracted to the paranormal, the supramental and the supernatural; whereas others are not; why is this so?

B.: It all depends on the poorvasamskaras of the person in question; owing to vasanas left over from previous births, people feel attracted towards such things.

Q.: But would I be right in assuming that such attraction towards the supramental, if present in a person, will make him ripe for Realisation in a relatively short span of time?

B.: Mere academic curiosity is not of any great use. For Realisation, there must be athmajignasa- i.e., curiosity which is of the nature of temptation to Realise.

Q.: Without knowing That state and without having any experience of the same, how can I feel tempted towards It?

B.: By negation. At present your mind is moving about and so causing you misery. You are now told that there is a state available which is free from misery and which affords bliss surpassing that of deep sleep. You know that in deep sleep you are peaceful and happy; also you know that there is no mind in deep sleep. When told that there is a way to consciously remain free of mind, why would one not feel tempted to Realise That state?

Q.: What to do when matters in one's life steadily move out of control?

B.: Never can anything get out of control, because God verily always controls and is in control of everything.

Q.: But the circumstances appurtenant to my life must be under my control; is that not so?

B.: If that is the way you would prefer things to be, be it so. However, the wise man surrenders his life entirely upto God and does not therefore stand in need of controlling anything.

Q.: If I surrender to God, will He take care of all my requirements?

B.: Yes, but not necessarily in accordance with your tastes and preferences. He does as He sees fit. Accept and abide by His will no matter what the circumstances might happen to be. Then there will be no perturbation of mind.

Q.: I suffer from all sorts of irrational fears and phobias. How shall I get rid of them?

B.: Surrender is the way. After genuine surrender, there cannot be anything to further lose. Why then should there be any fear? If there is no possibility of

losing anything, how can there be any fear? If there can be nothing precious in your sight, what could you ever possibly lose?

S>M>

For a few days now, Sri Bhagawan has been feeling slightly asthmatic. He himself never complained, but the fact was noticed nevertheless. So, Mr. Lakshmanan, the gentleman who is supposedly an expert in the area of nature-cures and Ayurveda, has for the past one month started regularly administering to the master a certain draught every evening, which according to him will bring about a complete cure. The Shylock questioned him as to the ingredients; he was told that the medicine contained diamorphine, medinal salt[barbitalum-natricum], milliners' salt[dinitrate-quicksilver], powdered cinnabar, a small amount of powdered pitchblende, epsom salt, salt of hartshorn, sal ammoniacus, crushed, pounded and dried stem of the bristly hollyhock plant and many other pulverised herbs besides.

E.Z.: Are you sure that it is perfectly safe for human consumption?

The man seemed stunned by the question.

L.: What are you trying to say, sir, please? These ingredients have been especially procured from a chemist in Birmingham, England, for our Bhagawan's use. It is a concoction I have formulated myself for the purpose of making Bhagawan's asthma complaint go away.

E.Z.: Yes; I am touched by the fact, but these are all heavy metals. They may cause the kidneys to stop functioning over time. Does Bhagawan feel any discomfort whilst passing urine?

L.: It is absurd.

The matter appeared to end there; later, whilst the master had gone for one of his usual walks on the Hill, the attendant whose task it was to sweep the floor whilst the master was away from the Hall approached me-

Attendant: Pardon me, please, but earlier today the Caucasian gentleman mentioned the English word 'urine'. I know that this English word means urine in Tamizh. For the past one month, I have been kept informed that Bhagawan's urine is reddish-brown in colour. He seems to be passing blood in his urine. He has forbidden Madhava from telling anybody about it; but Madhava could not bear to keep the information with himself and therefore he has told me exclusively. I feel restless and feel that something should be done about the matter. I feel apprehensive about telling Chinnaswami. You know English and move on friendly terms with Mr. Chadwick. Do you think it would be wise to appraise him of the matter? I thought of telling nobody, but it seems that the matter is already known to the other Caucasian gentleman who is staying permanently here, since he was saying something about Bhagawan's

urine earlier today whilst conversing with the man known as Lakshmanar, in the master's own presence.

I reported the matter to Chadwick and straightaway the master was tackled upon the subject as soon as he returned from the Hall.

C.: I heard that all is not well with Bhagawan's health.

B.: Oh! is that so? What gave you that impression?

C.: Is Bhagawan suffering from hematuria?

The master silently turned and looked at the attendant Madhava, as if to rebuke him for having spilt the beans; the attendant promptly burst into tears and fell at the master's feet, crying out aloud, 'Forgive me, Bhagawan, I could not bear to remain without telling anybody whilst Bhagawan is suffering like this...'. Soon the news spread like wild fire in the ashram, and outside also. In a matter of two hours, devotees had come flooding from the town with tearful eyes; a rumour had been started that the Maharshi had suddenly died from a severe stroke. The sarvadhikari was about to arrange for a doctor to visit from Mrs. Ida Scudder's famous Union Mission hospital at Vellore; but he was stopped by the master.

B.: Why all this fuss? It is nothing. For the past month, I have been taking a certain draught prepared by Lakshmana and given to me for the purpose of settling the wheezing complaint this body suffers from. Apparently one of the ingredients do not agree with the renal system. As soon as Lakshmana comes here, we will ask him about it and try to have the trouble-causing ingredient removed.

E.Z.: All the ingredients in that ridiculous potion of his are downright poisonous. I tried to point it out to him politely, but the man will simply not listen to reason. He seems to be a crackpot. The ingredients are all heavy metals; they will stop the kidneys from functioning. Bhagawan also feels pain at the tip of the urethra whilst urinating; is that not right?

B.: [smiling] Yes, yes; do not agitate yourself, please; let him come and we can discuss the issue.

S>M>

Q.: They say that it is suffering that brings out the best in man. Is it true?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Does incessant suffering help to cultivate vairagya and thereby contribute in facilitating the mind to turn inwards?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Should one then voluntarily seek out suffering for oneself?

B.: No; but do not try to fight suffering when it does descend upon you; instead accept the same as God's will.

Q.: How to make the world perfect?

B.: Perfection in oneself automatically entails seeing only perfection in everything and everywhere. Perfect yourself first and thereafter if any world is left, we may draw up plans to make it perfect, if the need is still felt then.

S>M>

The curious case of a patient of the French psychopathologist Dr. Joseph Capgras was mentioned in the Hall. This patient was referred to in the popular-press as 'Madame Macabre'. She had delusionally convinced herself that a doppelgänger had replaced her husband. This was apparently a new form of dementia-praecox that was surfacing for the first time in the history of the study of mental-illnesses. Bhagawan is asked-

Q.: Does the presence of a Jnani always drive away all mental illnesses?

B.: It is not so. Many bring their mad relatives here in the hope that I am going to cure them. Only if the prarabdhas of both the Jnani and the other are intertwined in such manner can such cures take place. We hear stories of saints performing healing miracles. Why then did not these saints eradicate all diseases and maladies from the world? Because only those can be helped whose prarabdha it is that they ought to receive such help.

Q.: So everything is left to prarabdha only.

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is there any way whereby which we can escape from this prarabdha which haunts us always?

B.: Realisation.

Q.: Is Realisation the only way to escape from karma?

B.: Yes.

Q.: We do not choose that life be imparted unto us. Yet we are born. Why?

B.: Because of the undying continuity of the vasanas and samskaras.

However: who is born? who claims that he was born?

Q.: What am I to do whenever enthusiasm for the spiritual quest wanes, as it indeed occasionally does?

B.: Come around this Hill.

S>M>

Q.: Why are the Jews referred to as the chosen people? What is so special about them? Why does God in the Bible say that the Jews are especially dear to Him?

B.: Does the Bible say so?

Mr. Knowles: Sirs, it is a myth that the Jews are somehow a special people; listen to what this book has to say on the topic, please: [reads out as follows from the book, 'Benedictus de Spinoza: Tractatus Theologico-politicus, Tractatus Politicus; translated from the Latin, with an introduction by R. H. M. Elwes']

*He who thinks himself the more blessed because he is enjoying benefits which others are not, or because he is more blessed or more fortunate than his fellows, is ignorant of true happiness and blessedness, and the joy which he feels is either childish or envious and malicious. For instance, a man's true happiness consists only in wisdom, and the knowledge of the truth, not at all in the fact that he is wiser than others, or that others lack such knowledge : such considerations do not increase his wisdom or true happiness. Whoever, therefore, rejoices for such reasons, rejoices in another's misfortune, and is, so far, malicious and bad, knowing neither true happiness nor the peace of the true life. When Scripture, therefore, in exhorting the Hebrews to obey the law, says that the Lord has chosen them for Himself before other nations (Deut. x. 15) ; that He is near them, but not near others (Deut. iv. 7) ; that to them alone He has given just laws (Deut. iv. 8) ; and, lastly, that He has marked them out before others (Deut. iv. 32) ; it speaks only according to the understanding of its hearers, who, as Moses justly testifies (Deut. ix. 6, 7), knew not true blessedness. For in good sooth they would have been no less blessed if God had called all men equally to salvation, nor would God have been less present to them for being equally present to others ; their laws would have been no less just if they had been ordained for all, and they themselves would have been no less wise. The miracles would have shown God's power no less by being wrought for other nations also ; lastly, the Hebrews would have been just as much bound to worship God if He had bestowed all these gifts equally on all men. When God tells Solomon (1 Kings iii. 12) that no one shall be as wise as he in time to come, it seems to be only a manner of expressing surpassing wisdom ; it is little to be believed that God would have promised Solomon, for his greater happiness, that He would never endow anyone with so much wisdom in time to come ; this would in no wise have increased Solomon's intellect, and the wise king would have given equal thanks to the Lord if everyone had been gifted with the same faculties. Still, though we assert that Moses, in the passages of the Pentateuch just cited, spoke only according to the understanding of the Hebrews, we have no wish to deny that God ordained the Mosaic law for them alone, nor that He spoke to them alone, nor that they witnessed marvels beyond those which happened to any other nation ; but we wish to emphasize that Moses desired to admonish the Hebrews in such a manner, and with such reasonings as would appeal most forcibly to their childish*



*understanding, and constrain them to worship the Deity. Further, we wished to show that the Hebrews did not surpass other nations in knowledge, or in piety, but evidently in some attribute different from these ; or (to speak like the Scriptures, according to their understanding), that the Hebrews were not chosen by God before others for the sake of the true life and sublime ideas, though they were often thereto admonished, but with some other object. What that object was, I will duly show. But before I begin, I wish in a few words to explain what I mean by the guidance of God, by the help of God, external and inward, and, lastly, what I understand by fortune. By the help of God, I mean the fixed and unchangeable order of nature or the chain of natural events : for I have said before and shown elsewhere that the universal laws of nature, according to which all things exist and are determined, are only another name for the eternal decrees of God, which always involve eternal truth and necessity. So that to say that everything happens according to natural laws, and to say that everything is ordained by the decree and ordinance of God, is the same thing. Now since the power in nature is identical with the power of God, by which alone all things happen and are determined, it follows that whatsoever man, as a part of nature, provides himself with to aid and preserve his existence, or whatsoever nature affords him without his help, is given to him solely by the Divine power, acting either through human nature or through external circumstance. So whatever human nature can furnish itself with by its own efforts to preserve its existence, may be fitly called the inward aid of God, whereas whatever else accrues to man's profit from outward causes may be called the external aid of God. We can now easily understand what is meant by the election of God. For since no one can do anything save by the predetermined order of nature, that is by God's eternal ordinance and decree, it follows that no one can choose a plan of life for himself, or accomplish any work save by God's vocation choosing him for the work or the plan of life in question, rather than any other. Lastly, by fortune, I mean the ordinance of God in so far as it directs human life through external and unexpected means. With these preliminaries I return to my purpose of discovering the reason why the Hebrews were said to be elected by God before other nations, and with the demonstration I thus proceed. All objects of legitimate desire fall, generally speaking, under one of these three categories :*

- 1. The knowledge of things through their primary causes.*

2. *The government of the passions, or the acquirement of the habit of virtue.*

3. *Secure and healthy life.*

*The means which most directly conduce towards the first two of these ends, and which may be considered their proximate and efficient causes are contained in human nature itself, so that their acquisition hinges only on our own power, and on the laws of human nature. It may be concluded that these gifts are not peculiar to any nation, but have always been shared by the whole human race, unless, indeed, we would indulge the dream that nature formerly created men of different kinds. But the means which conduce to security and health are chiefly in external circumstance, and are called the gifts of fortune because they depend chiefly on objective causes of which we are ignorant ; for a fool may be almost as liable to happiness or unhappiness as a wise man. Nevertheless, human management and watchfulness can greatly assist towards living in security and warding off the injuries of our fellow-men, and even of beasts. Reason and experience show no more certain means of attaining this object than the formation of a society with fixed laws, the occupation of a strip of territory, and the concentration of all forces, as it were, into one body, that is the social body. Now for forming and preserving a society, no ordinary ability and care is required : that society will be most secure, most stable, and least liable to reverses, which is founded and directed by far-seeing and careful men ; while, on the other hand, a society constituted by men without trained skill, depends in a great measure on fortune, and is less constant. If, in spite of all, such a society lasts a long time, it is owing to some other directing influence than its own ; if it overcomes great perils and its affairs prosper, it will perforce marvel at and adore the guiding Spirit of God (in so far, that is, as God works through hidden means, and not through the nature and mind of man), for everything happens to it unexpectedly and contrary to anticipation, it may even be said and thought to be by miracle. Nations, then, are distinguished from one another in respect to the social organization and the laws under which they live and are governed ; the Hebrew nation was not chosen by God in respect to its wisdom nor its tranquillity of mind, but in respect to its social organization and the good fortune with which it obtained supremacy and kept it so many years. This is abundantly clear from Scripture. Even a cursory perusal will show us that the only respects in which the Hebrews*

*surpassed other nations, are in their successful conduct of matters relating to government, and in their surmounting great perils solely by God's external aid; in other ways they were on a par with their fellows, and God was equally gracious to all. For in respect to intellect they held very ordinary ideas about God and nature, so that they cannot have been God's chosen in this respect; nor were they so chosen in respect of virtue and the true life, for here again they, with the exception of a very few elect, were on an equality with other nations: therefore their choice and vocation consisted only in the temporal happiness and advantages of independent rule. In fact, we do not see that God promised anything beyond this to the patriarchs or their successors; in the law no other reward is offered for obedience than the continual happiness of an independent commonwealth and other vicissitudes of this life; while, on the other hand, against contumacy and the breaking of the covenant is threatened the downfall of the commonwealth and great hardships. Nor is this to be wondered at; for the ends of every social organization and commonwealth are security and comfort; a commonwealth can only exist by the laws being binding on all. If all the members of a state wish to disregard the law, by that very fact they dissolve the state and destroy the commonwealth. Thus, the only reward which could be promised to the Hebrews for continued obedience to the law was security and its attendant advantages, while no surer punishment could be threatened for disobedience, than the ruin of the state and the evils which generally follow therefrom, in addition to such further consequences as might accrue to the Jews in particular from the ruin of their especial state. But there is no need here to go into this point at more length. I will only add that the laws of the Old Testament were revealed and ordained to the Jews only, for as God chose them in respect to the special constitution of their society and government, they must, of course, have had special laws. Whether God ordained special laws for other nations also, and revealed Himself to their lawgivers prophetically, that is, under the attributes by which the latter were accustomed to imagine Him, I cannot sufficiently determine. It is evident from Scripture itself that other nations acquired supremacy and particular laws by the external aid of God; witness only the two following passages: In Genesis xiv. 18, 19, 20, it is related that Melchisedek was king of Jerusalem and priest of the Most High God, that in exercise of his priestly functions he blessed Abraham, and that*

*Abraham the beloved of the Lord gave to this priest of God a tithe of all his spoils. This sufficiently shows that before He founded the Israelitish nation God constituted kings and priests in Jerusalem, and ordained for them rites and laws. Whether He did so prophetically is, as I have said, not sufficiently clear ; but I am sure of this, that Abraham, whilst he sojourned in the city, lived scrupulously according to these laws, for Abraham had received no special rites from God ; and yet it is stated (Gen. xxvi. 5), that he observed the worship, the precepts, the statutes, and the laws of God, which must be interpreted to mean the worship, the statutes, the precepts, and the laws of king Melchisedek. Malachi chides the Jews as follows : "Who is there among you that will shut the doors ? [of the Temple] ; neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts. For from the rising of the sun, even until the going down of the same My Name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered in My Name, and a pure offering ; for My Name is great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts." These words, which, unless we do violence to them, could only refer to the current period, abundantly testify that the Jews of that time were not more beloved by God than other nations, that God then favoured other nations with more miracles than He vouchsafed to the Jews, who had then partly recovered their empire without miraculous aid ; and, lastly, that the Gentiles possessed rites and ceremonies acceptable to God. But I pass over these points lightly : it is enough for my purpose to have shown that the election of the Jews had regard to nothing but temporal physical happiness and freedom, in other words, autonomous government, and to the manner and means by which they obtained it ; consequently to the laws in so far as they were necessary to the preservation of that special government ; and, lastly, to the manner in which they were revealed. In regard to other matters, wherein man's true happiness consists, they were on a par with the rest of the nations. When, therefore, it is said in Scripture (Deut. iv. 7) that the Lord is not so nigh to any other nation as He is to the Jews, reference is only made to their government, and to the period when so many miracles happened to them, for in respect of intellect and virtue that is, in respect of blessedness God was, as we have said already, and are now demonstrating, equally gracious to all. Scripture itself bears testimony to this fact, for the Psalmist says (cxlv. 18), "The Lord is near unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call*

*upon Him in truth." So in the same Psalm, verse 9, "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." In Ps. xxxiii. 15, it is clearly stated that God has granted to all men the same intellect, in these words, " He fashioneth their hearts alike." The heart was considered by the Hebrews, as I suppose every one knows, to be the seat of the soul and the intellect. Lastly, from Job xxxviii. 28, it is plain that God had ordained for the whole human race the law to reverence God, to keep from evil doing, or to do well, and that Job, although a Gentile, was of all men most acceptable to God, because he excelled all in piety and religion. Lastly, from Jonah iv. 2, it is very evident that, not only to the Jews but to all men, God was gracious, merciful, long-suffering, and of great goodness, and repented Him of the evil, for Jonah says : " Therefore I determined to flee before unto Tarshish, for I know that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness," etc., and that, therefore, God would pardon the Niuevites. We conclude, therefore (inasmuch as God is to all men equally gracious, and the Hebrews were only chosen by Him in respect to their social organization and government), that the individual Jew, taken apart from his social organization and government, possessed no gift of God above other men, and that there was no difference between Jew and Gentile. As it is a fact that God is equally gracious, merciful, and the rest, to all men ; and as the function of the prophet was to teach men not so much the laws of their country, as true virtue, and to exhort them thereto, it is not to be doubted that all nations possessed prophets, and that the prophetic gift was not peculiar to the Jews.*

S>M>

Q.: According to the Pratyabhijna school of Vedantic outlook, concentrating on the brahmarandhra[cranial-bregma] will lead to vikalpakshaya, provided such concentration is steady and intense enough to lead to evisceration of the mind's contents. Is it a correct approach?

B.: The technique that you are endeavouring to describe does not involve concentration, but rarefication, of mind. The mumukshu identifies the feeling of beingness or subjective consciousness with the brahmarandhra until he has become one with the brahmarandhra itself. Subsequently this final identification with the brahmarandhra is also abandoned and the Self is Realised. But why such indirect methods?

Q.: Somehow or the other I want to get bliss.

B.: You are bliss; remain as that. Why imagine otherwise and go through all sorts of suffering instead?

Q.: Do evil acts beget evil consequences?

B.: Undoubtedly. "...he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death."

S>M>

Q.: Should I actively plan my life or should I simply accept whatever happens to me by chance?

B.: Surrender to Him without reserve so that there is no question of bothering about what happens afterwards. Perfect surrender precludes possibility of questions arising after such surrender.

Q.: What is the link between sentience and Reality?

B.: The former is a dualistic experience of the latter.

Q.: How shall I acquire humility?

B.: Humility cannot be acquired. Remain without ego and that is humility. The means to permit humility to shine is to give up all pretentiousness and remain as you actually are.

Q.: Does circumcision lead to any spiritual good?

B.: [no response]

Q.: Can Realisation of the Self be had by means of activating the chakras?

B.: It is only in Realisation that all chakras are fully active.

Q.: Are the chakras real or are they only a figment of our hyper-active imagination?

B.: Their reality is on a par with that of this world.

Q.: Is the world real?

B.: World? What world?

Q.: Are Shiva and Rudra one and the same entity?

B.: How should I know? It is between you and them.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that so long as body-consciousness is present, Realisation will be impossible; therefore, what pragmatic measures can we take to eradicate body-consciousness?

B.: Consciousness appears to be confined to the body only owing to mental identification of the self with the body or intellect. If the ego is relinquished, body-consciousness will fade away of its own accord. It is enough to remain unattached to the body. The thought 'I must somehow get rid of the body.' is also an obstacle to Realisation. Why should you think so? What does it matter to you whether the body remains or has dropped off? The body is not you and it is not yours. The body and world are merely transient and transitory appearances in You. In You there is no movement whatsoever. You are always stationary. Realise it. The presence or absence of the body cannot affect the Self in anyway; whether it appears, does not appear or disappears, you remain as you are. The body by itself is merely an apparition in the Self

and is not in possession of any proclivity to cause any mischief. All mischief arises only because of our attachment towards the body. Remain without any such attachment and be happy. As it has been said, எல்லாப்படியாலும் எண்ணினால் இவ்வுடம்பு பொல்லாப் புழுமலிநோய் புன்குரம்பை - நல்லார் அறிந்திருப்பார் ஆதலினால் ஆம்கமல நீர்போல் பிறிந்திருப்பார் பேசார் பிறர்க்கு .

Q.: I feel impatient for Realisation. When shall I get It?

B.: There is no question of getting anything. The question is one of losing everything. Why should you anticipate that Realisation is going to come to you at some point of time in the future? Remain without that idea also and be at peace. Why ought you to care whether Realisation dawns upon you or not? Giving up the aspiration to Realise the Self is an unequivocally necessary step prior to dawn of Realisation; there is no point in giving up such aspiration with the expectation that such relinquishment is going to bring about Realisation unto you. There is no such thing as freshly obtaining Realisation. Remain without ego and that is Realisation.

Sri Muruganar: Even assuming one has to wait for Realisation for a long time, what is wrong in it? It is a worthwhile wait. அடக்கம் உடையார் அறிவிலர் என்றெண்ணிக் கடக்கக் கருதவும் வேண்டா - மடைத் தலையில் ஓடுமீன் ஓட உறுமீன் வருமளவும்வாடி இருக்குமாம் கொக்கூ .

B.: What is there to wait for? It IS. For what should we wait? Is Realisation going to arrive on the goods-carriage of the evening train? He ever is here and now; therefore, extinguishing ourselves in Him here and now is the thing to do, not waiting for something. What is newly obtained will also be lost in due course. Only the Unborn will remain free from destruction.

S>M>

Q.: Rene Guenon has expressed the opinion that there once existed in this world a 'Universal Spiritual Tradition', which was revealed to humanity at the beginning of the present cycle of time, but is partially lost today. Is it so?

B.: Even if there was, rest assured that it said the same thing precisely that I am saying now: that is to say, discard the mind and Realise the Self. 'Seek thyself.' is the message.

Q.: Is this the same as the doctrine, Gnothi-seauton?

B.: No. There is not one self with which to know and another which is to be known. There is neither subject nor object in the Self. The Self cannot be known at all. Seek the self or "I"; then the same vanishes; only the Self thereafter is left as the eternal residue. So, not know thy Self, but seek thyself or search for "I". The Self does not even know himself. Knowledge and ignorance are both functions of the mind; they bear no relation to the Self. The

Self is free from both knowledge and ignorance. He remains as He ever IS. Nothing more can be predicated of the Self than that It exists.

S>M>

Q.: I am trying to do sadhana in order so that I might Realise the Self, but God is busy filling my life with suffering and misery. What am I to do?

B.: "In the world ye shall have tribulation..." Suffering is there for all embodied beings; it cannot be avoided. Do not try to fight against God's will but submit utterly to the same. Do not begrudge suffering. If it be His will to make you suffer, so be it. Who are we to question His will? Go on with your sadhana no matter what adversities might present themselves. That is the only way. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Q.: Did Jesus also advocate unconditional surrender just like Bhagawan?

B.: Certainly. "Not My Will But Thine." "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

Mr. Knowles: Sir, this book contains just the answer to your question; please listen whilst I read out from it- [reads out as follows from the book, "Of the Imitation of Christ by Thomas A'Kempis":]

Happy hour ! when Jesus calleth from tears to spiritual joy. How dry and hard art thou without Jesus ! How foolish and vain, if thou desire anything out of Jesus ! Is not this a greater loss, than if thou shouldst lose the whole world ? What can the world profit thee without Jesus ? To be without Jesus is a grievous hell ; and to be with Jesus, a sweet paradise. If Jesus be with thee no enemy shall be able to hurt thee. He that findeth Jesus findeth a good treasure, yea, a good above all good. And he that loseth Jesus loseth much indeed, yea more than the whole world ! Most poor is he who liveth without Jesus ; and he most rich who is dear to Jesus. It requireth great skill to know how to hold converse with Jesus ; and to know how to retain Jesus is great wisdom. Be thou humble and peaceable, and Jesus will be with thee. Be devout and quiet, and Jesus will stay with thee. Thou mayest soon drive away Jesus, and lose His favour, if thou wilt turn aside to outward things. And if thou shouldst drive Him from thee, and lose Him, unto whom wilt thou flee, and whom wilt thou then seek for thy friend ? Without a friend thou canst not well live ; and if Jesus be not above all to thee, thou shalt indeed be sad and desolate. Therefore thou doest most foolishly, if thou trust or rejoice in any other. It is preferable to have all the world against us, rather than to have Jesus offended with us. Amongst all therefore that be dear unto us, let Jesus



alone be especially beloved. Love all for Jesus, but Jesus for Himself. Jesus Christ alone is singularly to be loved ; and He alone is found Good and Faithful above all friends. For Him, and in Him, let friends as well as foes be dear unto thee ; and all these are to be prayed for, that He would make them all to know and to love Him. Never desire to be singularly commended or beloved, for that appertaineth only unto God, who hath none like unto Himself. Neither do thou deserve that the heart of any should be set on thee, nor do thou set thy heart on the love of any ; but let Jesus be in thee, and in every good man. Be pure and free within, and entangle not thy heart with any creature. Thou oughtest to be naked and open before God, ever carrying thy heart pure towards Him, if thou wouldst be free to consider and see how sweet the Lord is. And truly, unless thou be prevented and drawn by His grace, thou shalt never attain to that happiness of forsaking and taking leave of all, that thou alone mayest be united to Him alone. For when the grace of God cometh unto a man, then he is made able for all things. And when it goeth away, then he is poor and weak. When a man trusteth in himself, he easily slideth unto human comforts. But a true lover of Christ, and a diligent follower of all virtue, does not fall back on comforts, nor seek such sensible sweetnesses ; but rather prefers hard exercises, and to sustain severe labours for Christ. Many love the heavenly kingdom of Jesus, but few care to bear His Cross. He hath many desirous of consolation, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of His table, but few of His abstinence. All desire to rejoice with Him, few are willing to endure anything for or with Him. Many follow Jesus unto the breaking of bread ; but few to the drinking of the cup of His passion. Many reverence His miracles, few follow the ignominy of His cross. Many love Jesus so long as no adversities befall them. Many praise and bless Him so long as they receive any consolation from Him. But if Jesus hide Himself, and leave them but a little while, they fall either into complaining, or into too much dejection of mind. But they who love Jesus for his own sake, and not for some special comfort, bless Him in all tribulation and anguish of heart, as well as in the state of highest comfort. Yea although He should never be willing to give them comfort, they notwithstanding would ever praise Him, and wish to be always giving thanks. O how powerful is the pure love of Jesus, which is mixed up with no self-interest, or self-love ! Are not all those to be called mercenary, who are ever seeking consolations ? Do they not show themselves to be rather lovers of themselves than of Christ, who are always thinking of their own profit and advantage ? Where shall one be found who is willing to serve God for nought ? Rarely is any one found so spiritual as to be stripped of all earthly things. For where is any man to be found that is indeed poor in spirit, and thoroughly void of all leaning on creatures? From afar, yea

from the ends of the earth, is his value. If a man should give all his substance, yet it is nothing. And if he should practise great repentance, still it is little. And if he should attain to all knowledge, he is still afar off. And if he should be of great virtue, and of very fervent devotion, yet there is much wanting ; especially one thing, which is most necessary for him. What is that ? That leaving all, he forsake himself, and go wholly from himself, and retain no self-love. And when he hath done all that is to be done, so far as he knoweth, let him think that he hath done nothing. Let him not think that of great weight, which is greatly esteemed ; but let him in truth pronounce himself to be an unprofitable servant, as the Truth Himself saith, "When you shall have done all things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants." Then may he be truly poor and naked in spirit, and say with the Prophet, "I am desolate and afflicted." Yet none is richer than that man, no man more powerful, no man more free ; for he knoweth how to leave all things, and to set himself in the lowest place.

S>M>

Q.: How did the cosmic illusion [jaganmaya] come about?

B.: See if it ever came about.

Q.: For getting rid of the individual's ignorance or illusion, vichara might suffice; but how to enlighten all of humanity? Should not all people on the earth awaken into Jnana? How shall we bring about the same?

B.: First do it and see.

Q.: Will enlightenment of one automatically bring about enlightenment of the whole of humanity? If it be so, why does not Bhagawan's Realisation make me also automatically Realised?

B.: The question presupposes existence of multiplicity; there is none in fact. Realise and then see whether there are any others to enlighten. Suppose you dream that you are on a boat that is slowly sinking; after waking up will you wonder about the fate of those other persons with whom you shared the boat inside the dream?

Q.: Bhagawan has woken up from this dream but we still see him here with us; he is still inside this dream, atleast as far as my eyes can see.

B.: No. I am not here. I AM. That is all.

Q.: Then who is the anthropomorphic figure on the Sofa that is now having this conversation with me?

B.: I see no such figure. There is only the Self. The goldsmith whilst handling various jewels sees only gold.

Q.: Bhagawan has previously explained that the Self does not even say 'I AM.'. Why then should the Jnani, who is one with the Self, say so? Does the Jnani speak on behalf of the Self? Does he then stand apart from It?

B.: 'I AM.' is an expression used to represent the Self; it is the closest accurate description possible to express through speech; the expression cannot be the Thing Itself. The state of Self is not experience of silence; it is Silence Itself.

S>M>

Q.: Is shikar ethical?

As soon as this question was asked, all eyes immediately turned to Mr. Knowles, who laughed nervously.

B.: Provided it is clearly evident that the animal in question poses an unequivocal threat to human lives.

K.: There you go, sirs. I have only ever hunted dangerous game, such as tigers and bears. I do, of course, fish when I feel like it. But other than for these reasons and with these exceptions, I do not hurt or harm any living creatures.

G.: But, sir, in your book 'In the grip of the Jungles' you mention that you shot 5 different types of birds on a certain particular day: duck, grebe, partridge, snipe and quail. You also mention that you shot so much that after a time you had to operate your firearm only by means of wrapping a handkerchief around it, for it had become tremendously hot from continuous firing.

K.: Well, yes, boy; but that expedition was a social engagement; I could not very well turn my nose up and stay away whilst everybody else was onto it. Besides, birds constitute a man's natural food. Minced partridge stewed in red wine and cranberry sauce, and flavoured with cinnamon and juniper seasoning: do you have any idea what it tastes like? Well, it is hard to miss what you never were aware existed. It tastes angelically divine. Here, of course, people abstain from eating meat because they are desirous of obtaining Self-Realisation. But man was born to enjoy the various comforts proffered unto him by nature. What is wrong in it? For monks, of course, the rules they have to play by are hugely different... Let me not become a monk just yet!

S>M>

Q.: What is the definitive hallmark of perfect surrender?

B.: Realisation.

Q.: What is the definitive hallmark of Realisation?

B.: Perfect surrender! Complete surrender is another name for Jnana or Realisation.

Q.: Is it wrong to make plans for the future and generally plan the course of one's life?

B.: There is no immorality in it, but one who has surrendered to the Almighty without reserve will never find the need arising to make plans and schemes

for the future.

Q.: How then does his life go on?

B.: By Divine Grace. One who has surrendered completely need not ask God for anything. God takes care of him unasked. After total surrender has been achieved, the thought of asking for something will never arise. He who has surrendered without reserve has no needs and no wants.

Q.: What is the means by which Realisation might be vouchsafed for humanity as a whole- i.e., for all persons living in the world?

B.: First yourself do it and see.

Q.: Is everything only my own mental creation?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then I should be able to make the elements of nature obey my will- walking on water, handling fire without hurting myself, floating in the air, etc.; but on the other hand, I am at the mercy of the elements.

B.: There are techniques which can be used to gain mastery over the elements, which, as pointed out by you, are merely mental phenomena only; but training in them leads away from Realisation rather than towards It.

Q.: Why?

B.: Because these are merely mental gimmicks or mental abilities. The truth is that these siddhis are totally worthless. Do not covet them, or one day you will feel disappointed and frustrated. The Real siddhi is to remain as the Self.

S>M>

Towards evening the observation is made that the master's feet are slightly swollen; despite the master's evident disapproval of this course of action, a doctor from Vellore is summoned. When the master initially refused to see a doctor, the matter really stood settled at that, but the intervention of a young man by name of Mr. Parashurama Rao, a visitor to the ashram, changed the circumstances; this boy was unduly upset to give himself to understand that a genuine Mahatma like Sri Bhagawan should be going without medical attention for, as he saw it, want of financial resources. On the spot, he donated a sum of Rs. 100 to the ashram to be used for present and anticipated future medical expenses required to be incurred appurtenant to the master's physical well-being. Later the ashram came to know that this boy was the son of the raja of Oudh. He had heard of the Maharshi from a Polish friend of his, who happened to be a devotee of the master. This was his first visit. He could not bear to see an enlightened soul like Bhagawan being exposed to suffering and not availing himself of measures of relief, 'whilst charlatans were having themselves a good life'. He wept openly in the Hall. The master reluctantly gave his assent, and the boy was delighted. He left at once to Vellore, saying that he would either return here with a doctor before

nightfall or arrange to have one sent tomorrow morning to the ashram. He was as good as his word; the doctor did duly arrive the next day. He has collected a urine sample of the master and gone back. I am, however, suspecting that the fellow is only a quasi-medical man who is a trainee in the Union Mission hospital, forming part of the nursing staff, and not at all an actual doctor. He is dark, stout, and has thick, foolish lips, like a chandala. His eyes have a shrewd, nasty quality about them; on the whole he resembles vastly a member of the negroid-race, and therefore poses a stark contrast to any civilised being. He does not treat the master with respect. For his fee, the audacious rascal collected Rs. 15! The infuriated sarvadhikari had no choice but to pay. For the time-being, Mr. Lakshmanan's prescription is discontinued.

S>M>

In order so as to pray for the master's good health, a girivalam is organised by Mr. TKS; those interested could join; the party would start out from the Dakshinamurti-mandapam near the ashram at 19 hours. More than a dozen people have come, including the Shylock, Chadwick, Mr. Knowles, myself, Sri Subbaramayya and a relative of his named Venkatanarayanappa, Sri Narayanasamy Aiyyer, 'Andavanae' Ramanathan, Annamalai-swami, Mr. Nambiar and his assistant Mr. Natesan, a certain woman cook from the ashram's kitchen, and others besides. When informed as to the plan for going around the Hill, the master had simply smiled at Mr. TKS; the latter has interpreted the smile as a mark of approval. The expedition had the approval of the sarvadhikari and therefore any who wished could participate without fear. At each of the dilapidated ashtadhik-lingams, a coconut is to be broken, praying for Sri Bhagawan's speedy recovery. All the way along, songs of devotional fervour are sung, including songs in praise of the master. The songs are accompanied by jalra from small clash-cymbals hand-operated by Sri Narayanasamy Aiyyer. Many of the master's miracles are discussed. Subbaramayya: By Bhagawan's Grace I have completed a Thenungu-verse translation of Sri Ramana Gita. It is certainly a miracle worked by none other than Bhagawan. I have never composed verses before. But as soon as I put pen to paper, the verses flowed off me automatically with no effort on my part. If not Bhagawan's magic, what else can it be?

Venkatanarayanappa: We all know that Bhagawan does not generally say such things, but as soon as he had gone through the translation, he remarked to me, 'He has expressed the ideas in an easy-to-understand manner. The work has been done well.'. Our Bhagawan is a merciful god. Just last week, I was suffering from a severe fever. I could not even get out of my bed. My wife gave me some attukulu to eat and I ingested it with difficulty; but as soon as I

had swallowed the same I felt immensely relieved, both physically and mentally. It seems Bhagawan had touched the attukulu with his own hands and then asked Sri TKS-garu to send the same to my house by post. How wonderfully merciful! The very next day I was completely cured of the fever. The doctor was stunned, because he had been thoroughly convinced upto that point that my affliction was a typhoid-fever which would take 3 months to recover from. Today he is also a devotee of Sri Bhagawan!

A.S.: When I first came to the ashram I wanted to join as Bhagawan's attendant. I coveted this job because I thought the same would give me the opportunity to continually remain in the master's presence all the time. However, Bhagawan gave me only construction work to do and nothing else. One day I asked him when I would obtain the opportunity to remain in his presence continuously. He responded by answering that this was exactly the purpose in relation to which I had been assigned in this birth of mine. I did not understand his response but did not like to press him further. He laughed and said, 'Already you are in My presence always, but you do not know it; if you knowingly wish to remain steadfast in Me without termination or cessation of contact with me, you must first get rid of your mind.'. I then understood that he was asking me to do vichara so that I could Realise the Self. I said that I wanted to go to some quiet place, free from all distraction, and firmly seated there practise vichara adamantly till Realisation dawned on me. He said, 'When that day comes, I will not permit you to remain in the ashram any longer. But until then, work here so that your karma can come to an end.'. I then became convinced that Bhagawan's plan for me was for the spiritual good of myself and thereafter abandoned all desire to be his attendant or constantly be in his physical proximity. Of course when I get the chance to come near him and be with him, I feel delighted.

K.: You are that chap that built the huge revetment that runs along the back of the hermitage, eh, my good man? Good piece of work, I'll say!

A.S.: Even as it is, the revetment appears to be big enough; but Chinnaswami has been asked to raise funds so that it shall become possible to build an additional compound wall on top of it, all along its entire length.

K.: What on earth for?

A.S.: I do not know. The engineer Mr. Nambiar, whom is seen going along over there next to TKS-Aiyyer, is the one who seems to have suggested the idea.

G.: It must be to protect the ashram from burglars, perhaps. [I was the one doing the translation between the parties.]

K.: The hermitage has already been robbed multiple times, I heard.

A.S.: Yes: as a matter of fact, once the master was beaten severely with a cane by a burglar; he never retaliated or fought back.

K.: It is disturbing to think that anybody should want to harm him, of all people. A peaceful, gentle saint of a man.

Chadwick.: [abruptly] Mr. Knowles, why do you keep reading out passages from old, obscure books in the Hall? Do you suppose that everybody enjoys what you are doing?

K.: I am thinking that the information must be of utility to the people coming there; won't they feel bored sitting all day doing nothing? Should we not give them something interesting to think about?

C.: On the other hand, the point of coming here is to learn how to remain without thinking.

K.: Alright, sir, pray do not enrage yourself. I thought I was being of some use in the Hall, that is all. But anyway, I always take permission from Bhagawan before doing it, don't I?

C.: What's that? Of course you don't!

K.: What do you know, sir? I have established a telepathic channel of communication with him.

C.: Baloney!

K.: [laughs but does not say anything]

E.Z.: I don't think that the master is communicating telepathically with anybody; we might imagine that he is so doing unto ourselves, but that is another matter entirely. I have almost never observed him opening a conversation of his own accord, or calling somebody aside so as to talk to them. The Maharshi is not like that; he does not converse privately with devotees, almost as a matter of rule. Bhagawan does not show people special favours. His Grace is always the same.

Subbaramayya: Bhagawan himself has said that his Grace is like an ocean. We are limited only by how much we are able to carry away out of it for ourselves. The supply is always unlimited. It is upto us entirely how much we choose to avail of.

A.S.: On Bhagawan's jayanti days, he transmits even more of his radiance than usual. I do not know how many people have observed this besides myself. He even stops breathing, and sits like a statue on the Sofa.

C.: Did you put your hand under his nostrils to check whether he was breathing or not?

A.S.: [laughing] No, no. His abdomen and chest usually gently rise and fall in tune with his breathing. On jayanti days, even this slight movement is not there in his body.

K.: He goes into samadhi on those days, perhaps.

E.Z.: Bhagawan is always in samadhi.

Venkatanarayanappa: Do not bodily functions cease completely in samadhi?

C.: There are different kinds of samadhi. I have heard Bhagawan explaining them many times. The highest samadhi is Sahaja-samadhi; Bhagawan is always in this state. Nirvikalpa-samadhi is a lower kind of samadhi. Bodily functions are wholly unaffected in the former but become temporarily suspended in the latter.

Venkatanarayanappa: I am afraid to ask 'Who am I?' because I have the fear that I might slip into samadhi and so lose my bodily functions. If I remain for months in this state, who will take care of my family?

Subbaramayya: It is a silly fear. You need not have any such fear. Vichara is a safe path. Bhagawan has indicated this to be so many times.

A.S.: Many people think that vichara is Bhagawan's principal teaching. He teaches surrender also.

C.: I understand that vichara is the means whilst surrender is the goal.

A.S.: Bhagawan has said that just like vichara, surrender can also be used as sadhana.

C.: How can surrender, which is the final goal, be itself used as a means to reach that very same goal?

E.Z.: I have heard Bhagawan talking about this. He says that partial surrender by stages leads to complete surrender.

C.: I hope he recovers soon. I wonder if it is the customised prescription from that self-proclaimed Ayurvedic-expert that caused hematuria in him.

E.Z.: Do doubt at all; that was it alright.

C.: I hope he never takes it again.

A.S.: We need not worry about Bhagawan's health. His health has taken a turn for the worse many times. But he has always bounced back like a rubber-ball into perfect health. Until about a year ago, Bhagawan was suffering from severe haemorrhoids. All sorts of medicine were tried but nothing happened. Finally the malady went away of its own accord. Bhagawan always says, 'As it came, so it will go.'. When the complaint of haemorrhoids was at its worst, a devotee suggested surgery. Bhagawan's response was, 'If this body is ever mutilated with a [surgeon's] knife, that will be the end of it.'. From this I understood that performing surgery on a Jnani's body is a blasphemous idea. An long-time attendant of the master named Kunju had come along with us and now said, 'Once Bhagawan suffered from severe cholera when we were at Skandasramam. His diarrhoea would be so frequent that he stopped eating and stopped coming inside the ashram. Many thought he was going to die, and wept openly. But thank God, he made a full recovery. He has also suffered from jaundice and malaria on occasion. Typically, his symptoms



worsen before he recovers completely; that seems to be the usual pattern with Bhagawan's body.'

C.: Many say that mysterious herbs are to be found on this Hill which can make the body perfect and immune from senescence, disease and injury; I wonder if this legend were true.

E.Z.: How does it matter? Bhagawan has taught us that we are not the body.

C.: He says that Realisation is here and now, but yet that it can be attained only with patient and perseverent practice; I truly relish this dichotomy in his teachings; I do not find it puzzling at all. Oddly, it occurs to me that I must be thankful that such is the case. Why? Because if Realisation had to be newly or freshly acquired, obtained or attained, it could also be lost all over again!

K.: I remember that I had read of a similar point in some book; but I have not brought along my rucksack with me, and so-

C.: -we are all spared!

We roared with laughter. A still grinning Mr. Knowles now turned on me and asked me if I had enjoyed reading his book 'In the grip of the Jungles', since I had mentioned it in the Hall earlier today.

G.: Yes. In particular I found certain paragraphs to be particularly fascinating to my sense of attention.

K.: Oh! really; and what are these paragraphs, might I ask?

G.: 'Tis as follows, that is to say: the paragraph wherein it is mentioned that if one of a pair of snakes is killed in a certain place, the other one will come to the same spot sooner or later and try to take up an aggressive attitude; the paragraph that mentions the strange practice of stuffing a mule's ears with paper in order so as to make him move; the paragraph wherein it is mentioned that the tiger and the panther are hailed as 'champions of Islam' by moslems; the paragraph wherein it is stated that it is a provision of nature that the mind should support the body directly through the influencing power of the imagination, as well as indirectly as it does through the medium of devising ways and means of sustenance; and the paragraph wherein the remark is made that there are certain things in this life that, if they are at all pre-determined, immediately work by contraries.

K.: Bravo, boy! You seemed to have pored over my book, certainly!

We were now arrived near the tomb of Isanyajnanadesikar, a great sage who had once lived in Tiruvannamalai. An old man suddenly approached us from out of nowhere and began to cry earnestly. He brushed aside the coins offered to him, and then began to speak. He said-

***You will not easily find a mahan like Sri Ramana Maharshi anywhere in the world. He is a rare gem. Please utilise him well for the purpose of bringing about your deliverance from the wretched cycle of birth and***

***death. Pay attention to his words and practise them carefully; do not fritter away your lives, children! This is all that I am willing to say...***

Having said the words, he ran away into the forest, and we never saw him again. That same night, the unique incident was mentioned to Bhagawan. Bhagawan was asked what he thought of it. He smiled but proffered no reply.

Q.: Can it be that it might have been Isanyajnanadesikar himself? They say that his spirit is still alive inside his tomb.

B.: Perhaps. Who can say?

13th September, 1936

Q.: It is said that inside a cave located in some remote and inaccessible region of the Himalayas, a certain yogi known as Kriya Babaji Nagaraj has been doing tapas for the welfare of humanity for the past 300 years. He is said to have attained Realisation at the age of 16, just like Sri Bhagawan. Leadbeater is said to have seen him in visions. It is said that this yogi can astrally transport himself to anywhere in the universe he pleases, and by such means gives darshan to his devotees around the world. Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, a guru who lived in Benares during the previous century, is said to have been in constant and unintermittent psychic contact with him. I wish to have darshan of Sri Kriya Babaji. Please tell me how it is possible.

B.: If you go in search of him, the desire of your heart to see him may not be accomplished, because only the purest of souls, it is said, are able to catch glimpse of him. On the other hand, surrender to his will without reserve and rest assured that he himself will come searching for you.

The devotee was overjoyed with the firm assurance.

S>M>

Q.: If Advaita is final, why then did Madhvacharya recommend dvaita?

B.: [no response]

Q.: Bhogar Maharshi is said to have invented the aeroplane thousands of years before the Wright-brothers were born. Is it so?

B.: [no response]

Q.: In the opening sentences of the preface to the book 'Ueber das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens; von C. L. Reinhold; nebst einigen Erläuterungen über die Theorie des Vorstellungsvermögens', the following interesting content is to be found:

**In der physischen Welt wird man immer zuerst durch das, was wirklich geschieht, und in der moralischen durch das, was geschehen soll, über dasjenige, was geschehen kann, belehrt, und in soferne viel eher von der Nichtunmöglichkeit überzeugt, als man die Möglichkeit begreift. Dass sich die Philosophen von**

**Prosellion über die letzten Principien ihrer Wissenschaft verstehen lernen sollen, fordert nicht nur das Interesse der Wissenschaft, die sie entweder schon besitzen, oder aufsuchen, sondern auch ein weit höheres, dem jenes als Mittel zu seinem Zwecke untergeordnet ist, und das man entweder gar nicht kennt, oder für das Allerhöchste anerkennen muss, das Interesse der fittlichen Veredlung der Menschheit. Nur ein sehr kleiner Theil des sogenannten Lehrstandes in der weitesten Bedeutung dieses Wortes, befehlt aus Selbstdenkern. Gleichwohl hat dieser kleine Theil auf die Denkart des grösseren, und theils durch ihn, theils unmittelbar auf die Kultur der übrigen Stände, entscheidenden Einfluss. So lange nun die Selbstdenker über die letzten Gründe unsere Pflichten und Rechte in die sem und unserer Erwartung im zukünftigen Leben unter sich uneinig seyn werden, so lange wird mystische Bigotterie und Libertinismus für Moralität, Anarchie und Despotismus für Recht der Menschheit, Unglauben und Aberglauben für Religion, immer ausdrücklicher und in schneidenderem Gegensatze geprediget, und nicht eben bloss durch den Stumpfsinn die Unwissenheit und Rohheit des gelehrten Pöbels, sondern selbst durch den philosophischen Geist, die Gelehrsamkeit und den Zauber der darstellenden Kunst vorzüglicher Schriftsteller verbreitet werden. So lange wird ein künstlicher Antagonismus, der mit dem Natürlichen zwischen Vernunft und Sinnlichkeit ja nicht zu verwechseln ist, die bestimmte und wohlthätige Lenkung der handelnden Kräfte durch die denkenden in den öffentlichen Angelegenheiten vereiteln, und das Schicksal eines Staates, dasselbe mag nun durch Mehrheit der Stimmen, oder durch den Willen eines Einzigen entschieden werden, dem blinden Zufasse Preis geben – so lange wird der menschliche Geist, der sich selbst und nach seinen eigenen Gesetzen irar in soferne regieren kann, als er über diese Gesetze mit sich selbst einig ist, die Leitung des Ganges seiner Kultur zufälligen Eräugnillen überlassen, und unter der Vormundschaft der Naturnothwendigkeit, die ihm in den Verhältnissen drückender wird, als er seine Kräfte mehr fühlen lernt, unmündig bleiben müllen.**

Does Sri Bhagawan agree with the above words?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

The story of Purandaradasaru was mentioned in the Hall. Purandaradasaru had been born as Srinivasa Nayikker. He was working as a pearl merchant, which had been his family business for generations. He became exceedingly wealthy owing to his shrewdness and astuteness in business matters. By nature he was a miser and he saved every pie. His love of money had made him forget everything else. God felt sorry for him and therefore came in the guise of a poor brahmin in order so as to awaken him to the error of his selfish and parsimonious ways. The brahmin came to the shop where Srinivasa carried on business and begged for money from Srinivasa, weeping that he needed money desperately in order so as to celebrate the upanayanam of his son. Srinivasa chased him away after giving him a broken coin, saying, 'Be satisfied with what you get.'. The brahmin now went from Srinivasa's shop straight to his residence. He told Srinivasa's wife, Saraswati, what had happened. Srinivasa's wife was a very kind-hearted soul. She wanted to help him. But she was not in a position to give anything without asking her husband. She was also fully aware of his miserliness. Saraswati said, "What shall I do? My husband is not at home. I cannot give anything without asking him." The brahmin replied, "Oh! mother, you may have something which your parents might have given at the time of your wedding. Can you not give that?" Her parents had given her a diamond nose stud and she gave it to the brahmin feeling that she had given to Lord Krishna himself. The brahmin took the nose stud straight to Srinivasa's shop for sale. Srinivasa became angry with the brahmin for coming to him again. The brahmin said, "I have not come to you to beg. I have a jewel with me; will you take it as a pledge and give me a loan?" Srinivasa wondered what jewel the poor brahmin could have and asked him to show the jewel. The brahmin handed the nose stud to him. Srinivasa was surprised. He suspected that it could be his wife's stud. So he asked the brahmin where he had obtained the same. The brahmin asked Srinivasa, "Why do you ask this question? Do you think I stole it from somewhere?". But Srinivasa told him that he asked him only out of curiosity. The brahmin said, "Some generous person like you gave it to me as a gift. Evaluate it and give me a loan, keeping it as a pledge. Do not ask any further unnecessary questions because it is getting late and I urgently need money." Srinivasa asked him to come the next day. He locked the stud safely and went home. He called his wife and said to her, "Your nose is unadorned. Where is your nose-stud?" Saraswati did not know what to say, but said, "I have kept it away." Srinivasa commanded, "Show it to me.". Saraswati did not know what to do or say. She had given the stud away to the poor brahmin and she knew that her husband would upbraid her if she told him that she had given it away as a gift to the brahmin. She decided that she should commit suicide. She

poured poison into a cup and lifted the cup to her lips to drink it, in order so that she might breathe her last. She heard a metallic sound and lo! behold, there was the diamond nose-stud in the cup. She could not believe her eyes. Her heart was filled with gratitude. She prostrated before the idol of Lord Krishna and took the jewel to show her husband. Srinivasa could not believe his eyes. It was the same nose-stud that the brahmin had brought to him! There was no doubt that such was the case. He asked his wife, "How did the nose stud which you must have given to the brahmin come here? Please tell me the truth." Saraswati narrated all that had happened. Srinivasa was astounded. He went back to the shop and looked for the jewel in the box. It was empty. This opened the eyes of Srinivasa Nayikker. He understood that God had appeared before him as a poor brahmin to open his eyes and to cure him of his love of gold. He felt ashamed of his miserliness. He gave away in charity every bit of his wealth and felt happy about having done so. He convinced himself that what he had given away he had given to Krishna and Krishna only. From that day onwards he became a devotee of Hari.

Q.: About 3 decades ago, I had gone to take darshan of Jagadguru Sri Satchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Swamiji at Sringeri, along with a brahmin friend of mine who kindly consented to take me there. The Swamiji was giving a speech during the course of which he narrated the above story. At the conclusion of his speech, he said that God sometimes comes down in the guise of an ordinary human-being to bring about certain drastic changes in our lives, so that our spiritual progress is furtheranced. Something similar has now happened in my life also. Today morning I came to this town as part of our family's panchaboortha-sthalam pilgrimage. I had never heard of Sri Bhagawan. A leper was standing outside the temple and taking pity on him, I gave him a coin. I noticed that his face was glowing brightly with tejas. He threw my coin aside and told me that the price I had to pay for my sins was something far greater than a mere coin. I became annoyed that after all a beggar should talk to me in so arrogant a fashion, and I walked away from him. A row of beggars were sitting some distance away from the spot and I was walking towards them whilst suddenly they all turned their heads and looked at me; I was dumbfounded to see all faces were the same as that of the leper I had first encountered! I thought perhaps I was hallucinating, since my family members could not notice anything unusual; but as I passed by them, they all spoke in one voice, and uttered the following words: 'Fulfill the purpose of your visit here by coming to see me; tell the jutka-driver that you want to go to Ramana Maharshi's ashram and you will be carried to the place where you can have my darshan.' I stopped walking along so that I could question them further, but at that very moment the singular

faces disappeared and were replaced by usual faces of normal beggars. I left my family at the Nattukkoettai-nagaratthar choultry in town and hurried here. To my astonishment, as soon as I entered here and saw Bhagawan's face, I realised that it was Bhagawan's face that I had earlier seen in the leper and amongst the beggars! Without doubt, Bhagawan's leelai it is that has brought me here to his feet! [bursts into tears] Will Bhagawan consent to take me as his disciple? But alas! I am not in a position stay here all the time with Bhagawan. I feel restless. How shall I be saved from the consequences of sins I have committed in my youth? What is the way for me? Please tell me.

B.: Prapatti. Only He can save you. Surrender to His Mercy without reserve. That is the only way.

Q.: Then prayaschittham is not necessary?

B.: Absolute surrender is the greatest[loftiest] prayaschittham.

15th September, 1936

Q.: The Jnani and ajnani both have a body; what is the difference between them?

B.: The mistake made by the ajnani is that he limits his "I" to the body. Both the Jnani and the ajnani have a body, and both say 'I am the body'. The difference lies in the fact that in the case of the Jnani the diaphanous stream of consciousness needed to sustain life in the body is an upadhi, whereas in the case of the other, that macilent ray of reflected consciousness[known as body-consciousness] is the one and only consciousness he is aware of. I-am is the truth. Body-consciousness is an obnubilating limitation which obscures Revelation of the Self in the case of the ajnani and an upadhi in the case of the Jnani. You are always the same "I", whatever state it is that may be passing in front of you. In sleep "I" remains without a body. That same "I" remains undisturbed and unmutated in the jagrat and swapna states also. Only, in these states, we abandon our actual identity with "I" and imagine ourselves to be perishable bodies made of matter. Despite this confusion on our part, "I" remains happily without a body in truth always, although we assume that we are within the body. Although by us imagined to be within the body, the Real "I" ever is without any body or other limitation, being the Absolute Immutable Self Itself. One's ignorant outlook is not merely 'I am the body.'; it lies in having confounded the Self with the not-Self, such as the mind, intellect or body. Does the Real "I" formulate or proclaim the idea of it being this or that? Is it not always perfectly silent? It is the spurious "I" which is capable of rumbustiousness or obstreperousness, and which says, 'I am this.' or 'I am that.'. The body is insentient and cannot say so. Our mistake lies in thinking "I" to be what "I" is not. "I" cannot be insentient; therefore "I" is not

the inert body. What then is this "I"? "I" means Sentience or Awareness which is not adumbrated by the faculty of thought-manufacture- i.e., the aham vritti. The body's movements are confounded with "I" and excruciating agony is the result. Whether the body and mind work or not, "I" remains free and happy- i.e., in its nativistic or intrinsic state of ecstatic, Eternal Emancipation. The ajnani's "I" is limited to his body and mind only; that is where his whole error lies. The Jnani's "I" includes the body and everything else. For the Emancipated-one there cannot be anything apart from "I" the Self. He sees no other. Verily everything is only Himself. In the case of the ajnani, some phantasmagoric, intermediate entity known as ahankaram arises between the body and the Self and gives rise to all sorts of trouble. If its source is sought, it disappears, leaving the Self alone behind, as the solitary residue. Continuous and intense inward-pointed scrutiny of the mind results in its disappearance.

Q.: Since the Jnani has a tangible body, what happens to the soul in that body after its death?

B.: Others say that the Jnani has a body, and talk of jivanmukti, videhamukti, mukti by means of making the body disappear in a flash of blazing light, etc.; the Jnani's experience of Reality is altogether unconditioned and totally absolute. His experience is that he has no body. If others see him as being one with a body, or as possessing a body, can that affect him? He does not identify himself with the body even whilst the body is yet alive. Can the death of the body then affect him?

Q.: But just now Bhagawan said that the Jnani also says "I am the body."

B.: Yes. His "I" includes the body. His experience is that for him there cannot be anything apart from "I". If the body is destroyed there is no loss for the "I". "I" remains the same as ever. If the body feels dead let it raise questions. Can it? No; being inert it cannot. "I" never dies and it does not ask any question. Who then dies and who asks questions?

Q.: For whom are all the sacred-books then? They cannot be for the real "I". They must be for the unreal "I". The real one would not require them. Am I correct?

B.: Yes- yes.

Q.: Is it not strange that an unreal entity should have so many sacred-books written for him?

B.: Quite so. Death is merely a thought and nothing more. He who thinks raises questions and experiences troubles. Let the thinker tell us what happens to him in death.

S>M>

Q.: What is the genuine "I" and what is the false "I"?

B.: That which says "I" is not the genuine "I". The genuine "I" abides as "I" silently. He does not say anything. The real "I" is always silent.

Q.: How to empirically prove Bhagawan's teachings to be correct?

B.: Never make the unpardonable mistake of believing in my literature or in what I am saying. I am not here to ask you to believe me. Do not have faith in me- never. Experiment and find out the truth by yourself. Suppose you like jilaebi very much, and want to experience the taste of eating it. How will you go about obtaining this experience? Will you give it to a friend and ask him to eat it, and then ask him to provide you with a lengthy narrative of how it tasted? Or will you thrust it into your mouth as soon as you obtain it? Which is the better way of experiencing the taste of jilaebi?

Q.: Eating it!

B.: Exactly. Always long for first-hand experience. Why have faith in Bhagawans and Swamis? What they say is about their experience. You must have your own experience. Watching somebody eat is not going to satisfy your hunger. If you feel hungry, eat yourself.

Q.: Will repeating mentally Brahmaivaham, or chanting Nirvanashatkam mentally, lead to Sakshatkaram?

B.: One should not think "I am this." or "I am not that.". It is a sign of weakness to meditate in such a manner. Find out what you are and eternally abide as that. Sri Sankara wrote the composition when he was intoxicated with nectarous, divine bliss. He did not write those words in a mood of intellectual contemplation. To say 'I am the Self.' or 'I am not the ego.' is absurd; it is unequivocally counter-productive. Who is making these asseverations? Is Brahman making them? Brahman does not even say "I". The method of Realisation is 'Who am I?', not aham brahmasmi, etc.; repeating such assertions means that you are radically ossifying your own thralldom. Why? Every time you tell yourself, 'I am not the body, mind or ego, but the supreme Self.', the bondage-causing conviction that there is a 'you' who is making this assertion grows stronger and stronger. One who, blind to the fact of his actually being all the while verily nothing but the Self Itself, goes on thinking 'I am the Self.', is committing an execrable, heinous blasphemy or heresy unto none other than himself; by following such harmful, putrescent practice, he condemns himself thereby to the horrific fate of unceasing bondage- it is far, far better to remain without doing any sadhana at all.

S>M>

Q.: Why does Sri Bhagawan condemn the practise of thinking 'I am Brahman.'?

B.: Any sort of thinking is a limitation upon your real limitless nature. Only I-am is the truth. The Real "I" is exclusively Silence. Thinking 'I am Brahman.', man



falls into worse delusion, since his inflated, tumescent ego now imagines itself to be God-supreme and goes on to wreck all sorts of grievous havoc, enthralled under the inebriating sway of that ridiculous, false notion. The mahavakyas are not asking you to imagine that you are Brahman. They want you to extinguish thought and thereby abide as Brahman.

Q.: The world is filled with unrest. What is the reason?

B.: Why is there suffering and unrest in the world? Expectation of things apart from oneself is the reason for all the mischief. If man is content with his Self there will be no trouble of any sort anywhere. Since objects are perceived outside oneself, the desire to acquire or obtain them arises. Perception of objects is made possible because there is a perceiving subject- i.e., the notorious ego, the killer of man's inherent happiness. People fight with each other in the name of nationalistic, religious or caste-based affinities or for other reasons- where lies the root of the problem? One thinks "I am this."; another thinks "I am that."; and so on it goes- clash of thoughts is the inevitable result, and man goes to war with man. Perception of otherness results in loss of the natural state of blissful Peace. If thinking is put an end to there will be peace everywhere. There is no conflict in the Self. Why not quietly abide in the Self? The Self ever remains as it is, in its nativistic state of unalloyed, inviolable, imperishable, incontaminable bliss. All problems arise only when we leave the Self. Why leave Him at all?

Q.: There are many schools of Vedanta. Each one has something different to say. Which to follow?

B.: The Self is not affected by any doctrines, conflicting or otherwise. The Self does not participate in any arguments. The Self is mute and has nothing to say. Therefore, abide in the Self; this alone is Real Vedanta.

S>M>

Q.: What is the meaning of death? Is it merely cessation of bodily functions? Does the soul survive it or does it perish at the time of death?

B.: Why do you want to know all these things?

Q.: I dread death.

B.: Do you find sleep desirable?

Q.: Yes.

B.: Why find death abhorrent but sleep pleasurable? Are they not the same thing?

Q.: How can that be? I know I shall wake up from sleep.

B.: Yes- thought again. Just before going to sleep, there is the preceding thought "I shall wake up.". Thoughts rule one's life and make it thoroughly miserable. What is to be done? Freedom from thoughts is one's true nature- it is the bliss of the Self hors concours.

Q.: How to escape from death? Is there a way to become immortal?

B.: Yes. Find out whether you were ever born. Discover your Immortality.

Q.: How?

B.: Investigate 'Who am I?'.  
S>M>

Chadwick: What does Bhagawan think about the 5 ways espoused by St. Thomas of Aquinas to prove the existence of God?

B.: God's existence follows from our conception of His existence. First find out whose conception it is.

C.: Is even God only an intellectual or mental conception?

B.: Yes.

C.: Than what are we trying to Realise our Identity with?

B.: Reality- i.e., the Self.

C.: Is He not the same as God?

B.: He is different from the omnipotent, justice-dispensing personality you are imagining within your mind [as being God].

C.: Is it wrong to harbour conceptions of God?

B.: Where is the need to look for Him outside? He shines as the true import of "I" within the cavern of the heart. Realise His resplendence there reverberating as "I-I", give yourself upto it once and for all and be done forevermore with the quest [after God].

C.: What is the meaning of the Psalm verse, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?"? Why did Jesus say it upon the Cross? Did he feel despair concerning the question of his death? Was he then unaware of his impending resurrection? Did Jesus dread his death upon the Cross or did he embrace the same willingly? If the latter was the case, why did he earlier say, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..."?

Before B. could respond, Cycle-pillai, who had just then come to the Hall to prostrate to the master at nightfall as usual, said with a smile, addressing Chadwick, to the stupendous astonishment of the Hall: "But He finished with '...nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.'. That is ananyasharanagati as taught by our Bhagawan."

Chadwick looked fully flabbergasted; B. laughed with profound enjoyment at the look of surprised delight on the gentle Caucasian-giant's face[;Chadwick has not infrequently reminded me of Oscar Wilde's 'Selfish Giant'- the reformed version of the giant- i.e., the character post his meeting with infant Jesus]. Cycle-pillai paid his respects to the master and left the Hall without further ado.

B.: [after sometime] You want to know why he did or said this or that. But we cannot judge the activities of the Emancipated-one by using our faculty of reason or weltanschauung. Being a Jnani he certainly [would have] had no dehatmabuddhi. Therefore he would have accepted the Crucifixion without alarm.

C.: Is it true that before his ministry he came to India and converted himself from Judaism to Kashmiri-shaivism? I heard that many scholars- based on conclusions drawn from their research-activities- have made such claims.

B.: We need not concern ourselves with his physical whereabouts during his earthly sojourn. He is always with you- as the Self ever within you. Realise Him there first and then raise other questions. After all- what does 'Jesus' mean? It means Yehoshuah- i.e., 'YHWH is my Emancipation.' YHWH means 'He who IS.' Likewise, AHIH ASR AHIH means 'I-AM that I-AM.'. Likewise in the Psalms is it said, 'Be still, and know that I am God...'. Alqurahn says, 'KN FKN'. Nirvanopanishad says, 'Paramahamsaha soham'. Says the Aitreyabrahmanam, '[Thanishukrani abhyathapat thaebhyobhithapthaebhyastrayo varna ajayanthakara ukaro makara iti than ekadhasamabharat that ethat om iti thasmath om om iti pranouti om iti vai svarga loka] om iti asou yosou tapati.'- i.e., He is Om who Shines- the implication being that the real meaning of 'Om' is "I", since "I" alone Shines, and even if anything apart from "I" be perceived, as in the case of the man on the Clapham omnibus, it seemingly shines or exists because of a reflection made possible on account of the one sole original light, which is verily nothing but the true "I"- i.e., the Self. So, everywhere the message of the ancients seems to be the same- but what does it all mean?

C.: I haven't the faintest clue.

B.: The message may be interpreted so as to give oneself to understand, 'That which IS, is my Salvation[or God].'

C.: Meaning, Salvation or Deliverance can come from the Self only?

B.: Yes. The message of genuine Sages of God of old is only this: LOOK WITHIN.

E.Z.: Chadwick mentioned Kashmiri-shaivism just now. I have heard of the school. Their whole objective seems to revolve around somehow obtaining this thing called 'saktipada'. They have divided saktipada into 7 categories. I have perused much material, but still am at a loss to precisely understand what saktipada is or what its exact role is in facilitating dawn of Liberation.

B.: Introversion of mind is your effort to remain without effort; saktipada is the response from the Deep which makes it possible for such effort to succeed in bringing about a state wherein there is no effort.

E.Z.: How to obtain saktipada? Is it by having the Guru's hands touch the crown of one's head?

B.: The Guru is not physical. Touch with the mind. That ought sufficeth to.

C.: I am aware that- traditionally- Hinduism holds that Liberation is to be had only after taking formal initiation from a Guru. Will not B. bless me by bestowing a monastic name on me?

G.: Yes, I suggest Chadickananda!

Everyone roared with laughter- especially, the master's eyes shone with moisture owing to prolonged laughter!

C.: [meekly, after all the pandemonium died down] I still wish to be initiated formally as a disciple of the Maharshi. Will not B. grant this my earnest plea?

B.: Is there any Maharshi outside of your imagination? Does the Maharshi haunt you in deep sleep? Diksha, saktipada, etc. are all automatically taken care of in the vichara margam. Do not bother about such things. Rather, concentrate on finding the source of the thought "I". Trace the aham vritti back to its source. This is wisdom, not hankering after diksha, saktipada, etc. from some piffing koupeenadhari. Why are you still stuck in the delusory realm of conceptual knowledge? Try to sink into the Heart. Remain permanently submerged in the Heart; this is Liberation.

C. did not look entirely convinced, but he seemed to have not the hardihood to argue the matter further with Bhagawan; he left the topic at that.

E.Z.: In the work Tayodejing, it is said, 'The wise man is one who knows what he does not know.'. Socrates seems to have said the same thing. What does it all mean?

B.: One who has recognised the impossibility of veracity of mind-generated information cannot move the mind outward, amongst the direction leading towards sensory perceptions, memories, conceptual or intellectual disquisitions, etc., etc.; so, since he knows that mind and its contents are all totally spurious and false, he remains content and peaceful in and with the bliss of the Self. One who knows objective knowledge to be actually fictitious- as opposed to one who, for instance, merely believes such to be the case- enjoys great peace and relaxation all the time, although his body might be working round the clock. Really objective knowledge is impossible fiction. Since the Sage knows that he does not know anything at all, he is wise- i.e., a Jnani. Consciousness emptied of its contents or knots- pure consciousness that is a tabula rasa- is the way leading to Realisation of the Self- one's true Immortal Self which knows neither birth nor death.

E.Z.: Practically recognising the mind- together with its contents- to be unreal or fictitious: how shall we accomplish this? Is it by getting rid of the veil of avidya maya?

B.: Yes. You will eliminate avidya maya only by investigating into the source of the aham vritti.

E.Z.: Does vichara involve asking 'To whom has this thought arisen?' everytime a thought presents itself?

B.: After putting the question 'Who am I?' to yourself, return the mind to its nativistic nivritti state.

C.: After putting an end to 1 thought, another rises to take its place. What shall we do?

B.: It requires practice to quiesce the mind.

TKS.: Mr. C. E. Banks, employed as editor with the United-states newspaper 'Seattle P-I', has contrived the following verse-

The toughest wood with brightest blaze will greet:

The hardest nut contains the sweetest meat;

So wisdom, gained by light of midnight oil,

Gives richest recompense to patient toil.

B.: Yes. Toil is absolutely necessary. Some bruhaspatis, having listened to the words 'The Self is here and now.', imagine themselves to be already Realised. Nothing could be more absurd. It is like the cat which died when it tried deploying a red-hot iron rod in an attempt to give itself decorative stripe-patterned markings on its back, desirous of emulating its distant relative, the tiger. Such a one is paving the way for his own complete mental derangement, nothing else.

C.: I also want to read out a poem: may I proceed?

B.: [smiling] Oh! yes; why not- why not? [தாராளமாக; தாராளமாக.] Go on! Is it your poem?

C.: No; it is by the United-states poet F. L. Stanton: [reads out happily]

See the wild birds soaring on the wing,

Hear the church-bells that sweetly ring;

When you feel like moaning and sighing, sing

The good tidings that soon spring shall bring!

When it looks as though the game of life is up,

Don't go around smashing one after another tea-cup.

Even if everybody treats you with utter malice,

Don't forget to drain your sweet wine off the chalice.

Whether you might happen to strike thorn or rose,

Or even if the plough were to yield nothing but grouse,

Remember the exploits among the native Indian louse

Of the mountebanks' foe, the 1st Marquess of Dalhousie!

It was not you to be born who ever chose;

So remember that the next time life misery snows!

How can you afford to sit and whine  
When there are no fish tugging at your line?  
Bait your hook and keep on trying;  
And soon you will have fish on your grill frying!  
Suppose you have exhausted every dime,  
Brood not- for penury never was a crime;  
Tell the world in your voice with a cheerful chime,  
That from them you do tolerate no foisting of grime!  
When the weather in her fury unplacated  
[Why, of course she ought to be severely berated!]  
Kills mercilessly by you painstakingly planted  
All of the precious, sun-kissed crop,  
Or when you tumble down right from the top,  
Please don't go about thinking,  
"I am such a miserable flop!"  
Keep on going!

Everybody including myself appreciated the poet's skill, although I could not really see anything great about it; Chadwick seemed mournful and disconsolate today, and I seemed not to be the only person sensing it. Mr. TKS said comfortingly, 'Oh! Good poem that you have selected to read out for us, sir...' The Shylock said something along the same lines, and others. I was reminded of H. C. Anderson's 'The Emperor's New Clothes', and smiled to myself. Then, Chadwick, with a strange sniff, thanked the Hall and made to get up; but at that precise moment B. sharply turned his gaze in his direction and looked straight into his eyes. Chadwick sank to the floor with a small groan and burst into heavy sobs. Mr. TKS fetched him some water to drink, while the Shylock fanned him continuously with a small palm-leaf fan handed unto him by the attendant. There was no expression of disquiet on B.'s face, however- not that it is possible there ever could be; the master was as placid as ever. Finally C. ceased his crying. The Shylock asked gently, 'What's the matter, old Major?'

C.: I was just forcibly reminded of the fact- my parents- used to read out poems like this to daddy- do miss my baby-sister Enid... she used to trouble me to no end- got us all into no end of mischief-

E.Z.: Maybe you could- for a brief while- return to England- we shall ask B.-

C.: No, no, I just can't part from Bhagawan anymore- love him too much...

Was forcibly reminded of Enid, the thought that- nobody to bother me like that anymore- well... its the trouble-makers that are sorely missed, you know, even amongst loved ones... [laughs briefly and tries to get up]

B.: [smiling graciously; gesticulating unto him to sit down] You are talking about the affectionate trouble you had with your sister. Let me tell you about that I had with mine. When we were at Thiruchuzhi, Alamaelu always wanted to visit her grandmother. She would go on crying but nobody would pay the slightest attention. But I would be moved by pity. I would consent to take her, and she would happily agree. But she would not say which grandmother. Our grandmothers lived at the opposite ends of the town. I would painstakingly take her to one grandmother's house. As soon as she set foot there, she would scream, 'This is not the grandmother I meant; I wanted to visit the other one and you have brought me here...' So, after an hour or so, I would take her to the other end of town. Those days there were no buses, and nobody owned a cycle in our house. After a few minutes of walk, she would demand to be carried. I would remain in compliance till my humeri threatened to come off loose. Then I would beg her to walk until some bullock-cart should happen to pass by. But next she would complain to me about the ground being hot. So, I would pluck plantain leaves from somewhere and using the sinew-like chords that can be ripped off the trunk off the plantain tree, sit down on the spot and manufacture makeshift shoe-like coverings for her feet. Those days we children were not given to the habit of using any foot-wear. We would wait and wait for any bullock-cart to come by. When it finally came, for fear that it would pass us by, I would throw myself on the road some distance away from the speedily forthcoming bulls in sashtanganamaskaram. The driver would curse angrily and stop. I would beg him, saying that my sister was of a delicate biological-constitution and that she was finding it untenable to tolerate the heat of the mid-day sun. I would entreat him to take her atleast, and say that I did not mind walking. Generally my pleadings were obliged and either us both or only Alamaelu would get dropped off on the main road. From the main road further kilometres had to be traversed until the grandmother's house could be arrived at- no matter which grandmother it was. So, if I did not get to ride, she had to wait at the destination until I arrived on the spot; if she was made to wait too long she would start crying and attract the attention of passers-by, and I would get a sound thrashing at home for encouraging and arranging such adventurous exploits. So, I would rush to the spot as fast as my legs would carry me, not minding the pain in my legs. Finally we would reach the other grandmother's house. But as soon as we arrived there, Alamaelu would feel tired and would want to go home. I would feel exhausted, and plead with her that I required some rest for my aching limbs; but she would be adamant. So we started off home... This would happen almost every weekend. At the end of every such misadventure, invariably I would sternly tell Alamaelu- and also myself in all seriousness- that this occurrence ought to be the final one

appurtenant to any such kind; she would at that point of time sleepily agree- but invariably next week again she would cry that she wanted to visit ஸ்ரீமாத்ரீ ; again I would feel too moved by her tears to be able to refuse or ignore her... [laughs] It is like King Vikramaditya's adventures with the vetala hanging upside down from atop the drumstick-tree...!

The Hall was reeling under a stupefied silence. Sri Bhagawan was never in the habit of narrating incidents from his own life- usually the stories were from the puranas, ithihasas, etc.; this was most unusual- bizarre, even. I glanced at Chadwick's face. Fresh tears were now streaming down his cheeks profusely, at having had to visualise all the suffering the master had had to undergo.

Enid the beloved sister evidently lay forgotten by his mind for the time being. The Maharshi himself was smiling with the jocundous innocence of a young boy, as though heartily satisfied with some cosy joke he had just managed to crack. For a long while nobody opened their mouth. Finally-

TKS.: [bravely attempting to sound chucklesome] Is Sri Pitchu Aiyyer acquainted with all these facts?

B.: [smile widening] No- and do not tell him...!

G.: Did these things happen before Sri Bhagawan Realised the Self or afterwards?

B.: Before- why are you asking?

G.: I thought it would be sacrilegious to treat a Jnani in such a way...

C.: Even after the commencement of his Advent here, Sri Bhagawan was pitilessly harassed by jealous sadhus on numerous occasions; it was during the days whilst he was staying in the Virupaksha-cave... Wonder whether it occurred to the facinorous rogues that what they were doing was blasphemy against God, straight and direct...

E.Z.: Particularly the rascal Balananda seems to have given Sri Bhagawan a terrifically hard time...

B.: [smiling] Bhagawan is always the same. But he annoyed everybody staying in the cave. Once under the influence of opium he marched into the cave, told me 'Now I am going to prove to the world that I also have no dehatmabuddhi whatsoever...', vigourously stripped nude, clasped hold of Easwarasamy, and tried [to pedicate him]; when he was pushed away, he came and smeared semen on my face. When everybody noticed what he was doing, they roughly shoved him out of the cave and threatened to report the matter to the police; then he became quiet and went away...

C.: [emotionally; in a raised voice] Why, the unholy scoundrel! He ought to be skinned alive!

E.Z.: Is he still living in Tiruvannamalai?



B.: I don't know. He had great intellectual mastery over the sacred-books, but little actual insight. Such persons do run the risk of becoming mentally deranged or perverted, imagining themselves to be Brahman, Ishwara, etc., etc. and behaving accordingly... That is why it is important to never stop at conceptual understanding- however sophisticated or perspicacious that understanding might happen to be. Intellectual understanding of Ajata-advaita is of course necessary, but instead of stagnating and thus strangulating oneself there, one must quickly move on to the aspect of application or practice... The purpose of acquiring an understanding of theory is exclusively so that it may serve as an initial basis for practice... As one deepens in one's practice [of introversion of mind, one finds that] it is not understanding of theory that sustains the practice [any longer], but the practice itself [which so does]. Theory is merely the first stepping stone. Before commencement of one's voyage can take place, one must get into the steamer. For this purpose a gangplank may be deployed. Theory is[-i.e., may be compared with] the gangplank; if you keep standing on it, can your voyage ever begin? It is also true that some persons, being excessively anxious or altogether eager to complete their journey, do not wait for the gangplank to be assembled; they take one gigantic leap and land in the fore-castle!

E.Z.: Bhagawan would fit nicely into this category, I think!

B.: [smiling] But I never saw the steamer approach...

S>M>

Having obtained the master's permission[a smile] so to do, Mr. Knowles read out the following poem to the Hall, from an aged-seeming book he clutched in hand- 'Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam- Rendered into English Verse by Edward Fitzgerald; Portland, Maine; Thomas B. Mosher; 1899':

***Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,  
Before we too into the Dust descend;  
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,  
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and sans End!***

***Alike for those who for To-day prepare.  
And those that after a To-morrow stare,  
A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries  
"Fools your Reward is neither Here nor There!"***

***Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd  
Of the 2 Worlds so wisely- they are thrust  
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn  
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.***

***Oh, come with old Khayyam, and leave the Wise***

***To talk; one thing is certain, that Life flies  
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies;  
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.***

***Myself when young did eagerly frequent  
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument  
About it and about but evermore  
Came out by the same Door as in I went.***

***With them the Seed of Wisdom did I sow,  
And with my own hand labour'd it to grow  
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd-  
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go."***

***Into this Universe, and why not knowing,  
Nor whence, like Water willy-nilly flowing:  
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,  
I know not whither, willy-nilly blowing.***

***What, without asking, hither hurried whence?  
And, without asking, whither hurried hence!  
Another and another Cup to drown  
The Memory of this Impertinence!***

***Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate  
and on the Throne of Saturn sate,  
And many Knots unravel'd by the Road;  
But not the Knot of Human Death and Fate.***

***There was a Door to which I found no Key:  
There was a Veil past which I could not see:  
Some little Talk awhile of Me and Thee  
There seemed- and then no more of Thee and Me.***

Chadwick: These words shan't cheer anybody up- in fact, they sound somewhat depressing, if you will permit me to say so, Mr. Knowles.

K.: My point is, it is man's mortality that facilitates him and spurs him on to celebrate life and live it to the fullest. Without possibility of death, life would become boring. Am I right, Maharshi?

Bhagawan did not reply.

E.Z.: Everyone knows that he is going to die one day. Only, he refrains from ruminating upon the fact. Why? Because contemplating upon death terrifies him. Fear of death is present in all of us. We may think we have accepted death as part and parcel of life. But when it is just about to hit us in the face, we realise we were never prepared to face death ever. If

you ask me, the only true preparation to face death is Realisation of the Self. Your view that it is death that makes life interesting would hold good if death were inevitable. But it is not. Realising the Self, we transcend birth and death. B.'s method of vichara enables us to see past the Veil; it is the key to the Final Door.

K.: Is personal service to the Guru necessary to Realise the Self- I mean massaging his legs and anointing them with oil, etc..

B.: Do you think the Guru is the body? When this body was living on the Hill there was a man who served it devotedly and took good care of it whilst it fell ill. Last month he was seen distributing pamphlets elucidating my 'actual nature' to those living in town; people coming here want to discover their true nature and are quizzing me about it all the while; but lo! behold: this man has divined my true nature and is explaining it to everybody! Is it not a marvel? [laughs good-humouredly] And now he has initiated proceedings against the ashram in the Tiruvannamalai Munsiff-court. What is to be said about this? So, remain permanently submerged in the Heart: that is verily the best service you can do to the Guru.

S>M>

A modest pandit by name Narasimhan, who, according to Mr. TKS, from whom I heard of the matter later, is a relative of Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the famous Indian philosopher and renowned King George V Professor of Philosophy at Calcutta University, has arrived in the ashram today morning. B. has been exceptionally solicitous towards him. Now when B. casually made the above remarks about the harassment allegedly inflicted by a former devotee of the master, he could not contain himself; and he burst into profuse tears! He was consoled by those in the Hall and given water to drink by B.'s attendants.

N.: The thought occurred to me, 'Who will protect our innocent B. from such abominable villains?'. So, I started crying...

B.: [smiling] Who will protect me, you ask? The same power which brought me here! Who else?!

S>M>

Q.: Is it possible to lose the feeling of "I"?

B.: That is precisely the objective of our efforts. It is called Jnana. But it cannot be accomplished over the course of a few days. Tireless and persistent practice is necessary.

Q.: At the time of cosmic dissolution [pralayam] what happens to the Self-awareness of the Jnani? Does it survive or perish?

B.: Let us wait for a pralayam to occur and then find out! [laughter in the Hall]

S>M>

Q.: Is faith in God- personal or otherwise- necessary to Realise the Self?  
Is belief in His existence a sine qua non in order so as to be able to attain Jnana?

B.: No.

Q.: So even a materialist or atheist can Realise?

B.: No "ism" can help in Realisation. [Know that] "ism"s are an obstacle, not an aid [upon the quest].

S>M>

K.: On the occasion of my previous visit here I heard Maharshi comparing the mind to a camera obscura. I request him to explain this concept to us in further detail.

B.: You are able to see objects, including the body that you take mistakenly to be yourself, exclusively on account of mental darkness. Really there is nothing to see. The mind now takes itself to be not-Self and therefore is said to be immersed in the darkness of avidya-maya. If and when it discovers its identity- not conceptually, but actually- with the Self, all objects perish. The lesser the radius of the aperture in a camera obscura[-i.e., the greater the f/number], the clearer the image formed will be. Go on enlarging the pinhole and the image becomes further and further indistinct and fuzzy. Finally, tear down the wall in which the pinhole was situated. What is the result? Light floods the room; then there is no possibility for any image-formation. Likewise here. The denser one's ignorance, the more real the world appears to be and the sharper- and therefore more eminently believable- the mental simulation you call 'world' seems to appear. When the mind, as a result or by virtue of continuously or incessantly seeking its source and inhering therein, has disappeared, the world can possibly no longer be perceived. This is called Jnana.

K.: But Maharshi continues to see this world!

B.: Did I tell you so?

K.: Does Maharshi see me and hear me talking to him or not? If not, how is he responding to me so coherently?

B.: The Jnana-siddha cannot be aware of the world. There is no world for Maharshi to see. What is talking to you is merely your own mind.

K.: Is mind part of the Self or does it not exist at all?

B.: Mind as mind is non-existent. Realising the Self, nobody bothers about the mind. The Self cannot be bothered about whether minds remain or perish. The question of Realisation or problem of nescience is only from our side [or applicable or relevant only for our perspective as

the ego]. Does the ocean ever complain, 'Oh! a bubble floating about upon me has burst; alas!'

K.: The ocean may not even be aware of the fact that bubbles are floating about upon its surface; it might not even occur to It to see them as being apart from Itself.

B.: Exactly...

K.: What happens to the mind in sleep?

B.: It is inactive but still there.

K.: Keats has mused:

**What is more gentle than a wind in summer?  
What is more soothing than the pretty hummer  
That stays one moment in an open flower,  
And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower?  
What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing  
In a green island, far from all men's knowing?  
More healthful than the leafiness of dales?  
More secret than a nest of nightingales?  
More serene than Cordelia's countenance?  
More full of visions than a high romance?  
What, but thee Sleep? Soft closer of our eyes!**

B.: Yes, sleep is blissful because the mind cannot move during sleep. But the ananda of the Self is superior to any other ananda. Why? Because it remains unmediated. There is no intermediary entity there to rise up and asseverate, 'Yes; I am enjoying ananda.'. The mind is a thief. He consumes or obnubilates all the bliss of the Heart and leaves a tiny little bit for you to enjoy. Do not be cheated by this thief. Verily the entire Inheritance is yours. Realise the Self and take It all. King Janaka exclaimed, 'Now that I have discovered who the thief is, I shall extirpate him summarily!'. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." So, God is waiting to bestow Realisation upon us, if only we would surrender unto Him without reserve.

K.: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." What does it mean?

B.: Precisely what it says! If you covet and accumulate worldly wealth, which are only in the mind, you will go on living in delusion, imagining the mind and the transient pleasures encompassed by it to be the Heaven of the Heart. But if you seek as the treasure you covet God or the actual Kingdom of Heaven- i.e., the Self, that is where you will find the Heart to be.

S>M>

Q.: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Does it mean engaging oneself in social service is an activity that is to be regarded as being a taboo for

those in pursuit of the Quest [for Realisation]?

B.: There is no harm in egoless social-service. Do not think that you are serving one who is beneath you. Think that you are being blessed in that you have found an opportunity to serve the Lord. Remember: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

Q.: People cause some disturbance or the other whilst I am trying to make effort to discover the Self. What shall I do?

B.: The disturbance is in the mind and mind only. One who is single-mindedly searching for God or the Self does not get afraid of any obstacle. "...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Q.: B. shares his opinions with us so wonderfully. But some- even within Tiruvannamalai itself- seem to hate him. Why?

B.: [smiles and keeps quiet]

K.: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

S>M>

Q.: No matter how much I pray to God, He is unwilling to satisfy my desire to embrace Him as the Lord of my Heart. What shall I do?

B.: What can we do? Can we demand anything from Him as a matter of right? We are only beggars before Him. Let us therefore surrender to Him unreservedly and abide by His will- whatever it might be. The same is advised by Sri Thayumanavar.

B. then handed Sri Muruganar a notebook and asked him to read out certain verses. But right into the first few lines, that great poet's voice became choked with profound emotion and he could coherently continue no further. The master then took back the notebook from the quivering tear-filled scholar and read out himself thus-

நினைவொன்று நினையாமல் நிற்கின் அகம் என்பார்  
நிற்குமிட மேயருளாம் நிட்டையரு ளட்டுந்  
தனையென்று மறந்திருப்ப அருள்வடிவா னதுமேல்  
தட்டியெழுந் திருக்குமின்பந் தன்மயமே யதுவாம்  
பினையொன்று மிலையந்த இன்பமெனும் நிலயம்  
பெற்றாரே பிறவாமை பெற்றார்மற் றுந்தான்  
மனையென்றும் மகனென்றுஞ் சுற்றமென்றும் அசுத்த  
வாதனையாம் ஆசைமொழி மன்னொருசொற் கொண்டே .  
நில்லாத ஆக்கைநிலை யன்றனவே கண்டாய்  
நேயஅருள் மெய்யன்றோ நிலயமதா நிற்கக்

கல்லாதே ஏன் படித்தாய் கற்றதெல்லாம் மூடங்  
 கற்றதெல்லாம் மூடமென்றே கண்டனையும் அன்று  
 சொல்லாலே பயனில்லை சொல்முடிவைத் தானே  
 தொடர்ந்துபிடி மர்க்கடம்போல் தொட்டதுபற் றாநில்  
 எல்லாரும் அறிந்திடவே வாய்ப்பறைகொண் டடிநீ  
 இராப்பகலில் லாவிடமே எமக்கிடமென் றறிந்தே .  
 பாராதி யண்டமெலாம் படர்கானற் சலம்போல்  
 பார்த்தனையே முடிவில்நின்று பாரெதுதான் நின்ற  
 தாராலும் அறியாத சத்தன்றோ அதுவாய்  
 அங்கிருநீ எங்கிருந்தும் அதுவாவை கண்டாய்  
 பூராய மாகவுநீ மற்றொன்றை விரித்துப்  
 புலம்பாதே சஞ்சலமாப் புத்தியைநாட் டாதே  
 ஓராதே ஒன்றையுநீ முன்னிலைவை யாதே  
 உள்ளபடி முடியுமெலாம் உள்ளபடி காணே .  
 வரும்போமென் பனவுமின்றி யென்றுமொரு படித்தாய்  
 வானாதி தத்துவத்தை வளைந்தருந்தி வெளியாம்  
 இரும்போகல் லோமரமோ என்னும்நெஞ்சைக் கனல்மேல்  
 இட்டமெழு காவுருக்கும் இன்பவெள்ள மாகிக்  
 கரும்போகண் டோசீனி சருக்கரையோ தேனோ  
 கனியமிர்தோ எனருசிக்குங் கருத்தவிழ்ந்தோ ருணர்வார்  
 அரும்போநன் மணங்காட்டுங் காமரசங் கன்னி  
 அறிவாளோ அபக்குவர்க்கோ அந்நலந்தான் விளங்கும் .  
 தானையும் இவ்வுலகம் ஒருமுதலு மாகத்  
 தன்மையினாற் படைத்தளிக்குந் தலைமையது வான  
 கோனாக வொருமுதலிங் குண்டெனவும் யுகங்  
 கூட்டியதுஞ் சகமுடிவிற் குலவுறுமெய்ஞ் ஞான  
 வானாக அம்முதலே நிற்குநிலை நம்மால்  
 மதிப்பரிதாம் எனமோனம் வைத்ததும்உன் மனமே  
 ஆனாலும் மனஞ்சடமென் றழுங்காதே யுண்மை  
 அறிவித்த இடங்குருவாம் அருளில்தொன் றிலையே .  
 எனக்கெ னச்செயல் வேறிலை யாவுமிங் கொருநின்  
 தனக்கெ னத்தகும் உடல்பொரு ளாவியுந் தந்தேன்  
 மனத்த சத்துள அழுக்கெலாம் மாற்றியெம் பிரான்நீ  
 நினைத்த தெப்படி யப்படி அருளுதல் நீதம் .  
 உளவ றிந்தெலாம் நின்செய லாமென வுணர்ந்தோர்க்  
 களவி லானந்தம் அளித்தனை அறிவிலாப் புன்மைக்  
 களவு நாயினேற் சிவ்வணம் அமைத்தனை கருத்துத்  
 தளருந் தன்மையிங் காரொடு புகலுவேன் தக்கோய் .  
 கணம் தேனுநின் காரணந் தன்னையே கருத்தில்  
 உணரு மாதவர்க் கானந்தம் உதவினை யொன்றுங்

குணமி லாதபொய் வஞ்சனுக் கெந்தைநிர்க் குணமா  
மணமு லாமலர்ப் பதந்தரின் யாருனை மறுப்பார் .

திருந்து சீரடித் தாமரைக் கன்புதான் செய்யப்  
பொருந்து நாள்நல்ல புண்ணியஞ் செய்தநாள்  
பொருந்தா ( து )

இருந்த நாள்வெகு தீவினை யிழைத்தநாள் என்றால்  
அருந்த வாவுனைப்பொருந்துநாள் எந்தநாள் அடிமை .  
மின்னை யன்னபொய் வாழ்க்கையே நிலையென மெய்யாம்  
உன்னை நான்மறந் தெவ்வணம் உய்வணம் உரையாய்  
முன்னை வல்வினை வேறற முடித்தென்று முடியாத்  
தன்னைத் தன்னடி யார்க்கருள் புரிந்திடும் தக்கோய் .  
பாடி யாடிநின் றிரங்கிநின் பதமலர் முடிமேல்  
சூடி வாழ்ந்தனர் அமலநின் னடியர்யான் தொழும்பன்  
நாடி யேஇந்த உலகத்தை மெய்யென நம்பித்  
தேடி னேன்வெறுந் தீமையே என்னினிச் செய்வேன் .  
தன்னை அறியத் தனதருளால் தானுணர்த்தும்  
ம்ன்னைப் பொருளெனவே வாழாமற் பாழ்நெஞ்சே  
பொன்னைப் புவியைமடப் பூவையரை மெய்யெனவே  
என்னைக் கவர்ந்திழுத்திட் டென்னபலன் கண்டாயே .

But Bhagawan himself could not continue beyond this point. His voice cracked sharply and he became silent. His face seemed flushed, his eyes were teary and hair all over his body stood on end. The skin on his chest had turned reddish. He looked almost frightening now. Shuddering slightly, he tossed the notebook aside and looked outside the window. Attendees in the Hall had turned into stone. Total silence reigned for quite a while.

S>M>

Q.: "Search for the root of the 'I'-sense." is Bhagawan's advice to us. At the same time he also advises us to be without effort. How is it possible?

B.: Make an effort to be without effort. Why? Because effortlessness is the objective of all our effort. Abidance or inherence in the Self must be unswerving, effortless and volitionless. Then, and only then, does Realisation result.

S>M>

Q.: I have read that the Rani of Pudhukoettai begged Sri Thayumanavar to have sex with her. But he refused to oblige her and instead promptly ran away from her kingdom. Why? What does the Emancipated-soul lose by having sex? Does the Liberated-one fall back into ignorance because his phallus engages in coital penetration, vaginal or otherwise? Is His link with the body then yet to be broken?



B.: Once chidjadagranthibhedam has taken place, return to ignorance is impossible. No matter what the body might be observed to be doing, such as one has nothing to do with the body or its actions. He is altogether lost in the Beyond and does not know anything apart. The body's conduct is determined by its prarabdha; the Jnani, who is verily Jnana or the Self, has nothing to do with its actions; he does not concern or associate himself with the body in any manner whatsoever. He is bodiless even whilst with a body. Kaduveli-siddhar had a child with a devadasi-woman. Does it mean he was an ajnani?

Q.: Is it possible to have sex without carnal arousal or desire?

B.: For the Emancipated-one, yes, provided his prarabdha prompts the body to engage in such activity. The Jnani cannot feel desire. "I" is necessary to feel anything. When there is no aham-vritti left to feel anything, where is the scope for desire, anger, envy, etc. to arise?

Q.: Just now Bhagawan became emotional upon reading out Sri Thayumanavar's verses.

B.: [smiling] You are still thinking that 'this' [tapping own right shoulder] is Bhagawan- is that not so?

Q.: Who is the Real Bhagawan, then?

B.: The Self. He is not to be seen with these eyes. Realise Him in the Heart.

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between jivanmukti and videhamukti?

B.: There is no difference. They say that the jivanmukta attains videhamukti when the body dies. But think- can there be anything which he has yet to attain? Such differences are exclusively from the point of view of the onlooker. They do not exist from the Jnani's point of view. There is no change in the Jnani's state before or after abandoning the body.

Q.: Can presence of body-consciousness not be inferred from the fact that the body is alive? Can we say that one with body-consciousness has attained Emancipation?

B.: Who told you that the Jnani has body-consciousness? When the knot between the sentient and the insentient is sundered, body-consciousness is irrevocably lost.

Q.: Can the body be alive without body-consciousness?

B.: Why not? The body is only an inert mass of organic chemicals. It has no "I"-sense about it. Do you think the word 'Life' refers to or connotes one's bodily or biological existence? 'Life' means 'Consciousness'. Consciousness or one's awareness "I-AM" is never lost in all the 3 states.

Jagratchethanam passes. I am. Supthachethanam passes. I am. Rikthachethanam passes. I am. I always am. Let the derivatory-consciousness assume any form it likes. The parent-consciousness "I-AM" is always there. It is known as mahat in Vedantic parlance. If that is steadfastly held on to it is discovered that the body is only an appearance in and of the Self. Only then does the idea that it is the body which is responsible for harbouring one's Life fade away and die out completely.

S>M>

Q.: If everything is an illusion, is God atleast Real?

B.: Are you aware of God in your deep sleep?

Q.: No.

B.: What is the inevitable inference?

Q.: So God also is just a myth, as is the case with the world- is that right?

B.: God is real only if and until mind or ego remains.

Q.: What about the Impersonal Absolute- which Bhagawan calls 'the Self'?

B.: In His case who do you think is available to raise this or any other question?

Q.: What about the not-Self?

B.: What is meant by 'not-Self'?

Q.: That which is not the Self.

B.: Impossible. There cannot be anything apart from the Self.

Q.: What about the ego?

B.: Whose ego?

Q.: So really the ego does not exist at all?

B.: No. Mind or ego is fictitious fiction. The moment "I" tries earnestly to know itself, it finds itself to be the Self. But this cannot happen whilst any vishayavasana, poorvasamskarara, or other chitta-vritti lies latent in the mind. That is why the practice of vichara, which steadily destroys all chitta-vrittis of mind, is advocated. Vichara succeeds only if it is deployed continuously and incessantly.

Q.: How then is worldly work to be carried on?

B.: Both vichara and worldly work can be carried on side-by-side[in the sense§concurrently].

Q.: Vichara aims at a state of mind wherein there is no movement of thought waves.

B.: Correct.

Q.: On the other hand, worldly work requires me to think thoughts.

B.: Not correct.

Q.: I am an architectural engineer. While drawing up plans, do I think 'Who am I?' or do I think 'What measure of length shall this facade extend upto?'?

B.: That is the mistake.

Q.: What?

B.: You are under the impression that performance of vichara merely involves asking yourself 'Who am I?'. That is just the first step. As you yourself said, vichara aims at a state of mind wherein there is no movement of thought waves. This cannot be brought about just by asking yourself 'Who am I?'. The question 'Who am I?' is only meant to arrest further progress of the thought that you incumbently happen to be thinking. After the present thought has been curtailed, take the mind back to its source, which is the primordial state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly. When you are in this state, neither the thought 'Who am I?' nor any other thought should disturb you; if it does, ask yourself 'Who am I?' and come back immediately to such state. 'Who am I?' is an axe with which to chop down thoughts as and when they occur, at once. After the current thought has been struck down, the mind must retreat into its nativistic state. The question itself is only a tool to help you move from the realm of thought to the realm of effortless-and-volitionless-stillness-of-mind. A still mind is a mind that is exclusively subjectively aware. When by means of and as a result of having extensively practised in this manner you are able to remain effortlessly-and-volitionlessly-still, all the work that it is the body's prarabdha to carry out will go on of its own accord like clockwork. You will then be surprised at the efficaciousness and efficiency achieved by you, although you never in fact did anything! So, whilst drawing up plans for constructing buildings, think neither 'Who am I?' nor think any other thought, but keep your mind still. Then the work will go on of its own accord.

Q.: Is this nativistic state of mind mentioned by Bhagawan the same as the Parabrahman mentioned in the Upanishads?

B.: No. He is the Beyond.

Q.: How then shall I know Parabrahman, which is the final goal of human-birth according to the sastras?

B.: The nativistic state of mind- to which thought, desire, aspiration, volition or effort are altogether alien- will of its own accord take you There. But you cannot have It overnight. Sustained practice is necessary to uproot all your ancient vasanas and other chitta-vrittis.

Q.: If mind must be destroyed before there can be possibility of Realisation, the question arises: how did the mind arise, and why?

B.: There is already no mind. Searching for the mind, we arrive at the Self. Mind can never be found. How to find something that is not there at all? What never could be never was. What cannot be is not. What IS, is only that-which-IS, and That is the Self. Speaking from the p.o.v. of mind, it certainly will not be possible for you to deny the existence of mind. The only way to genuinely discover the mind's non-existence is to Realise the Self- and vice versa.

Q.: B.'s words make a powerful impact on me. But will I remember them?

B.: There is no need to force yourself to remember anything. The words of Sages are not meant to be verbatim memorised. You may practice vichara when you remember me, but don't try to 'do' anything else with whatever you have listened to here. Let the words sink deep within your mind. When the time comes they will do their work. Birds drop their seed-containing excreta on all sorts of terrain. In some terrain the sprouting is immediate. In others it takes time because favourable conditions have to arrive before germination can take place. There will come a time when you cannot rest content until you have Realised the Self. The longing to wake up or discover Reality grows slowly in the mind of the neophyte. In due course of time, it kills all other thoughts and emerges as the one sole thought or concern supremely dominating or exclusively occupying the mind. That is the stage when the aspirant is ready to plunge the mind in the Heart so that it stands annihilated there once and for all. The thirst for Jnana must be permitted to wax undisturbed in the mind. It is like the pernicious water-hyacinth weed irrevocably choking the entire ecological-system of a water-body to death. The weed drifts in upon the pond as a tiny seed. In due course of time it multiplies itself rapidly and shuts off access to sunlight to the other living organisms inhabiting the pond. How? It covers the entire surface of the pond. Nothing in the pond can survive. Likewise, if Guru's Grace is available, the seed of Jnana planted by the Sage multiplies into the great-destroyer[mahaviksheenaka] of illusion which chokes the mind to death. How? It covers the entire surface of the mind with the blazing fire of vairagya- i.e., revulsion towards samsara.

Q.: So until then I just have to wait?

B.: No; go on with your effort in investigating 'Who am I?'. But only when the present, mundane bodily-existence has become completely, intolerably unacceptable will the effort bear fruit.

Q.: I hope I am not barren wasteland. I hope B.'s seed in me will sprout into Jnana. Will it? Or am I a desert in which nothing will grow?

B.: Do you think 'this' talks this much to all and sundry who come here? Whilst the delighted gentleman was exiting the Hall, he came across the entering Mr. Knowles, with whom he was evidently acquainted, and told him 'Do you know? B. has planted his seed in me!', and went hurriedly on his way. The comical expression of mortified horror that appeared on the face of Mr. Knowles as he walked into the Hall made me regret- for the first time in my life until now- that I was not the owner of a camera! He slowly and cautiously turned his head toward the Sofa, as if expecting to find some loathsome scene, penned by the quill of Aristides of Miletus, being enacted there. He seemed extremely relieved to notice B. serenely reclining on his Sofa as usual, but with a wide smile- a steadily widening smile- sitting on his lips. Just then I burst into an unpardonable peal of loud laughter. To my surprise, everyone in the Hall who understood what was going on joined too- particularly Bhagawan: the Sofa started quivering! Mr. Knowles now looked, or perhaps tried to look, in which case he was not meeting with much success, apologetic and shame-faced. He came and sat down. The attendant looked puzzled. Once the laughter had died down [somewhat], Mr. Knowles addressed Chadwick: K.: I say, Major, what the deuce is going on here? What on earth did that idiot mean when he said that to me? I mean, imagine Maharshi- the nonsense- of course I wouldn't presume anything to the contrary- what that bugbear must have been thinking to say such a thing I can't quite begin to-

Admst convulsive spurts of snortful, chucklesome giggling, Chadwick told him all about B.'s message to the other gentleman. I was trying to wipe the smile off my lips, fearing B. should take offence. But the master seemed to be taking it all jovially- in fact, he seemed to be enjoying himself much!

K.: Oh! That's the matter, eh?! Of course, that's what I thought 'twud be too, see...

The master glanced at him and smiled affectionately.

Presently, surprising everybody, Sri Muruganar spoke seriously; he sounded quite emotional-

M.: The Sage implanting the seed of Jnana into the mind of a deserving aspirant is without doubt akin to a heroic-man impregnating a loving, fertile girl's womb. There is nothing improper about the comparison. It is quite apt. But why is everybody attitudinising in this bumptiously sententious fashion all of a sudden?

The Hall was dumbstruck. B. smiled quietly.

S>M>

Q.: When the devas and asuras churned the ocean in order so as to extract amrutham from beneath the sea-bed, all sorts of treasures came up. But they kept churning right until amrutham was obtained. Likewise, vichara may produce siddhis, but we must ignore all of them and keep investigating 'Who am I?' until the Self is Realised. Am I correct?

B.: Vichara does not give rise to siddhis other than Jnana-siddhi.

S>M>

Q.: I have heard that moments after Sri Vittobha-swamigazl of Polur died, Sri Seshadri-swamigazl pointed to the sky and said, 'I see him going to heaven in a decorated chariot, in royal style!'. Only afterwards when they heard the news of Sri Vittobha's passing did everybody realise who Sri Seshadri must have been at the time referring to. How is it that Jnanis are able to see what the man on the Clapham omnibus cannot see? What makes such unique abilities with the Jnani possible? I mean, at the time of Realisation, does their biological framework undergo any change, as a result of which they develop extra-sensory perceptions, such as seeing into the future, reading minds, etc.?

B.: The Jnani is not confined to the present moment or location alone. The entirety of this vast cosmos, and beyond, is vested only in Him. He is everywhere. He is always and ever in the past, present and future. For Him there cannot possibly be any limitation. He Himself is the fabric of Reality out of which time and space are made and in which their investiture may be ascertained. We say that Mahatmas perform miracles. Such statements are from our point of view only. The Sage does not consider any act as being a miracle- no matter how unusual it might be. For Him there cannot be anything apart from the Self; since as far as He is concerned all and everything is verily only the Self, there cannot be anything anomalous from His point of view. So really there is no miracle happening anywhere. Or, you may say that everything is miraculous. Why? Because everything is the Self, and the Self is the Supreme Miracle, for It alone IS, but yet, mysteriously, It seemingly appears to accomodate diversity or multiplicity, which is not possible in actuality.

S>M>

Q.: Some years back, near the borough of La Chapelle-aux-Saints in France, skeletal remains of an ancient human-being were found. It is believed by scientists possessing expertise in the field that the man must have lived more than 10000 years ago. These decrepit fragments of bone show that man must have looked quite different in appearance many thousands of years ago. What is the inference? Man's anatomical and morphological structure has changed massively through the ages. It is

thus clear that Darwin's theory of evolution stands proved correct. Likewise, is there any spiritual evolution taking place in man, side-by-side[in the sense§simultaneously] with his biological evolution? Nietzsche talks about it. So does Maharshi's contemporary Sri Aurobindo. I would like to learn Maharshi's opinion concerning the matter. As time passes, are men becoming more spiritually evolved- or are they regressing spiritually with the passage of time? Or, is there stagnation? Which view is correct? Are there cycles in the spiritual evolution of man? Is spiritual evolution cyclical? Nietzsche suggests that the cosmos- down to every single last minutest detail- repeats herself endlessly, over and over again. So, is the pinnacle of spirituality reached only so as to subsequently lead us back into the abyss whence we started? Are we going round and round pointlessly, like a dog chasing his own tail? What does Maharshi think?

B.: We are tormented by such torturous perturbations because we have wrongly assumed the experience of mind to be Real. Give up the idea that the mind is Real. Give up the idea that the experience of mind is Real. Only then can peace [shanti] result. Peace cannot be found with the mind, by the mind or in the mind. In order to find permanent peace it is necessary to go irrevocably beyond mind. When you are yourself struggling to find peace, what does it matter to you whether Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence of the Same is right or not? First reach the state where all your mental afflictions have deserted you once and for all and peace reigns supreme in your life. Then we can discuss all these questions.

S>M>

Q.: For obtaining peace of mind what should I do?

B.: Remain without thinking. 'Tis as simple as that. Peace is already there. It is thoughts that ruin our inherent peace. Peace is not to be gained afresh. Clear away the obstructions to peace and peace is found.

S>M>

Q.: Suppose, even after reading several books on Ajata-advaita, a man lazily chooses to be content with his incumbent bodily existence, and prefers to ignorantly remain as he is- i.e., without Realising the Self. What is to be said of him?

B.: The choice is always yours. But after reaching a certain critical level of mental introversion, we cannot turn back, but shall be dragged all the way inward. We may posit the example of a heavenly-body orbiting the sun. To make it break its orbit requires a huge amount of energy. But once the centripetal-force of the orbiting body has been rendered too weak to be

able to resist the pull of the sun's gravity, nothing can be thereafter done; the body's plummet into the sun is then automatic and inevitable.

Likewise here. At present the choice is always left to you as to whether you want to Realise the Self or not. If you would prefer to keep on dreaming, be it so. Who wants to Realise the Self if you do not want to? BLUTKEIM's Note: we are reminded of the red-pill vs. blue-pill scenario from The Matrix!

S>M>

Q.: To make a body break its orbit, delivering small quanta of energy- no matter how frequently applied- would prove futile. In a single stroke, we would need to deliver a massive thrust of application of a huge quantum of energy.

B.: That is why the example of the experiments performed by the Nobel-laureate Herr Von Lenard is mentioned. He is known for his experiments with ultraviolet light and cathode-rays. When he shone ultraviolet light of varying frequencies upon strips of metal, he found that the shorter the wave-length of the light irradiated, the greater the energy possessed by the cathode-rays emitted as a result of exposure of the metal to such light- the intensity of the light, on the other hand, did not matter. This phenomenon was explained by Herr Einstein in one of his 1905 papers to Annalen der Physik.

Q.: What is Bhagawan's point?

B.: Some complain, 'I engage in vichara day in and day out, but there is no Realisation for me.'. Where does the fault lie? One's introversion of mind has to be total and absolute if the investigation 'Who am I?' is to succeed. How often you practise [the practice] is of no relevance. 'Is the wave-length of the light irradiated short enough to make the metal emit cathode-rays?' is the only relevant question; nobody is bothered about how much light you shine, how long you shine it for, etc., etc.; likewise here. Is the mind's introversion or surrender complete and unreserved- or not?

Q.: How shall I gain sufficient introversion of mind?

B.: Only by vichara again. Vichara is thus both the preparatory practice with which to gain sufficient gravitation[or introversion] of mind so that the same may be sunk into the Heart, as well as the final axe with which to fatally strike down the ego once and for all. The axe itself serves as the machine with which to sharpen the axe.

Q.: What about sharanagati? Will it help me to Realise the Self?

B.: Provided it is unconditional or absolute. The surrendered mind cannot raise the question, 'Why am I yet to Realise the Self?'.



S>M>

Q.: What happens after death?

B.: Why not engage yourself in the living present?

Q.: But I am curious to know the answer. Will not Bhagawan please tell me?

B.: Nothing is happening now. Nothing ever happened. Nothing ever could happen. This is all Bhagawan knows.

Q.: Are visions of God merely mind-generated fiction?

B.: They are as real as you are in this body.

Q.: It is said that when Sri Isanyadhesikar's tapas was disturbed by people who wanted to obtain boons from him, God himself came there as a pair of tigers and drove them away, so that he should continue to perform tapas undisturbed. In my house when I am meditating, my nagging wife keeps disturbing me. I pray to God to come there as a tiger and chase her away but God does not oblige my request. What am I to do?

B. laughed but made no reply.

S>M>

Q.: I am feeling depressed, miserable and despondent all the time. These famous lines from Shelley often float into my head unbidden:

**Tyrant of Earth! pale Misery's jackal Thou!  
Are there no stores of vengeful violent fate  
Within the magazines of Thy fierce hate?  
No poison in the clouds to bathe a brow  
That lowers on Thee with desperate contempt?  
Where is the noonday Pestilence that slew  
The myriad sons of Israel's favoured nation?  
Where the destroying Minister that flew  
Pouring the fiery tide of desolation  
Upon the leagued Assyrian's attempt?  
Where the dark Earthquake-daemon who engorged  
At the dread word Korah's unconscious crew?  
Or the Angel's two-edged sword of fire that urged  
Our primal parents from their bower of bliss  
(Reared by Thine hand) for errors not their own  
By Thine omniscient mind foredoomed, foreknown?**

What shall I do? I also not infrequently have dark and disturbing visions, which I believe are hallucinations. What advice does Maharshi have for me?

B.: How many days have you planned on staying here?

Q.: [gloomily] I don't know. I do not want to trouble your hermitage for accommodation. Besides, I am not comfortable in these jungle environments.

Just like so many others here I am coming and going back everyday fro and to my lodgings in Pondicherry.

B.: Today, just for one day, don't go back. Come around the Hill once in the evening. If you will so prefer, some company can be arranged for you. Will you do as I say?

Q.: [after a prolonged silence] Yes. But don't bother about the company part, please, Maharshi. I shan't need any. I fancy I like to do it alone... According to your romantic poems, this Hill is God Himself, is that right, eh?

B.: [smiling] Soon you might see for yourself.

Everyone in the Hall was stupendously surprised. The master generally did not talk like this at all. He was- almost as a matter of rule- reserved and completely impersonal in his utterances. Sometimes when old devotees, such as disciples of the late Sri Kavyakantha Ganapathi Swamigazl, arrived, he would of his own accord make a few kind customary inquiries, but that would be all. I wondered if this Caucasian had come to recognise how privileged he was.

S>M>

Q.: Can we avoid the evil effects caused by the planet Jupiter by means of wearing pazhavakkal on the ring-finger of the right hand?

B.: Let us ask him. [pointing to the pandit Narasimhan]

The pandit tried to modestly excuse himself, but Bhagawan would have none of it; with a serious face he told the pandit, 'I am only a school drop-out. What do I know? You, on the other hand, have engaged yourself in teaching Caucasians philosophy; such is your virtuosity! You are the appropriate person to answer questions posed in this Hall hereafter... Come, come!'. But then the pandit's eyes became watery and B. relented, saying, 'Alright. Answer this man's one question and thereafter I shall not be giving you any more trouble...'.  
Answer this man's one question and thereafter I shall not be giving you any more trouble...'

N.: [straightening himself up in relieved fashion] No; please wear golden-beryl. Later I learnt that the pandit was playfully harassed by the Maharshi today on account of the fact that in the morning, he had clandestinely prepared a list of questions to which he wanted to elicit answers from Bhagawan, but timorously was unwilling himself to ask the master them; therefore he had been planning to hand over the list to a certain group of Malayali devotees[with whom he seemed in all likelihood to be affably acquainted] whom he knew would be arriving at the ashram in the evening; of his own accord B. had somehow divined all this! When the said Malayalis brought forth the pandit's questions and fired them at the master, without divulging who their author was, the master ludicrously made the pandit himself to answer them!

BLUTKEIM's Note: I think this stone is known as 'heliodor' nowadays. I am mentioning this just in case anybody would like to try out this man's prescription for eliminating from their brow 'Jupiter's evil influence'!

S>M>

Q.: What do they mean when learned people say, 'The Jnani lives in a state wherein knowledge is not possible.'?

B.: It means that for the Jnani objective knowledge is impossible. He is merely AWARE.

Q.: But B. writes poetry, clarifies doubts of seekers, and does so many other things besides in the ashram. Can it all be done without knowing anything- i.e., in the absence of [a mind] thinking thoughts? Can mere awareness accomplish all these things?

B.: What do you suppose is awareness? Awareness is the basic stuff out of which everything is made. Anything and everything is only an appearance upon pure awareness.

Q.: How is this awareness of the Jnani's different from my commonplace awareness?

B.: In the Jnani's case no ideas remain to catch the light of pure awareness and so cause a reflection, which, in common parlance, is known as 'mind'.

S>M>

Q.: In the book *Naturalis Historia* by Pliny the Elder, translated from the Latin by Dr. John Bostock, M.D., the following remedies are prescribed for curing irritable bowels: [reads out as follows from a few sheets of folded note-paper presently extracted from his pocket]

**"One of the very best remedies for affections of the stomach, is to use a snail diet. They must first be left to simmer in water for some time, without touching the contents of the shell, after which, without any other addition, they must be grilled upon hot coals, and eaten with wine and garum; the snails of Africa being the best of all for the purpose. The efficacy of this remedy has been proved in numerous instances of late. Another point, too, to be observed, is to take an uneven number of them. Snails, however, have a juice, it should be remembered, which imparts to the breath an offensive smell."**

**"The aloe bears a resemblance to the squill, except that it is larger, and has more substantial leaves, with streaks running obliquely. The stem is tender, red in the middle, and not unlike that of the anthericus. It has a single root, which runs straight downwards, like a stake driven into the ground; its smell is powerful, and it has a bitter taste. This plant is of an astringent nature, binding, and slightly calorific. It is employed for numerous purposes, but principally as a purgative, it being almost the only one of all the medicaments which produce that effect, that is at the same time a good stomachic, and does not exercise the slightest noxious influence upon the stomach. It is taken in doses of one drachma, and, in cases of derangement of the stomach, it is administered two or three times a day, in the proportion of one spoonful to two cyathi of warm or cold water, at intervals,**

**according to the nature of the emergency. As a purgative it is mostly taken in doses of three drachmae; and it operates still more efficaciously, if food is eaten directly afterwards."**

Does Maharshi agree with these remedies?

B.: [smiling] Why don't you try them out and tell us? We are all eager to benefit from your experience...!

S>M>

When B. had gone up the Hill on one of his usual walks, a Caucasian walked up to Mr. Knowles and said: 'Some months back the Macmillan Company, United-states, released an anti-Communism tract; 'tis titled 'We the Living'; and, penned by a hitherto unknown writer- some newcomer. The book did not manage to rouse up any significant attention from people. But I received a proof-copy before the thing went to the press. A friend of mine- working in the company- gave it to me to read; for amusement's sake, he did. But I find it to be pure negative propoganda. Everybody wants us to believe Communism to be an evil. But I'm not the one to buy any of that. I don't want to keep this book anymore. Here, I think you'll like it, maybe...' And handing the book to the perplexed Mr. Knowles, the man left the Hall. Mr. Knowles, scratching his chin in some vexation, was nonchalantly looking through the book when he noticed a small centipede crawling near his feet; with an alarmed shriek he tried to swat the creature with the book, but missed. The red centipede then rapidly moved towards the B.'s Sofa. The distressed Mr. Knowles took careful aim and threw the book in its open position as though it were a frisbee at the creature; the book landed squarely on the myriapod. Just then B. entered. 'Oho! What is this?' he said softly. He picked up the book, and did not seem in the least discountenanced to find a centipede crawling away from underneath it. He put the book on the Sofa, carefully picked up the squirming creature, went outside with it, and came back inside after a minute with empty hands. He examined the book with some interest. Then he held it slightly above the level of his head, and, smiling, asked, 'Whose is it?'

K.: Somebody just gave it to me. I don't know why. I don't want it...

B.: [after having gone through it for some more time] The Bible says, 'Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.'. Who knows what this author is going to achieve in the times yet to come? He got up and managed to effortlessly squeeze the book into the Hall's already over-flowing book-case.

S>M>

Q.: B.'s behaviour is inexplicable. Our elders have told us centipedes must be burned alive upon sight; otherwise, during night-time, they will come to us when we are sleeping; they will enter one of our ears and make their way into our brain; then all our brains shall be eaten away. Thereafter we shall not be

able to recognise even our family members. We shall become mindless creatures.

B.: [smiling] Do you think it is so easy to get rid of the mind?

S>M>

Q.: Why has God created this world?

B.: No, He did not. Is He so merciless as to create a world as dangerous as this one, where one may get lost in the putrid sea of avidya-maya easily? Would He ever be so cruel? Impossible.

Q.: If God did not create the world, then who did?

B.: Your own mind.

Q.: Then this figure sitting on the Sofa in front of me also has been created by me only!

B.: What is the doubt in it?

S>M>

Q.: Mr. Jack London said, 'Life is not always a matter of holding good cards, but sometimes, playing a poor hand well.'. Does Maharshi agree?

B.: Yes. Instead of waiting for the good card to all of a sudden somehow miraculously manifest itself from out of nothingness one fine day, keep on playing with the cards you have here and now; the important thing is to keep on playing. Some think, 'Now I have worldly commitments. First let me retire from work, settle my son in a good job, marry off my daughter and buy a small spartan accommodation for myself and my wife in Benares; immediately after seeing my first grandson's face once I shall shift there once and for all. Then I shall have all the time in the world to devote and dedicate exclusively to sadhana. Now there are too many pressing responsibilities. I cannot take up sadhana now. When I am in Kashi, I shall engage myself in sadhana day in and day out and by hook or by crook obtain Jnana.' Do you think such a one can Realise?

Q.: Such a one will probably never even visit Kashi in his lifetime, leave alone settle there permanently...!

B.: Exactly. One must begin one's practice here and now. Life in the world is not a hindrance to abhyasa. If you wait for worldly responsibilities to come to an end before commencing sadhana, you are not going to get anywhere.

S>M>

An palmistry-astrologer who announced himself to be visiting from Madras stealthily crept up to the Sofa and said in a crafty voice, 'Swami, I have plans to increase the revenue of this ashram dramatically. You are spoken of to be an incarnation of Dakshinamurti. My brother-in-law owns a small copper-foundry. Let me manufacture small thagadugazl with the Dakshinamurti-yantram inscribed on them. We will sell these in your ashram, saying the

same has been sanctified by the touch of 'Sadhguru'. If this becomes a hit, next let us obtain imprints of the soles of your feet and then cast the same in copper-plates, saying that anybody possessing it in their homes will be surely visited by the goddess of good-fortune everyday. For wealthier devotees, we can arrange for special golden or argentic plates. In the course of time of a few years, we can expand and diversify into manufacturing and selling here, 'Sadhguru Incense-sticks', 'Sadhguru Sambrani', and so on and so forth. If a photograph of your face is included in the front of the packet-wrapping, who can resist the temptation to buy these things? From all the money we can start a jewellery business here in your name with branches all over the country. If we are lucky, perhaps we can get overseas orders also for the things sold by us, since Swami has so many Caucasian devotees as well. If the Caucasians should buy these things, they need some rationalistic background in relation to the product they contemplate purchasing to serve as an intellectual bulwark, so that they 'understand the underlying concept' before spending their money. Now, I have a friend who is working as an English-reader in the Presidency College, Madras. He is struggling to make ends meet. He is sending his manuscripts everywhere but nobody is showing any interest in paying the slightest attention to him. I shall rope him in. He can write detailed catalogues for these products. Let him outline the supposed benefits of each item in his books. That way all our products will become a hit with these 'concept-loving' Caucasians. What does Swami say? He need not do anything. He can follow his doctrine of Summa-irutthal as usual. He need not lift his little finger even. In a matter of a decade I shall make him into a crorepathi. On the first of every month I will give you 50% of the profits-promptly, and in hot cash! I am not the one to go back on my word. We can have a written agreement if you would prefer things that way. Do you agree? All you need to do, Swami, is to give me your assent. Just nod your head- that will do. Remember, a simple nod of the head is waiting between you and crores of rupees. Consider carefully my offer before you say anything hastily. If you want time to think it over I can come tomorrow. Now then- what do you say?

B. seemed to have been listening to the whole sequence of ideas with immense enjoyment; with the effect that the man now seemed almost triumphant, confident that his oratorical skill had won him a meritorious victory. Then the master, smiling, slowly shook his head at the bearded, saffron-turbaned man. Some ineluctable sense of inexorable finality in that amiable but unyielding gesture of the master's seemed to make the man understand the utter futility of the audaciously freakish proposal he happened to be

positing; with a rueful smile, he respectfully bowed and walked out of the Hall. The master chuckled and leaned back on his Sofa.

S>M>

Q.: Can Consciousness be or exist in the absence of a physical medium- such as the body- to support or sustain it?

B.: There is nothing physical. There is no such thing as physicality. What exists is only Consciousness. Consciousness alone IS. Consciousness alone could ever be. Consciousness alone exists.

Q.: What's the proof of what you're saying, please, Maharshi?

B.: Is not-Existence trying to refute the existence of Existence?

Q.: Are you saying, sir, that I am not existent?

B.: You are aware of Existence- your own existence. Is that right? Or, do you need a mirror to be held up before your eyes to ascertain the fact of your existence?

Q.: No. I am perfectly conscious of my existence.

B.: That consciousness does not question its own existence; it does not raise the doubt, 'Do I exist or not?'; neither does it ask any other question; it is totally silent always. The one who asks questions therefore is something that or somebody who is apparently apart from Consciousness or Existence; so, in the first instance, should we not endeavour to find out who or what this mysterious alien entity, that you keep calling "I", is? The body cannot say "I" because it is an insentient mass of organic chemicals. Pure consciousness never says "I", because it is merely simple awareness. What then is this "I"? Solve this one problem and you will solve all other problems thereby. Are you not curious to find out who or what it is that says "I" if neither the body nor Consciousness says so?

Q.: Yes.

B.: Good. Find out.

S>M>

Q.: Who created Consciousness? And who created the Consciousness of that creator- and so on?

B.: Consciousness IS. It was never created and is never destroyed or altered or mutilated. We find it difficult to understand this because we are used to thinking in terms of time and space, cause and effect; these are only our ideas; ideas are in turn made up only of Consciousness. Mind exists and can exist from its own [deluded] perspective only. So far as Consciousness or the Self is concerned there is no such thing as 'mind'. Mind is thus its own fictitious or imaginary creation. When it looks at itself, it disappears. Then only the Self remains- as in fact was always and ever the case. So, really mind is not. Realise it.

S>M>

Q.: Will not the advice 'Summa-iru.' prompt people to lead a life of indolence, sybaritism and idleness?

B.: If people misinterpret it, what can we do? It means that the mind must not move out of the Heart. The counsel has nothing to do with the body at all.

Q.: How can worldly work go about if I should not think at all?

B.: Let your hands do the work but keep your mind still. It is certainly possible for all with adequate practice.

Q.: Poosala-nayanar built only an imaginary temple; whereas the king of  $\text{காஞ்சி}$  built a real temple; yet God gave immense preference to the former. Why is this so?

B.: From God's point of view, both temples are equally real or unreal.

Poosalar's bhakti was exemplary and blemishless. The king was also a Siva-bhaktar, but together with wanting to please Siva, he also subconsciously wanted to acquire a good name from the public for having commissioned and built such a huge, grand temple. Poosalar had no such ancillary motives.

His Love was exclusively for the sake of Love. Such Love is the same as ananya-sharanagati; It does not know to expect something in return or anticipate anything by way of reward. Some people come here and say that they have surrendered themselves heart and soul to Bhagawan. He says, 'Good.'. Five minutes later, he is asked, 'Well? Where is my Realisation? I must catch the afternoon train, please...'. Is surrender a barter-transaction?

Q.: Will surrendering unconditionally to God help me overcome prarabdha-karma?

B.: The more you surrender, the more you transcend your destiny. Complete surrender Emancipates one from destiny once and for all provided the same is genuine- i.e., volitionless and motiveless.

Q.: I am sitting at the feet of the incomparable Bhagawan Ramanar. Yet there is no peace of mind for me.

B.: The expectation to find peace is an obstacle to Realising the same.

Without aspiring for any new state, remain as you ARE. To BE is to be in peace. Mental modifications, such as the idea 'I must Realise peace.', bring not peace but only more and more misery. Realisation of the Self is nothing but to BE as you ARE.

Q.: Shall I tell myself, 'I am not the body but the Self.'?

B.: When you are asked to abandon the idea that you are the body, it does not mean that you should in its stead embrace another idea enunciating that you are not the body. Freedom from all ideas is your true nature. 'I am the body.' is one idea. 'I am not the body but the Self.' is another idea. Remain free from all ideas. Ideas cast a veil over your true nature. Ideas cannot be eliminated by



embracing a fresh set of ideas. J.K. has said, 'Total negation is the essence of the positive.'. Ideas cannot give you freedom from ideas.

Q.: How then shall I reach that state wherein ideas are not?

B.: Only by steadfastly and relentlessly carrying on with the investigation 'Who am I?'. 'Who am I?' is neither conceptual nor intellectual. It means that one must trace thought back to its source; once you have found the source, remain there once and for all. What is the source of thought? It is the primordial state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly.

Q.: Is it possible- pragmatically speaking- to successfully practise vichara while holding a job, looking after a family and remaining in the life of the world?

B.: Assuredly and undoubtedly.

Q.: What is karma-margam?

B.: It is to not falsely imagine yourself to be the doer of actions performed by the body. The body does not say that it is doing anything. The body cannot even say that it exists. You point to your body and say, 'I'. Why this false association? Give it up and you will find peace.

S>M>

Signor Toscanini, apparently a famous violinist from Milan, Italy, from whom a handful of Caucasians here were asking for autographs in the morning, asked thus-

Q.: If everything is merely a projection of the mind, why cannot I cure all the various diseases my body is afflicted with simply by means of expending effort of will?

B.: Even if you manage to retain this body, the continued welfare and unimpinged salubrious sustenance of which your anxiety to take steps to procure for is evident, for 100000 years upon the earth, what good is that ever going to do to you? The body exists only in your imagination. What is gained consequent to mistaking the body for the Self and undergoing a series of births? Only misery. You say you want to cure the body's diseases. But the body itself is a disease. So, first find a cure for this primeval disease- i.e., rid yourself of it; thereafter let us raise other concerns if the need is still felt.

Q.: But diseases bring pain to the body.

B.: What is to be done? Suffering is inevitable, unavoidable and inescapable for that which is born. But were we born? [One's] bodily sensations are not Real. Suffering is not for the Self. Disease attacks the body, which in itself is a disease. So, if a second disease attacks the first disease, we should really feel glad- overjoyed- about it. Let these diseases fight amongst themselves and perish. Let us rest content in the Self.

Q.: The problem is that this Absolute Self is not tangible, not perceptible and not palpable. To me He is only an abstract mental conceptualisation. I do not know this 'Self'. Who is He? Where can I find Him?

B.: "I" cannot find Him. If "I" is discarded, He Shines.

Q.: Can He not be found through Love?

B.: Love of form is not genuine Love. Genuine Love paralyses the mind. Love, in its loftiest phase of experience, is non-dual; It is the Self.

Q.: How to attain or cultivate such Love?

B.: The more the "I"-sense wears down, the more you find yourself able to unselfishly Love. The most profound experience of Love possible is verily Jnana alone. Love for objects can never furnish one with satiation; whereas he that will volitionlessly and motivelessly Love God as the one, sole, exclusive இதயக்கனி of his life is absorbed into Him.

Q.: I have not seen God. How shall I fall in love with something I cannot see?

B.: Bhakti- in the loftiest apogaeum of its culmination- is not love of God; It is Realisation that Love is God. Love, Self and God are all one and the same thing.

Q.: May I repeat my question?

B.: To surrender oneself to God unconditionally and unreservedly, without allowing scope in one's mind for raising of any complaint, such as 'I am not able to see Him.', is the proper way to Love God.

Q.: Shall I then blindly believe in God's existence? Would that not be irrational?

B.: Belief and faith stop at the level of the intellect. Love alone absorbs you into Itself. It is unequivocally possible to Love God together with leaving open [or neglecting] the question of His existence. Love Him whether He exists or not. Let Him exist; again, let Him not exist; let it remain an open question. You Love Him with all your heart.

Q.: How is that possible?

B.: When performance is going on in an opera-house, amongst the audience, do not sentimental persons shed tears whilst watching the death of their favourite character? [smiling] Have not experienced it?

Q.: Yes. [becomes slightly emotional] Giordano's Andrea Chenier. At the end, when the lovers walk toward the guillotine together, the scene is very moving.

B.: So, there is nothing wrong in relishing fiction. Now what you do not see you term as fiction. When Jnana dawns all this [waving hand about] ceases to exist and other than the Self everything is seen to be fiction only. So, everyday you eat fictitious food, wear fictitious clothes and stay in a fictitious house, all using a fictitious body. What is wrong in Loving a fictitious God?

Q.: Is repeating God's names as found in the Bible, such as, for instance, Adonai or Yelohim, a means to Loving Him?

B.: Doing something mechanically cannot qualify to be regarded as Love. Love is the feeling of mind being submerged in the Heart. If you are unable to find God with your efforts, surrender to Him without reserve and He Himself will come searching for you.

Q.: De Vigny is the author of these words: [handing over a sheet of note-paper to the master, which was later passed around; meaning to ask Chadwick later, I copied its contents into my notebook; these words are anything but comprehensible to me]

**Je suis celui qu'on aime et qu'on ne connaît pas.  
Sur l'homme j'ai fondé mon empire de flamme  
Dans les desirs du cœur, dans les rêves de l'âme,  
Dans les liens des corps, attraités mystérieux,  
Dans les trésors du sang, dans les regards des yeux.  
C'est moi qui fais parler l'épouse dans ses songes  
La jeune fille heureuse apprend d'heureux mensonges;  
Je leur donne des nuits qui consolent des jours,  
Je suis le Roi secret des secrètes amours.  
J'unis les cœurs, je romps les chaînes rigoureuses,  
Comme le papillon sur ses ailes poudreuses  
Porte aux gazons emus des peuplades de fleurs,  
Et leur fait des amours sans périls et sans pleurs.  
J'ai pris au Createur sa faible creature;  
Nous avons, malgré lui, partagé la Nature:  
Je le laisse, orgueilleux des bruits du jour vermeil,  
Cacher des astres d'or sous l'éclat d'un Soleil;  
Moi, j'ai l'ombre muette, et je donne à la terre  
La volupté des soirs et les biens du mystère.**

So, is it correct to say that the ego is an illegitimate entity and must go? Whereas Maharshi talks about Realisation as though it were an entirely natural thing, my personal feeling is that perhaps we are not meant to penetrate beyond the great mystery, the ego or "I"... In Maharshi's case, Realisation happened to him. He did not go looking for it. If God comes looking for one that is a different matter, but is it really permitted or given to man to probe into the Realm of the Beyond of the Almighty?

B.: [smiling] If you feel that way, there is no need to force yourself to convert to Ajata-advaita. Only remain true to God and let Him be your Light and Guide. Only one who has surrendered himself unreservedly to God deserves genuinely to be His beloved.

Q.: Are we not all children of God?

B.: Theoretically, anybody can Realise the Self, because all that is needed to Realise the Self is verily just the Self Itself. Why? Because Realisation means

be-ing the Self and nothing farther. However, each person arrives into this world with a certain set of mental predilections and predispositions. These must be overcome before Realisation can be accomplished. So, whilst it is doubtless true that God is equally available for all to embrace, only those who actively seek Him out actually manage to Realise Him as the Fruit of their Heart. "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching..." So, the thing to do is to go on watching- i.e., attending incessantly to the Quest. The Self is not to be Realised in the twinkling of an eye; it requires continuous practice over a sustained period of time to introvert one's mind completely. But then- [smiling] What about Maharshi? Did he not extemporaneously awaken himself into Enlightenment?

Q.: [laughs] No, I won't ask that! I know Saints get It just like that[clicking his thumb and middle finger]; since they are entrusted with the enormous burden of facilitating furtherance of humanity's spiritual progress, they must be pre-eminently cognoscente in the art of Realising; not for them the rigours of practising...

Q.: Maharshi said Love for God results in Realisation. Can I Love God and at the same time practice the investigation, 'Who am I'?

B.: Certainly. If bhakti or Love for God is one way to approach Him, seeking an escape or exit from samsara or the question of mortality is simply the other side of the coin. If Jnana is the destination, bhakti and vairagya are like a man's 2 legs which help him to reach There.

Q.: It is difficult to hop onward with only 1 leg!

B.: Exactly!

Q.: I understand that the Sanskrit word 'vairagya' means to distinguish the Real from the unreal.

B.: Vairagya is simply to shun the not-Self; it is thus the same as inherence in the Self.

Q.: When we hear the Jnani explicating unto us a description of what the experience of Realisation feels like, how far is the description away from the actual thing?

B.: One can only quote Dante:

Qual e colui che sognando vede,  
che dopo 'l sogno la passione impressa  
rimane, e l'altro a la mente non riede,  
cotal son io, che quasi tutta cessa  
mia visione, e ancor mi distilla  
nel core il dolce che nacque da essa.

Q.: How is it that some people, when they hear elucidation of the doctrine of Non-duality, Realise the Self immediately, but others need many long,

arduous years of incessant practice?

B.: It all depends upon the mental fitness of the individual concerned. Repeated practice of mental introversion eventually makes the mind fully unwilling to leave the blissful Heart; it is only then that effortless, motiveless and volitionless abidance in the Self stands achieved. As Dante says:

A quella luce cotal si diventa,  
che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto  
è impossibil che mai si consenta;  
però che 'l ben, ch'è del volere obietto,  
tutto s'accoglie in lei, e fuor di quella  
è defettivo ciò ch'è lì perfetto.

Until such stage is reached, relentless practice is necessary.

Q.: To set my mind at rest, will Maharshi please tell me when I also shall reach his state- if at all I ever am destined to manage to do so?

B.: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

Q.: The verse is a reference to the alleged second coming of the Christ. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Is there any meaning in believing that Lord Jesus will return to the earth to reclaim those souls that are dear to Him?

B.: He ever Shines within you as the light of your Heart; only, open your mind to Him. When He is always with you as the Self within you, why do you expect Him to drop down from the sky?

Q.: It is difficult to conceive of God as the formless Self; by means of conceiving of Him as a form that the mind recognises and loves, it is made possible for us to occupy ourselves mentally with the attempt to endear ourselves unto Him. But Maharshi opines that Love of form cannot be true Love.

B.: What begins as Love directed toward a particular form eventually expands until both the subject and object thereof merge into such Love Itself with perfect miscibility. I, who am fervently in Love with Jesus, and Jesus Himself, both melt into supreme Love, which knows neither rhyme nor reason and in which neither subject nor object can possibly be discerned. This is called parabhakti and is the same as Realisation of the Self. Jesus Himself asseverates that Loving Him is enough to gain Salvation- i.e., Emancipation. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." But one's Love must not be actuated or inveigled by any motive. If one's love for God carries with it a

reason, then the same cannot be considered unconditional Love. Only unconditional Love will bring about Vimochanam.

S>M>

Q.: I also want to become a spiritual superman like Bhagawan. What shall I do for it? Will 'Who am I?' suffice?

B.: In our obsession with 'becoming', we forget 'being'. There is no end to becoming; in being alone can there ever be finality.

Q.: There are said to be 3 vital pre-requisites for achieving Realisation: to have had a human birth, to feel intense longing for Emancipation, and Guru's Grace. Since I am already born as a human, I need not worry about the first; also, I crave passionately for Jnana; so the second stands having been taken care of. But what is Guru's Grace? How shall I win the same?

B.: The more you make effort to discover the Self, the more is Grace bestowed upon you. Grace is not be separately striven for. It is enough to make persistent and continuous effort to introvert the mind. Grace is response from the Beyond. It will come automatically provided one's effort is resolutely pertinacious and intractably unrelenting.

Q.: Everybody says that the path of Jnana is hard. Kathopanishad says: Utthishtajagratha prapyavarannibodhata kshurasya dhara nishita dhuratyaya dhurgam pathasthathkavayova. But B. stubbornly maintains that nothing could be easier.

B.: It is hard only when you have to force yourself to make the effort [to Realise the Self].

Q.: I don't understand what B. is trying to say.

B.: Effort to introvert the mind comes naturally to those who have already discarded samsara as being precisely the deepest depths of hell. Those who are comfortable with their apparent bodily existence- can they obtain Realisation? When one's apparent bodily existence has become a veritable nightmare to the mind, Realisation is not far away. If your head is being pressed underneath the surface of water, will you go around complaining 'Alas! how hard is the grip around my neck!' or will you desperately try every means within the reach of your capability to try to break free? The more samsara has become unacceptable or illegitimate, the closer you have inched towards Realisation. Absolute non-allowability of samsara is the same as Realisation.

Q.: Does Bhagawan agree with the doctrine of one's re-incarnating ego?

B.: What once stands incarnated can have incarnated [itself] any number of times before and may incarnate [itself] any number of times after. But are YOU ever incarnating? You are ever the same. These scenes shift- they are mere fleeting mirages. Consider whether there is any change in YOU.

Q.: Meaning that consciousness does not undergo change?

B.: Yes.

Q.: But consciousness is lost in deep sleep.

B.: In sushupti upadhis enveloping consciousness are temporarily lost sight of- never is consciousness itself affected in any manner whatsoever.

Q.: I am not conscious in sleep. That is my experience.

B.: What you are trying to say is that you do not recollect having been conscious whilst immersed in sushupti.

Q.: Does it not amount to the same thing?

B.: No. The state of sushupti is beyond the mind. What you now understand to be 'consciousness' is not actual Consciousness. Your incumbent experience of Consciousness in the jagrat-swapna states is = [Consciousness+upadhis]. On the other hand, the state of sushupti is the experience of upadhi-bereft Consciousness- i.e., mind-free consciousness. Not having been present in sushupti, the mind naturally is helpless [or at a loss] to recollect or relate what its condition was in that state.

S>M>

Q.: How to obtain peace of mind?

B.: By remaining without thinking.

Q.: Will not thinking about God bring peace to the mind?

B.: The thoughtless mind is swiftly absorbed into God.

Q.: I find that contemplating on the image of Pazhaniyandavar helps me to obtain relaxation of mind.

B.: Good.

Q.: But I realise it is an altogether absurd course of activity, because the truth according to the Upanishads is that Parabrahman is the only Reality. Therefore I want to Realise the non-dual Self.

B.: Good.

Q.: But thinking about God brings about tranquility of mind. One cannot focus the mind so as to fix it upon an attributeless God. Therefore the need for a personal god is felt.

B.: Good.

Q.: But it is said that even to think of God, we must have earned God's Grace previously.

B.: Correct. What is your doubt?

Q.: So, everything is verily in His hands.

B.: Yes! "But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Q.: Then what is the point of me existing? Who am I?

B.: [smiling] That is what you have to find out.

Q.: He does everything, does He not? Let Him also find out who I am. Why should I take the bother? Let Him do that also.

B.: Only the starving mouth solicits[-i.e., feels the need for] porridge. One who feels need for Peace, let him try to get It. God is not searching for Peace.

S>M>

Q.: "He alone Realises the Aathman who is chosen by the Aathman." Is that right?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Please tell me if I am chosen or not. If I am not chosen, what is the point in making effort? Please tell me whether it will be productive for me to try to Realise or not. You are known as the 'Sarvagnar'. You should be able to read the letters on my brow. If I am not destined to Realise, let me not waste my effort, time and energy on a pointless wild-goose chase. What is it going to be? Please tell me...

B.: Do you think those who Realise were given certificates saying, 'I, God Almighty, hereby guarantee that this person is destined to Realise Me; therefore he may occupy himself busily with sadhana.'? If such a proclamation is made to a man's knowledge, will he thereafter ever make any effort to Realise?

Q.: I feel God is a sadist. Why play games with people like this?

B.: We want to do business with God. That is the problem. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The poverty required is intellectual poverty. The shrewd, calculating mind, which wants to 'strike a deal' with God, has no place in His Kingdom; whereas the innocent, guileless simpleton with the mind of a toddler is ushered inwards with profuse fondness. Know this: nobody deserves to gain His state; Jnana can NEVER be earned. It is exclusively His compassion or mercy that sunders the knot of the Heart and brings about Emancipation.

Q.: I thought vichara was a scientific method whereby which one could attain Jnana. Now I find that some nonsensical sentimental garbage is thrown in my face.

B.: The doorway leading into Jnana is exceedingly low. If you want to get inside, the only way so to do is to CRAWL.

Q.: I am reminded of Colonel Dyer's notorious 'crawling-order' in the Punjab. Sir, what about my self-respect?

B.: There is no harm in losing it for God.

Q.: But the Upanishads declare that I am myself- that my Self is- God.

B.: The Self is not the ego's property. The ego is an appearance in- and is of- the Self.

Q.: Will God or the Self accept my efforts to Realise Him or not?



B.: He might or He might not.

Q.: So it is a gamble...

B.: Yes.

Q.: I have understood Maharshi's doctrine of ananya-sharanagati to be as follows: I am expected to throw away myself and everything I have; yet, there is always the heftiest of chances that I may not gain Realisation at all. That is what you are trying to say. Is that right?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Which madman would be willing to do such a thing?

B.: One who has cognised rightly that he has nothing left to yet lose [here]. To bring about this understanding in a man Grace is needed. Why? Because he who has something to yet lose or forgo [in the world] cannot to give up by himself himself himself bring so that God may Shine forth from his Heart as the blazing sun of his Self.

Q.: So then, the sort of sacrifice required to obtain Realisation seems to me to be totally absolute.

B.: Yes. "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

S>M>

Q.: What is meant by avidya-maya?

B.: Mistaking sensory perceptions to be Real and ignoring that which IS actually Real.

Q.: Is being-consciousness then the only Reality?

B.: Being-consciousness which is free from [any phenomenon of] reflection[actual word used by the master§chittavishtavimardhakam- i.e., obnubilative channelisation of consciousness] is Real.

Q.: But how can we tell what is unreal and what Real? Where is the proof that even Reality is Real? What if even Reality is just one more illusion? What if discarding one phase or layer of illusion we pick up another, this going on endlessly? Does the Quest have any end at all? Or is it like peeling an infinitely-large onion-bulb?

B.: What is your observation regarding the state of sleep? Do these troubles perturb you whilst you are immersed in the state of deep sleep?

Q.: No. But what is B.'s answer to all my questions?

B.: In sleep we are entirely free from questions because there is nobody to think thoughts in that state. All our doubts and uncertainties are merely thoughts, nothing else. It is with reference to ourselves that the question of Realisation arises. The Self is in Eternal Realisation. He does not need to Realise anything.

S>M>

Q.: Is trusting in God enough to grant unto me Emancipation?

B.: We cannot expect God to act in accordance with our whims and fancies. Surrender to Him without reserve and do not mind what happens afterwards. That is the way to tide over your problems.

Q.: If I am not the doer of actions performed by the body, then who is the doer? It cannot be God, because in the essay நானார் ? B. says that God never performs any actions.

B.: When wind blows, leaves are seen to move about hither and thither. Is it with intention to make leaves perambulate that wind blows? Likewise, all actions are in fact purely random only. There is no reason why anything happens. It is we who assign reason and motive to events. We need an intellectual structure to imprint in our minds so that our ego feels satiated and contented: so we invariably invent one. What is the truth? Everybody performs actions randomly only. But we need to 'understand the situation'; the mind desires to create order out of chaos. There is nothing in the moon but rocks and dust. But we see our grandmother's face in it. Similarly, all patterns and motifs in consciousness are totally fictitious. By herself nature contains chaos and only chaos. Since nature is totally chaotic or in equivalent words geared towards ever-increasing entropisation, we may say her intrinsic nature is that she is self-harmonious to the point of unequivocal perfection. There can be no reason for anything. The intellect is good at fictitiously or spuriously inventing patterns in random bits of information; but whilst it can come up with all sorts of imaginary notions and delude itself into believing that they are 'real objects', the faculty of intellection must needs fail when brought around to face the task of discovering what "I" actually means. Why? The intellect knows to create—that is all. It cannot reach its parent entity, the Self. Therefore even the mightiest intellect stands utterly baffled before the question, 'Who am I?' or 'What is myself?'. Only annihilation of the intellect can make the answer Shine forth.

Q.: I want some convincing proof that this 'Absolute Self' exists. The only self I currently know is my mind.

B.: The Self cannot be apprehended by mind. You need not believe in anything. Simply keep your mind open to the possibility that: a] consciousness may have an origin that is not physical or gross in nature, and b] there may be a layer of absolute consciousness which might reveal itself if the mind were to be peeled off. That will do. Where is the need to harbour any belief, be it belief in God or in something else? What is belief? It is a fanciful, ostentatious term for what is merely mental conditioning; and to condition the mind is to close it to Truth. So, do not believe, but INVESTIGATE. Truth is found not through belief but through investigation.

Q.: J.K. opines God does not exist. Does B. agree?

B.: Yes. There is neither God nor Lucifer nor cosmos. The Self alone is Reality; Reality alone IS; what IS alone is Real; what is Real alone exists.

Q.: Is birth an accident? Or is it our actions in past lives that have caused our incumbent birth?

B.: Birth? Birth! Whose birth?

S>M>

Q.: I have encountered various persons blessed with unique and extraordinary mental abilities. Some are able to multiply upto 3 4-digit numbers with each other and tell the answer within the time-span of half-a-second. Others discern thoughts of persons present near them clearly, as though reading from the pages of a newspaper. Yet others are even able to move physical objects by using just the mind! How is it all made possible? Are these persons Jnanis? Is that how they have managed to cultivate these abnormal, fascinating abilities?

B.: No. Jnana has nothing to do with these so-called miraculous abilities. It is freedom from embodiment or birth. We might like to imagine otherwise, but extended abilities may not bring about peace.

Q.: Why and how did mind or ego separate or divorce itself from the Self?

B.: There are no 2 distinct entities by name mind and Self. Extroverted, mind is seen to be the cosmos. Mind attending exclusively to itself discovers itself to be Self.

S>M>

Q.: E. A. Poe writes:

I have been happy, though but in a dream;  
I have been happy- and I love the theme;  
Although filled with fleeting, shadowy, misty  
strife,  
I take delight when into its vividly coloured life  
A dream whisks me off to realms unknown  
Where chicanery in man has not at all grown;  
Its semblance to reality doubtless brings  
To the delirious eye more lovely things  
Of Paradise and Love- fancy that, all our  
own!-

## Than young Hope in his sunniest hour hath known.

Is it a crime to not wake up to Reality but simply go on dreaming?

B.: No. But it may be a crime of treacherous perfidy unto oneself to continue to harbour the pretence that such option yet remains for one, when in fact it stands expired.

Q.: How to tell whether the option to continue dreaming has expired or not?

B.: World is seen not as world but merely as scenes flitting by or shifting on the screen of pure consciousness.

Q.: That is Jnana. Am I right?

B.: No. In Jnana world is not seen at all.

S>M>

Q.: If I surrender myself to God, will I not lose control over my life?

B.: Once cares appurtenant to one's mundane life have been thrown on the Higher Power, leave it to Him to take care of everything. Where is the need for us to exercise control over our lives when it is really He who does everything? We think that the body's actions are performed by us. The ego is akin to the sculpted figures at the base of the Rajagopuram which are designed in such fashion as to convey the misleading impression that it is they that bear the weight of the entirety of the structure; in actual fact the construction rests exclusively upon the earth, which alone bears all the weight. Likewise here. Everything happens on account of Randomness only. Nobody really does anything. The ego claiming responsibility for the body's actions is a spurious or fraudulent entity. In actual fact there is no such thing called 'ego' or 'I'. Only Reality, to which action is wholly alien, exists. Endeavouring to derail off the ego's tenacious control over one's life is the point of attempting to surrender oneself.

S>M>

Q.: The ego's interminable quest to attain to the state of the Self reminds me of Hawthorne's words: "You search his thoughts. You burrow and rankle in his heart! Your clutch is on his life, and you cause him to die daily a living death, and still he knows you not." Why is the Self so adamantly resisting my efforts to find Him? Will He not take notice of the fact that I am trying to Realise Him? Since I am exceedingly eager to find Him, should He not make my job easier by means of somehow making Himself easier to discover? Will He not help me on the Quest?

B.: He will, provided you surrender yourself to Him unreservedly.

Q.: Logically speaking, absolute surrender or unconditionally giving up forever the ego precludes one even from making active efforts to Realise the Self. Is

my observation correct?

B.: Surrendering yourself does not mean merely thinking once, 'I hereby surrender absolutely.'. After perfect surrender, the ego does not rise at all. Until you gain that state, relentlessly go on making attempt to surrender completely. To begin with, one may not find the strength to achieve total surrender; but partial surrender is possible for all; in due course of time that will lead to complete surrender. It is like a game of tug of war. The ego's strength in its obdurate pertinacity in causing mental-attention to wander away from the Self will diminish only with repeated attempts to surrender. No matter how many times you fail, go on trying. Pick yourself up after every fall and keep on going; the thing to do is to not brood but keep on going. Nobody succeeds without determined, incessant effort; those few who succeed owe their success to adamant, sedulous, punctilious perseverance. Do not keep dwelling on your failures, but go on diligently pursuing with your effort and you are bound to strike Light one day.

E.Z.: It is said that Mr. Edison made 9999 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light-bulb. One day, they say, somebody asked him, "How does it feel to have failed so many number of times?" We are told that Mr. Edison calmly replied, "I did not fail 9999 times. The light-bulb was an invention with 9999 steps."

The master smiled appreciatively upon having listened to the amusing little anecdote.

S>M>

Q.: Gauthama Buddha's view on creation seems to be cogently and succinctly expressed in the following piece of text: [reads out from the book 'Buddha: A drama in 12 scenes- by Sadakichi Hartmann']

**Departed spirits of my faith once more, like the majestic moon, rise and move in mighty waves the ocean of my thoughts that lay at rest; not to the tempestuous fury of the past that drove resistless everything before its mighty course, and shattered human creeds like wrecks, but merely a last glance of farewell at thy everlasting rise and fall, the grand monotony of life! Oh, universe within universe, the enigma of thy existence is not cruel, not obscure to me though it has oft tormented me with sleepless agony. A repetition, nothing else: a ceaseless play of billows of the same chaotic mass! Just as this body's imperishable dust incessantly rebuilds the phenomena of life, reason and feeling both consist of multitudinous minute forces that, in continual transformation, attract or repulse, inflame or chill, condense or dissolve each other. These forces, wedded to the dust, roam dormant through the universe, until affinity lets them concuss to minor images of the majestic revolution: man. All the nomadic population of water, earth and air, swarming in flocks or straying alone, even beings too small for the eye of science, all growing things, the**

flowers indeed, nay, this solid rock, possess soul-atmospheres in inferior states. Incessant concussion during millenniums had to in and evolutionize, before the breathing of a tenuous leaf became the breath of human eloquence, before acranic 2-holed bellies moved to the highest phase of individual consciousness: a mechanism even freer than the stars that can reflect upon its action and partly influence itself. The human soul with its panurgic zest and obsequious intervals of lethian rest, from where it comes, for which it pines in apathetic absentions of itself, straying through the weird capricious confusions of dream-land, or struggling in sombre estuaries of insanity's sea! By parents, manifold and cruel, the germs of our life are shed in the fields of infancy and youth; changing their substance ceaselessly, each turgescient plant, fed by all affinity can draw from chaos' surging sea, unfolds unwillingly its individual zest with soaring trunk and leafy wilderness; its fruitage falling more or less complete according to the skill, that curbs the fire fluids as they intercourse. There are souls swooning away as noonday love and glare dissolve their overheated sheath; and there are others, burning fierely in calm intensity, until the inward fire has consumed the mortal web maintaining it. How frail and fugitive is life!

What does Maharshi have to say about it?

B.: Creation is only as true as the ego is true. Is there any creation when you are in the state of deep sleep?

S>M>

Q.: The absolute happiness enjoyed by the Jnani is said to be impossible to be imagined by or with one's mind.

B.: Yes. As Emerson has written, "The strong gods pine for my abode, And pine in vain the sacred Seven; But thou, meek lover of the good! Find me, and turn thy back on heaven." All of heaven's pleasures pale away in insignificance when seen in comparison with the state of the Emancipated-being. Humility is necessary and sufficient to Realise the Self. Humility is merely another name for absence of ego. Trying to behave humbly is not humility; it is sycophancy. The moment the man decides his ego does not count [anymore], he has begun to understand what humility means.

S>M>

A timorous-looking Caucasian consulted the master as to whether he should advise his married sister who was living in the Straits to go away from her husband for good and having left him return home to their European ancestral-village of Nanhafair, since he was an intractably intransigent, inveterately incurable drunkard. This man, he said, was giving her trouble all the time; he felt she had suffered enough; at the village their people would be there to take care of her-

B.: [with an unusually fierce countenance] Embworsthoud! [P>S> I wrote down what I recollected having heard; I have no idea what the word means or what language it might belong to.]

The man fell silent as if struck by lightning. For whatever reason, he appeared to have become uneasy. Presently Mr. Knowles, doubtless trying to offer some kindly help, read out from the book 'East Lynne by Mrs. Henry Wood, Author of "Danesbury House" ' as follows: " Whatever trials may be the lot of your married life, though they may magnify themselves to your crushed spirit as beyond the nature the endurance of woman to bear, resolve to bear them; fall down upon your knees, and pray to be enabled to bear them- pray for patience- pray for strength to resist the demon that would tempt you to escape; bear unto death, rather than forfeit your fair name and your good conscience; for be assured that the alternative, if you do rush on to it, will be found worse than death. "; he added- 'There- that's some good advice, don't you think, sir?'. But now the Caucasian seemed distinctly unsettled. He rose uncertainly, proffered a hasty bow before the Sofa, and teetered out of the Hall. The master laughed.

S>M>

Q.: The ego is unreal compared with the Self- am I correct? Or is it absolutely unreal?

B.: The surf floating about on top of the surface of the ocean- is it real or unreal?

Q.: There is really only just the ocean. We look at it and call what floats about on top 'surf'.

B.: Exactly.

Q.: But surf does not possess any separate "I"-sense about it: it is naturally part of the ocean. In this case, however, we are separated from the Self on account of avarana caused by avidya-maya.

B.: Such idea of separation also is an obstacle to Realisation; remain free of this idea also.

S>M>

Q.: How does the Jnani, who is in perpetual recognition of his identity as being one with Absolute Existence, which is formless, yet retain a body, which has a form?

B.: Did the Jnani come and tell you that he has a form? Experience of Jnana certainly precludes any sense of form [from remaining available or springing forth into manifestation]. Whether the world of shape and form appears in It or not, the Jnani abides as the Self. It makes no difference to the Enlightened whether anything called 'world' appears in the Self or not; either way his absorption in Reality is total.

Q.: In order so as to achieve B.'s state of Sahaja-stithi, which approach is better- summa-irutthal or investigating 'Who am I'??

B.: The former. To the extent one deviates from the former, upto that same extent practise of the latter stands necessitated so that one may regain the former. Vichara becomes necessary certainly but only if and when a] there are thoughts perturbing the mind or b] sleepiness, or laya, ventures to seize control of the mind.

Q.: Then what is surrender?

B.: To surrender is to cease to imagine that you are and BE. To surrender is to absolutely cease to care [about anything and everything].

Q.: Your teachings are profoundly fascinating. But I don't want to believe blindly in anything. Instead, I want to experience matters for myself, first-hand.

B.: Yes- that is the correct spirit [temperament of mind]. Search for Truth. It cannot be handed over to you. It is upto you to find It.

Q.: Then I don't have to believe in the framework of conceptual exposition postulated by the Ajata-advaita philosophical school? Can I opt not to believe in it and yet Realise the Self?

B.: Neither believe in anything nor disbelieve. Both belief and disbelief are mental modifications. All mental modifications are obstacles to Realisation. Remain free of them. Keep an open mind.

Q.: When I remain aware of myself I am the Self, but when I am aware of anything else I become the not-Self. Is that right?

B.: One's feeling of being-ness or self-awareness is NOT the Self. Vedanta's emphasis on one's being-ness should not be perversely interpreted to mean that that is the Self. Being-ness is the natural state of Self. But your feeling of being-ness or self-awareness, even after the stage stands reached wherein the same is sustained incessantly, volitionlessly and effortlessly, is not the Self. The Self is Parabrahman. He is the Beyond. Holding on to subjective consciousness with effort and volition is savikalpa-samadhi; when both effort and volition have faded away completely, it is the subsequent stage, nirvikalpa-samadhi. But the Beyond is only in Sahaja-samadhi. There is no reaching Him. All that is possible to do is to surrender to Him unreservedly. Having gained theoretical or intellectual knowledge concerning Ajata-advaita, some [charlatans who hanker after fame, wealth and social influence and so as to accomplish such selfish ends pretend to be Emancipated-beings] mislead others by proclaiming that being-ness is the Self. The Self is doubtless nothing but being-ness; but one's feeling of being-ness is certainly not the Self. You talk about 'not-Self'. Realise the Self and you will see that there is no such thing as not-Self. All and everything is verily the Self only.



Q.: But B. sometimes advises us to catch hold of the "I"-thought and keep watching it till it has subsided entirely into the Heart. Is this not holding on to subjective consciousness?

B.: Holding on to or remaining as subjective consciousness I-AM is means or machination to gain the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani; it is not itself that state. The practice is not the goal.

Q.: I thought absence of sensory perception in the waking state means that we are in samadhi.

B.: Then hitting somebody on top of the head with a stout truncheon should do to plunge him into samadhi.

Q.: What is it then?

B.: Let sensory perceptions remain or vanish. Never mind whether they remain or disappear. You remain AWARE.

Q.: How can I practise something if the volition to do so is an obstacle to that very practice?

B.: Exactly. It is like saying, 'Do not think of monkey whilst taking this medicine.'. It is impossible. So, leave aside the question of practising anything. Simply REMAIN or BE as you ARE. Pay attention exclusively to what IS.

Q.: And ignore what is not. Is that right?

B.: No. There cannot be anything left to do for one who is exclusively occupied with what IS. There is nothing to ignore. Simply BE.

Q.: Shall I be or focus my attention on being?

B.: The former. But if [to begin with] you are unable to manage it, practise the latter and it will automatically and eventually lead you into the former.

Q.: E. A. Poe wrote:

Gaily bedight, A gallant knight,  
In sunshine and in shadow, Had journeyed long,  
Singing a song, In search of Eldorado.  
But he grew old- This knight so bold-  
And o'er his heart a shadow- Fell as he found  
No spot of ground That looked like Eldorado.  
And, as his strength Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow- 'Shadow,' said he,  
'Where can it be- This land of Eldorado?'  
'Over the Mountains Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow, Ride, boldly ride,'  
The shade replied,- 'If you seek for Eldorado!'

How can we be sure that the quest for Enlightenment does not turn out akin to searching for the horse with a horn on his head?

B.: That is just what it is. Nobody succeeds in Realising the Self. All that is possible is to unrealise the not-Self; then the Self shines forth. Can the mind ever know the Self? All our effort is only to shake off fiction, not to obtain Reality. So, yes: the Quest also is fictitious. And- who knows?

[smiling] One day man may succeed in setting foot in the moon also!

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that no such thing as the cosmos ever existed?

B.: Yes.

Q.: But sometimes Maharshi says the cosmos is a dream.

B.: People desire to be presented with some sort of explanation concerning the world they think they see around them; for this reason, they are told that the world is a dream; such asseveration is merely an novice-level hypothesis given to the neophyte in order so as to assuage his intellectual inquisitiveness for the time being. But what is the actual fact? The world that is seen is the same as the "I" that is doing the seeing. Seeing, seer and seen are all only one and the same imaginary mind. Mind gone, all 3 vanish and only Reality remains. So, while the theory that the world is a dream is not actually correct, it is the only postulation that can be given to the ego that desires to know what the reality of the world is that it presumes it spectates. Realising the Self, there is no world to be seen. It is only then we know that dream or not-Reality can never exist. Even now dream IS-not and Reality alone IS: Realise It.

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that everything happens only on account of God's will?

B.: Yes.

Q.: So all the evil deeds in the world also go on only on account of God's will.

B.: Yes.

Q.: How can God permit bad things to happen in the world? Does he not care for us?

B.: He cares extremely. That is why he is reminding or cajoling you to look for Reality. If this world were paradise, would anybody make any attempt to Realise the Self?

S>M>

Q.: How is it that the mindless Bhagawan, himself having no beliefs or opinions of his own, manages to interact with and provide solace to so many people from around the globe belonging to diverse cultural and intellectual backgrounds? In fact I want to ask Bhagawan the question- who are you?

B.: The Jnani's presence is like a pure, stainless mirror. People see in the Jnani what they want to see. The Jnani himself completely lacks a nativistic personality, for he is one with the Absolute Himself. Yet he pretends to acknowledge what 'others' say to him is meaningful. He laughs with the laughing and weeps with the weeping. What does he lose? In funeral processions, there are people employed to mourn for a fee. The agony on the faces of those who, devoutly kneeling near the cadaver, beat their breasts and foreheads passionately seems quite real to one who does not have any idea that they are actually hired, professional artists. The Jnani's case is likewise. People looking at him from outside think he has some role to play in teaching the art of Emancipation to 'fellow man', in the spiritual development of the world, in the moral redemption of humanity, and so on and so forth. It is all absurd. He is not doing anything at all. He is not even here. He IS. All he knows is to BE. For him there cannot be anything else. The distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, etc. are not present in him. He is like an infant- totally innocent and altogether incapable of forming [value-]judgments. He has no conceptualisation of himself. For him there is no need to make effort to be this or that, because he IS. For the Jnani the world is like a cinematograph-picture continuously running in front of him. It is free, it goes on day and night, and is most entertaining: but there is no story [being narrated]! You want to ask me who I am. I am You. Your mind, in this its dream, has created and given birth to me because it feels that it deserves Emancipation.

Q.: So B. is only my own mental creation?

B.: Undoubtedly and unequivocally.

Q.: So... I am staring at a reflection or mirage formulated and sustained by my own mind, when I gaze at the figure seated on the Sofa before me? It seems too fantastic to believe that I could ever create the incredibly and incomparably wondrous Bhagawan Ramanar. The idea that it is we who create God sounds, to me atleast, deeply unsettling.

B.: One will Realise the Self Absolute cannot afford to shy away from throwing away [to the wind] all his antediluvian relics of conceptual knowledge and plunging deep down into the Heart so as to be destroyed there once and for all. Never mind your ideas concerning God. Realise the Self; the Self is the one and only God.

BLUTKEIM's Note: we are reminded of Woody Allen's Leonard Zelig and Jim Carrey's Man on the Moon!

S>M>

Q.: This philosophy is simply Nihilism taken to its apogee extreme. Am I right?

B.: Does Nihilism say that human-life is inherently pointless or meaningless? Ajata-advaita goes even further and says that human-life does not exist. Only the Self exists.

Q.: This is total abstraction.

B.: Not so for those who Experience It as Living Reality.

BLUTKEIM's Note: The following essay on the web could be opined to be expressing similar ideas:

[https://ia800609.us.archive.org/27/items/le\\_mythe\\_de\\_sisyphe/mythe\\_de\\_sisyphe.pdf](https://ia800609.us.archive.org/27/items/le_mythe_de_sisyphe/mythe_de_sisyphe.pdf)

S>M>

Q.: Soren Kierkegaard called death, "...the one thing certain, and the only thing about which nothing is certain." Does Bhagawan agree?

B.: Nothing was born and nothing dies.

Q.: That is the Jnani's point of view. Please step down from your towering pedestal for a moment and talk to us on our own level.

B.: You seek the answer to the question of death. Realisation of the Immortal Self is the only genuine answer. The other answers are precisely just as fictitious as the questioner and therefore totally worthless. The one and only worthwhile thing to do with one's life is to discover one's Imperishable nature- i.e., to Realise the Self.

Q.: I find you to be like a Sphinx: no matter what question is thrown at you you manage to bring around the questioner to the Self!

B.: [laughs]

Chadwick: Well- that's what he's here for, isn't he?

16th September, 1936

A certain Caucasian asked permission from Bhagawan to sing in the Hall. The same was granted by the master: a simple smile.

*It was a lucky April shower*

*It was the most convenient hour*

*I found a million dollar baby*

*In a five and ten cent store.*

*The fierce rain continued for some time*

*But I wouldn't have left for a nickel and a dime*

*I hung around for three or four hours*

*Not minding the thunderstorm showers*

*Around a million dollar baby*

*In a five and ten cent store.*

*She was selling china  
And when she made those eyes  
I kept buying china, quiet as mice  
Until the crowd got wise.  
Incidentally, should you be bumping  
Into old Senator Grover  
From Kentucky, preaching  
The parable of the Sower  
Tell him that I'm the one that was wrecking  
The other day his rusty old lawnmower.  
If you should run into a shower,  
Just step inside my cottage door,  
And meet my million-dollar baby  
From the five and ten cent store.  
Love comes along like a popular song  
Any time or anywhere at all  
Rain or sunshine; spring or fall.  
Say, you'll never know  
When it may say hello  
In an unexpected place  
For example, take my case.  
If you should run into a shower  
Oh! do step inside my cottage door  
And meet my million-dollar baby  
From the five and ten cent store.*

The song, in my view, had a mellow, pleasant quality about it; but it was not appreciated in the Hall; it was viewed as being excessively frivolous. The singer was mildly rebuked for having taken up this particular song to sing; such songs, he was told, were not conducive to the spiritual climate that prevailed at the ashram.

S>M>

Q.: What does Bhagawan think about the Buddhist variety of philosophical-system known as 'Zen'?

The master gave no response, but-

Mr. Knowles: First, sir, let us obtain an understanding of what 'Zen' really means; this book will be kind enough to tell us; please listen whilst I read out from the same:[reads out as follows from the book 'An Introduction to Zen Buddhism; by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki'-]

Among the many sects of Buddhism that have grown up, especially in China and Japan, we find a unique order claiming to transmit the essence and spirit

of Buddhism directly from its author, and this not through any secret document or by means of any mysterious rite. The order is one of the most significant aspects of Buddhism, not only from the point of view of its historical importance and spiritual vitality, but from the point of view of its most original and stimulating manner of demonstration. The Doctrine of the Buddha-heart (buddhahridaya) is its scholastic name, but more commonly it is known as "Zen". Zen is not the same as Dhyana, though the term Zen is derived from the Chinese transliteration [channa] of the original Sanskrit. This school is unique in various ways in the history of religion. Its doctrines, theoretically stated, may be said to be those of speculative mysticism, but they are presented and demonstrated in such a manner that only those initiates who, after long training, have actually gained an insight into the system can understand their ultimate signification. To those who have not acquired this penetrating knowledge, that is, to those who have not experienced Zen in their everyday active life-its teachings, or rather its utterances, assume quite a peculiar, uncouth, and even enigmatical aspect. Such people, looking at Zen more or less conceptually, consider Zen utterly absurd and ludicrous, or deliberately making itself unintelligible in order to guard its apparent profundity against outside criticism. But, according to the followers of Zen, its apparently paradoxical statements are not artificialities contrived to hide themselves behind a screen of obscurity but simply because the human tongue is not an adequate organ for expressing the deepest truths of Zen, the latter cannot be made the subject of logical exposition; they are to be experienced in the inmost soul when they become for the first time intelligible. In point of fact, no plainer and more straightforward expressions than those of Zen have ever been made by any other branch of human experience. "Coal is black."- this is plain enough; but Zen protests, "Coal is not black.". This is also plain enough, and indeed even plainer than the first positive statement when we come down right to the truth of the matter. Personal experience, therefore, is everything in Zen. No ideas are intelligible to those who have no backing of experience. This is a platitude. A baby has no ideas, for its mentality is not yet so developed as to experience anything in the way of ideas. If it has them at all, they must be something extremely obscure and blurred and not in correspondence with realities. To get the clearest and most efficient understanding of a thing, therefore, it must be experienced personally. Especially when the thing is concerned with life itself, personal experience is an absolute necessity. Without this experience nothing relative to its profound working will ever be accurately and therefore efficiently grasped. The foundation of all concepts is simple, unsophisticated experience. Zen places the utmost emphasis upon this foundation- experience, and it is around this

that Zen constructs all the verbal and conceptual scaffold which is found in its literature known as "Sayings" (goroku in Japanese). Though the scaffold affords a most useful means to reach the inmost reality, it is still an elaboration and artificiality. We lose its whole significance when it is taken for a final reality. The nature of the human understanding compels us not to put too much confidence in the superstructure. Mystification is far from being the object of Zen itself, but to those who have not touched the central fact of life Zen inevitably appears as mystifying. Penetrate through the conceptual superstructure and what is imagined to be a mystification will at once disappear, and at the same time there will be an enlightenment known as satori. Zen, therefore, most strongly and persistently insists on an inner spiritual experience. It does not attach any intrinsic importance to the sacred sutras or to their exegeses by the wise and learned. Personal experience is strongly set against authority and objective revelation, and as the most practical method of attaining spiritual enlightenment the followers of Zen propose the practice of Dhyana, known as zazen in Japanese. A few words must be said here in regard to the systematic training by Zen of its followers in the attainment of the spiritual insight which has been referred to before as the foundation-experience of Zen. For this is where Zen preeminently distinguishes itself from other forms of mysticism. To most mystics such spiritual experience, so intensely personal, comes as something sporadic, isolated, and unexpected. Christians use prayer, or mortification, or contemplation so called, as the means of bringing this on themselves, and leave its fulfilment to divine grace. But as Buddhism does not recognize a supernatural agency in such matters, the Zen method of spiritual training is practical and systematic. From the beginning of its history in China there has been such a tendency well marked but, as time went on, a regular system has finally come into existence, and the Zen school at present has a thoroughgoing method for its followers to train themselves in the attainment of their object. Herein lies the practical merit of Zen. While it is highly speculative on the one hand, its methodical discipline on the other hand produces most fruitful and beneficial results on moral character. We sometimes forget its highly abstract character when it is expressed in connection with the facts of our everyday practical life but here it is where we have to appreciate the real value of Zen, for Zen finds an inexpressibly deep thought even in holding up a finger, or in saying 'good morning' to a friend casually met on the street. In the eye of Zen the most practical is the most abstruse, and vice versa. All the system of discipline adopted by Zen is the outcome of this fundamental experience. I said that Zen is mystical. This is inevitable, seeing that Zen is the keynote of Oriental culture; it is what makes the West frequently fail to fathom exactly the depths

of the Oriental mind, for mysticism in its very nature defies the analysis of logic, and logic is the most characteristic feature of Western thought. The East is synthetic in its method of reasoning; it does not care so much for the elaboration of particulars as for a comprehensive grasp of the whole, and this intuitively. Therefore the Eastern mind, if we assume its existence, is necessarily vague and indefinite, and seems not to have an index which at once reveals the contents to an outsider. The thing is there before our eyes, for it refuses to be ignored but when we endeavour to grasp it in our own hands in order to examine it more closely or systematically, it eludes and we lose its track. Zen is provokingly evasive. This is not due of course to any conscious or premeditated artifice with which the Eastern mind schemes to shun the scrutiny of others. The unfathomableness is in the very constitution, so to speak, of the Eastern mind. Therefore, that is, to understand the East we must understand mysticism; that is, Zen. It is to be remembered, however, that there are various types of mysticism, rational and irrational, speculative and occult, sensible and fantastic. When I say that the East is mystical, I do not mean that the East is fantastic, irrational, and altogether impossible to bring within the sphere of intellectual comprehension. What I mean is simply that in the working of the Eastern mind there is something calm, quiet, silent, undisturbable, which appears as if always looking into eternity. This quietude and silence, however, does not point to mere idleness or inactivity. The silence is not that of the desert shorn of all vegetation, nor is it that of a corpse forever gone to sleep and decay. It is the silence of an "eternal abyss" in which all contrasts and conditions are buried; it is the silence of God who, deeply absorbed in contemplation of his works past, present, and future, sits calmly on his throne of absolute oneness and allness.

S>M>

Q.: What role does kundalini-shakti play in bringing about Self-Realisation?

B.: Kundalini rises from whatever lakshya it is that you have. Kundalini is the same as prana-sakti.

Q.: Different deities are said to reside in different chakras. Does one see them in course of one's tantra-sadhana?

B.: They can be seen if desired. But they are not apart from the seer.

Q.: Does the path to Self-Realisation go through samadhi?

B.: Realisation and samadhi are one and the same.

Q.: It is said that the Guru can make his disciple Realise the Self by transmitting some of his own power to him. Is it true?

B.: Yes. However, the Guru does not bring about Self-Realisation. He simply removes the obstacles to it. The Self is always Realised. He is nitya suddha buddha mukta.



Q.: Is there absolute necessity of a Guru for Self-Realisation?

B.: So long as you seek Self-Realisation Guru is certainly necessary. Who is the Guru? Guru is the Self. Take Guru to be the Real Self and yourself to be the imaginary self. The disappearance of this sense of duality is brought about by means of removal of ignorance. Ignorance is dispelled only by the Grace of the Guru. So long as duality persists in you Guru is necessary. Because you identify yourself with the body you think that the Guru, too, is a body. You are not the body; neither is the Guru. You are the Self and so is the Guru. This knowledge is gained by what you call Self-Realisation.

Q.: How can one know whether a particular individual is competent to be a Guru?

B.: By the peace of mind found in his presence and by the sense of respect you feel for him. However, why should we go about assessing the competence or otherwise of others? Let us attend to ourselves first and foremost.

Q.: If the Guru happens to turn out to be a charlatan, what will be the fate of the disciple who has implicit faith in him?

B.: The fate of each one will be according to his prarabdha.

Q.: What are your opinions about social reform?

B.: Self-reform automatically brings about social reform. Confine yourself to self-reform, and social reform can take care of itself.

Q.: Should harijans be permitted to enter temples?

B.: It is not for me to say.

Q.: Sri Gandhiji is undertaking efforts to ensure that harijans are permitted to enter temples and use other public amenities. Is he doing the right thing?

B.: Ask him.

Q.: Is it necessary to take a bath if we touch dead bodies?

B.: The body is a corpse. So long as one is in contact with it one must bathe in the waters of the Self.

Q.: If the advaita is final, why did Ramanuja teach vishishtadvaita?

B.: All systems agree on self-surrender. Attain It first; then there will be time enough to judge whose view is right or otherwise.

Q.: Why do you not preach to the common people to set them on the right path?

B.: You have already decided by yourself that I do not preach. Do you know who I am and what preaching is?

Q.: What do you think about the practice of sati or [உடன் கட்டை ஏறுதல்](#)?

B.: It is already banned by the government. What more is there for us to say?

Q.: What right do these Britishers have to interfere with age-old Hindu customs?

B.: Ask them.

S>M>

Q.: How can one become jitasangadoshah?

B.: Sathsangatvae nissangathvam nissangathvae nirmohatvam nirmohatvae nischalatvam nischalatvae jivanmukti. Satsangam is the way.

Q.: How long is satsangam required?

B.: Remain absorbed in the Self until only the Self is left; satsangam is necessary until duality has ceased completely. But what do you suppose is meant by satsangam? Satsangam does not mean massaging the feet of the guru. Satsangam means sangam with sat. What is sat? Sat is simply the Self. Since the Self is now not understood to be sat, the company of the sage who has already understood the fact is sought. So, satsangam is really athmasangam. What is the benefit obtained out of satsangam? Introversion of mind, which leads to Realisation of the Self. Then Absolute Sat is revealed. You mention jitasangadoshah. For whom is sangam? For whom is dosha?

Q.: Is it not for the Self?

B.: No. The Self is pure and unaffected. All impurities affect only the ego.

Q.: Can the jivatman remain without a body?

B.: In sushupti it is without a body. As for the Self, He is always bodiless; even now whilst a world continues to be perceived He is without form.

Q.: Can a sanyasi remain in the midst of a samsaric-life?

B.: So long as one thinks that he is a sanyasi, he is not one; so long as one does not think of samsara, he is not a samsari; on the other hand, he is a sanyasi.

S>M>

Q.: It is said in the Bhagavad Gita, "Realise the Self by means of service to the Guru."; and also, "Realise the Self by means of introverting the purified intellect." How are these statements to be reconciled?

B.: Ishwaro Gururathmeti - Iswara, Guru and Self are identical. So long as the sense of duality persists in you, you seek a Guru, thinking that the Guru is apart from you. He however teaches you the truth and from him you gain successfully the insight needed to Realise the Self.

Q.: Please explain the meaning of the shloka: ahamaekoname kaschidnamanyasya... etc.

B.: It means that the Real 'I' is only one. Although the egos are different, they are never apart from the one Self, the Supreme Reality. There may be many bubbles floating on the surface of the ocean. Superficially speaking, the bubbles are all distinct from one another. Yet all of them are of the same substance, which is the ocean that supports them. Bubbles form on the ocean, float on it and ultimately get dissolved in it. The ocean is not affected

by any of this activity. Likewise here. The Self is not affected by the egos. There is only one genuine 'I', and that is the Absolute Self.

Q.: If the Self be itself aware, why am I not aware of the same, even now?

B.: In Reality there cannot be any duality. Your present knowledge is due to the ego and thus only relative. Relative knowledge requires a subject and an object; whereas awareness of the Self is absolute and requires no object. Remembrance also is similarly relative, requiring an object to be remembered and a subject to remember. When there is no duality, who is to remember whom? So, in the Self there is neither any duality nor any remembrance.

Q.: What happens to the ego when the body dies?

B.: The ego is really nothing but the aham-vritti. In its subtle form the ego remains a thought, whereas in its gross aspect it embraces the mind, the senses and the body. All of these disappear in deep slumber along with the ego. Yet in sushupti the Self is there unaffected as It always was; similarly it will be in death. Ego is not an entity independent of the Self in order that it might be created or destroyed by itself. Mind functions as an instrument of the Self but periodically ceases to function[in sushupti]. Mind is an entity that appears and disappears; it is therefore a discontinuous and transient entity; it arises from the Self and again merges in the Self; this activity might be considered to be birth and death. Relative knowledge pertains to the mind and not to the Self; it is therefore illusory and not permanent. Take a scientist for instance. He formulates a theory that the Earth is round and goes on to prove it and establish it on an incontrovertible basis. When he falls asleep the whole idea vanishes; his mind is left a blank; what then does it matter whether the world remains round or flat when he is asleep? So you see the futility of all such relative knowledge. One should go beyond all relative knowledge and abide in the Self. Real knowledge is verily Self-abidance. Theoretical apprehension by the mind of the principle of Ajata-Advaita cannot be called Realisation. Realisation means destruction of mind.

Q.: In that case, how to destroy the mind?

B.: Is it the mind that wishes to destroy itself? Will a thief ever betray himself? Mind cannot kill mind. If you abide in the beingness of the Self, mind will fade away of its own accord. Any kind of effort cannot kill mind; total absence thereof will.

Q.: Should I not make efforts to Realise the Self within this lifetime?

B.: Make every effort to remain without any effort.

Q.: That sounds complicated.

B.: No. It means, simply BE. That is all there is to Realisation.

Q.: Why does not Sri Bhagavan travel around the world like JK and preach the doctrine of Ajata-Advaita to the public at large?

B.: How do you know that I am not doing it? Does preaching refer to mounting a platform and discombobulating the people around? Preaching is simple communication of knowledge. It is best done in Silence. What do you think of a man listening to a homily for an hour and going away without being impressed by it so as to change his life? Compare him with another who sits in the presence of a Jnani and leaves after some time with his outlook on life totally changed. Which is better: to preach loudly without effect or to sit silently sending forth Intuitive-force to play on others? Again, how does speech arise? There is abstract knowledge, which is the same as the unmanifest. From it there rises the ego, which gives rise to thoughts and words successively. Silence, therefore, is the great-grandfather of the spoken word; the same has more effect than lectures or conceptual explanations.

Q.: Sushupti is so peaceful that I should love to stay forever in it, but in practice this is impossible. Why?

B.: We are always in sushupti. Becoming aware of the fact in jagrat is the state of jagrat-sushupti. The ajnani cannot remain long in sushupti because his recalcitrant ego pushes him out of it. In the case of the Jnani, although he has permanently ruined the ego, it continues to rise again and again due to prarabdha. So, for both the Jnani and the ajnani the ego springs up, but with this difference: while the Jnani enjoys the transcendental experience of the Self, keeping his lakshya always fixed on the source of the ego, the ajnani is completely ignorant of the actual Self. The Jnani's ego is not harmful, being a mere skeleton of its normal self, like the burnt ash-skeleton of a rope. By means of constantly fixing its attention on the beingness of the Self, which is the Heart, the ego gets dissolved into it like a salt doll which has fallen into the ocean. The Heart is the source from which springs the ego.

Q.: But why can we not remain in sushupti as long as we like, and also be voluntarily in it just as we are in the waking state?

B.: Sushupti continues in the other two states also. We are ever in sushupti; the truth of this statement should be consciously gone into and realised in jagrat and swapna. There is no such thing as going into or coming from sushupti; becoming aware of the import of this statement is called the state of samadhi. An ignorant man cannot remain long in sushupti because he is forced by his ego to emerge from it. His ego is not dead and it will rise up again and again. But the Jnani has crushed the ego at its source; yet it rises up again and again for him too, as impelled by prarabdha. Both in Jnani and ajnani, ego is sprouting forth, but with this difference, namely the ajnani's ego when it rises up is quite ignorant of its source, or he is not aware of his sushupti in his swapna and jagrat states; whereas a Jnani when his ego rises up enjoys the transcendental experience of the Self with this ego, keeping his

lakshya always on its source, which is the Heart. The Jnani's ego is not dangerous: it is like the ash-skeleton of a burnt rope: for this reason it is ineffective in relation to the purpose of manufacturing fresh karma. By constantly keeping our aim on the Heart, our ego is dissolved in its source, which is that same Heart, like a doll of salt in the ocean.

Q.: Sri Ramakrishna says that nirvikalpa-samadhi cannot last longer than twenty-one days. If persisted in beyond such time period, the person dies. Is it so?

B.: When the prarabdha is exhausted the ego is completely dissolved without leaving any trace behind. This is called videhamukti. Unless prarabdha is completely exhausted the ego will be rising up in its pure form even in jivanmuktas. The duration of 21 days is an arbitrary number given to satisfy some disciple's curiosity; the same is not correct. It is said that people cannot live if they fast for more than 45 days. But there are those who have fasted longer, say a hundred days. It means that there is still prarabdha for them. Three years ago, Sri Gandhiji fasted for many days continuously so that there should be improvement in the condition of harijans. Did anything happen to him?

S>M>

Q.: How is Realisation made possible?

B.: There is the absolute Self from which a spark proceeds as from fire. This spark is called the ego or mind. In the case of an ignorant man it identifies itself with an object simultaneously with its rise, for it cannot remain independent of such association with objects. This association is ajnana or ignorance, whose destruction is the objective of our abhyasa. If the ego's objectifying tendency is killed it remains pure; and also eventually merges into its source, which is the Heart. The wrong identification with the body is called dehatmabuddhi. The same must go before good results can follow.

Q.: How to eradicate my conviction that I am the body?

B.: We exist in sushupti without being associated with body or mind. But in the other two states we are associated with them. If we are the same as the body, how is it that we exist without the body in sushupti? We can separate ourselves from that which is external to us but not from that which is one with us, or that which we are as a matter of fact. Thus, oneself is not one with the body. This must be practically realised in the jagrat and swapna states; avasthatraya is meant to be studied only for such purpose. The ego in its purity is experienced in intervals between two states or two thoughts. Ego is like a caterpillar which leaves its hold on one leaf only after catching another. Its true nature can be found when it is out of contact with objects or thoughts.

Realise this interval as your true nature by means of the conviction gained by study of avasthatraya.

Q.: How do we go to sleep and how do we wake up?

B.: Yathagargya mareechayoerkasya sthamgacchathaha sarva ethasmin thejomandala ekibhavanti thaha punaha punrudhayathaha pracharanth yevamhavaithath sarvam paredhevae manasyekibhavati thena tharhyesha purushoena shrunothinapashyati najighrati narasayathae naspruhshatena abhivadhate nadhattae nanandhayathaena visrujhathae neyayathae svapithi thyachakshathae. Just at nightfall the hen clucks and the chicks go and hide themselves under her wings. The hen then goes to roost in the nest with the chicks in her protection. At dawn the chicks come out and so does the hen. The mother-hen stands for the ego which collects all its thoughts and goes to sleep. Similarly, when the ego displays itself, it does so with all its paraphernalia. When it sinks, everything disappears with it.

Q.: What does sushupti actually look like?

B.: In a cloudy dark night no individual identification of objects is possible and there is only dense darkness, although the seer has his eyes wide open; similarly in sushupti the seer is aware of simple nescience.

S>M>

Q.: In the 76th chapter of the Uttarakhanda of the Ramayana, a shameful incident takes place which pertains to the conduct of Sri Rama. A harijan named Shambooka is sincerely doing tapas so as to gain Realisation of the Self. Sri Rama comes near him and asks him to which varna he belongs. The harijan replies that he belongs to the shoodras. Upon hearing these words, Sri Rama severs his head off. In what way does Sri Bhagawan justify this barbarous conduct on the part of Sri Rama?

B.: He was not doing tapas in order to gain Realisation of the Self.

"...devathvamprarthayerama sashareero mahayashaha na mithyham vadherama dhevaloka jigishaya..." He himself openly proclaims that he wants godhood with his body intact, so that he can assemble an insurrection against the realm of the gods and take over power there by brute-force. The object of his tapas is invincibility in warfare, so that he can unjustly assume power as supreme ruler over the kingdom of the gods. Suppose you are planning a violent putsch to take over His Majesty's Government in India, and the authorities come to know of it, do you think they will let you carry on with your plans? Dhevaloka does not refer to any imaginary place where some fictitious heavenly beings are reigning over the land; the term is used metaphorically within the context of the ithihasas to refer appreciatively to the region that is today known as the Presidency of Sindh. The fact is that Shambooka was making intense efforts to acquire certain occult-powers that would have made

him invincible in warfare had he in fact acquired them. His slaughter was necessary in the light of the gravity of his attempted crime. Had he not been thwarted at the correct time by Sri Rama, eventually the entirety of the Indian-subcontinent would have fallen irreversibly into the hands of tyranny and oppression.

K.: Yes, it is true that when a government is toppled by rebels, the general populace of the place suffers untold tribulation; Jesus himself has said so in this book, thus-[reading out as follows from the book, ' A Liberal Translation of the New Testament being an attempt to translate the Sacred Writings with the same Freedom, Spirit, and Elegance, with which other English Translations from the Greek Classics have lately been executed: the design and scope of each Author being strictly and impartially explored, the True Signification and Force of the Original critically observed, and, as much as possible, transfused into our Language, and the Whole elucidated and explained upon a new and rational plan: with select notes, critical and explanatory; by E. Harwood ':] But Jesus, whose divine knowledge penetrated the human heart, and pervaded all its inmost recesses, knowing their malicious thoughts and invidious designs, turned to them and thus addressed them- *Every kingdom torn by internal divisions and civil discord is quickly reduced to a state of the most deplorable dissolution and ruin- every city also and every family, full of dissention and the rage of faction and animosity, cannot flourish and prosper: now if Satan empower any one to expel those daemons which he himself injects, he must foment dissentions in his own kingdom- and consequently consents to its weakness and demolition.*

But the gentleman's reading was interrupted by the visitor-

Q.: Oh! so, if harijans administer a region, it thereby falls into the hands of tyranny, does it?

B.: I have not said so. I have only said that there is nothing morally reprehensible about Sri Rama's abrupt decapitation of Shambooka[-i.e., execution without opportunity to defend oneself in a trial conducted according to due process of law] owing to the fact that it is the bounden duty of any incumbent regime to perennially undertake measures to prevent itself from being destabilised by violent insurrections.

Q.: So England has every right to take harsh measures against those amongst us who are demanding swarajya for India?

K.: In the book 'The Code of Hammurabi by Percy Handcock, M.A., Barrister-at-Law, formerly assistant to the Keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, British Museum' it is stated, 'If a man destroy the eye of a man they shall

destroy his eye. If one break a man's bone, they shall break his bone.' I should like to know what Sri Bhagawan's views on pacifism are. Does Sri Bhagawan advocate pacifism under all circumstances?

B.: Violent demands will lead to violent retribution by way of response. Demand peacefully whatever it is that you feel you require. Sri Gandhiji's method of ahimsa is the way.

Q.: Ahimsa can achieve nothing. Violence is the way to get what we need. If nature were to start observing ahimsa, all life on the earth would become simply impossible. You, Maharshi, lived for years in the wild. Have you observed nothing? How do wild animals survive? By devouring the flesh of other animals. Violence is thus inherent in nature. One who opposes violence opposes life. The Hindu deities Rama and Krishna fought many bloody battles. When Arjuna wanted to follow ahimsa in the battlefield, he was severely rebuked by Krishna. Ahimsa is merely a silly Jain invention and the ridiculous idea has no meaning nor relevance in the contemporary situations we face in our day-to-day life.

G.: Mr. Ambedkar has said in relation to the question of ahimsa that people must ideally follow the Buddhist and not Jainous interpretation of ahimsa. As far as my knowledge of the subject-matter goes, the Buddha seems to have been of the opinion that violence must be deployed as a matter of necessity when one is confronted with the rightful duty to vanquish evil. So, Rama has done the right thing when it comes to the slaughter of Shambooka.

K.: Yes; further, according to the sage Tukaram, destruction of all evil-doers is the integral second-half of the concept of ahimsa, the first-half being to show love and kindness towards all living creatures.

B.: It might be so for others; but for mumukshus, absolute ahimsa is altogether indispensable.

G.: There are many other such seemingly unjust incidents in the ithihasas and puranas; for instance, we may as an example take the slaughter of Romaharshana at the hands of Balarama, the slaughter of Vali at the hands of Rama, or the slaughter of Drona at the hands of Dhruvadyumna. Each of these incidents would have some moral justification, although appearing immoral prima facie.

B.: Do you think a man's earmarked prarabdha cares whether perceived ethical obligations appurtenant to manner of death are fulfilled are not? Never forget that as far as samsaric-life is concerned, prarabdha alone has a say; anything else is wholly irrelevant. If you are in the world, prarabdha is your king and you are his slave.

K.: How then could it be possible to escape at all from prarabdha, since the world comprises everything that exists? Can we simply exit ourselves from the



world?

B.: Yes. Realisation is the means for it.

S>M>

Q.: Is it advisable to speak the truth always? In certain delicate situations, will it not be a morally superior option to tell a harmless lie, which the person concerned would find easier to digest than the actual truth of the matter?

TKS.: How can that be? It is said, sathyamaeveshvaroeloke sathye dharmaha sadhashritaha sathyamoolani sarvani sathyannasti parampadham.

B.: Truth is always adapted to the circumstances under consideration.

Q.: I want to go to Benares next month so that I can spend my final days there; please give me your blessings.

B.: Have you consulted your family-members in relation to this decision of yours?

Q.: On the contrary, I have not even informed them. I plan to leave without telling them. What Bhagawan did at 16, that I am going to do at 61. What is wrong in it? If they come to know of my plans, they will never let me leave.

TKS.: How did you arrive at the decision that the time had come for you to renounce the world? It is said, deshakalavihinanikarmani vipareetavath kriyamanani dhushyanti havimshyaprayathaeshviva.

Q.: Sir, I am talking with Bhagawan. Why do you unnecessarily keep offering your remarks? It is said, ahithamchahithakaram dhashtaryajjalpanti yenaraha avashyam mantrabahasthaekarthavyaha kruthadhooshakaha.

The master laughed.

S>M>

Q.: What is the grand secret of Realisation?

B.: Summa-irutthal. Thyakthva pashyameethi bhavamandhavannihi chalathmana dharshana dharshane thyakthva yosi sosi dhrutham bhaja. 'Who am I?' is for those who are for whatever reason unable to keep [mentally]still naturally.

Q.: Why do some find it easier to keep still as compared to others?

B.: It depends upon the strength of the vasanas and samskaras; if they are strong, the mind is said to be weak and vice-versa.

Q.: Will these vasanas go away gradually as one progresses in one's practice?

B.: Yes, that is it.

Q.: "It was not at all uncommon for the hermit to keep his eyes on the dazzling sun for some hours till it disappeared below the western horizon." Mr. Brunton mentions in his book Secret India that Bhagawan had the habit of staring fixedly at the sun during the evening hours of the day, whilst he was staying

up on the Hill. May I know what is the reason for this singular abhyasa followed by Sri Bhagawan?

B.: There was no sankalpa in me that I should be looking at the sun. I would be merely looking in that direction[West], when the sun would cross my field of view. It did not occur to me to close my eyes, or to take my eyes off the sun and shift my gaze to another direction. I simply would go on looking. That is all. Nahava asma udhaeti na nimlochati sakruddhiva haivasmai bhavati ya yethamaevam brahmopanishadham vedha.

Q.: How to explain the Self to those who have not Realised the same?

B.: No description can convey That state; but to satisfy one's curiosity one may refer to the fact of how the sacred-books deal with the question: adhrushtamavyavaharyama grahyama lakshanam achinthyam avyapadheshyamaekathmaprathyayasaram pranpancho pashamam shantam shivam advaitam chaturtham manyathaesa athma sa vijneyaha; bruhachcha thadh dhivyamachinthyaroopam sookshmachcha thath sookshmatharam vibhati dhoorath sudhoore thadhihanthikaecha pashyathsvihaiva nithyam guhayam.

Q.: The explanation seems interested largely in telling us what the Self is not.

B.: Yes. It cannot be expressed by words or conceived of by mind. It has to be Realised in and as the Heart of one's being.

Q.: It is said, aathmavaidhameka evagra asinnanyath kinchithna mishat sa ishathalokannu sruja ithi. Why therefore did the Atman decide to create the cosmos?

B.: That shloka is only there so as to give some manner of creative explanation to those who ask the question. In actual fact creation never happened.

Q.: What about the world around me?

B.: Ask yourself who sees it. Can there be anything apart from the seer?

Q.: Nayamathma pravachanena labhyo na maedhaya na bahunashruthaena yamaevaishavrunuthae thaena labhyasthasyaisha athma vivrunuthae thanumsvam, it is said. Then what is the use of making efforts to Realise the Self?

B.: The Atman chooses those whose minds are wholly introverted; the choice is not altogether random.

Q.: Can the jiva by its own effort reach the Atman?

B.: No; one ought to surrender to the Atman to gain That state. Surrender means to give up all contents of the mind. Yathaivabimbam mrudhayoe paliptham thaejomayam bhrajathe thath sudhantham thadhvathmathatvam prasameekshyadehi ekahakrutharthoebhavate veethashokaha.

Q.: Patanjali says, shanthoedhithou thulya prathyayou chitthasyaikagratha parinamaha.

B.: Yes. Hold any one thought to the exclusion of everything else and trace it back to its source; having reached the Heart as the source, remain there once and for all; that is Liberation.

S>M>

Q.: The Chinese polymath Chang Heng is said to have somehow found out what is there on the surface of the other hemisphere of the moon. Does Bhagawan know what is there on the other side of the moon?

B.: [smiling] There also only 'I' am there. What else can there be?! [laughter in the Hall]

S>M>

Q.: How shall we erase carnal-lust or carnality from the mind?

B.: The further and further the mind is introverted, the more and more do libidinous-passions proceed to evaporate from the mind.

Q.: Can we entertain our individual aspirations after surrender?

B.: No. One who has truly surrendered unconditionally unto the Divine-will accepts anything and everything that has happened and that is happening to him in life and in death; his heart is always full to the brim with joy; he has nothing to complain about and never will have anything to complain about; there is no room in his heart for anything excepting joy and joy alone; such a one will not have any desires or aspirations.

Q.: How am I to get this blissful state for myself?

B.: To surrender is to absolutely LET GO. You are desperately holding and clinging onto life. There is no need, because you are already alive. Realise It.

Q.: Everyone respects Bhagawan. How can I make everyone respect me?

B.: Cease to respect yourself. [In other words, cease to pay any attention to the ego.]

Q.: How shall I get rid of the desire to take revenge on those who have betrayed me and stabbed me in the back?

B.: You are the sole rightful heir to the supreme treasure of Absolute Happiness that knows neither beginning nor end. Somebody is keeping it from you. Is this not the greatest betrayal possible? What shall we do to this traitor, who is keeping the whole of the treasure to himself and only releasing tiny amounts for you to enjoy every now and then?

Q.: Murder him!

B.: Exactly.

Q.: But how?

B.: Remain without leaving yourself[unnaividamalyiru]. In other words, do not arise as the ego but remain as the Self. Prapatti is the means for it. You say 'I'.

What is your self? The false 'I' is born everytime a thought occurs and it subsides everytime such thought fades away. The Real 'I' is the actual Self, which does not even say 'I'. The ego is like a caterpillar-worm; it abandons the present thought only after grasping the subsequent thought. Its true nature can be known only when it is out of contact with thoughts and objects. When everything has subsided, That Shines.

K.: Kind sir, please pay attention to what Mr. Francis Bacon has had to say about revenge in this book: [reading out as follows from the book 'Bacon's Essays, edited with introduction and notes by Alfred S. West, M.A., Trinity College, Cambridge, Fellow of University College, London:]

Revenge is a kind of wild justice, which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out: for as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law, but the revenge of that wrong putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon: and Solomon, I am sure, saith, "It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence." That which is past is gone and irrecoverable, and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come; therefore they do but "trifle with themselves, that labour in past matters. There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake, but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honour, or the like; therefore why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong, merely out of ill-nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or brier, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but then, let a man take heed the revenge be such there is no law to punish, else a man's enemy is still beforehand, and it two for one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous the party should know whence it cometh this is the more generous; for the delight seemeth to be not so much in doing the hurt as in making the party repent: but base and crafty cowards are like the arrow that flieth in the dark. Cosmus, Duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable. "You shall read," saith he "that we are commanded to forgive our enemies but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends." But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune: "Shall we," saith he, "take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?" and so of friends in a proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge, keep his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well. Public revenges and for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Cæsar; for the death of Pertinax; for the death of Henry the Third of France; and many more. But in private revenges it

is not so; nay, rather vindictive persons live the life of witches; who as they are mischievous, so end they unfortunate.

S>M>

Q.: What is the allegorical or metaphorical significance of the apologos of man's expulsion from the garden of Eden? Further, what does the forbidden fruit stand for?

B.: [no response]

E.Z.: Bhagawan has answered this question many times. Man's expulsion from Eden represents the fact that the ego has forgotten its true nature- i.e., its identity with the Real Self. The forbidden fruit is nothing but the aham-vritti, or the idea that one is an individual person.

Q.: What did Jesus mean when he said, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."?

B.: Precisely what he meant when he said, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.". Those who are unfit to receive the loftiest teaching should never come to hear of it; such is the Will of the Almighty.

Q.: The Swiss physician who specialised in psychopathology, Herr Gottlieb Burckhardt, is known to have made the remark, "The mule thinks that embossed-paper makes inferior-quality food.".

B.: Quite so.

Q.: How can we tell the difference between a Jnani and an ajnani by means of studying their respective external behaviours?

B.: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Q.: Mrs. F. D. Hemans wrote:

*Oh! Thought, Oh! Memory: gems for ever heaping  
High in the illumined chambers of the mind,  
And thou, divine Imagination! keeping*

*Thy lamp's lone star amid shadowy hosts enshrined;  
How in one moment rent and disentwined,  
At Fever's fiery touch, apart they fall,  
Your glorious combinations!- broken all,  
As the sand-pillars by the desert's wind  
Scattered to whirling dust!- Oh! soon uncrowned.  
Well may your parting swift, your strange return,  
Subdue the soul to lowliness profound,  
Guiding its chastened vision to discern  
How by meek Faith Heaven's portals must be passed  
Ere it can hold your gifts inalienably fast.*

Man knows that he is going to return to the dust one day. Why then does he make effort to acquire wealth, name and fame for himself, instead of simply keeping quiet?

B.: Because he mistakenly assumes that his life lies between the birth and death of the body. That which is actually Life was never born. That which takes itself to be the body whilst actually being the Self is neither the body nor the Self. Investigating what it is, it is never found and only the actual Self remains.

Q.: Why does Islamic Theology lay forth the idea that Jesus did not die on the Cross, but was raised into heaven whilst still alive in the flesh?

B.: [no response]

E.Z.: In fact, according to the Koran, Jesus was never crucified at all.

S>M>

Q.: Some extraordinary persons are able to display all sorts of miraculous abilities, such as therianthropy, telekinesis, telepathy, etc.; can we say that such persons have attained Jnana? Does Jnana bestow such powers on the Jnani?

B.: A year ago a youth from Calcutta came here. He could multiply upto 4 3-digit numbers together and subsequently upon the result perform many other arithmetic, trigonometric and logarithmic operations in immediate concatenation, and arrive at the final answer in less than 1 minute. The people here gave him many challenges to solve and he was upto them all. The boy was well appreciated by one and all. Next he wanted to challenge me to a duel of mathematical ability. I kept quiet and he was about to get up and go away. Not wanting to upset him, at the time of his departure I told him that I had no expertise in performing such computations. He asked incredulously, 'Are you saying that you cannot do it?'. To make him feel more comfortable, I replied in the affirmative. 'But they say that you are a Jnani.', was his response. I then explained to him that mental abilities were one thing,

whereas the state of no-mind another. I am now saying the same thing to you. Presence of such superior mental abilities in a person does not indicate that he is a Jnani; again, a Jnani may or may not possess such superior mental abilities. Some persons can predict the future accurately. Others can listen to conversations going on in far-away continents. Still others are able to materialise any desired object out of thin-air. Yet these are all only mental abilities. The Jnani has nothing to do with them. Such powers may come to him if it be so according to his prarabdha, but he does not care for them. The Jnani's state is the same whether these thaumaturgic powers and extraordinary mental abilities come to him or not; such talents, in fact, are being exercised by the Jnani only from the onlooker's point of view; he himself cannot be aware that he is wielding them. The Jnani's own experience is that he does nothing. We think that the Jnani is acting because we see his body moving; we think that he is there inside that body, just as we think that we are located within our bodies. But what is the fact? The Jnani has already transcended the mistaken identity of the Self with the body. Destruction of the body cannot affect him in any way. Like a horse eager to reach its destination so as to feed on the bag of gram-seeds waiting for it, the Jnani is waiting for his prarabdha to come to an end so that he can drop off the body. Even whilst the body is there the Jnani sees only the Self in the body.

S>M>

Q.: Has Bhagawan ever seen the narrow-snouted crocodile, known as 'Ghrial'?

B.: [smiling] Yes, but only once; that was within a few years of arriving at this place. Only one animal was seen by me near the place where the Sona theertham sits today; I do not think that there might have been more. It had a huge bulbous nose at the tip of its snout, about the size of a small corm of the elephant-foot yam.

C.: I wonder if Mr. Knowles here does not get any ideas from hearing this; I hope he shall not go marching off to find the beast, rifle in hand and all!

K.: No, no, sir; this is purely a trip of spiritual interest; as you do observe, I have not brought a single firearm with me...

S>M>

Q.: "When a man fasts, suppose he do it through a religious motive, he should give the food of that day, from which he abstains, to the poor and hungry, who, in the course of providence, are called to sustain many involuntary fasts, besides suffering general privations. Woe to him who saves a day's victuals by his religious fast! He should either give them or their value in money to the poor." Does Sri Bhagawan agree with these words of the English Methodist Mr. Adam Clarke?

B.: It is not necessary that everybody must do so.

Q.: Please bless this artefact, which I purchased on my pilgrimage to Haridwar last year.

A small, painted, wooden statuette of the monkeys Mizaru[??], Kikazaru[??] and Iwazaru[??] was handed over to the master. He took it, examined it carefully, and handed it back with a smile.

B.: When this was a small boy, there was a similar statuette in our house at Thindukkal. It had 4 monkeys. The fourth monkey would be covering his groin.

S>M>

Q.: They say that Swami Raghavaendhra is alive inside his brindavanam even today at Mantralayam. Can it be true?

B.: Once you begin to doubt it, it cannot be true.

Q.: Mrs. Helen Keller has said, 'I cried because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet.'. When will man learn to be content with what he has?

B.: After he has lost everything, he wishes that he had been content with what he once had; because greed leads to loss of even what one yet has.

Q.: Is everything only the handiwork of God, including all the various mishaps and iniquitous occurrences that take place in the world?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Being God, how can He permit evil to remain in the world?

B.: [The concepts of] good and bad are not applicable to Him and He is not troubled by them. Creation or mind appears in Him and disappears again, without affecting Him in any way. Suppose a murder is going to take place on the cinema-screen, does the projectionist remove the portion of film-strip appurtenant to that particular scene?

Q.: This idea of God sounds like Deism.

B.: It is true that generally Ishwara does not selectively meddle with the prarabdha of any particular individuals; but on the whole, diversity or maya becomes manifest only owing to his sakti or leelai.

Q.: What is the advantage of practising vichara in solitude? I am under the impression that if the practise be carried out in a condition of solitude, it will bear a greater likelihood of bringing about success. Ekanthavasam is necessary for Realisation. Am I correct?

B.: The solitude that matters is mental solitude.

Q.: What is that?

B.: To remain free from both thought and sleep.

Q.: What about physical solitude?

B.: There is no such thing. Solitude is exclusively in the mind of a man. One man may be in the thick of the world and yet maintain perfect serenity of mind. Such a person is always in solitude. Another may live in the forest but might



still be unable to control his mind; he cannot be said to be in solitude. Solitude is an attitude of the mind. A man attached to the things of life cannot get solitude, wherever he may be, whereas a detached man is always in solitude.

S>M>

Q.: I am addicted to routinely seeking out and obtaining fulfillment of sexual cravings. I also masturbate obsessively. I have no self-control. I am also hopelessly addicted to opium and alcohol. I am a poor, pathetic creature that has come hoping to be helped by the great Maharshi Ramana. I know not what to do. Please show me the way out.

K.: Masturbation is fundamentally an expression or exhibition of listlessness, aimlessness, and indolence; in my opinion, an attitude of zeal, zest, enthusiasm and cheerfulness towards life, along with leading a goal-oriented and meaningful life, and productively occupying oneself with working wholeheartedly toward some purposeful ambition or aim in life, will keep such perverse, wretched, self-destructive habits and tendencies at bay; you see, your unfortunate situation is by no means-

Q.: Sir, please speak no more. I came here for the Maharshi's advice, not for anybody else's.

B.: [after sometime] Come around the Hill today evening.

17th September, 1936

Q.: Is being obsessed with God a good thing?

B.: For those who are desirous of obtaining Realisation, yes.

Q.: Do dualistic devotional practices such as singing bhajans, smearing an idol of the chosen deity with sandal-paste, waving camphor-flame before it, etc. help towards Realisation?

B.: They are good aids for beginners.

Q.: Is it true that the purpose of birth in the human-form is exclusively to achieve Realisation of Parabrahman?

B.: Insofar and inasmuch as you believe it to be true, true it is.

Q.: Should I endeavour to atone for my sins?

B.: The idea that you are a sinner is in itself a great sin.

Q.: I am an aspirant for Realisation. Shall I marry or not? Please advise me after suitable fashion.

B.: Can you remain without marrying? Has your wedding not been arranged already?

Q.: But I am developing cold feet at the last moment.

B.: Why invoke spirituality to justify your present condition of pusillanimity? Do you think that spirituality is a contrivance that can be used as a second-best

option in case the first option of matrimony fails? Is it to fulfill the objective of running away from home that every person who adopts sannyasa does so?

Q.: I admit that my life is nothing but one vast, colossal failure.

K.: The Buddha has said, 'Accept the pain.'

S>M>

Q.: I have heard that hatha-yoga helps to keep carnal-lust under control. Is it really so?

B.: For the duration in relation to which hatha-yoga is performed, there will be control. The permanent way is to investigate who it is that feels such lust.

Q.: 'Even the least work done for others awakens the dormant power within, and gradually instills into the heart the strength of a lion.', said Swami Vivekananda, whereas Sri Bhagawan feels that philanthropy or altruism is a mere waste of time, since the world is only a dream. How are these apparently contradictory points of view to be reconciled?

B.: They cannot be reconciled.

Q.: When two Enlightened-beings meet, what will they see [in each other]?

B.: There cannot be more than one Enlightened-being.

Q.: Supposing another Jnani enters this same Hall: will there then not be two Enlightened-beings in the same place?

B.: That is your view. As far the Enlightened-being is concerned, only his Self exists and there cannot be anything besides. Appearances such as another Jnani entering this place, etc. are all only upon and within the Self and not apart from It.

Q.: How did consciousness- which, by its inherent nature is deathless and all pervading- come to be trapped inside the confines of a mortal body, which by its inherent nature is perishable and transient in character?

B.: If consciousness really be so trapped, why does it not speak out, saying, 'I am trapped; please come and set me free.'? Consciousness is not complaining that it is in bondage; it is you who so complain; therefore, find out who you are. Are you apart from consciousness that you should speak of consciousness remaining in bondage?

Q.: I am one with consciousness.

B.: Is it consciousness which speaks now? Who claims to be one with whom?

Q.: But apart from consciousness there is also the intellect.

B.: Exactly. What you refer to as being 'intellect' is really the ego or aham-vritti; its destruction bestows Emancipation.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that the Biblical Jacob's Ladder is really a veiled, metaphorical reference to man's spinal-column; it is also said that ascending Jacob's

Ladder means to send kundalini-shakti flowing upwards through the sushumna, from the mooladhara to the sahasrara. Is the comparison correct?

B.: Perhaps.

Q.: Upon having made kundalini-shakti to reach the sahasrara, is Realisation thereby achieved?

B.: No. For Realisation the jiva's prana-shakti must merge into the Heart irrevocably.

Q.: Is suffering an inevitable characteristic of any and every embodied soul?

B.: Yes. "...the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Q.: Then what is the way out?

B.: Perpetual abidance in the Self.

Q.: Is Parabrahman aware that so many jivas are trying to Realise Him?

B.: No; He does not and cannot possibly know anything; He is altogether innocent.

S>M>

Q.: Hindus make japa of 'Rama' or 'Siva'. What shall I do?

B.: You can use the name of Jesus: Yehoshuah; or, if that does not satisfy you, you may use any one of the following, that is to say: Jehovah-jireh[Genesis 22:14], Jehovah-nissi[Exodus 17:15] or Jehovah-shammah[Ezekiel 48:35].

Q.: Is developing self-confidence at odds with cultivation of the attitude of surrender, 'Thy will be done.'?

B.: Yes. You talk of self-confidence; that is really poisonous ego-confidence. 'I cannot do anything of my own accord or by means of using my own effort; the Lord is my only succour; only what He wills takes place; my own will counts for nothing; I am not capable of accomplishing anything; He alone verily does everything for me out of His infinite compassion towards me.': this is the attitude of surrender. Surrender and self-confidence are thus the anti-theses of one another. One who has surrendered himself to the Will of the Almighty without reserve lives in the world purely on Grace alone; he does not imagine himself to be capable of anything; his requirements are taken care of by God automatically; such a one would never ask for anything. God satisfies his needs without his having to ask for anything. That is the wonder of sharanagati.

S>M>

Q.: Whenever I see women whom I think look pretty, sexual thoughts conjured up by my contumacious mind start attacking me. What am I to do? At such moments, 'Who am I?' does not seem to yield any effect or impact whatsoever.

B.: Think of your chosen deity at such moments and the disturbing thought will flee away from you.

Q.: You are my chosen deity.

B.: Oh! is that so? Very well; think of me.

Q.: How shall I cultivate sound memory-power? At present my memory is exceedingly weak.

B.: [no response]

TKS.: Include vallaraikkerai in your diet and your memory-power will certainly improve.

S>M>

Q.: Should we shy away from pain or is pain a necessary part of every person's life? Is pain to be avoided as being insalubrious and unhealthy or does pain ultimately bring about a person's moral and spiritual betterment? By pain I mean not just physical pain but also mental anguish or agony.

B.: If there is pain, so be it; it also is not apart from the Self. Neither abhor nor relish anything. What comes let come and what goes let go, be it pain or anything else. If you try to either court something or reject something, it will keep coming after you; but if you remain fixed in the Self and oblivious of everything else, then nothing can bother you and you will be at peace.

Q.: How to give up lethargy and slovenliness?

B.: Incessant inherence in the Self is the remedy for it.

Q.: Should I plan my actions, both short-term and long-term? Or should I simply passively permit things to take their own natural course? What does Sri Bhagawan advise that I do?

B.: Surrender to the Higher-power and then the question cannot arise.

Q.: Is sleeping during day-time a good habit?

B.: It is a wretched habit.

Q.: Is the spiritual quest best left to old age?

B.: The opposite is true. Sri Ramakrishna has observed, "The parrot cannot be taught to sing when the vibrating-membrane in its throat has hardened on account of age; the bird must be taught to sing whilst young, before the collar-line appears on its neck.". The quest for the Absolute must be planted in the mind at a tender age. If ignorance has congealed too much, thereafter it will be difficult to drive it away. One must start his abhyasa in youth. "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not."

Q.: Is it possible for me to live in the absence of a body? Can I go on living even in the absence of my body?

B.: In actual fact, that which is Life is always bodiless.

Q.: I am unable to understand anything.

B.: What is your state in deep sleep? Are you not bodiless then?

Q.: The body is there but I am unaware of the same.

B.: If unaware how then do you say it was there?

Q.: After waking up the same body is found. In sleep I do not see the body but others who were awake when I was asleep tell me that the body remained, whilst I slept, in an intact condition.

B.: You say so now in the present state; but in sleep the presence of the body was not perceptible to you.

Q.: Yes.

B.: The body and the cosmos are merely outgrowths of the mind. The mind is an outgrowth of the Self. So, everything is within the Self only. There cannot be anything apart from the Self.

Q.: Whose mind is it that is responsible for projecting the body and the cosmos?

B.: Yours.

Q.: Why me in particular amongst so many millions in this world? I am not special in any manner. I am just an ordinary person.

B.: Only you exist.

Q.: What about all these people sitting here then?

B.: Even in dreams we see so many other people. Where do they go when we wake up? Can they be found after we have woken up?

Q.: Is all this a dream, then?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What is the proof?

B.: It cannot be proven objectively that the world is a dream, because the objective outlook in itself is incorrect and wrong. You set out to prove with the aid of mind that mind is unreal. It is an impossible, absurd quest. It is like to trying to bury one's shadow inside a deep pit. After the pit is filled up, again there the shadow is on top of the filled-in pit.

Q.: If proof is not possible, how to believe?

B.: Did I ever ask you to believe? There is no need for any belief. When direct experience is available always, why should anybody want to believe?

Q.: Direct experience of what?

B.: The Self.

Q.: Whose Self?

B.: [smiling] Find out.

S>M>

Q.: Is it meaningful and morally acceptable to harbour worldly ambition and spiritual aspiration at the same time?

B.: If you do so, you will fall in between the two benches and both objectives will fail miserably.

Q.: Is then sannyasa the only means for Realisation?

B.: Sannyasa does not mean leaving the house and wandering about as a begging mendicant from place to place wearing ochre-coloured clothing. Sannyasa means remaining without ego. The life of action need not be renounced. Give up the doer and that shall suffice.

S>M>

Q.: Today morning I was visiting the Arunachaleshwara Temple as usual; but something strange and unusual transpired. When I was in the innermost sanctum-sanctorum of the temple, I heard a mysterious voice emanating from within my own body; it said that I must give up the habit of consuming thaengaippal once and for all. What is the significance of this bizarre occurrence? May we say that it was the voice of Lord Arunachaleshwara that was heard by me? Or was I merely hallucinating?

B.: It seems to be an instance of manifestation of God's will. It is good to obey that which the voice has said. Let us not reason as to why the voice has said what it said, but simply take care to follow what it said.

Q.: But is hearing voices a good thing? Or is it a sign of mental derangement?

B.: In the present case, there is no harm in what has happened.

S>M>

Q.: If God exists, why is He tolerating all the injustice that is taking place in the world? Is He even watching over the world? When Mohammed Ghazni desecrated and destroyed hundreds of Hindu temples in India, why then did He not stop him?

B.: The destroyer and the destroyed are both only Himself. What can be there for Him to do?

S>M>

Q.: I want to become God's sacrificial-offering; I want to give up my life in favour of God. What shall I do?

B.: Surrender to Him without reserve and do not care about anything thereafter.

Q.: If I want to attain Realisation, should I donate all my wealth to the poor and needy, and myself go out to beg on the streets?

B.: Not necessary. Renounce your jivabodham [individuality or personality] and that will do.

Q.: What is the jivabodham?

B.: It is the mind or ego.

Q.: There are distractions at home. I am unable to meditate properly there. Therefore, I feel like leaving home and moving into some remote forest, in

order so that I might meditate peacefully and undisturbed. What does Sri Bhagawan advise me that I do?

B.: You yourself as the ego are verily the one and only distraction that you are longing to escape from so desperately.

Q.: How to give up the ego?

B.: The ego arises only by means of holding onto you. Hold yourself so that the ego does not arise. The environment is not to be blamed for our distractions. All distractions are solely mentally caused and created. No purpose is served by physically transporting the body from one location to another. The physical environment is merely mind-generated delusory appearance. Wherever you go you are nothing but the Self. So, why aspire to go anywhere?

Q.: If everything is a dream, what is the point of making any effort at all to Realise the Self? The effort will be dream effort and the Realisation will be dream Realisation.

B.: [smiling] Exactly.

Q.: What should I do then?

B.: There is nothing whatsoever to do- except to clearly realise that fact. Who asked you to do anything? BE as you ARE. All effort is made only so that we can effortlessly remain without any effort.

Q.: The Dutch physician who specialised in psychopathology, Mijnheer Frederik van Eeden, has made the observation that between the states of waking and deep sleep, there is an intervening state known as 'the hypnagogique'; in this state the individual is dreaming but also at the same time aware that he is dreaming.

B.: Why go to such great lengths to establish whether all this is a dream? The rule is simple: if anything is available to be perceived, you are dreaming.

Q.: Bhagawan is perceiving this Hall at this present moment. Is Bhagawan also dreaming? Can a Jnani then have dreams?

B.: The Jnani's state is known only to the Jnani. Bhagawan is not perceiving anything. Perception requires a perceiver.

Q.: I have heard that people on the spiritual path sometimes go insane. Why is this?

B.: It might be owing to unfulfilled desire to attain to the state of Realisation, or to have darshan of God in gross-form.

Q.: How to avoid the risk of going insane whilst on the spiritual path?

B.: Follow the method of vichara to Realise the Self. It is a safe path and it does not carry any such risk.

Q.: Does the mind possess any intrinsic recalcitrance resisting its own destruction?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How to overcome the same?

B.: Only by means of further and further practice.

Q.: There are multiple selves in the world, since it contains so many people. How can it be correct to say that only one Self exists?

B.: Imaginary selves are many; that Self which is Real is only One.

Q.: How can I Realise this for myself?

B.: By means of introverting the mind.

Q.: Is it better for a sadhaka to avoid the company of others?

B.: It is better for him to reach that state in which no others could ever be possible.

S>M>

Q.: In the book 'Thought-forms by Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater', the suggestion is made that thoughts are not entirely subtle in character, but also additionally possess an intangible material dimension, which is nonetheless physical.

B.: Whatever you perceive is only your own thought. Perception and thought are not two different phenomena. You may imagine that you are seeing gross objects, but what is being seen is merely mind-generated information. So, there cannot be any distinction applicable between a gross-object and a thought. Thought and object are simply obverses of one another; they are two sides of the same coin known as mind. The cosmos is only a mental phenomenon. It requires a perceiver to be aware of it. In deep sleep the cosmos, including the perceiver's body, is lost. Yet the Self of the perceiver remains unaffected. Therefore the Self is the essential thing and the rest is just play of shadows.

Q.: Is perfect faith in God enough to save me from the curse of rebirth?

B.: Yes. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." "...he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Perfect faith cannot fail to lead to perfect surrender. Faith is the means to surrender. Surrender is the means to Immortality.

S>M>

Q.: Does Sri Bhagawan believe in anarchism?

B.: [no response]

Q.: In many wonderful works such as 'Rasse und Seele: eine Einführung in die Gegenwart' and 'Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes', it is clearly mentioned about the danger of permitting the inferior races of mankind to gain control over society. Sadly, the contemporary situation is that the influence of



the Aryan man is diminishing in the United-states; many not-Aryan persons, such as the niggers and the jews, have, regrettably, started gaining dominance over society; this alarming problem was highlighted exquisitely in Mr. D. W. Griffith's epic masterpiece 'The Birth of a Nation'; the pressing question of the moment is, how do we put an end to the same?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: Why did Jesus ask "Simon Peter, do you love me?" three times?

B.: This can be understood only if you read the testament in its original Attic language. Jesus demands unconditional love but the disciple is not prepared or not able to offer the same unto Him, or is incapable of offering the same unto Him. In English, all three times the word 'lovest' or 'love' has been deployed by those who prepared the Authorised Version of the Bible in 1611. In the Attic language, the words differ. On the first two occasions, Jesus uses the word ἀγαπάω, but the disciple does not respond in a favourable manner; he offers a careful reply by means of using the word φιλέω. After attempting to offer him the highest initiation and guidance twice, Jesus understands that the particular disciple is not mature enough in his heart to offer Him his unconditional love; therefore when He frames the question the third time, He Himself uses only the word φιλέω. The words ἀγαπάω and φιλέω are not perfectly synonymous; the former implies that the object of love be prized above and beyond all other things, whereas the latter implies merely being fond of something.

Q.: Is belief or faith in God necessary to Realise the Self?

B.: No. Belief operates in the mental realm of the intellect. When pratyaksha-anubhava [direct experience] of the Self is always available, why should we adopt dualistic means and methods of experiencing the Self, such as belief? For those who are not temperamentally suited to the path of Jnana, belief might be of use; but for those who are fit to walk this path, why belief, faith, etc.?

Q.: How to avoid feelings of self-pity, self-aversion, self-loathing, etc.?

B.: By investigating into the question of who their subject is.

Q.: What does the Cross of the Christ stand for?

B.: For crucifixion of the ego.

K.: The answer to your question, kind sir, is contained in this particular book; please listen carefully whilst I read out from the same: [reads out as follows from the book, 'No Cross, No Crown; A Discourse, showing the nature and discipline of the Holy Cross of Christ: and that the denial of self, and daily bearing of Christ's Cross, is the alone way to the Rest and Kingdom of God; to which are added, the living and dying testimonies of many persons of fame

and learning, both of ancient and modern times, in favour of this treatise; by William Penn'-]

The daily cross being then, and still, O Christendom! the way to glory, that the succeeding matter, which wholly relates to the doctrine of it, may come with most evidence and advantage upon thy conscience it is most seriously to be considered by thee,- First, What the cross of Christ is? Secondly, Where the cross of Christ is to be taken up? Thirdly, How, and after what manner it is to be borne? Fourthly, What is the great work and business of the cross? In which, the sins it crucifies, with the mischiefs that attend them, will be at large expressed. Fifthly and lastly, I shall add many testimonies from living and dying persons of great reputation, either for their quality, learning, or piety, as a general confirmation of the whole tract.

To the first, What is the cross of Christ?

I. The cross of Christ is a figurative speech, borrowed from the outward tree, or wooden cross, on which Christ submitted to the will of God, suffering death at the hands of evil men. So that the cross mystical is that Divine grace and power which crosseth the carnal wills of men, and gives a contradiction to their corrupt affections, and that constantly opposeth itself to the inordinate and fleshly appetite of their minds, and so may be justly termed the instrument of man's wholly dying to the world, and being made conformable to the will of God. For nothing else can mortify sin, or make it easy for us to submit to the Divine will in things otherwise very contrary to their own.

II. The preaching of the cross, therefore, in primitive times was fitly called by Paul, that famous and skilful apostle in spiritual things, "the power of God," though to them that perish, then, as now, "foolishness." That is, to those that were truly weary and heavy laden, and needed a deliverer, to whom sin was burdensome and odious, the preaching of the cross, by which sin was to be mortified, was, as to them, the power of God, or a preaching of the Divine power by which they were made disciples of Christ and children of God; and it wrought so powerfully upon them that no proud nor licentious mockers could put them out of love with it. But to those that walked in the broad way, in the full latitude of their lusts, and dedicated their time and care to the pleasure of their corrupt appetites, to whom all yoke and bridle were and are intolerable, the preaching of the cross was and is foolishness.

III. Well: but then where does this cross appear, and where must it be taken up? I answer, within: that is, in the heart and soul; for where the sin is, the cross must be. Now all evil comes from within: this Christ taught: "From within," saith Christ, "out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evils

come from within, and defile the man." (Mark, vii. 21, 22, 23.) The heart of man is the seat of sin, and where he is defiled he must be sanctified; and where sin lives, there it must die: it must be crucified. Custom in evil hath made it natural to men to do evil; and as the soul rules the body, so the corrupt nature sways the whole man: but still, it is all from within.

IV. Experience teaches every son and daughter of Adam to assent to this; for the enemy's temptations are ever directed to the mind, which is within: if they take not, the soul sins not; if they are embraced, lust is presently conceived, that is, inordinate desires; lust conceived, brings forth sin; and sin finished, that is, acted, brings forth death. (James, v. 15.) Here is both the cause and the effect, the very genealogy of sin, its rise and end. In all this, the heart of evil man is the devil's mint, his work-house, the place of his residence, where he exercises his power and art. And therefore the redemption of the soul is aptly called the destruction of the works of the devil, and bringing in of everlasting righteousness. (1 John, iii. 8.; Dan. ix. 24.) When the Jews would have defamed Christ's miracle of casting out devils, by a blasphemous imputation of it to the power of Beelzebub, he says that "no man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, till he first bind the strong man." (Matt. xii. 29.) Which, as it shows the contrariety that was between Beelzebub and the power by which he dispossessed him, so it teaches us to know that the souls of the wicked are the devil's house, and that his goods, his evil works, can never be destroyed till first he that wrought them, and keeps the house, be bound. All which makes it easy to know where the cross must be taken up, by which alone the strong man must be bound, his goods spoiled, and his temptations resisted, that is, within, in the heart of man.

V. But in the next place, how and in what manner is the cross to be daily borne? The way, like the cross, is spiritual: that is an inward submission of the soul to the will of God, as it is manifested by the light of Christ in the consciences of men, though it be contrary to their own inclinations. For example: when evil presents, that which shows the evil does also tell them they should not yield to it; and if they close with its counsel, it gives them power to escape it. But they that look and gaze upon the temptation, at last fall in with it, and are overcome by it; the consequence of which is guilt and judgment. Therefore, as the cross of Christ is that spirit and power in men, though not of men, but of God, which crosseth and reproveth their fleshly lusts and affections; so the way of taking up the cross is an entire resignation of soul to the discoveries and requireing of it: not to consult their worldly pleasure, or carnal ease, or interest, for such are captivated in a moment, but continually to watch against the very appearances of evil, and by the obedience of faith, that is, of true love to, and confidence in God, cheerfully to

offer up to the death of the cross, that evil part, that Judas in themselves, which, not enduring the heat of the siege, and being impatient in the hour of temptation, would, by its near relation to the tempter, more easily betray their souls into his hands.

VI. O this shows to every one's experience how hard it is to be a true disciple of Jesus! the way is narrow indeed, and the gate very strait, where not a word, no not a thought must slip the watch, or escape judgment; such circumspection, such caution, such patience, such constancy, such holy fear and trembling. This gives an easy interpretation to that hard saying, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" (Matt. xxiv. 42; xxv. 13; xxvi. 38, 42;) those that are captivated with fleshly lusts and affections: for they cannot bear the cross; and they that cannot endure the cross must never have the crown. To reign, it is necessary first to suffer. (Phil. ii. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 50.)

S>M>

Q.: Is hating God a means to Realise the Self?

B.: Yes. However, be it love or hatred, the same must be infinitely intense; only then will Realisation result. The one thought, be it love or hate, must be held on to all the time to the exclusion of any and every other thought. Take, for instance, the case of Ravana. Ravana hated Rama and therefore kept thinking of him all the time. Even at the time of dying, the thought of hating Rama was uppermost in his mind. Therefore he was able to get Emancipated.

Q.: Does reading the non-canonical gospels make me an infidel: does it make me an unworthy Christian?

B.: If you are harbouring such fears, you should stick to the Authorised Version and ignore everything else.

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that people are coming to see Bhagawan even from corners of the world as far away as Japan?

B.: Only one has so far come from Japan. He came about two years ago.

Q.: What was his name?

B.: Yosikasu Vogada.

Q.: Did he get Enlightened under Sri Bhagawan?

B.: Has everybody in the world pawned their Enlightenment with me, in order for me to release it and return it to them?

S>M>

Q.: Can a Jnani feel negative emotions, such as, for instance, hate, jealousy, anxiety, fear, malevolence, etc.?

B.: Such feelings may appear before Himself as the Self but they are powerless to affect the Jnani's state of ineffable and imperishable peace,

which state is the same as the Self.

Q.: Some persons write the name of God, such as Rama, or a phrase associated with Him, such as Sri Rama Jeyam, many times, over and over again, on paper and expect that it will fetch good karma for them, and also that it will wash away all of their sins. Is this correct? Also, will such practise lead to Realisation? Is this form of written japam as effective as spoken or mental japam- or is it merely a waste of paper, ink, effort and time?

B.: Written japam has less efficacy as compared to spoken japam. Spoken japam has less efficacy as compared to mental japam. An individual's prarabdha cannot be changed for any reason or altered by any means; it is what it is; that is all. Sin is the same as emergence of ego; if the ego continues to arise there cannot be any remedy from sin. If you want to be sinless, be egoless. Japam made within the mind strengthens the mind and makes it one-pointed; a mind continuously making japam will quickly become ripe enough to Realise the Self by means of practising vichara.

Q.: Is the theory of Jewish-deicide correct?

B.: [no response]

E.Z.: The words "His blood be on us, and on our children." seem to suggest so. However, the Roman government must have been equally responsible; for Jesus, without meaning to, of course, posed a serious threat to their rule over the region of Judah because he was claiming to be the Jewish messiah, and the legitimate successor to the throne of King David.

C.: Excuse me, but where does it say that the Lord ever made those claims? When asked, he only said, "Ye say that I am."

E.Z.: "Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

C.: That only means that He is our Christ or saviour.

E.Z.: It amounts to the same thing, my dear man. In Hebrew, 'moshiach' means 'the anointed one'; in Greek, 'kristos' means the same thing. In the Kingdom of Judah, anointing with aromatic oil was reserved and permissible only for the King and the Chief Priest of the Temple. Therefore, the epithet 'the anointed one' could only refer to either of these two.

C.: Jesus came solely to redeem us. What need could he have had to identify with the Jewish messiah? Perhaps he really was the Jewish messiah.

E.Z.: Impossible.

C.: Why?

E.Z.: Jesus simply did not fulfill the messianic prophecies. In the Tanach there are many indications given as to what the messiah would be like and what he would do. For example, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall

rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." The prophet Isaiah has indicated that the Jewish messiah must usher in an era of unprecedented world peace, and put an end to all suffering, war and strife in the world. Jesus did not do any of these things.

C.: Well, in that case, never mind that He was not the Jewish messiah. It suffices to me that He is my Christ.

Bhagawan beamed at him.

S>M>

Q.: How to perceive the Self?

B.: It cannot be perceived.

Q.: How then to believe in its existence?

B.: We believe in the objective existence of the things we see; that is why the Self is not seen.

Q.: How to prove the existence of the Self?

B.: Your own existence is the proof.

Q.: If everything is an illusion, my own existence also could be an illusion.

B.: Yes: investigate it and find out if it is so.

Q.: Mahayana vs. hinayana buddhism: of these which is closer to Advaita as far as the philosophical aspect is concerned?

B.: Theravada.

18th September, 1936

Mr. K. Ananda Rao, professor of mathematics at Presidency College, Madras, has come to the ashram on yet another visit. This time it is the physicist Paul Dirac whose works are discussed betwixt him and the master. A long and complicated discussion took place, and others in the Hall could not follow much of it. At the end the professor asked-

Q.: Is there any scientific proof available to demonstrate that free-will does not exist and that everything is predetermined?

B.: Last year a certain paper was published in the journal Physical Review; the title thereof is 'Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete? by A. Einstein, B. Podolsky and N. Rosen'. Did you happen to read it?

Q.: Yes.

B.: Nature does mysteriously intervene in such a way as to ensure that Heisenberg's principle does not stand violated. The paper reads, 'Previously we proved that either (1) the quantum-mechanical description of reality given by the wave function is not complete or (2) when the operators corresponding

to two physical quantities do not commute the two quantities cannot have simultaneous reality. Starting then with the assumption that the wave function does give a complete description of the physical reality, we arrived at the conclusion that two physical quantities, with noncommuting operators, can have simultaneous reality. Thus the negation of (1) leads to the negation of the only other alternative (2). We are thus forced to conclude that the quantum-mechanical description of physical reality given by wave functions is not complete. ' . Naturally, nobody has created the experimental set-up necessary to test what is being referenced to here; if such a set-up, hypothetically speaking, were to be fashioned, the results observed would be exceedingly curious indeed; we shall find that making a measurement on a particular system influences not merely that system, but also every other with which it has once interacted in such manner as to cause linkage of their quantum states.

Q.: Such influence would require information to travel faster than light.

B.: Not if such information was perfectly predetermined. Where is the need for information to travel? All of creation is a single whole that is always spontaneously self-aware. If there were multiplicity within creation, the question of time might arise. Since the cosmos is only one whole, the need for information to travel does not arise. The result of measuring the first system was determined even before that system was measured. So, naturally the second system [the quantum state of which is linked to the first's] knows what to do. It is we who divide creation into multiple elements; in creation itself inherently there is no such division.

S>M>

Q.: If Christians take some amount of interest in following Jewish traditions and customs, owing to the fact that Jesus was a Jew, does that amount to an offence or an act of heresy for a follower of Christianity?

B.: [no response]

K.: According to this book, sir, the answer would be a 'yes'; please listen whilst I read out therefrom for your benefit: [reads out as follows from the book, 'Antisemitism: its history and causes; by Bernard Lazare'-]

Many, I know, respect the Jews and think that their present way of life is a venerable one. This is why I hasten to uproot and tear out this deadly opinion. I said that the synagogue is no better than a theater and I bring forward a prophet as my witness. Surely the Jews are not more deserving of belief than their prophets. "You had a harlot's brow; you became shameless before all". Where a harlot has set herself up, that place is a brothel. But the synagogue is not only a brothel and a theater; it also is a den of robbers and a lodging for wild beasts. Jeremiah said: "Your house has become for me the den of a

hyena". He does not simply say "of wild beast", but "of a filthy wild beast", and again: "I have abandoned my house, I have cast off my inheritance". But when God forsakes a people, what hope of salvation is left? When God forsakes a place, that place becomes the dwelling of demons. But at any rate the Jews say that they, too, adore God. God forbid that I say that. No Jew adores God! Who say so? The Son of God say so. For he said: "If you were to know my Father, you would also know me. But you neither know me nor do you know my Father". Could I produce a witness more trustworthy than the Son of God? If, then, the Jews fail to know the Father, if they crucified the Son, if they thrust off the help of the Spirit, who should not make bold to declare plainly that the synagogue is a dwelling of demons? God is not worshipped there. Heaven forbid! From now on it remains a place of idolatry. But still some people pay it honor as a holy place. Let me tell you this, not from guesswork but from my own experience. Three days ago-believe me, I am not lying-I saw a free woman of good bearing, modest, and a believer. A brutal, unfeeling man, reputed to be a Christian (for I would not call a person who would dare to do such a thing a sincere Christian) was forcing her to enter the shrine of the Hebrews and to swear there an oath about some matters under dispute with him. She came up to me and asked for help; she begged me to prevent this lawless violence-for it was forbidden to her, who had shared in the divine mysteries, to enter that place. I was fired with indignation, I became angry, I rose up, I refused to let her be dragged into that transgression, I snatched her from the hands of her abductor. I asked him if were a Christian, and he said he was. Then I set upon him vigorously, charging him with lack of feeling and the worst stupidity; I told him he was no better off than a mule if he, who professed to worship Christ, would drag someone off to the dens of the Jews who had crucified him. I talked to him a long time, drawing my lesson from the Holy Gospels; I told him first that it was altogether forbidden to swear and that it was wrong to impose the necessity of swearing on anyone. I then told him that he must not subject a baptized believer to this necessity. In fact, he must not force even an unbaptized person to swear an oath. After I talked with him at great length and had driven the folly of his error from his soul, I asked him why he rejected the Church and dragged the woman to the place where the Hebrews assembled. He answered that many people had told him that oaths sworn there were more to be feared. His words made me groan, then I grew angry, and finally I began to smile. When I saw the devil's wickedness, I groaned because he had the power to seduce men; I grew angry when I considered how careless were those who were deceived; when I saw the extent and depth of the folly of those who were deceived, I smiled. I told you this story because you are



savage and ruthless in your attitude toward those who do such things and undergo these experiences. If you see one of your brothers falling into such transgressions, you consider that it is someone else's misfortune, not your own; you think you have defended yourselves against your accusers when you say: "What concern of mine is it? What do I have in common with that man"? When you say that, your words manifest the utmost hatred for mankind and a cruelty which benefits the devil. What are you saying? You are a man and share the same nature. Why speak of a common nature when you have but a single head, Christ? Do you dare to say you have nothing in common with your own members? In what sense do you admit that Christ is the head of the Church? For certainly it is the function of the head to join all the limbs together, to order them carefully to each other, and to bind them into one nature. But if you have nothing in common with your members, then you have nothing in common with your brother, nor do you have Christ as your head. The Jews frighten you as if you were little children, and you do not see it. Many wicked slaves show frightening and ridiculous masks to youngsters-the masks are not frightening by their nature, but they seem so to the children's simple minds-and in this way they stir up many a laugh. This is the way the Jews frighten the simpler-minded Christians with the bugbears and hobgoblins of their shrines. Yet how could their ridiculous and disgraceful synagogues frighten you? Are they not the shrines of men who have been rejected, dishonored, and condemned? Our churches are not like that; they are truly frightening and filled with fear. God's presence makes a place frightening because he has power over life and death. In our churches we hear countless homilies on eternal punishments, on rivers of fire, on the venomous worm, on bonds that cannot be burst, or exterior darkness. But the Jews neither know nor dream of these things. They live for their bellies, they gape for the things of this world, their condition is not better than that of pigs or goats because of their wanton ways and excessive gluttony. They know but one thing: to fill their bellies and be drunk, to get all cut and bruised, to be hurt and wounded while fighting for their favorite charioteers. Tell me, then, are their shrines awful and frightening? Who would say so? what reasons do we have for thinking that they are frightening unless someone should tell us that dishonored slaves, who have no right to speak and who have been driven from their Master's home, should frighten us, who have been given honor and the freedom to speak? Certainly this is not the case. Inns are not more august than royal palaces. Indeed the synagogue is less deserving of honor than any inn. It is not merely a lodging place for robbers and cheats but also for demons. This is true not only of the synagogues but also of the souls of the Jews. I urge you to keep my words in your minds in a special way. For I am

not now speaking for show or applause but to cure your souls. And what else is left for me to say when some of you are still sick although there are so many physicians to effect a cure? There were twelve apostles and they drew the whole world to themselves. The greater portion of the city is Christian, yet some are still sick with the Judaizing disease. And what could we, who are healthy, say in our own defense? Surely those who are sick deserve to be accused. But we are not free from blame, because we have neglected them in their hour of illness; if we had shown great concern for them and they had the benefit of this care, they could not possibly still be sick. Let me get the start on you by saying this now, so that each of you may win over his brother. Even if you must impose restraint, even if you must use force, even if you must treat him ill and obstinately, do everything to save him from the devil's snare and to free him from fellowship with those who slew Christ. Tell me this. Suppose you were to see a man who had been justly condemned being led to execution through the marketplace. Suppose it were in your power to save him from the hands of the public executioner. Would you not do all you could to keep him from being dragged off? But now you see your own brother being dragged off unjustly to the depth of destruction. And it is not the executioner who drags him off, but the devil. Would you be so bold as not to do your part toward rescuing him from his transgression? If you don't help him, what excuse would you find? But your brother is stronger and more powerful than you. Show him to me. If he will stand fast in his obstinate resolve, I shall choose to risk my life rather than let him enter the doors of the synagogue. I shall say to him: What fellowship do you have with the free Jerusalem, with the Jerusalem above? You chose the one below; be a slave with that earthly Jerusalem which, according to the word of the Apostle, is a slave together with her children. Do you fast with the Jews? Then take off your shoes with the Jews, and walk barefoot in the marketplace, and share with them in their indecency and laughter. But you would not chose to do this because you are ashamed and apt to blush. Are you ashamed to share with them in outward appearance but unashamed to share in their impiety? What excuse will you have, you who are only half a Christian? Believe me, I shall risk my life before I would neglect any one who is sick with this disease- if I see him. If I fail to see him, surely God will grant me pardon. And let each one of you consider this matter; let him not think it is something of secondary importance. Do you take no notice of what the deacon continuously calls out in the mysteries? "Recognize one another", he says. Do you not see how he entrusts to you the careful examination of your brothers? Do this in the case of Judaizers, too. When you observe someone Judaizing, take hold of him, show him what he is doing, so that you may not yourself be an accessory to the risk he runs. If any Roman

soldier serving overseas is caught favoring the barbarians and the Persians, not only is he in danger but so also is everyone who was aware of how this felt and failed to make this fact known to the general. Since you are the army of Christ, be overly careful in searching to see if anyone favoring an alien faith has mingled among you, and make his presence known- not so that we may put him to death as those generals did, nor that we may punish him or take our vengeance upon him, but that we may free him from his error and ungodliness and make him entirely our own. If you are unwilling to do this, if you know of such a person but conceal him, be sure that both you and he will be subject to the same penalty. For Paul subjects to chastisement and punishment not only those who commit acts of wickedness but also those who approve what they have done. The prophet, too, brings to the same judgment not only thieves but also who run with the thieves. And this is quite reasonable. For if a man is aware of a criminal's actions but covers them up and conceals them, he is providing a stronger basis for the criminal to be careless of the law and making him less afraid in his career of crime.

S>M>

Q.: The Chinese teacher of Buddhism, Baijeng Huayhai, is said to have laid down three progressive stages of spiritual awakening:

1. Detachment from everything,
2. Absence of attachment even towards the state of detachment, and
3. Renunciation of even the subtlest vestiges of self-referential awareness or knowledge of having transcended all detachment.

B.: Why all this needless accoutrement? Perfect absence of attachment will do. The ego survives only by means of attaching itself to imaginary objects of its own conception. So, absence of attachment is absence of ego. Absence of ego is a sine qua non for Realisation.

Q.: What does Jesus mean when he says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."?

B.: He means what He says.

K.: The answer to your question, sir, is contained in this book; please listen attentively whilst I read out from you for it: [reads out as follows from the book 'Theologia Germanica; which setteth forth many fair Lineaments of divine Truth, and saith very lofty and lovely things touching a perfect Life; Edited by Dr. Peiffer from the only Complete Manuscript yet known; translated from the German by Susanna Winkworth; with a Preface by the Rev. Charles Kingsley, Rector of Eversley, and a Letter to the Translator by the Chevalier Bunsen, D.D., D.C.L., etc.':]

Many say they have no peace nor rest, but so many crosses and trials, afflictions and sorrows, that they know not how they shall ever get through

them. Now he who in truth will perceive and take note, perceiveth clearly, that true peace and rest lie not in outward things; for if it were so, the Evil Spirit also would have peace when things go according to his will which is nowise the case; for the prophet declareth, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." And therefore we must consider and see what is that peace which Christ left to His disciples at the last, when He said: "My peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." We may perceive that in these words Christ did not mean a bodily and outward peace; for His beloved disciples, with all His friends and followers, have ever suffered, from the beginning, great affliction, persecution, nay, often martyrdom, as Christ Himself said: "In this world ye shall have tribulation." But Christ meant that true, inward peace of the heart, which beginneth here, and endureth for ever hereafter. Therefore He said: "Not as the world giveth," for the world is false, and deceiveth in her gifts. She promiseth much, and performeth little. Moreover there liveth no man on earth who may always have rest and peace without troubles and crosses, with whom things always go according to his will; there is always something to be suffered here, turn which way you will. And as soon as you are quit of one assault, perhaps two come in its place. Wherefore yield thyself willingly to them, and seek only that true peace of the heart, which none can take away from thee, that thou mayest overcome all assaults. Thus then, Christ meant that inward peace which can break through all assaults and crosses of oppression, suffering, misery, humiliation and what more there may be of the like, so that a man may be joyful and patient therein, like the beloved disciples and followers of Christ. Now he who will in love give his whole diligence and might thereto, will verily come to know that true eternal peace which is God Himself, as far as it is possible to a creature; insomuch that what was bitter to him before, shall become sweet, and his heart shall remain unmoved under all changes, at all times, and after this life, he shall attain unto everlasting peace.

S>M>

Q.: Has the death of Jesus on the Cross automatically cleansed man of all sin?

B.: How can that be? The karma of each is a business left to be tackled by him and himself alone. Jesus gives you the opportunity to redeem yourself; he does not do the necessary redeeming for you or on your behalf.

K.: The answer to your question, sir, is contained in this book; please listen attentively whilst I read out from you for it- [reads out as follows from the book 'The Way to Christ, described in the following treatises: of True Repentance, Resignation, Regeneration, and of the Super-sensual Life; written in the year 1622 by Jacob Boehme of Goerlitz in Northern Germany':]

Christ alone indeed has merited Redemption for us; but not in such a Way as that for His own proper Merit's Sake, he will freely grant us his Childship by an outward Adoption only, and so receive us for Children, when we are none. No; he himself is the Merit; he is the open Gate that leads through Death; and through that Gate we must enter. He receives no Beast into his Merit, but those only that turn, and become as Children. Those Children that thus come to him are his Reward, which he has merited. For thus he said, Father, the Men were thine and you have given them to me (as my Reward) and I will give them eternal Life. But the Life of Christ will be given to none, unless they come to him in his Spirit, into his Humanity, Sufferings, and Merit, and therein be born true Children of the Merit. We must be born of his Merit, and put on the Merit of Christ in his Passion and Death; not outwardly with verbal Flattery only, and bare comforting of ourselves therewith, while we still remain Aliens and strange Children, of a strange Essence or Nature. No; the strange Essence inherits not the Childship, but the innate Essence inherits it. This innate Essence is not of this World, but in Heaven, of which St. Paul speaks saying, Our Conversation is in Heaven. The filial Essence walks in Heaven, and Heaven is in Man. But if Heaven in Man be not open, and the Man stand without Heaven flattering himself, and say, I am still without, but Christ will take me in through his Grace; is not his Merit mine? Such a one is in Vanity and Sin with the outward Man, and with the Soul in Hell, viz., in the Anger of God. Therefore learn to understand rightly what Christ has taught us, and done for us. He is our Heaven; he must get a Form in us, or else we shall not be in Heaven. Thus then the Soul's inward Man, with the holy Body of Christ, viz., in the New Birth, is in Heaven, and the outward mortal Man is in the World, of which Christ spake saying, My Sheep are in my Hand, and none shall pluck them away; the Father which gave them to me is greater than all. S>M>

Q.: Is the Japanese concept of satori the same as the Hindu concept of Moksha?

B.: No. Satori is spandabhrâjasamâdhi or aham-sphurana.

Q.: The Buddha has said that he has come into the world for the purpose of rescuing exclusively those with only a little dust in their eyes. Can the same thing be said in relation to Bhagawan also?

B.: Yes. The teaching is open to all, but those with excessive dust in their eyes will not find any use for it.

Q.: Has any Tamil saint spoken of aham-sphurana or spandabhrâjasamâdhi, apart from Bhagawan?

B.: Yes; Thayumanavar.

Q.: The purest strain of Islam is said to be that enunciated by al-Wahhab of al-Uyaynah. Why is this so?

B.: He correctly advocated that physical places should not become objects of veneration[shirk] for any reason whatsoever, because God alone deserves to be venerated[tawheedh].

Q.: Can Sufism be considered Islamic?

B.: There is no scope for any such concept as mysticism in that which is actually Islam. Islam means to surrender to God, not curiosity to know [more] about God.

Q.: Is the doctrine of the virgin birth correct? Was Jesus conceived miraculously on account of divine intervention, or was he inseminated just like the rest of us?

B.: How does it help you to know this?

Q.: I wish to believe that he was conceived miraculously.

B.: Then you may believe so.

Q.: But my faculty of reasoning and logic tells me that this is not possible.

B.: Do not aspire for both the porridge and the moustache. A doubter cannot be a believer. A believer does not doubt.

S>M>

Q.: St. Athanasius is said to have stated that Jesus was of the same essence as that of the Father and the Holy Ghost. But Jesus died on the Cross, whereas death is not possible for the other two.

B.: Only the body died, not Spirit.

Q.: Some say that Jesus entered into nirvikalpa-samadhi sometime after the point of commencement of crucifixion, and awakened therefrom three days afterwards.

B.: It is possible.

Q.: Saints like St. Isidora of Tabenna and St. Basil the Blessed Wonderworker of Moscow are said to have given up all worldly possessions and become 'fools for Christ'.

B.: If you want to Realise the Christ, the possessor himself must be given up. The possessor gone, who can be there to possess anything?

Q.: Did Sri Bhagawan really teach the missionary Mr. Sherwood Eddy Tamil on his visit to the ashram last month?

B.: There was no need to teach him anything; he spoke it well already! Whilst pronouncing one or two words here and there he stumbled and I corrected him; that is all. He also brought here a portable cinema-projector and showed us a one-reel cartoonic-film, 'Oswald Rabbit presents the Mechanical Man'. It was funny [laughs]. He did not come here last month, but last year, accompanied by a friend of his, Sri Morardesai, a Congress worker.

Q.: Is it the first time that Bhagawan watched a moving picture?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that Bhagawan Ramana is to be found not only in Tiruvannamalai, but is in fact everywhere. Is it true?

B.: Yes. Bhagawan Ramana is the Heart.

Q.: Whose Heart?

B.: The Heart alone exists; it cannot be yours or mine; yet He is your Heart and yours alone.

Q.: In the kruthayugam, Arunachala is said to have been made out of fire, in the trethayugam gems, in the dvaparayugam gold, and finally in the present age of kaliyugam stone. Why this change?

B.: It is in the scheme of things that it should be so; no purpose is served by looking for a reason.

Q.: Does God dwell within even wicked souls?

B.: Yes; He alone is the substratum for everything. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly."

Q.: Why then does the Spirit of God inside not prevent man from doing wicked things?

B.: If the earth were to be a paradise, would the desire for Realisation ever arise?

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between the ananda experienced in sushupti and that experienced in samadhi?

B.: There are not different kinds of ananda. Ananda is only one, and it is always the bliss of the Self; in samadhi such ananda is enjoyed consciously; whereas in sushupti the same ananda is experienced unconsciously.

Q.: How and for what reason did the jiva become separate from God?

B.: The one now raising the question of separation is the jiva. First find out why God does not raise the question of separation, and why the jiva does not raise such complaints in the state of deep sleep.

Q.: How can bhakti lead to Realisation? Does not bhakti intrinsically involve duality?

B.: To one who is a true bhakta the question would never arise.

Q.: I am not a bhakta.

B.: Then why do you bother about the question?

19th September 1936

Today Vinayagar-chathurti celebrations are observed at the ashram. When I entered in the morning, a small motley crowd consisting of yellow, white and

brown faces was standing near Sri Bhagawan's mother's samadhi. A large clay-idol of Vinayagar has been installed near the samadhi. As I moved closer I was somewhat astonished to see the master himself standing in the midst; he did not usually attend the pujai performed everyday at the spot of the sarcophagus. Not being interested in the ceremonies of ritualistic worship, I tried to move on towards the Hall as usual, and scurried forwards; but a hand caught hold of me on the right-hand side corpus humerus: it was Sri Bhagawan himself! I turned and stood facing him speechless; the exhilarating thrill of the divine touch of his sacred flesh can be known only by those who have experienced it for themselves. The master's flesh was soft and loose-almost unwilling to be stuck to the bone; it was tender and cool to the touch. 'Where are you going? Without you, how can we celebrate Vinayagar-chathurti?' he joked. The sarvadhikari, who was standing nearby, laughed and said: 'Bhagawan refused to allow pujai to be started without you having arrived.' So I was made to stand near the clay-idol. Everytime the priests finished one line of their incantation, I was asked to throw some flowers upon Vinayagar's idol. After sometime naivaedyam was offered to Vinayagar and prasadam distributed. A widow known as Yechammazl, who is apparently an old devotee of the master and has been coming to see him everyday since the time when B. used to stay in the Virupaksha-cave, has come well before day-break today with a young boy I took to be her grandson, bringing Kozhakattais for all to eat; but [incorrectly] assuming her to be of not-Aryan[one belonging to the panchamabandham] race, the priests silently kept her dilapidated tin vessel aside; her offering was not included in the naivaedyam. When prasadam was first given to the master, he sat like a stone, completely ignoring the priests who were attempting to hand it over to him. Soon the reason was discovered and naivaedyam was performed for a second time, now together with the food the lady had brought. This time the master accepted and ate what was placed in his hands; the first thing he put into his mouth was a Kozhakattai made by Yechammazl. The old woman's eyes glistened with tears of joy at the sight. B. smiled kindly at her. Later I heard that the boy with her was not her own grandchild, but an adopted one. Interestingly, this boy's name is Venkataraman, but everybody calls him Ramana! This boy and me distributed prasadam to everyone assembled. Chadwick seems to love Kozhakattais and asked me how they were made; I grinned at him and told him I had no idea. The young Ramana somehow understood these lines of conversation and made an extremely sagacious comment: 'To eat it is easier than to make it; let us therefore confine ourselves to the former.'. Everyone laughed. Mr. Knowles was greatly interested in the ezhaikkolam patterns drawn on the floor for the occasion. Bent over, he was



attempting to copy down the designs in his note-book. He received a tap on the shoulder, and turned to see the master standing behind him. 'Not like that...' he said, and squatting on the floor by the side of the astounded Caucasian, took the pencil and note-book from him; adroitly his hand traced the pattern correctly over the Caucasian's incompetent scribbling; and he handed them back saying, 'Like this... now let us see you try the next one.'. But Mr. Knowles could not get it right. So Bhagawan moved closer to him, caught hold of his hand, and guided the pencil effortlessly over the notebook. For sometime the blessed contact remained. Then the Maharshi laughed and went away. The crowd dispersed. But one person was not moving. Mr. Knowles had become paralysed with some strange, catatonic ecstasy. He was smiling in peculiar fashion, like an infant; his eyes, and nor, I am sure, his attention, were not focused on anything. The notebook and pencil lay abandoned on the floor. Every few moments or so, the man twitched with a small spasm evidently motivated by some inner compulsion. The Shylock tried to rouse him, but Chadwick restrained him, convincing him that the experience given by the master ought to run its course. Only some hours later did the Caucasian come into the Hall and prostrate himself before the master. One might easily deem him a garrulous man. But I did not ever observe him taking up for discussion in the Hall this experience afforded unto him.

S>M>

Q.: Can I please ask Maharshi what happens after death?

B.: Which is the latest story-book you read?

Q.: Why, the Count of Monte Cristo. But what that can have anything to do with anything, I don't quite fathom...

B.: What happened to the Marquis and Marquise de St. Miran?

Q.: They were poisoned- done to death by the scheming Madame Heloise de Villefort! Why? Oh! is some kind of similar fate awaiting me also? Oh! dear, I hope not!

B.: [laughing] No, no. Now- what happened to them after they died?

Q.: I suppose the question couldn't possibly arise, because they are just fictitious characters.

B.: Exactly.

Q.: But I am real.

B.: That which is raising the question of its death is not Real. That which is Real never dies and never raises any questions.

Q.: Then I don't exist at all?

B.: You exist as that which exists, not otherwise.

Q.: Meaning that I am not this body, and that I ought to endeavour to discover my true Self?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is it true that although the body dies, my Self will not be affected?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is my true Self of the nature of some kind of light?

B.: Find out who you are. That is the only way to know- to find out for yourself.

Q.: I ask myself 'Who am I?' but there is no answer forthcoming.

B.: You are yourself the answer.

Q.: But then who is asking the question?

B.: Find out.

S>M>

Whilst the master is absent from the Hall, the subject of discussion amongst the Caucasians in attendance therein at first revolves around art [-Rubens' 'The Fall of the Damned', Caravaggio's 'The Entombment of Christ' and El Greco's 'El Expolio' are discussed in some detail-] and thereafter turns into cinematograph-pictures. Mr. Knowles was asking people what their favourite picture was; his, he said, was C. M. Hepworth's 'The Man Who Stayed at Home'.

E.Z.: Raoul Walsh's 'Regeneration', I suppose...

Chadwick: [happily] Arbuckle's 'Fatty's Magic Pants'!

This response prompted an impromptu debate about whether the gentleman known as "Fatty Arbuckle" was culpable or not in respect of the various crimes perpetration of which he had stood accused by the mass-media.

C.: But he was acquitted- together with a statement of apology being tendered to him!

K.: Fatty got some skilled lawyers to plead for him and their defense tore the prosecution apart. I don't find that surprising; the cunning, obnoxiously obese animal could easily afford America's top lawyers- he was a big star before that scandal hit him, remember...? Filthy rich, I dare say, sir!

This seemed to upset Chadwick a bit, and he seemed to be on the verge of coming up with a retort when the master entered. All promptly subsided into immediate silence.

S>M>

Q.: In 'Ulysses' we find Mr. Joyce to have deployed the words, "And we stuffing food in one hole and out behind: food, chyle, blood, dung, earth, food: have to feed it like stoking an engine." I am frequently beginning to think on such lines now-a-days. We feed and clothe the body; we find for it a warm shelter to live under. In return, what is our gain? The body keeps getting new diseases and fills us with agony and misery by putting us in pain. This is a traitorous body which returns evil for good. I don't want it anymore. Is the

body a gift from God? Is it a sin to refuse to remain in acceptance of it anymore?

B.: It is not so easy to get rid of the body. Physical annihilation of the body might remove it from this earthly realm, but again your mind will find another body for you. The body was manufactured only by the mind. There is only 1 way to kill the body: that is to kill the mind. Mind dead, not only does the body die, but also the whole of the cosmos. Our effort must therefore be directed toward killing the mind, not the body. The body is not a gift from God inasmuch as God never asked you to take the form of the body- i.e., to imagine that you are one and identical with the body. You ask what is gained by holding on to the body. Who is it who says he is holding on to what he refers to as being his body? Discover the identity of that villain. Then you Realise that you never did have any body. The body has nothing to do with you. You are bodiless always. Realise It. How? The same Mr. Joyce mentioned by you also writes, "...remember, my dear boys, that we have been sent into this world for one thing and for one thing alone: to do God's holy will and to save our immortal souls. All else is worthless. One thing alone is needful, the salvation of one's soul. What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffer the loss of his immortal soul? Ah, my dear boys, believe me there is nothing in this wretched world that can make up for such a loss." If the soul is immortal how can it be lost? So, what is attempted to be communicated? The Immortal and Imperishable Soul is seemingly lost because of avarana. That is the meaning. To tear asunder this veil of iniquity is the one and only relevant goal of one's life.

Q.: And it can be accomplished by asking oneself, 'Who am I?'?

B.: People who come here say, I practise the investigation 'Who am I?' for an hour each day, or for a few hours each day. What can we say to them? It is not a practice that is to be pursued a few hours each day. It is a fundamental change or shift in the direction in which one's extroverted mind happens to incumbently be oriented. Relentlessly pursue the investigation day-in and day-out till the Self is Realised.

Q.: How can the investigation, which seeks to curb thought, be at all combined with activities that necessarily entail thinking?

B.: With persistent practise of the practice, activities- that you now think are being done by you- will automatically go on effortlessly. Your intervention will then be unnecessary- in fact, impedimentous. We are under the impression that we do things. What is the fact? It is the Higher Power that does everything. Is it the chiselled figures found at and forming part of the base of the Rajagopuram that bear the weight of the same? Is it not the earth that bears the entire load? Yet those sculpted figures have facial features that are

wildly contorted with the evident strain of carrying the huge structure. It is a clever, artistic sham. Likewise here. The ego never does anything, but simply appropriates to itself credit for the body's actions, which happen exclusively and spontaneously in accordance with Ishwara's pre-destined script for it. In other words, thoughts do not cause action to take place. Actions always go on only of their own accord: only we assign to them a spurious sense of personal doership or individual agency, and suffer thinking that free-will is real.

Q.: But actions follow thoughts. First I think and decide; then I act accordingly.

B.: That is just what is NOT true.

Q.: How so?

B.: The apparent causal-synchronicity between thought and action is a sham. That alone transpires which is destined to transpire. The preceding thought motivating the [body's] action is not the result of free-will. Why? Because there is no such thing as free-will. How then is there cohesion between thought, which occurs first, and action, which occurs in subsequent concatenation? It is because the extroverted mind is also subject to destiny, just as the body's actions are subject to destiny.

Q.: How cheerless to think that free-will is a myth...

B.: It cannot be denied that from the standpoint of the individual person free-will is indispensable. But where is the need to be an individual person when you can BE THAT?

S>M>

Spenser laments:

O! what avails it of immortall seed

To beene ybredd and never borne to dye?

Farre better I it deeme to die with speed

Then waste in woe and wayfull miserye:

Who dyes, the utmost dolor doth aby;

But who that lives is left to waile his losse:

So life is losse, and death felicity:

Sad life worse then glad death; and greater crosse

To see frends grave, then dead the grave selfe to engrosse.

What is the justification underlying the Hindu doctrine of karma, that decrees certain persons as being entitled to lead joyous lives whilst others must undergo miserable ones?

B.: One can only quote Chaucer:

Now sir, if men wolde axe me, why that god suffred men to do yow this

vileinye, certes, I can nat wel answere as for no sothfastnesse. For thapostle

seith, that the sciences and the luggementz of our lord god almighty been ful

depe; ther may no man comprehende ne serchen hem suffisantly. Nathelees,

by certeyne presumpcions and coniectinges, I holde and bileve that god, which that is ful of lustice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffred this bityde by luste cause resonable.

And Seint Gregorie seith: that whan a man considereth wel the nombre of hise defautes and of his sinnes, the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffreth semen the lesse unto hym; and inasmuche as him thinketh hise sinnes more hevy and grevous, insomuche semeth his peyne the lighter and the esier unto him.

Q.: I am a perennially miserable, unhappy, wretched person. I did not have a happy childhood. I am not of the socialising variety of creature; indeed, I feel nothing but disdain for constituents of humanity and their fleeting, momentary spans of existence: myself not excluded. I want to Realise my Absolute Existence. By once and for all merging myself into God I hope to put an end to any possible future births of mine. I want Realisation in this life, and I crave for it badly. I came here thinking that Maharshi's presence would help me in the accomplishment of this my objective. I have been here for more than 3 weeks. But I see no progress. Indeed, I seem to be growing worse, because sinister, long-forgotten desires are now re-kindling themselves from within the murky depths of my mind. I wonder why I am such a pathetic failure. In worldly life I never tasted any success. Now here also I am faced only with failure. What shall I do?

B.: There is only one thing to do: surrender to the Self and be at His mercy completely. Don't bother [or worry about] whether he grants you Realisation or not. Surrender absolutely and don't care what happens afterwards.

Q.: But will God or Self be pleased to accept my surrender? What if my surrender is rejected? What if I fail in this also, miserable wimp that I am?

B.: Throw yourself at His mercy once and for all: thereafter only automatic acceptance remains. Genuine surrender is always sans-recourse. Open up your mind completely to Him. Let Him accept or reject. Don't bother about it. Surrender is not surrender which solicits an undertaking that it shall not be rejected. Unconditional surrender means that you find God or Self to be your one and only refuge or succour. One who is secretly hiding a back-up plan up his sleeve never surrendered. Did not Spenser put it thus-

And doth not highest God vouchsafe to take

The love and service of the basest crew?

If she will not, dye meekly for her sake:

Dye rather, dye, then ever so faire love forsake!

S>M>

Q.: Franz Kafka's novelle Die Verwandlung tells the story of a man who awakens on his bed one fine morning to find that he has transformed into a

gigantic beetle. I fantasise: won't I similarly awaken one fine morning to find that I have transformed into a Jnani? Maharshi maintains that the cosmos is a dream. In a dream anything and everything is possible. So, why should I not extemporaneously awaken into Jnana? Why is effort needed to Realise the Self? Since we are now living inside a dream, why not let the dream spontaneously come to an end of its own accord and land us in the Real?

B.: Effort is made not to Realise the Self but only to shake off the apparent not-Self. Dream effort can only ever grant you dream Realisation; that is because fiction cannot reach Reality. So, the point of making effort from within the dream is not to Realise the Self at all, but only to eliminate the not-Self or dream. Dream can take place only when you are sleeping. You are now fast asleep. Wake!

Q.: I am unable to. You are awake. Please wake me up.

B.: Is the figure on the Sofa keeping Jnana locked away in a vault and sitting atop the key? Can Realisation be handed over on a platter? When the mind has acquired sufficient maturity, it is desecrated and annihilated by the Self automatically. So long as your mind is still alive, keep actively pursuing the investigation 'Who am I?'

S>M>

Q.: I am frustrated with samsara. I want get out.

B.: The only way OUT is IN.

S>M>

Q.: Why don't the world's omnipotent Mahatmas like yourself help the suffering masses?

B.: How do you know that I am not doing it?

S>M>

An excited rumour reaches the ashram that a cheetah has been spotted near Somavara-kulam. The town fears anxiously for its safety, it is said.

B.: It is unlikely. Nowadays people have hunted them to extinction. But when I first came here, they were there. At this same spot you mention, near Somavara-kulam, a mother cheetah came with her litter once, when I was stationed there for the night together with Palanisamy. He was terrified but I gestured him to remain motionless. Whilst the others were drinking water, 1 little kitten somehow got itself separated or disentangled from the brood and wandered over into my lap. Sometime later the mother came to me sniffing her way punctiliously, quietly picked up her young-one betwixt her jaws, and they all trooped away into the wildernesses swaddling the Hill...

Q.: Was B. then going on giri-pradakshinam with Palanisamy?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How fortunate would have been Palanisamy to have had the opportunity of serving B. all by himself for so many years!

B.: Those days there was no 'Ramana Maharshi' in Tiruvannamalai. Everything was quiet and peaceful... [chortles] We would close the gates to Virupaksha-cave and go for giri-pradakshinam in leisurely fashion. Often it would be a week or more before we returned. Sometimes Seshadri-swamigazl would spot us, join us, walk along with us for a mile or so, but after that in mysterious fashion imperceptibly melt away and disappear into the surroundings...

Q.: It is said that this Hill is hollow inside, and that there are siddha-purushas, devas and rishis staying inside. What is the scientific evidence supporting such claims? Is it not silly?

B.: It is no more silly than a man taking himself to be the destructible body, when he is in fact the imperishable Self.

S>M>

Q.: If summa-irutthal is the way for Realisation of God, why does Bhagawan ask people to carry out the investigation 'Who am I'?

B.: To Realise the Self, simply summa iru. That is all that is necessary. But insofar as and inasmuch as there is deviation or derailment from this nativistic or pristine state, get back to it by means of investigating 'Who am I?'. Vichara is a tool with which to get back to summa-irutthal when and whenever there is fall therefrom. To the extent there is distraction from self-attention, exclusively and precisely to that same extent vichara stands having become necessitated.

Q.: Is surrender the same as bhakti?

B.: Surrender is the apogeeal culmination or utmost climactic pitch of bhakti. It implies total attenuation, abnegation or effacement of the ego.

Q.: Then dualistic practices of worship- such as chanting God's name- are worthless?

B.: Did I say so? Such practices prepare the mind for introversion. Thus, they have their use.

Q.: Is surrender a loftier practice as compared to vichara?

B.: Yes. Absolute surrender is to crush the ego in a single stroke. But for those who find this impossible, unrelenting, intermittent attempts at partial surrender is suggested. In due course of time that will lead to complete surrender. Absolute surrender is another name for Realisation; whereas partial surrender or surrender as abhyasa means making attempt to surrender. Except in the case of paripakvis, repeated attempts to surrender are generally necessary before the ego can be finally toppled off completely- i.e., before complete surrender can be achieved.

Q.: Will vichara be effective even if performed away from Bhagawan's physical presence- say in Europe?

B.: [smiling] There is no such thing as physicality and it is impossible to be away from Bhagawan's presence.

The questioner's face lit up with joy.

S>M>

Q.: Some people have visions of Bhagawan. Is it within their own mind only?

B.: The figure you now see seated on the Sofa is also within your own mind only. Reality is not to be perceived. He is the Self of the perceiver.

Q.: Is it serendipity which brings people to Bhagawan's presence? Or are they drawn here as reward for sadhana they have performed in this and previous lives?

B.: There can be no reason for anything. Perfect Randomness is the nature of cosmic phenomena.

S>M>

Q.: Your body is not phosphorescent[tejomayam]. How can we accept that you are a Jnani?

B.: [no response]

The questioner went closer and loudly shouted out his question near the Sofa, after first commenting, 'Poor fellow; he must be hard of hearing...'

B.: Did I ever say that I am a Jnani? People have placed me on a pedestal, erected guard-rails around it to prevent me from escaping and imprisoned me like this; and now they are asking me what right I have got to sit here. If I go somewhere else, people will come there also and put up buildings all around me. What am I to do?

S>M>

A telegram has arrived in the ashram announcing the news of birth of the Sarvadhikari's 2nd grandson. There is immense jubilation in the ashram amongst those in the know. In the midst of it all, the master quietly turned to me and smilingly remarked, 'Shall we name him after you?'. Scandalised, I said at once, 'No, no... I am an deeply wretched soul...'

B.: In that case, you yourself suggest a name. But it must be a name of Pillayar...

G.: [relieved; saying the first thing that comes into my head] Let it be Ganesan...

The master smiled and said, 'Be it so.'. The sarvadhikari later told Bhagawan the party was making swift preparations to leave from their village, so as for the baby to be brought into the master's presence and christened in his hands.

S>M>



Q.: 'Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatvamanasuh parena nakam nihitam guhayam vibhrajate yadyatayo vishanti.' What is the thyagam being referred to here? Is it giving up the ego?

B.: Yes.

Q.: We offer samith into agni. What shall the ego be offered into?

B.: Jnana-agni.

Q.: We ignite agni with a match. How to light Jnana-agni?

B.: By means of acquiring vairagya.

Q.: How is that done?

B.: By reflecting upon the ephemeral nature of everything you see around you.

Q.: Agni is made to grow with a fan made out of the palmyra-palm leaf.

B.: Who am I? is the way to make Jnana-agni grow.

Q.: Cakes made out of cow-excreta is the fuel for agni to burn.

B.: [laughing] Can there be any doubt in it? You are the fuel! Now- burn!

S>M>

Q.: How to get rid of deha-vasana?

B.: Dehatma-buddhi is the cause for deha-vasana[The presence in the mind of the wrong idea 'I am the body.' is the reason why one harbours affection towards the body].

Q.: How to eliminate dehatma-buddhi then?

B.: Find out whose body it is.

S>M>

Q.: Which weltanschauung is ideal to Realise the Self?

B.: The complete absence of any weltanschauung. There must not remain anybody so that harbouring of any weltanschauung continues to be possible. Whose weltanschauung is it? Mine. If "I" do not remain, can any weltanschauung remain?

Q.: If there is no weltanschauung, conceptions of future and memories of past become inutile, pointless, irrelevant and meaningless.

B.: Exactly.

Q.: Then what role does decision-making play in life?

B.: Once the ego has fallen, it is the Higher-power that makes all the decisions. Even now that is how it is. But now we pretend to be the author of the body's actions.

Q.: What is the actual meaning of 'Realisation'?

B.: Consciousness freed from mind.

Q.: Why does the Jew not say God's name?

B.: Because God Himself does not say even "I". Where is the need for Him to say anything? He abides as "I" and that is the finality.

Q.: "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."  
What is the meaning?

B.: Realisation of God can be had only after mind has been annihilated. "I" cannot see God. If "I" stands obliterated, only Reality or God remains. 'Perishing as the ego is the way for awakening as the Self or seeing God.' is the purport of the verse.

Q.: Science has come to the conclusion that matter and energy are one and the same. Is the Self of the nature of energy?

B.: No. There is no movement in the Self. It simply IS.

S>M>

Q.: If everything is an illusion or dream, what about the dreamer? If the dream in its entirety proceeds from the dreamer only, how then can he himself be part of the dream?

B.: The dream or illusion is simply "I". There is no dream apart from the dreamer; and the dreamer is not apart from the dream. The dreamer himself is the dream. Dream and dreamer are all one and the same fictitious entity known as "I". Investigate what this "I" is and it disappears never to have existed. In his discovering that no such thing as "I" exists, the discoverer or "I" is himself devoured by the Absolute.

Q.: Please teach me how to investigate 'Who am I?'

B.: The investigation 'Who am I?' does not mean that there is something called "I" and that you are being asked to find the same. There is no "I". Realise It.

Q.: But how? I want to get Enlightened under your guidance. But I am not getting anything.

B.: Why this expectation to get something? It is not a question of getting, but one of losing. To remain without 'you' is Enlightenment. To permanently eradicate "I" is Jnana. Jnana is the Art of UNKNOWING; it is the involitionally and perpetually exercised skill or craft of eternally not knowing anything. Objective knowledge is really ignorance. To BE is wisdom. Him alone who has mastered the art of being is freed from bondage.

Q.: How shall I renounce the self so that the Self may be Realised?

B.: By remaining without thinking.

Q.: But it needs constant effort to go on suppressing thoughts all the time.

B.: There is no point in suppressing thought.

Q.: What shall I do then?

B.: Don't do anything. BE-ing and DO-ing are antonyms.

Q.: But you said not to think. That means I must make an effort not to think, make the attempt to remain without thoughts. But now you are telling me not to do anything.

B.: Make [every] effort to remain without [any] effort.

Q.: That sounds quixotic and paradoxical.

B.: Remaining without thinking does require effort in the beginning. But with constant practise of BE-ing, the state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly is reached. This state of mind is its nativistic, fundamental state. Talk of reaching it is only with reference to the present extroversion.

S>M>

Q.: Does total surrender imply that even the desire, aspiration or ambition to Realise the Self or unite with God must be given up?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Did Jesus really come back to life from the Dead?

B.: Is that your doubt? Will knowing the answer solve all your problems?

Q.: No.

E.Z.: Jesus was undoubtedly a Jnani who had a destiny to guide man's pilgrimage along the path leading into Light. Isn't that right, Bhagawan? The master smiled but did not affirm or negate the words.

S>M>

Q.: How can we say that the Jnani has transcended all karma? Prarabdha continues to affect him. For instance, Bhagawan's manner of walk betrays a slight limp. This debilitation has been brought about by karma; is this inference not right?

B.: It is only from the onlooker's point of view that the Jnani has any body at all.

Q.: If B. is unaware of his body, suppose he steps on an upturned needle, is there no sensation?

B.: The Jnani knows that verily all is of the Self and the Self only. If there is pain let there be; it is also an appearance in the Self. The Self is poornam. Supposing molten gold is cast into the shape of a person you don't like, can we say that there is something is wrong with gold? The Self IS; apparent [physical and mental] phenomena are merely appearances in it and of it.

S>M>

Q.: I read up about the school of philosophy taught by you. Ajata-advaita's proclamation that God does not exist I find revolting: and deeply unsettling.

B.: If 'you' exist, and so long as 'you' exist, God exists too. The personal God is unreal from the standpoint of the Jnani, because his self is just the Self. Those who have a [spatially and temporally localised sense of] self cannot deny the existence of a God with attributes.

Q.: So the only genuine atheist- the only one who knows what he is talking about when he says there is no God- is the Jnani!

B.: [smiling] Yes.

Q.: Is renunciation necessary for Realisation of the Self?

B.: Yes. Renounce the renouncer.

S>M>

Q.: Early morning is a good time to practise the investigation 'Who am I?', since the mind will be fresh and crisp in the mornings. Isn't that right?

B.: It has to be taken up each and every time the mind departs from the Self-ask yourself 'Who am I?' whenever the mind is found to have strayed away from the Heart.

Q.: I understand surrendering completely responsibility for one's life to the Higher Power is means to Realisation.

B.: To say 'I surrender.' and then demand 'Well, as you can see, I have surrendered myself; now, where is my Enlightenment?' defeats the point of endeavouring to surrender. Nadharma nishthoesmi nacha atmavedi nabhaktimansthvat charanaravinde akinchanoenanyagati sharanyam tvat padamoolam sharanamprapadye. So, complete self-effacement is the point of surrender. Surrender means more than the psychological inclination of cupio dissolvi. It means disappearance of one's volition or faculty of individual will. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." So, one must totally lose all sense of being a person; all mental notions must go; only then is the underlying Absolute-consciousness revealed.

Q.: What is the proof that this Absolute-consciousness exists at all?

B.: That which solicits proof is unreal. Proof of Reality cannot be given to illusion. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." What does it mean? Avarana covers up Reality from the point of view of the individual, who is himself precisely that avarana. Discard the self and the Self shines. It is that simple, really.

S>M>

Q.: If everything is an illusion, is it morally acceptable to commit sin?

B.: No. "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

Q.: So B. believes in divine retribution?

B.: God's will is not the reason for karma. God does not and cannot will anything. He is a volitionless and motiveless being with no other or second to ask Him anything or communicate with Him. It is we who manufacture and store away karma. Karma is purely a mental phenomenon; it has nothing to do with God. When the ego dies, karma dies along with it.

Q.: So, conceptions of good and evil are pertinent to the ego only; the Self has nothing to do with them. Since God is our true Self, is God then ignorant of what is good and what is evil?

B.: Yes. Otherwise He, too, would be in bondage. Do you expect God to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and become like us? [laughing] You want God to give you Emancipation; at the same time you want Him to enter into samsara? Knowledge of good and evil arises from the seed known as "I". The seed in turn gives birth to the tree, which produces more fruits with seeds concealed inside them. The forbidden fruit is nothing but one's personality or individuality, with its likes and dislikes, tastes and preferences, ideas and conceptualisations, and so on. At its core is the poisonous seed known as "I".

Q.: Who is the serpent?!

B.: [soberly] That is the great mystery.

S>M>

Mr. Knowles asked the master, 'Yesterday I heard from Mr. Cohen about Bhagawan's theory of yugapat-srishti- i.e., creation out of nothing. But I am not convinced. Please do permit me to explain why this happens to be the case; here is what we find in this book...' Then he proceeded to read out as follows from the book, "The Guide for the perplexed, by Moses Maimonides; translated from the original Arabic-text by M. Friedlaender, Ph.D, George Routledge & sons Ltd.":

**The objections raised to a creatio ex nihilo by its opponents are founded partly on the properties of Nature, and partly on those of the Primal Cause. They infer from the properties of Nature the following arguments: (1) The first moving force is eternal; for if it had a beginning, another motion must have produced it, and then it would not be the First moving force. (2) If the formless matter be not eternal, it must have been produced out of another substance ; it would then have a certain form by which it might be distinguished from the primary substance, and then it would not be formless. (3) The circular motion of the spheres does not involve the necessity of termination ; and anything that is without an end, must be without a beginning. (4) Anything brought to existence existed previously in potentia; something must therefore have pre-existed of which potential existence could be predicated. Some support for the theory of the eternity of the heavens has been derived from the general belief in the eternity of the heavens. To this effect, the properties of the Primal Cause furnished the following arguments: if it were assumed that the Universe was created from nothing, it would imply that the First Cause had changed from the condition of a potential Creator to that of an actual Creator, or that His will had undergone a change, or that He must be imperfect, because He produced a perishable work, or that He had been inactive during a certain period. All these**

**contingencies would be contrary to a true conception of the First Cause...**

B.: Yugapat-srishti is for those who cannot, or do not wish to, understand Ajata-advaita.

S>M>

Q.: It says in the Bible, "...what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God..." Should I be scared of God?

B.: [smiling] LYREH AT YHWH, it is written. Surely He needs no definite-article to be placed before Him in a monotheistic land. So, why usage of [what prima facie purports to be just] an oblique case-ending prior to God's-name? The text means, 'Surrender unto He-who-IS.'- i.e., 'Surrender to the Self.'. Rather than merely indicate that the concatenately-following noun is the object, the idea is to actively suggest that you surrender UNTO the Higher Power, the Self. Not fear Him, but submit to Him. Even the semitic alphabets involved [in the word] have the same suggestion to make: the staff, the closed-fist, man, the bull, and raised arms. The staff held by the clenched fist represents man's worldly power to prosper materialistically; but it is in the apogeeal zenith [the roof or Higher Power in supplication to which the hands are zealously raised] that genuine power [the bull] lies; this zenith is the Realm of Spirit and in order so as to attain to It surrender to It without reserve; indicating that to surrender is to totally let go the hands are opened to the heavens. Likewise is the case with YHWH: clenched fist, raised arms, pole, raised arms. The clenched fist is the mind which is collected together or introverted, just as the fingers of a closed-fist have been brought together. This is vichara. The raised arms represent letting go of one's individuality or surrendering unconditionally. This is sharanagati. The pole is forked at the top; the mind which was hitherto dualistically diversified as the cosmos stands collected at one point through simultaneous deployment of the twin-approaches of investigation and surrender, and now singly descends from the brain and moves downwards towards the Heart through the channel of the amruthanadi. The raised arms again: Emancipation. So, the inference? Through vichara and sharanagati, one may Realise the Self.

Q.: My God! "Both read the Bible day and night; but where thou readest black I read white." said William Blake. Now I am beginning to get an inkling of what he must have meant... But these are just your fanciful ideas; they seem to be inventions, not interpretations.

B.: Even the world you imagine yourself to be living in is also just your own invention.

Q.: Maharshi sees the same world as we all do. Yet he denies its existence. For instance- don't you see the Sofa you happen to be presently seated on? I

find it baffling: maddening.

B.: The only way to yourself find out the truth about this state is to yourself Realise It.

Q.: But that needs a lifetime of dedicated, committed effort. I am not capable of putting up such patience.

B.: [smiles] Don't decide that already!

S>M>

Q.: How to predict the future? I am not asking for selfish reasons. If we knew what was going to happen in the future, we could plan for unexpected natural disasters, and, and...

B.: First find out whether anything is happening in the present.

S>M>

Q.: Can one practise vichara and sharanagati concurrently?

B.: Certainly.

Q.: If one surrenders without reserve, where is the volition left for practising vichara?

B.: Surrender in the sense of abhyasa refers to one's attempt to surrender. Rare are the souls who surrender once and are done. Many people need to endeavour repeatedly and persistently at attempting to surrender completely before complete surrender can be achieved. The important thing is to go on trying. Don't sit down to mope, 'Why am I not getting Enlightenment?'. Instead deploy your time, all the time, productively towards abhyasa, whether the path taken up is vichara or sharanagati or, ideally, both.

Q.: If what is destined to happen will happen, where is the point in making effort?

B.: Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

S>M>

Q.: Is mind or the ego located within the anandamaya-kosha?

B.: All concepts, conceptualisations, or conceptions, such as for instance those pertaining to koshas, are located in one's mind only.

Q.: Despite sitting at your feet for weeks together I am not obtaining any peace of mind. What fault have I committed?

B.: The expectation to acquire peace of mind is the obstacle obstructing peace of mind. There is nothing to be got from without. Remain as you ARE.

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: Absence of thoughts is called peace of mind. Peace of mind cannot be imported from outside. Still the mind and there is peace without beginning or end.

Q.: Thoughts come uninvited and unsolicited. What am I to do? Asking to whom the thought has arisen everytime a thought crosses the mind is not

practicably feasible, because every minute more than a hundred thoughts furiously rush into my brain, causing me immense mental perturbation. What shall I do?

B.: Do not fight with thought or mind. Rather, gently return the mind to its nativistic thought-free state everytime and whenever you observe the mind to have strayed away from its source. This cannot be accomplished overnight. The mind is like a bull which is habituated to perennially grazing on pastures belonging to neighbours. If the bull is made to realise there is plenty of luscious green grass inside his own stable, the temptation now felt by him routinely to meander away therefrom will slowly and eventually subside. Beating the bull may bring him under control for the time-being, but in fact makes him all the more obdurate, recalcitrant and contumacious. So, gently turn the mind into the Heart. The state of mind wherein thought has died once and for all may take decades to accomplish, but is still well-worth the effort. Why? Because freedom from thought is the only way to win peace.

Q.: Will B. please give me hasta-diksha?

B.: The bird sits on his eggs, the fish look at them, and turtle thinks of them.

Q.: What am I to make of these ainigmatic words?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: What is karma-margam?

B.: Acting without harbouring the feeling of being the doer.

Q.: If I am not the doer of any work, then who will take responsibility if and when the work goes wrong?

B.: Do what is right at any given moment and leave it behind [you]. Certainly things may go wrong in one's life. Instead of trying to vivisect the past and fix responsibility or blame, learn to live in the eternal present- in what is forever [that which is] the here and now.

S>M>

Q.: Rumi has written these relishable words:

**Once that noble Ibrahim, as he sat on his throne,  
Heard a clamour and noise of cries on the roof,  
Also heavy footsteps on the roof of his palace.  
He said to himself, "Whose heavy feet are those?"  
He shouted from his window, "Who goes there?"  
'Tis no man's step; surely 'tis a fairy."  
His guards, filled with confusion, bowed their heads,  
Saying, "It is we who are going the rounds in search."  
He said, "What seek ye?" They said "Our camels"  
He said, "Who ever searched for camels on a housetop?"  
They said, "We follow thy example,  
Who seekest union with God while sitting on a throne."**



**This was all, and no man ever saw him again,  
Just as fairies are invisible to men.**

**His substance was hid from men, though he was with them,  
For what can men see save the outward aspect and dress?**

The urge to renounce the world and live in the forest like B. used to do before settling down here has grown strong in me. I am vexed with this selfish, evil world. I want to escape from it.

B.: It will not work.

Q.: Why not?

B.: Because world-perception is exclusively mental. As soon as you arrive there, you will find that fresh troubles, worse ones, have been awaiting to torment you in the forest; and then you will not know what to do. The mind is the one and only cause for the world to be perceived. Kill the mind first. Thereafter if the question still arises or the need is still felt of going away somewhere, we can talk about the same and try to find a solution. The idea of there being places where one can go to is only in the mind. Where can you go? You can only remain where you are now and always- the Heart. Realise It.

S>M>

Q.: In the book 'Lemuria: the Lost Continent of the Pacific' the author seems to make the claim that after the destruction of the Lemurian-continent [ குமரிக் கண்டம் ], its inhabitants moved to a mysterious mountain situated in California; they are supposedly still living there in a city carefully buried underneath that hill, so as to avoid detection by mankind. Similar to Arunachala, this mountain also seems to have certain strange properties, such as inducing in those who think about or visit it elevated or transcendental states of consciousness. I remember Maharshi has mentioned that according to legend, siddha-purushas are living in entire universes carefully hidden away inside the Arunachala-hill. So, I find that there are striking similarities between this hill in California and Arunachala. What does Maharshi say? Are there other Arunachalas on the earth? But how can there be, since Maharshi has alluded to Arunachala as 'oppuyarvilloi'?

B.: There are such shakti-peatams on the planet where stillness of mind can effortlessly be attained. How can this be denied?

Q.: But amongst these shakti-peatams Arunachala is undoubtedly the greatest- yes?

B. smiled widely but made no reply.

S>M>

Q.: Is earnest vichara able to transcend the jiva's prarabdha?

B.: Yes. Vichara is the only method heuristically facilitating you to discover the truth that you are not one bound by destiny.

Q.: But I suppose we must put up with the body's destiny- its various illnesses, age-related debilitation, and so on.

B.: When you once know that you are not the body but the Self, why bother what happens to the body? Let the body act as may suit it. You remain as you ARE, blissfully quiescent in the Self.

S>M>

Q.: Wordsworth has written:

"Imagination is that sacred power,  
Imagination lofty and refined;  
'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower  
Of Faith, and round the Sufferer's temples bind  
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,  
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind."

Can we not use good thoughts to get rid of insalubrious and lugubrious ones?

B.: When you can have effortless bliss, why do you go in for bliss that all the time needs or demands volition and effort to sustain it?

S>M>

Q.: Writes Herbert:

**Almightie Judge, how shall poore wretches brook  
Thy dreadfull look,  
Able a heart of iron to appall,  
When thou shalt call  
For ev'ry man's peculiar book?  
What others mean to do, I know not well;  
Yet I heare tell,  
That some will turn thee to some leaves therein  
So void of sinne,  
That they in merit shall excell.  
But I resolve, when thou shalt call for mine,  
That to decline,  
And thrust a Testament into thy hand:  
Let that be scann'd.  
There thou shalt finde my faults are thine.**

Why does God, who is omniscient, permit man to perpetrate sin? Does God not know that man must face retribution for all his sinful actions, whether such retribution may afflict him in this world or in a subsequent one?

B.: That is why you are given free-will: do what is both necessary and right but avoid everything else.

Q.: But Maharshi is a fatalist. Why is he suddenly talking about free-will?

B.: So long as [one's] ego is alive, so is [one's faculty of] free-will.

S>M>

Q.: I feel God is prejudicially partial towards me because He never reminds me to remember Him all the time, so that I shall not have any more births. What do I do?

B. remained silent, but Sri Muruganar spoke thus:

M.: God is not partial towards anybody. If you are not thinking about God, could that ever be God's fault? He will enter your mind only if you exit it.

Appar has sung thus-

இறந்தார்க்கு மென்றும் இறவா தார்க்கும்  
இமையவர்க்கும் ஏகமாய் நின்று சென்று  
பிறந்தார்க்கு மென்றும் பிறவா தார்க்கும்  
பெரியான்றன் பெருமையே பேச நின்று  
மறந்தார் மனத்தென்றும் மருவார் போலும்  
மறைக்காட் டுறையும் மழுவாட் செல்வர்  
புறந்தாழ் சடைதாழ்ப் பூதஞ் சூழ்ப்  
புலியூர்ச்சிற றம்பலமே புக்கார் தாமே .

S>M>

Q.: Why has B. assigned no monastic-name for himself after the traditional fashion? Arunagiriswarananda would be an excellent name...

B.: [smiling] Bestow on 'this' whatever name you like. Who is going to raise any demurral?

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between poorna-prajna and swabhava-samstithi?

B.: The former is paroksha-jnanam whereas the latter aparoksha-jnanam.

Q.: What is the difference between paroksha-jnanam and aparoksha-jnanam?

B.: The former is a chitta-vritti; the latter is the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani.

Q.: What is Realisation or Jnana?

B.: Consciousness freed from mind.

Q.: What is Arunachala?

B.: Arunachala is That-which-IS; That-which-IS, is Arunachala and nothing else.

Q.: What is 'mind'?

B.: There is no such thing.

Q.: What is the Self?

B.: That alone which IS.

S>M>

Q.: The nihilism in your teachings disturbs me. Are all my precious, loved ones, my family-members, just shadows flitting across the faculty of my own mental imagination?

B.: Live in fiction if that is what you want. Did I say it is wrong to do so?

S>M>

Q.: In the shloka 'Hrudhayaguharamadhye... etc.' authored by B., 3 paths are mentioned by aid of which to Realise the Self. Can B. please explain them to me?

B.: Investigate what "I" is; or, dive into the Heart- i.e., surrender yourself without reserve.

Q.: Is pranayama of no use then? And what about retention of air within the lungs, suppressing both inhalation and exhalation?

B.: Kevala-kumbhaka is not a method for annihilation of "I"; the verse merely makes the observation that whilst plunged in even savikalpa-samadhi, breathing may remain suspended of its own accord, because the reflected light of shudda-sattva proceeding or emanating from pure consciousness of the Self is hazily revealed even whilst the volition and effort to attain to and remain in the state of thoughtlessness are still yet present.

Q.: So, holding the breath cannot make me Realise the Self; is that right?

B.: Pranayama can hold the mind in temporary abeyance but cannot kill it. There are only 2 ways to kill the mind: vichara and sharanagati.

Q.: What about bhakti?

B.: Its apogee culmination is in ananya-sharanagati.

S>M>

Q.: In sleep there is no "I", no world, and no problem. On waking both a world and its perceiver come into apparent existence at one and the same time. What is the inference?

B.: [smiling] You tell me.

Q.: It is the mind which manufactures the world. Mind annihilated, no world remains to be seen and therefore all our problems are solved in a single stroke. Am I right?

B.: Yes, that is it.

Q.: Is there any actual organ corresponding to the spiritual Heart on the right-hand side of the chest? Or is the location of the Heart only metaphorically indicated to be there?

B.: The hrudhayapundarikam is as real as your body.

Q.: But according to Maharshi the body itself, together with the world perceived by it, is only a projection of one's mind.

B.: Exactly. So, when mind is lost and dissolved in Parabrahman, the body is also lost; therefore for the Emancipated-soul the question of the Heart's location does not arise at all. Thus, until you reach this state we have to admit the existence of such an organ [on the right-hand side of the chest].

S>M>

Q.: When B. mentioned loss of the body just now, he was referring to vidhehamukti. Is that right?

B.: No. The Jnani loses his body when he loses his mind.

Q.: But we are able to see B.'s body!

B.: Not so Bhagawan.

Q.: So, Bhagawan's body is invisible to himself?

B.: Yes. There is no world available for the Jnani to see.

Q.: Come, now, Bhagawan! Can you not see your body resting on this Sofa?  
[tapping the Sofa with fingers as though ascertaining it were not made of smoke]

B.: The Jnani sees only the Self in everything he sees, and verily Himself is that Self; therefore he never can possibly see anything that is apart from Himself. So, there is no Sofa, no body and no cosmos: there is only the Self. The goldsmith whilst collecting old ornaments for the purpose of melting them down does not see the design after which the ornaments have been fashioned, but only gold.

Q.: Will adopting this same attitude whilst seeing the world help to Realise the Self? Can I tell myself, 'Whatever I am seeing is not apart from myself.'? Is that of any use?

B.: No.

Q.: Why not?

B.: Giving up imagination or samsara is Realisation. Since you are unable to imagine a state wherein there is no imagination, when asked to remain without imagination what you do is to give up one piece of imagination and in its stead introduce another. When you are the Self, why do you want to imagine yourself to be the Self? The thing to do is to abide as the Self, not think 'I am the Self.'. Who thinks that he is the Self? Thought is altogether alien to the Self. So, that which thinks 'I am the Self.' is not the Self at all, but a doppelgänger or imposter who is pretending to be the Self. This pretender is the ego. Exterminate him through vichara and the Self stands Revealed. That which says 'I am the Self.' can never be the Self. That which is the true Self does not even say "I".

S>M>

Q.: How does submergence of mind in the Heart prevent metempsychosis at the time of death?

B.: The important thing is to get rid of all of one's pre-existing, antediluvian predilections and predispositions[samskaras and vasanas]. In deep sleep and comatose states, there is no awareness of the external world, but neither is there conscious awareness of the Self. The reflected light of the Self falls on one's vasanas and produces the phenomenon of reflection we call 'mind'. Each person finds himself in a different world depending upon his vasanas; it is exclusively the individual's vasanas which produce in front of or before him

the world he imagines himself to be living in; apart from one's vasanas there is no such thing as 'world'. Even before one lights fireworks, the various colours it will explode in whilst rocketing up the sky are already pre-determined in the form of the chemical-combinations packed inside. Likewise the world experienced by one in one's life is already printed like exposed film deep within the mind. This is why free-will is regarded as being mythical by the wise. The Jnana-sadhaka crushes his vasanas by refusing to pay them any attention; his lakshya is on pure consciousness exclusively; his mind is restrained from attending to anything else. What is the result? The individual's vasanas get destroyed and so the reflection cannot possibly continue: the light of the Self does not fall on anything- it is unable to find anything to fall upon or strike. So, the Self remains without reflection. This is Emancipation. Metempsychosis is made possible only when consciousness still has contents. If the contents are fully expunged or wiped off, rebirth is rendered impossible. This is the way to Mukthi: wipe the slate of your mind clean; make it a tabula rasa. A slate with the words tabula rasa written upon it is not a genuine tabula rasa. So, instead of thinking about how to Realise the Self, BE It.

Q.: I feel peace in B.'s presence. How to get the same peace in Vellore?

B.: B. is within. Can there be any B. outside you?

Q.: May I repeat my question?

B.: There is nothing. BE.

S>M>

Q.: It is said whatever a person thinks at the time of death, that he verily becomes.

B.: So, since there are no thoughts left in the Jnani, he never becomes anything, but remains as the Self he always was. That is the way to escape rebirth: Jnana. Apichaedhasi papaebhyaha sarvaebhyaha papakritthamaha sarvam jnanaplavaenaiva vrujinam santharishyasi; yathaidhamsi samiddhoegnirbhasmasath kuruthaerjuna jnanagni sarvakarmani bhasmasathkuruthe thata.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that in days gone-by, an ancient ruler of Sicily introduced and implemented a method of capital punishment known as the 'musical bull' for the purpose of tackling incurable criminals. Is it because such harsh forms of punishments have disappeared nowadays that crime is on the rise everywhere? [smirking] Or does Maharshi believe in reforming wicked people through showering love upon them? General Dyer, who caused the 1919 Amritsar-massacre, is known to have remarked, "...I am of opinion that if they had got a bit more firing given them it would have done them a world of good,

and their attitude would be much more amenable and respectful, as force is the only thing that an Asiatic has any respect for." Does B. agree with this remark?

B.: [does not make any response]

S>M>

Q.: How to remain free from doubt?

B.: By doubting the doubter. Investigate and see whether the doubter exists.

Q.: Is passively watching the breath of any use? Or is kevala-kumbhaka necessary?

B.: These methods are for novitiates on the path. The method of obtaining Jnana is nothing but the investigation, 'Who am I?'

Q.: Is it the mind's intrinsic nature to wander or stay still?

B.: Whatever we practise becomes the svabhava of the mind. If you let the mind wander, perambulating becomes the mind's nature. If you retain the mind in the Heart- i.e., keep it still, quiescence becomes the mind's nature. Everything is upto you only. It is you who decide what your mind's intrinsic nature ought to be.

S>M>

Q.: Is diksha or upadesha required prior to commencement of vichara for the 1st time?

B.: Commencement of vichara is itself the diksha or upadesha you crave for.

Q.: Why is it said that "I" is the door to Emancipation?

B.: Because the aham-vritti is the 1st mental mode in a man. It is only after the rise of the "I"-thought that other thoughts can possibly arise. If this first thought is destroyed the entire tree of illusion stands uprooted forever. That is why you are asked to investigate, 'Who am I?'. 'Who am I?' does not mean "I" exists and has got to be found out. See if there is anything called "I". "I" is fiction; there is no such thing. But do not understand this to be so. Realise It.

Q.: Which is easier, vichara or sharanagati?

B.: They are the same. However, absolute surrender does not come easily. Among these be it one approach or the other, what is needed is constant practice. Only with incessant practice can the obnubilating curtain of thought veiling the Self be sundered once and for all.

S>M>

A small boy wanted to sing Totakashtakam before the master and assent was accorded. After the performance was complete, somebody asked-

Q.: 'Sukruthaedhikruthae bahudha bhavathoe bhavitha samadharshana lalasatha...' The emphasis here seems to be on performance of sathkarma.

B.: Various people are characterised by diverse heights of spiritual maturity. The man on the Clapham omnibus wants to know what 'he' can 'do'. If told he

does not exist at all but is fictitious, such an idea may not appeal to him favourably; usually people want something they can do something with. To those who are yet to see the stark, arrant futility of doing something inside a cosmos that never existed, we have to suggest practices that will enable them to develop their noble side; this eventually leads to chitta-shuddi and so the mind at long last finds the strength to tear itself away from sensory perceptivities and turn inward so that one might plunge it into the Heart. So, while vichara is the direct and easy method for Emancipation, we have to admit that for some it will seem difficult and will not present favourable appeal.

Q.: How can someone judge for himself if he has the necessary competency to take up vichara-marga?

B.: There must either be intense longing or thirst to awaken to one's true Self or immense revulsion or abhorrence towards samsara; these 2 are sides of the same coin. But of its own accord continuous practice of vichara itself brings about these necessary qualities in an earnest aspirant. So, there is no need to bother with the question; anybody can endeavour to practise vichara. S>M>

Q.: How do maya and Sakshat-parabrahman manage to co-exist? Does it not violate Advaita?

B.: They cannot co-exist. Nobody can know them together. The Emancipated Jnani is aware of Reality but not fiction or maya; he is utterly ignorant of anything apart from himself as the Self. The man on the Clapham omnibus is ignorant of the Heart and lives in the brain imagining himself to be an individual person. So, one way or the other, one form of ignorance is for certain entirely inevitable and unavoidable. The Self Himself knows not any illusion; can the sun know darkness? The ocean is not aware of the froth floating about on its surface; likewise the Self is not aware of His egos.

Q.: They say that the path of vichara involves enormous mental agony because of the need to relinquish all of one's vishayavasanas and poorvasamskaras.

B.: Pain involved in eliminating vasanas cannot be avoided. How is a pearl formed? Something enters past its clam-shell and somehow pierces the soft flesh of the oyster, and unable to bear the pain of it, the animal secretes layer after layer of nacre over the intruder. What is pain to the animal humans relish as a priceless item of decoration. If the animal could choose to live with the pain of something constantly irritating the under-side of its belly, we would not know that there ever could be such a thing known as 'pearl', and Ramana Maharshi would not be saying these words to you now. What is the moral of the story? The other side of beauty is pain. Jnana is the supreme beauty among beauties, for there is none to rival Her. To reach Jnana, any amount of



pain is worthwhile; so, don't harbour or give scope for the feeling that pain is something to be shirked. Be convinced of this firmly in your heart. Even if the way to Realisation were to be paved with pain and pain only, unhesitatingly set out on the path, because the pain is imaginary but Jnana or Reality is Real. What is expended is fictitious but what is earned is Real. Therefore, there is no harm in experiencing pain in order so as to Realise the Self. You are not asked to mortify yourself. But whether pleasure comes or pain, accept it without question- i.e., don't feel mental perturbation or exultation. If you are able to inhere in the Self as a matter of course, events taking place or circumstances prevailing in the external world will never affect you.

S>M>

A strange kind of fruit, huge in size, with its outside completely covered in thick thorns, has arrived at the ashram. About half-a-dozen of these have been sent by Mr. Kukosia Kakoosia Aruppukutty from the Straits. The sarvadhikari thought they were jackfruits until he sliced open one and observed the strange smell. 'Perhaps they have gone rotten on the way...' he observed plaintively. But the bright, yellowish flesh of the fruit displayed no sign of decay. Everybody stood around the flummoxed sarvadhikari curiously looking at the fruit, concluding that it was some exotic cate hitherto not encountered by them; but nobody knew what these were until the master entered the Hall, took one look, and said, laughing, 'Oh! he has sent முள்நாறிப்பழம்...!'. The master, Chadwick, myself and certain others at the ashram relished devouring the pungent flesh of the fruit; whereas others find its odour repugnant. The Shylock, I observed to my profound amusement, almost fainted in horror when the fruit's odour wafted into his nostrils; nauseated with detestation, he rushed out of the Hall and sat under a tree until everybody finished eating the fruit; but even thereafter the smell, which a few apparently found disagreeable, lingered in the air; the master called for sambarani to be fetched from the store-room and threw some powder into the brazier burning by his side. Then he told the attendant, 'Tell the man sitting outside he may now come in...!'.  
S>M>

S>M>

Q.: Is the spiritual-heart on the right-hand side of the chest same as the anahata-chakra?

B.: No.

Q.: Is it Parabrahman Itself then?

B.: No. It is merely a locus where reflection of chidhabhasa takes place; it is only in this reflected light that the ego and the world are seen.

Q.: Parabrahman is said to be covered up with 3 coatings of maya: sunyata-shakti, avarana-shakti, and vikshaepa-shakti.

B.: There must be somebody to be aware of illusion. Who is he? Is Parabrahman complaining 'Alas! I am covered up with many different coatings of illusion...', etc.? Awareness of illusion is itself the one and only illusion [afflicting the jiva]. One who is afflicted with illusion is himself the one and only illusion that bothers him. Mere absence of thought is not Realisation. One's will or faculty of individual volition, which is the same as "I", must completely disappear. Otherwise there will be rebirth. Jnana is possible only if you have the same desperation that a man set on fire would have in trying to find water, or a man whose head is pressed underneath the surface of the ocean would have in trying to rise to the surface. Half-baked, casual attempts cannot possibly succeed in their own right- but in turn they eventually impel you to go on to make more serious, sincere effort.

Q.: Is effort made in this life carried onward into future lives?

B.: Have the industriousness to finish off everything in this very birth. This birth has been given to you for the exclusive and express purpose of ensuring that there will be no more births. But look at the question you are asking. It betrays a lackadaisical, pococurante attitude towards the question of further birth; this sort of attitude is poison on the spiritual path. The really earnest sadhaka lives in terror of future births. Even the present birth is a nightmare to him. Why? Because knowing that he is the blissful, formless Self, he cannot tolerate being locked down into a body. So, instead of raising such questions, try to unequivocally ensure that there will be no more births for you.

Q.: But it is not in my hands.

B.: Then surrender everything to the Higher Power and keep quiet. Either way the question of a subsequent birth ought to not arise.

S>M>

Q.: It seems Sri B. told Sri Subbaramayyagaru that he has 20 bodies in 20 different lokas. Please show me the other 19 bodies. I am extremely eager to see them.

B.: When you visit the other 19 lokas you will be able to see the other 19 bodies.

S>M>

Q.: It is observed that holding one's breath brings about the state of thoughtlessness, which state is said to lead to Brahmajnana. Why then should holding the breath not be regarded as a means to Realisation of the Self?

B.: As soon as breathing is resumed, thoughts rush back out. Pranayama and kevala-kumbhaka lead to suspension of thought, not destruction of thought. Even if you manage to remain without breathing for 1000 years, after that you will still have to release yourself from the state of manolayam caused on account of withholding of the current of breathing, and return to your usual

mental activity. Manolayam is a kind of sleep[thamovyasana]. You may be able to sleep for any length of time you wish, but will that take you any closer to Mukthi?

S>M>

Q.: What is the significance of the pranavamanthiram OM? I meditate on the sound of the syllable OM. Sometimes I chant it orally also and relish hearing the soothing sound of the mantra in my own voice. Will it suffice for gaining Aathmasakshatkaram?

B.: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." OM is said to be the primordial sound out of which the cosmos emerged according to those who are Vedic-scholars. But appearance of the cosmos is only an intellectual manifestation; otherwise you should be able to see the world in sushupti also. Since our vision is outward-bent, something is conjured up by our sensory perceptivities to fulfill the cravings of our samskara-ridden mind, to which the name 'cosmos' is given. Really OM is the Self. The Self is the true "I". So, OM and "I" refer in fact to one and the same Paramporul- i.e., the Self. Repeating OM is not to be done mechanically. See where the sound of the mantra is coming from. If chanted orally, the mouth, lips and tongue are the source. If chanted mentally, the mind is the source. Tracing back the source of the mind which is transformed into OM by virtue of constant practise, we arrive at the Self: what was once the method in due course becomes itself the goal.

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between "I" and "I-I"? Among these 2 which one is real?

B.: The Jnani's "I" and "Eye" are both simply just the Self, because his mind is dead. But in the case of the man whose mind moves amongst sensory perceptivities, "I" means the aham-vritti, the principal and primeval mental modification. "I-I" refers only to vritti-jnana and not Swarupa-jnana. Before the mind stands annihilated by the Self, but only after the mind has been reduced into simple consciousness of being to which volition and effort are altogether alien, there is a sensation of the mind being consumed by the Heart. This is known as aham-sphoorthi or "I-I". "I-I" is a rarefied, attenuated vritti of the mind[akhandakara-vritti]. Yet still it is only a vritti. In Jnana there are no vrittis left at all. "I-I" is a precursor to the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani. Neither the vritti "I" nor the sphoorthi "I-I" is Real. There is only one Real thing; and that is exclusively the Self. The vritti "I" is a discontinuous experience and it operates on the level of the intellect; the experience of "I-I" is continuous and it transcends the intellect; "I-I" refers to unperturbed continuity of beingness. That is the difference between them. But neither is Real. In Reality there

cannot be anybody to experience anything, nor can there be any experiences, nor is there scope for experiencing anything. Reality simply IS. That is why it is known as ghaana or poorna. Reality is anandaghaana, not anandamaya.

S>M>

Q.: If the mind is to be retained in the Heart all the time, how will day-to-day work go about? Can anybody function normally in the world without mind?

B.: Try it and see. You may become surprised to discover that even all along only that same current [of prarabdha-karma] which sustains life in the body has been doing the actions you have been believing yourself to be doing. We do not do anything. All actions are Ishwara's. Do not try to decide on anything by means of abstract intellectual hypothesization, but try it and see. The current takes care of everything whilst we lie blissfully quiescent in the Heart. Again, do not understand these words with the mind and endeavour to intellectually analyse them for meaning, but try what is suggested: you remain permanently submerged in the Heart; let the current suo moto animate your body according to the body's prarabdha, with no interference whatsoever from you. This way actions grow more and more spontaneous and automatic, and finally you are left in perfect peace because you have ceased long ago to identify yourself with the body or its actions. You are not being asked to act in spontaneous and automatic fashion. Don't do anything with the mind. Let it remain sunk deep in the Heart. This being the situation, actions by themselves go on in spontaneous and automatic fashion. The body will be working but there would be no worker. Thus is peace found even in the midst of unceasing activity. Try it and see; that is the only way you will be able to ascertain the truth of what is being said to you.

S>M>

Q.: How to train the mind to look inward?

B.: Constant vigilance or attentiveness is needed; as and when the mind tries to stray away from the Heart, push it back inside and establish it again in the Heart. 'Who am I?' is the proper aid for doing this.

Q.: Should I give up my job and family and come and settle at your feet? That way, I will stand a better chance of Realising the Self in this life-time.

B.: It will not work.

Q.: And why is that?

B.: There is no problem apart from the perceiver thereof. The perceiver of the problem is himself his one and only problem. Your problems do not lie outside you. You have only one problem, and that is yourself [as the ego]. Do not permit the ego to dictate your life. You say your existing life has problems. Do you imagine life at this place is going to be problem-free, conflict-free? It is the mind that gives rise to all sorts of problems. An imaginary solution cannot put

an end to an imaginary problem. The only way to make your imaginary problem, the ego, go away is to surrender yourself to the Real Self. Then questions like 'Shall I remain here? Or shall I go away there?' cannot arise anymore. Having surrendered, the only thing to do is to passively spectate or watch with perfect detachment or disinterest as the body's prarabdha exhausts itself out. Questions of all sorts are bothering you because you are unable to find the strength to surrender. One who surrenders unreservedly gives up all his problems in a single stroke. Nothing can perturb him thereafter. Complete surrender is another name for Jnana or Emancipation.

Q.: But if I come away permanently to this ashram and stay in B.'s presence all the time I will be able to speedily make progress with regard to the Quest.

B.: Such things are not in our control. The only thing we can do is not do anything- i.e., surrender absolutely to the Self. Where the body ought to be is the body's prarabdha. You have no say in it. Do not get yourself entangled up in where the body is or what it happens to be doing. Do not entertain ideas about where the body ought to be or what it ought to be doing. Let the body act as may suit it. Why do you care? Are you the body? The body's conduct cannot possibly be controlled by us. The body's conduct is left to the body's prarabdha. You don't confuse yourself with its present or proposed activities. You remain or BE as you ARE.

S>M>

Q.: Can the Self be discovered by means of intellectual deduction or logical adducement?

B.: No. Submit yourself to the Self and the Self Shines forth. One need not and cannot possibly make sense of Ajata-advaita logically. How to prove the existence of Reality to that which is illusory? Can it be done? Never. The derivatory entity cannot hope to apprehend the parent entity. Harboring such hope will not lead to any meaningful consequence.

S>M>

Q.: What is the use of worshipping the Meru-chakra? The Self is everywhere. Why does this geometric-pattern supposedly hold enormous spiritual significance?

B.: If you think like that, it means that path is not for you. Find out the source of "I" and stay there once and for all.

Q.: Those who waste their time in worshipping a God outside themselves when in fact He is the Self within- they are deluded souls. Am I right?

B.: You are also doing the same thing.

Q.: Nonsense! I don't visit temples at all.

B.: Why do you feed and clothe your body? Are you it? Is this not idol-worship?

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between Arunachala the formless Self and Arunachala the Hill?

B.: There is none.

Q.: How can that be correct? The Self is everywhere. The Hill is found in Tiruvannamalai only.

B.: The Hill is the Keystone of Emancipation. The example for this given in the sacred-books is that of an elephant who is dreaming. In its dream the elephant sees a lion. The lion roars. The elephant trembles with fear. The lion roars again and now the elephant drops dead out of fright. Then he wakes up, realises he had been dreaming, and feeling amused goes his way.

Q.: But the Jnani's body remains alive after Realising the Self.

B.: Not from his point of view. He sees only the Self in the body.

S>M>

Q.: What is to be done if even sincere and protracted attempts and efforts to Realise the Self have failed?

B.: It is enough that, totally abandoning all individuality, we consciously abandon ourselves into the embrace of the Heart. The rest is not in our hands.

S>M>

Q.: I have a fearful feeling that I may become lonely and alone if I Realise the Self.

B.: Some people want to retain their moustaches and yet drink porridge everyday. What is to be done?

E.Z.: The Self of course is alone but where is the scope for Him to feel lonely? Nobody took any notice of his supercilious remark.

S>M>

Q.: Will fasting help in the Quest?

B.: Yes- mental fasting. Starve mind, not body.

S>M>

Q.: I have heard that when somebody urinated on Bhagawan out of contempt, he remained calm and motionless and there was no trace of anger in him; likewise when somebody spat on him. If we take the case of Guhai-namacchivayar, they say that the following story about him is true- "Once upon a time a small shepherd boy was playing outside the cave wherein Guhai-namacchivayar had taken up residence. Suddenly one of the goats belonging to his flock died. The boy started crying loudly, fearing that the elders at home would upbraid him severely. Namacchivayar came outside and asked the boy what the matter was, whereupon the boy appraised him of the situation. The saint felt sorry for the boy and being a Jnani endowed with all

sorts of preternatural abilities brought back the animal to life. The boy was overjoyed and returned home happily with his flock. Being but an innocent child, the little boy told his friends about it. The older ones amongst them decided to poke some fun at the sage, since they assumed he must have convinced the boy of such impossible occurrence having transpired by means of hypnotising his gullible, young mind. They averred amongst themselves, 'Let us see how he manages to hypnotise us!'. They asked a boy to act as if he were dead and weeping and wailing walked up to the Jnani's cave of dwelling. They stood before him and mockingly pleaded with him to bring back their 'dead' friend to life. Guhai-namacchivayar became greatly enraged because being omniscient he saw through their petty deceit at once. He remained silent but the boys continued to taunt him further. Unable to bear the stinging barbs of abuse poured into his ears by the boys, the Jnani flew into a tremendous fit of rage. He splashed some water from his kamandalu on the boy pretending to be dead and vanished from the spot. Thereafter the boys tried to wake up their friend who had played dead for them. But he would never wake again: he was dead. The next day all people in Tiruvannamalai came there to ask that the boy be restored to life. The Jnani ignored them. They became angry with him and tied up his hands and feet; then they beat him black and blue with an iron-rod. Now the aged Guhai-namacchivayar was angrier than he had been in his entire life. He cursed Arunachala, pronouncing that this Hill and the town at its base ought to be destroyed without trace. Now it was the Lord's turn to be angry. Shiva came there seated on the back of his bull and said, 'It was I that took pity on you and awakened you into Jnana. Now you have raised your hand to strike against my own Jyothirswaroopam. Therefore I am now cursing you to the effect that you become an ajnani again.'. The Jnani fell at Shiva's feet and begged to be spared of the curse. Shiva's heart melted and he took pity on the floundering soul clutching at his feet. Shiva forgave Guhai-namacchivayar and both of them withdrew their respective curses. Thereafter Guhai-namacchivayar moved to another, more remote part of the Hill to avoid confrontations with the people of the town. But the place where Guhai-namacchivayar and Shiva pronounced their curses could not bear to tolerate the harsh words spoken by the 2 divine-beings who were standing on it when they said them. So the rock upon which they were located when they had screamed out their respective curses in profligate anger splintered into 2. The cracked-rock can be seen uptill this day. " My question is, why are some Jnanis calm and serene whilst others seem angry and enraged? Since the Jnani has no mind, how does it remain possible for him to get angry?

B.: The Jnani's state is known only to the Jnani. As far as he is concerned he is not doing anything; that is all he knows. Since we imagine we are one with the body, we attempt to posit upon him also the idea that he is one with the body. But the Jnani is not deluded. He knows that he is the Self. The external qualities you have mentioned arise on account of prarabdha. Yes, he may seem to be angry, but his mind is not moving at all.

Q.: So the Jnani is affected by prarabdha just like the man on the Clapham omnibus?

B.: No. But his body is. That body is never seen by him. Others see it from the outside and raise questions about it; he himself does not know it; neither does he know those others; he is awake to the Self and asleep to everything else. Yayaeshasuptaeshujagarti kamam kamam etc..

Q.: So Jnana is simply embracing subjective consciousness and abandoning absolutely everything else?

B.: Yes, that is it. Even the volition or effort to remain without thinking must not be there. Nobody can demand Jnana as a matter of right. It comes always as a gift of and from Grace. Even if you have been doing tapas since the time of birth of the incumbent Brahma, you have no right to win it. The only way to win Him is to lose yourself to [and in] Him.

S>M>

Q.: 'Hinduism exists only in the eyes of those who are not Hindus.' What is the meaning?

P>S> I have included the question because it gives the inquisitive intellect mental-fodder to chew upon. B. did not answer this question. Others in the Hall came forward and expounded unto the questioner their own answers, and none have been included here because of considerations appurtenant to space.

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between sattvic happiness and other varieties of happiness?

B.: Other happinesses are sleep-like. In sattvic happiness there is total awareness, alertness and stillness at the same time. Some people feel a powerful wave of sleepy-happiness whilst meditating and think that they have Realised the Self. Can it be right?

Q.: There are many deluded persons roaming around imagining themselves to be Jnanis, often fooling not merely themselves but others also successfully with their glib talk. How shall we expose them as being charlatans?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: How does bhakti lead to Jnana?



B.: Bhakti must be so intense that it becomes pitchi. One must burn or melt away in Love for the Lord. Only then does the ego stand obliterated. Half-hearted attempts cannot accomplish anything. Simply put, Enlightenment is not interested in the part-time mumukshu. Remain in the life of the world if that is your destiny. But keep your mind absorbed in the Real.

Q.: How to tell whether I am destined to remain in the world or retire in solitude to some lonely forest uninhabited by humans?

B.: Are you comfortable with the idea of going and living in a forest, all alone?

Q.: No; the idea altogether terrifies me. When B. was plunged in samadhi inside the temple, insects and rodents carried away portions of his legs but he did not care. If that were to happen to me, I would- on the spot- just die, I think...

B.: Stay at home.

Q.: But how can a gruhastha attain Realisation of the Self? The sacred-books say those who want to Realise must leave home so that nirvanamanaskara may become the habitual state of mind. Isn't that right?

B.: Did nirvanamanaskara come and tell you, 'I can be found in regions of uninhabited forests only.'? The sacred-books only say that nirvanamanaskara or amanaska is attained by destroying or abandoning the habit of channelising chittam towards the direction of sensory-perception: Paramatmadrishya tatpratyayalakshyanidrishtva tadhanu

sarveshamaprameyamajamshivamparamakasham niralambamadvayam

brahmavishnurudradinamekalakshyam sarvakaranam

parambrahmatmanyeva pashyamaano guhaviharanameva nishchayena

jnatvabhavabhavadhidvandvatitaha

samviditamanonmanyanyubhavastadanantara

makhilaendriyakshayavashadamanaska sukhabrahmanandasamudre

manahpravahayogarupanivatasthitadipavadachalam parambrahma prapnoti

tatah shushkavrikshavanmurcchanidramaya

nishshvasocchvasabhavannashtadvandvah sadhasanchalagatraha

paramashanthim svikrithya manah pracharashoonyam paramatmani

linambhavati payasravanantaram dhenustanakshiramiva sarvaendhriyavarge

parinashte manonasham bhavati tadhevamanaskam.

Q.: Will eyesight and hearing, as also the other senses, gradually cease to function, then, as one makes progress along the vichara-marga?

B.: The normal biological functions of the body do not become dilapidated on account of the mind being turned inward. Chittam intrinsically remains as it IS. It is we who channelise it towards the direction of sensory-perception, and suffer unnecessarily. Once extroversion ceases altogether, the prana in the body keeps the senses functioning for as long as that body's prarabdha

demands; so, presence of prana in the body does not unequivocally imply or indicate any presence of mind underlying that prana. The light of chittam is directed away from the intellect- which is the fraudulent entity responsible for attributing spuriously authorship for sensory-perception to a fictitious entity called "I"- and driven back into its source, the Heart: this is the point of abhyasa. The guideline to direct mental attention away from sensory-perception does mean that you should close your eyes, cover your ears, etc.; it is the mind that counts; go straight to the source of the mischief and tackle it there. "I" is the reason for all your misery. Find out what this "I" and all your problems are solved. You can prevent the outer senses from functioning using pieces of cloth and cotton to enshroud the eyes and ears, but will that solve your problem? No. The one enemy is the mind, and it must be made to submit to the Higher Power one way or the other so that its apparent separate existence is put to an end. Gradually shift attention away from perceived to perceiver; this is what is meant by destruction of tendency of channelisation of chittam towards the direction of sensory-perception: not tearing out one's eye-balls or gouging out one's ear-drums. Always the same question: 'If I isolate or seclude myself from humanity and go away to some remote location and so place myself in solitude, will I not stand a better chance at Realising the Self? Is that not what you did?'. What can we say to them? Is it the Self which discerns the difference 'This is a place where humans are going and coming about; that, on the other hand, is an deserted place.' and so on? Is He not always quiet even if a war is raging on in the empirical world? Is it not the mind which invents other-ness? In truth are there any others to be aware of? How then could they become a nuisance to you? If you find anybody to be a nuisance, it means you have become a veritable nuisance unto yourself. So, investigate 'Who am I?' and get rid of yourself so that the nuisance stands eradicated. What else can we say?

Q.: But during meditation a silent atmosphere is conducive and preferable: it is observed by us so to be. We feel we make more progress if the room is silent whilst one is meditating.

B.: Such notions of progress are totally false. In fact, it is the triumphal war-cry of the ego. The ego is a cunning demon who wants to be in total control of the situation all the time. When his desires are effectuated, he ever-so slightly steps aside and permits more light to flow from the Self. This is received by you as "I" experiencing happiness. This is what you call progress. Do you see now how you are being deluded? The entire ocean belongs to you; you are the sole rightful inheritor of this blissful Kingdom of Heaven known as Parabrahman. But have you successfully realised this invaluable precious bequeathance? No. What is happening? A scandalous fraud is taking place.

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." But something seems to stand in the way of one's Immortal Hereditament being acceded to by one in its unlimited entirety. Somebody called "I" is giving you a few drops from the nectarous boundaryless ocean of Aathman now and then and you feel grateful to him for such considerate act on his part. What is the truth? Is this "I" your friend? He is keeping back your priceless Eternal Treasure from you, and giving you tidbits every now and then to keep you satisfied and complacent. Is it not an outrage? Slay this unholy foe known as "I" here and now! Arise and take your Kingdom back: Realise the deathless Self! Can you afford to permit the ego to say, 'This place is comfortable for meditation; that one is far too distracting.'? Remain as That-which-IS no matter what the place, situation or circumstance might happen to be. Never let the ego take control. Whenever one thing seems attractive and another repulsive, know that it is the handiwork of the ego.

Q.: Bhagawan exhorts everybody to ask 'Who am I?'. Who is he?

B.: I am You. Before going to sleep from within the previous dream, you left a watchman behind to wake you up if you happened to go on dreaming for far too long. Ramana Maharshi is that watchman. He now enters your dream and says loudly, 'Wake up!'. Will you not pay attention?

Q.: [emotionally] Yes.

S>M>

Q.: How can we say that nirvanamanaskara and amanaska are the same?

B.: Because 'mind' means only extroverted mind. The totally introverted mind cannot be given the name 'mind'. In the state of complete introversion 'mind' is known as chidhabhasa. When extroverted, chidhabhasa becomes mind. When not extroverted, it remains merely as itself. In that state of zero-modification it[chidhabhasa] cannot remain intact for long and is soon annihilated by the Self. That is how Emancipation takes place.

S>M>

Q.: Somebody told me God is like an innocent pre-pubescent child playing with all the various universes like it were all a gigantic ant-farm, not knowing what He is doing. His actions maim some ants and delight some others, but he does not know. He is entirely innocent of motive. So His actions are always Random. Does Maharshi agree with this illustration? Is it appropriate?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is it not unfair?

B.: Unto whom is it unfair? Do you complain of this unfairness or anything else in sushupti?

S>M>

Q.: What if 'Who am I?' kills my mind but God does not grant me Realisation, fearing that I might usurp His place?

B.: This kind of calculative mentality is not going to get you anywhere. Only total guilelessness can lead you onto Realisation. There is no palliation or extenuation available in all the 14 worlds to compensate for absence of innocence. "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." The "I" which wants Realisation must die. That is the only way to obtain Realisation. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

S>M>

Q.: 'Maya is necessary for Self-realization.' Does Maharshi agree?

B.: It is a self-evident, tautological thing to say. If there is no illusion, what is it that searches for itself? The Self does not do any searching. To the Emancipated-being, there is neither maya nor Realisation.

S>M>

Q.: How real are visions of God seen by people whose temperament is devotionally inclined?

B.: As real as their own reality.

Q.: So the only genuine God is the Self?

B.: Yes. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

S>M>

Q.: How to control the mind?

B.: Realise the Self and see for yourself whether there is any mind [remaining] to be controlled.

Q.: Whilst practising vichara, I am carried away by various obstacles and impediments which keep distracting me. Apart from trouble caused on account of thought, there are also external disturbances- such as noises- which perturb me. Somebody talks, or someone arrives to greet me, or some other interference presents itself, just whilst I happen to be carrying on meditation. I feel frustrated and irritated. What am I to do?

B.: Those obstacles are part of this mind-generated delusion known as 'world'. They cannot be avoided because they are not in our control. The only thing we can possibly bring under our control is the mind. The events of one's outer life are determined by prarabdha, which is absolutely unchangeable. There is no use in intractably, obdurately endeavouring to change what cannot be changed in the slightest. Why try to irrigate a desert? Instead, try to work with a field wherein there is available fertility. As they say[in English], 'Of what avail aiming kicks against the pricks?'. Prarabdha is totally unyielding. The only

thing you can do is to sink the mind in its source so that prarabdha no longer has any power to affect you, so that prarabdha has no influence over you anymore.

Q.: But prarabdha's sway over the body is inalienable.

B.: Be it so. You don't identify yourself with the body or its sufferings. What then can prarabdha do to you? Prarabdha is helpless to taint the totally introverted mind.

S>M>

Q.: If the Self is only my own self, why is there need to put in so much effort to Realise the same?

B.: The Self does not belong to the ego. The ego is already the Self's. There is no meaning in the ego saying, 'I am the Self.'. The ego is only a miniscule pattern or image formed out of reflected light of chittam originating from the Self.

Q.: But sometimes you say that the ego does not exist at all.

B.: What is your experience? Are you not furiously thinking all the time?

Q.: True.

B.: The Self does not think any thoughts; neither does He sleep. It is certainly true that the ego does not exist, but that is [true exclusively from] the standpoint of the Self. On the empirical plane the ego's reality is as just true as the world it sees around itself. Remaining in the clutches of the ego, it is meaningless or deny or assert the existence of the ego. Transcend the ego and the question of its existence or non-existence does not and cannot arise. It is true that you are the Self here and now. But the same must be Realised. Repeating like a parrot the thought "I am the Self." or imagining oneself to be the Self or pretending to be the Self will eventually bring only misery. You may visualise yourself to be the Self or conceive yourself as being the Self; but that will not fetch you genuine happiness: nor peace. The present state of mind, wherein thoughts hold the field, is not acceptable because it is not conducive to peace; for this reason the obvious necessity stands that the Self must be Realised.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that the Buddha's last words were as follows: "Therefore, be ye a lamp unto yourself, be a refuge to yourself; look not for a refuge in anybody besides yourself; those who shall be a lamp unto themselves shall betake themselves to no external refuge, but holding fast to Truth as their lamp, and holding fast to Truth as their refuge, they shall reach the topmost height." Can I, without needing to depend upon outside help, Realise the Self by virtue of my own efforts?

B.: Grace is needed. Grace comes from within, not from without. There is no such thing as without. Everything is within the Self only.

Q.: How to acquire Grace?

B.: By means of introverting the mind and merging the same in its source. Practically, vichara is the way.

S>M>

Q.: 'Only death can secure Immortality.' Is that right? When the ego dies, is there pain involved? Is death of the ego a painful experience?

B.: The only way to know is to yourself die and see. Thereafter you will not be having any doubts.

S>M>

Q.: [pleadingly] Please give me hasta-deetchai. I am prepared to do anything for you in return.

B.: Nobody gave me hasta-deetchai; so how can I [be qualified to] give the same to anybody?

S>M>

Q.: I don't think going into details will be necessary; to put it in a few words, my life is in a complete mess. I don't know what to do about it. I have decided to surrender everything to you. Please bless me and take hold charge of my life.

B.: If you go on grasping, how can Bhagawan take hold? Let go and Bhagawan shall take hold. All you need to do is to TOTALLY LET GO.

S>M>

Q.: Vidhyapati sings thus- [reads out from the work, 'Bangeeya Padhabali-translated into English by Ananda Coomaraswamy']

**Thirsting for fragrance I flew to the flower  
But never I came the near,  
I saw not a drop of the ocean of honey,  
And now the people mock me.**

My situation has become analogous to these words. I came here hoping to gain Realisation of the Self. But nothing is happening. Many people report that blissful experiences have occurred to them in Bhagawan's presence. For me there is no such luck. Time is rushing past us at a furious pace even as we speak. I am desperate to Realise in this life-time. What does Bhagawan advise me to do?

B.: Give up the idea that you are responsible for your own Emancipation and surrender yourself to the Self without reserve. This is the only way [for Realisation to be gained].

S>M>

Q.: What are the stages in practice of vichara?

B.: Find the source of thought; having found the same, stay there once and for all. This is all that need be done.

Q.: How does one remain focused upon Consciousness, which, according to the sacred-books, is the only Reality, while dealing with illusion in the life of the world?

B.: By giving up the wrong idea that you are the doer of actions performed by the body. Ask yourself, 'Who works?'. Remain as That-which-IS. Then the work will not bind you; it will go on automatically. It is like an actor on stage. He plays the role given to him exceedingly well. But he is not deluded; he knows that in real life he is not that person [the person whose appearance he has taken on for the purpose of entertaining the show's audience] but somebody else. Likewise, remain as pure consciousness to which volition and effort are wholly alien; let the events of the outer world pass you by without affecting you; take part in them- without imagining yourself to be the doer or confounding yourself to be the author of the deeds the body carries out- to the extent necessary; but do not think it is real.

S>M>

Q.: How shall I become a devotee of Sri Bhagawan?

B.: By remaining permanently submerged in the Heart.

Q.: How to dive into the Heart?

B.: By giving up thought once and for all.

S>M>

Q.: Is the world a dream- or is it an hallucination?

B.: What is the difference between the 2 words?

Q.: It is thus: 'dream' is ultimately unreal; 'hallucination' is immediately or at once unreal.

B.: According to your nomenclature, you may call the world a hallucination.

Q.: But why am I hallucinating?

B.: This question can be asked if the hallucination is something apart from you. But what is the truth? Is there any hallucination apart from the experiencer thereof? To the extent you are under influence of the erroneous impression that you are a person or individual, you are yourself the hallucination that you are asking about; so, remain without yourself and the hallucination is at an end. Reality is simply absence or loss of ego or mind.

S>M>

Q.: In Vasudevamananam, there is distinguishment made between asattavavarana and abhanavarana. I am not able to understand this distinction clearly. Please explain the same to me.

B.: It is a question of the extent upto which the mind is amenable to accepting that it is dreaming. The dream being experienced is generated only by the

mind. The same mind will not easily bring itself around to accepting the truth that it is dreaming. When there is obstinacy in clinging fast to objective knowledge together with inability or unwillingness or both to accept the fact that the cosmos is a mind-generated delusion, one suffers from asattavavarana. There are others who have completed their intellectual understanding of Ajata-advaita. In their case, they accept the teaching of Ajata-advaita to be true, but practically are unable to Realise the Self on account of manosthoulyam[impurities lying latent in the mind]. They are said to be suffering from abhanavarana. But all these are intellectual classifications only. In truth, there is no ignorance: seek the one who is ignorant and ignorance is never found, but only Reality. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." What does it mean? To the sincere seeker Grace is never denied. If perhaps there is one vice that stands out as being altogether unpardonable in the eyes of God, it is hypocrisy; even the traitor may be pardoned, because his object lies in harming another; but the hypocrite harms himself by deliberate design.

Q.: How can we coax such wicked persons to mend their ways and lead noble lives?

B.: Reform yourself first and thereafter- once your reformation stands culminated- we can talk about reforming the world, if the need is still felt.

Q.: These days youngsters are discarding their sacred threads. They marry whomsoever they want without consulting horoscopes. They have abandoned observing caste-demarkations in-

B.: Alright, alright. Enough.

S>M>

Q.: Tagore has said: "Death is not extinguishing the light; it is putting out the lamp because dawn has come."

B.: Yes. Seeing objects or anything known as 'world' is only our ignorance. In truth there are no things of the sort. Only Reality exists.

Q.: But the same is veiled by avidya-maya.

B.: Who says that there is veiling? Is Reality complaining, 'Alas! I am enshrouded by veiling!'?

S>M>

Q.: It is said that if we rub iluppa-yennai on the head, sit under the sun and after 45 minutes wash it off with shiyakkai-podi every morning, meditating on the Self will be found to be easier.

B.: According to his poorvasamskaras, each one has his own pet theory, which he extolls as the best. So, what can we say to such things? As for



meditating on the Self, one may go on making the attempt but nothing is going to come out of it unless and until one sees that "I" is something which needs to be not pampered but obliterated.

S>M>

Q.: Please tell me what B.'s opinion is on the practice of thrataka-payircchi[staring fixedly at a candle-flame in a windless and otherwise dark room].

B.: They say that it helps kundalini-shakti to arouse itself from the muladhara-chakra and travel upwards along the sushumna-nadi. But the method to attain Emancipation is the investigation 'Who am I?'

Q.: Shall I then give up occupying myself with thrataka-payircchi? What do I do?

B.: You may do whatever you like. In deep sleep people do not talk about sushumna-nadi, kundalini-shakti, etc.; in deep sleep people are happily content to remain as the Self. But now they want this, that and everything else. It does not occur to them to wonder, 'I am the same "I" that slept who now believes himself to be awake. That being so, why did not these desires plague me in the state of deep sleep?'. The same one who slept happily is now unhappy because he apparently discovers himself to be an individual or person spectating or witnessing a world he thinks is apart from himself. In sleep this bifurcation betwixt perceiving subject and perceived object is wholly absent; thus happiness is complete. Something rises up from the blissful state of sleep and says "I". This "I" attaches itself to a body, understands itself to be perceiving a world outside itself, and forms relationships with 'others' seen by it. This "I" is a spurious "I"; it is not real. Diversity is its nature; it falsely creates diversity where in fact there is none at all. Getting rid of "I" is Jnana. By incessantly investigating 'Who am I?' "I" is toppled down and Reality Shines. This is wisdom, not playing with kundalini-shakti, etc.; you say I-AM: find out who IS. Other practices are useful if you want to dream that you have Realised the Self.

S>M>

Q.: There are said to be various rare herbs growing on this Hill that can cure disease, bestow immortality, and confer many other benefits besides. B. knows where they are growing, I am sure of it. Why does he not share the information with others so that all of humankind may stand to benefit?

B.: The Hill itself cures the disease known as samsara and so bestows Immortality.

Q.: I was asking from a pragmatistical perspective.

B.: It is precisely on the lines of such perspective that answer was given unto you.

S>M>

Q.: It seems Bhagawan has said, 'To be lost is to be saved.'. Please tell me what the meaning is.

B.: Get rid of the idea that you are an individual person; when this idea is lost for good, what then remains is nothing but unqualified bliss.

Q.: It is said that the Jnani has the power to Emancipate others from samsara. Please salvify me.

B.: It is necessary to surrender without reserve. Only then is Grace facilitated to manifest without hindrance.

S>M>

Q.: Does vichara need to be learnt from a Guru? Or can I try it on my own?

B.: Vichara is itself the Guru.

Q.: Is it true that karma is only a mental-experience?

B.: Yes. There is no karma in the Self.

S>M>

Q.: The cosmos is only an illusion, Bhagawan says. Yet he diligently scans the newspaper everyday. What is the explanation?

B.: An illusory Maharshi reads an illusory newspaper in an illusory cosmos; all this is witnessed by an illusory spectator. Where is any contradiction?

20th September, 1936

Today morning Sri Bhagawan told the Hall the amusing story of how a silver-thread-embroidered vaeshti had once been presented to him, and how he had not been willing to accept the same.

B.: It happened whilst I was staying on the Hill, in Virupaksha-cave. A gentleman named Mr. Puthucode Ramasundara Aiyer had come to see me. He was a lawyer by profession. He had heard that there was a swami living up on the Hill and had come to see him. He wanted to know from the swami whether he must renounce family-life, leave home and move into the jungles if he wanted to attain Brahmasakshatkara. Also, he was planning on having one more child, since his only male offspring was a weak boy who was falling ill often and there was thus a considerable chance that the lineage might get terminated. He was aged 48, he said. He was in a dilemma, according to him. If he did not have further children and his lineage collapsed, he would be starved of offerings of rice-ball and sesame seeds in the pithru-lokam, and thus be made to undergo immense suffering. If he did marry again and produce further children, the necessary carnal-knowledge which had to be indulged in order so as to produce offspring might make him ineligible to attain Brahmasakshatkara, which was his principal ambition in life. He did not know what decision to make and thus asked me for advice. I merely kept quiet.

Nowadays people come here to discuss such things all the time; but in those days people noticed me observing silence and so generally would not speak anything unto me; yet this man somehow seemed to sense that this particular swami could answer his question. He went on coaxing me to answer his question. He did not want to be reborn, according to him; he was frustrated with samsara and wanted to get out of it; yet he wanted to be well-fed in the pithru-lokam. He repeatedly asked the swami what must be done, but did not succeed in eliciting any response from the swami. Sometime passed in this manner. Then Sri Seshadri arrived on the scene. He took one look at the man and said, 'Nothing will happen to your son. He will marry and produce many male heirs.'. The lawyer was overjoyed. He asked me for confirmation of this prophecy. By way of conveying affirmation, I brought my closed fist down on my open palm three times. The man went away satisfied. The very next day, he arrived on the spot, delirious with joy. He had been appointed as a judge of the Madras High Court; he had never expected this honour; it was the swami that had bestowed this satkarma on him; the swami had brought his closed fist down on his open palm three times so as for the explicit purpose of causing this good fortune in his life; the gesture, according to the lawyer, had meant that he would be appointed as judge, but he had not understood it properly yesterday. Today he was convinced that it was the swami who had caused him to become a judge. For this reason, gifts were brought: for both Brahmana-swami and also for Seshadri-swami, since the latter had set his mind at rest about his son. Sri Seshadri and 'this' were each to be given a silver-thread-embroidered vaeshti and Rs. 101 in cash. When Sri Seshadri was given the presents, he tore up the vaeshti and tied the strips to a buffalo's tail; the currency-note he tore into pieces and tossed into the air; the coin he meekly licked and returned to the giver; but the lawyer was not offended. He had been told that this eccentric behaviour on the part of the holy-man meant that the latter was well-pleased with him. Now the Brahmana-swami was presented with the same gifts. He refused to accept them; but the lawyer would not stomach the swami's refusal. So, in the end, as pretence I accepted the garment and the money merely for the sake of outward appearances, and immediately gave them to the manager of Pacchiamman-koil, who was sitting there at the time, so that he could use the monetary resource for work appurtenant to the temple's impending renovation and reconsecration, and use the garment to give as an offering to the priest of the temple. This was the first time I had touched money after throwing it away as soon as I came to this place... The man who gave the presents served as judge in the Madras High Court for only a brief while; thereafter he contracted typhoid and passed away, we heard.

Q.: Did his son have male heirs as prophesied by Seshadri-swamigazl?

B.: Yes; their family pay visit here occasionally...

S>M>

Q.: Sri Bhagawan has said that he has seen entire cities inside this Hill, filled with siddha-purushas conducting all sorts of yajnas.

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is it real? Or was Bhagawan hallucinating? Perhaps at the time when these things were seen, Bhagawan was under the influence of some drug, which could have caused such hallucinations?

B.: Anything seen is nothing better than a hallucination. The whole of the cosmos is nothing but a gigantic hallucination conjured up by the restless mind.

Q.: Bhagawan's mind has merged in the Self. Why then does he continue to see the world?

B.: Did I tell you that any world is seen by me?

Q.: How then does the Jnani perceive the world?

B.: There cannot be anything for a Jnani to perceive, be it world or otherwise.

Q.: But Bhagawan sees the world. He now sees me and interacts with me.

B.: I do not see anything. I AM. My story begins there and ends there; there is nothing further to me than I-AM.

S>M>

Q.: Only brahmins are permitted to cook in your ashram; is that not right? Why? Is it not because you see the lower-caste persons and harijans as inferior beings?

B.: I have no say in these matters. If non-brahmins are permitted to enter the kitchen, the brahmins will refuse to eat here. I have eaten food cooked by non-brahmins exceedingly often. I do not mind it. These strict caste-based observances are not going on here for my sake, nor have I caused them to be instituted or furthered. Somebody has put in place such arrangements and they are going on undisturbed; that is all.

Q.: If the brahmins will refuse to eat food cooked by non-brahmins, let them starve to death. Come, let us introduce harijans into the ashram kitchen.

B.: [smiling] Is this the place for carrying on your revolutionary activities?

21th September, 1936

Q.: Why are people attracted to worldly wealth but not to the quest for Realisation?

B.: It is all a matter of one's value-judgment. Have you heard of Captain James Cook's visit to the Pacific island of Rapanooi?

Q.: Is that not the same as the one known as Easter Island?

B.: Yes. It is said that the natives of the island tried to steal away the hats of the Captain and his crew. The Captain and the members of his crew were ostentatiously wearing several items of opulent silver jewellery, but the natives left all these alone and paid no attention to them whatsoever; they were interested in obtaining for themselves solely the hats only. Why? Because they could only go after what they knew about. They had no conception of jewellery or precious metals. On the other hand, their ancestors had carved enormous statues of gigantic human-like figures on the island and these were worshipped by the natives at the time; many of these statues had heads with hat-like appendages attached to them as part of the sculpture-work. So, when the natives saw hats before them, they could not resist the temptation to take them away. But they ignored the jewellery, which they did not know about and did not recognise. Likewise, there is no use in preaching Ajata-advaita to those whose attention is fixed on the riches of the world; they cannot and will not understand the same; this doctrine is for those who are desperately seeking an escape-route or an exit from the world; it is useless to speak of it to others. Those who have once seen the futility of the samsaric-way of life [that is to say, the incessant and pointless cycle of birth and death that perturbs all embodied beings without exception] will take to Ajata-advaita like a duck to water; others will talk about It and give elaborate lectures about It, and also win prizes for being so knowledgeable about It; but they cannot Realise It.

Q.: How shall I understand the futility of samsara?

B.: Go on practising in your abhyasa; circumstances in your life will automatically mould themselves in such fashion as to make you cultivate distaste for worldly affairs. Everything depends upon the practice. If the practice is vigorous, intense and unremitting, response from Grace will be equally energetic. What you get is in proportion to what you put in. No pain, no gain.

S>M>

Some sweets have come into the Hall from the ashram-office for the purpose of general distribution and consumption amongst the Hall's attendees; the same is wrapped in some old newspaper. The master's keen sense of attention did not miss the newspaper. He scrutinised it thoroughly and passed it around with a smile. This was a newspaper known as 'The Rolfe Arrow, Consolidated With The Reveille February 12, 1914.'; it seemed to be a broadsheet-publication based in the United-states; a copy of this issue, dated January 4, 1934, must evidently have been brought here by some visiting Caucasian sometime back, and found its way into the ashram-office, where somebody had seen fit to use it to wrap sweets in. It seemed to be a newspaper dedicated and devoted entirely to reporting the local news affairs

appurtenant to the place of its origin: Rolfe, Pocahontas County, Iowa. I thumbed the sheet with some fascination. An interesting feature of the publication is a column known as 'Digging'Em Up- by Walt.:'; the same appears to list queer facts from around the world, together with illustrations; in this issue these are the facts mentioned:

**Powdered sugar is the fuel used in a recently perfected European motor.**

**The natives of the island of Malekula, New Hebrides have a pleasant custom of knocking out their brides' front teeth as a part of the marriage ceremony.**

**More heat is produced by burning pine than from an equal weight of hickory.**

**The Huia bird of New Zealand must hunt for food in pairs; the male pecks holes for wood grubs and the female extracts them with her long, slim bill.**

**The duck-billed Platypus of Australia is considered to be the most primitive living animal; its young are hatched from soft shelled eggs.**

**There were 79,023 fewer marriages in the United-states in 1932 than there were in 1931.**

**A. Dunk operates a coffee-shop at Giddings, Texas; by W. H. Jockel.**

**Two ships were scrapped for every one built by the nations of the world during 1932.**

Bhagawan noticed me pouring over the column intently and jocularly remarked-

B.: For the express purpose of arousing your curiosity, see how far and wherefrom this piece of newspaper has travelled!

Both the master and myself laughed.

S>M>

A certain long-time devotee of the master, Sri Griddalooru Narayana Rao, had assembled in the Thenungu-language an anthology of many Spiritual-stories narrated by Sri Bhagawan, after asking many devotees of the master to share their experiences with him of instances wherein the master happened to narrate such stories; it had been decided by the devotees Mr. Sundaram Chettiar, Mr. Aravind Bose, Mr. Nambiar and certain others that the same must be published[at their expense] after first translating it into English. The job of undertaking such translation fell upon the shoulders of Mr.

Subbaramayya. Today Mr. Subbaramayya humbly informed Bhagawan that the translation was completed and laid the same deferentially at the master's feet. The master asked him to read out select portions of the work in the Hall; this is what was read out:

1

Once Duryodhana's wife Bhanumathi and Karna were playing a game of dice. As the game progressed, it was evident that Karna was winning and Bhanumathi was losing. Just then Duryodhana entered his queen's chamber. Karna had his back to the door while Bhanumathi was facing it. Seeing her husband coming, she was

about to stand up. As she was just rising, Karna, thinking that she was trying to remove herself from the game all of a sudden out of fear of defeat at his hands, snatched at her drape, which happened to be studded with pearls. Tugged at by Karna's powerful hands, the thread snapped and all the pearls rolled on the floor. Queen Bhanumathi was stunned and did not know what to say or do. She was afraid that, for no fault of hers, she would be misunderstood by her husband because of Karna's apparently offensive and insensitive behavior. Seeing her shocked state and sensing that something was wrong, Karna turned round and saw his friend Duryodhana. He was also distressed beyond words. Here he was, in the royal chamber, playing a game of dice with his friend's wife; and, as if this was not enough, he had had the audacity to catch her clothes, thus embarrassing and endangering her chaste reputation. He stood dumbfounded and transfixed. As both Bhanumathi and Karna look down sheepishly, unable to meet Duryodhana's eyes, the Kaurava scion merely asked, "Should I just collect the beads, or string them as well?".

2

Five thousand years ago the Kurukshetra war took place. Nobody who was a kshathriya could remain neutral. Every kshathriya to be either on the Kaurava side or the Pandava side. All the kings of India- hundreds of them- aligned themselves on one side or the other. The king of Udupi, however, chose to remain neutral. He spoke to Krishna and said, 'Those who fight battles have got to eat. I will be the caterer for this battle.'. Krishna said, 'I agree with your proposal. Somebody has to cook and serve; so, you may do it.'. It is said that over 50,00,000 soldiers had gathered for the battle. The battle lasted 18 days; and, everyday thousands were dying; so, the Udupi king had to correspondingly cook that much less food, otherwise the excess would go waste. Somehow the catering had to be managed perfectly by him. If he went on cooking for 50,00,000 people, it would lead to wastage. Or, if he cooked far too less, soldiers would go hungry. The Udupi king managed the situation very well. Every day, the food prepared was exactly enough for all the soldiers who came to eat and no food was wasted. After a few days, people were asking, 'How is he managing to cook exactly the right amount of food?'. No one could know how many people had died on any given day. By the time they could have taken account of any such numbers, the next day morning would have dawned and again

it would be time to fight. There was no means by which the caterer could possibly know how many thousands had died each day, but every day he cooked exactly the correct volume of food necessary for feeding the surviving portion of the armies. When somebody asked him, 'How do you manage this business?', the Udupi king replied, 'Every night I go to Krishna's tent. Krishna likes to eat boiled groundnuts in the night so I peel them and keep them in a bowl for him. He eats just a few peanuts, and after he is done I count how many he has eaten. If he has eaten 10 peanuts, I know that tomorrow 10,000 people will be dead. So the next day when I cook, I cook for 10,000 people less. Every day I count these peanuts and cook accordingly, and it turns out that the Lord is always right.' Many people from Udupi are caterers even today.

3

After the successful completion of the one year mandated to be spent in hiding, the Pandavas came to Duryodhana asking for their Indraprasta. Duryodhana flatly refused. A priest was sent to the Kauravas asking for their kingdom back to prevent war. Duryodhana ridiculed the priest and sent him back. Krishna himself came and pleaded brilliantly for atleast five villages for the pandavas to avoid the war. Duryodhana did not relent. So, war was inevitable. As the Kauravas were losing the battle of Mahabharata, Duryodhana approached Bhishma one night and accused him of not fighting the war to the extent of his full strength on account of his affection for Pandavas. Bhishma was greatly angered. He immediately picked up 5 golden arrows and chanted mantras on them, declaring that on the next day he would kill the 5 pandavas with the 5 golden arrows. Duryodhana not having faith in his conduct asked Bhishma to give him custody of the 5 golden arrows, saying that he would keep them and return them next morning. Long before the Mahabharata war, the Pandavas had been living in exile in a forest. Duryodhana had placed his camp on the opposite side of the pond adjacent to which the Pandavas were staying. Once while Duryodhana was taking bath in the pond, the heavenly prince of the Gandharvas also came down to bathe there. Duryodhana picked a fight with the Gandharvas only to be defeated and captured by them. Arjuna saved Duryodhana and set him free. Duryodhana was ashamed of himself but being a kshathriya, he told Arjuna to ask for a boon. Arjuna replied he would ask for the honour gift later when he needed it. It was during that night of the Mahabharata war, when Krishna reminded Arjuna of his



unsatisfied boon and told him to go to Duryodhana and ask for the 5 golden arrows. When Arjuna asked for the arrows Duryodhana was shocked but being a kshathriya and bound by his promise he had to honour his words. He asked him who told Arjuna about the golden arrows, and Arjuna replied that it had been Lord Krishna. Duryodhana again went to Bhishma and requested for another five golden arrows. To this Bhishma laughed and replied that it was not possible. This story is explained in larger detail as follows: During the first ten days of the war, the general of the Kaurava army was Bhishma, the grandfather of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Bhishma was bound by his vow to serve the family ruling Hastinapur, so he fought on the side of the Kauravas. However Bhishma loved the Pandavas and he also felt that the Pandavas had been wronged. Duryodhana who knew this thought of Bhishma, thought that this fine warrior was purposely not killing the five brothers because of his love for them. On one night after a dismal show by the Kauravas in battle, Duryodhana went to Bhishma. 'Grandsire! I am ashamed of your way of fighting!' He spoke with undisguised fury. Bhishma looked at Duryodhana, his face expressionless. Duryodhana continued. 'You are supposed to be the greatest warrior in the world, but you are finding it difficult to kill five pathetic humans....' Bhishma still said nothing as Duryodhana started ranting and raving. 'I think you are actually fighting on behalf of the Pandavas.... You are in my army but you are fighting for the Pandavas...' Duryodhana spoke each word distinctly, his face red with anger. Bhishma felt the stinging words of Duryodhana go on ringing inside his head. How could he make Duryodhana believe in his sincerity? After great deliberation Bhishma pulled out five of his arrows and touched them with his closed eyes. Duryodhana watched the entire scene with bewilderment wondering what his grandfather was doing. Suddenly Duryodhana was surprised to see that a certain force left Bhishma's body and entered the five arrows. The five arrows now gleamed in golden hue and looked menacing. Duryodhana looked at the gleaming weapons, afraid to touch them. He asked Bhishma in a whisper, 'What is this, grandsire?' Bhishma knew that what he had done would definitely seal the fate of the Pandavas, but as the General of the Kaurava army he had no choice, for he was bound to serve his king. Bhishma spoke sadly. 'I have put my life-force inside these arrows. The entire force of tapas within me, obtained through my power vairagya, is now in these arrows. These five arrows would not fail. Each one is

for each of the Pandavas....' Bhishma shook his head in dejected fashion. 'There is no escape from this kind of arrow. When it is fired, it will kill the person for whom it is made!' Duryodhana's eyes gleamed as he eyed the arrows. Tomorrow there would be no Pandavas left on the earth. Duryodhana was about to laugh in joy when he saw the pained expression on Bhishma's face. His grandfather looked like he was sorry for what he had done. Duryodhana thought quickly. If he left the arrows with Bhishma, it was highly possible that the fool might, out of his carelessness or misplaced sense of righteousness, lose the arrows somewhere, or, worse, hand them over to the Pandavas. Duryodhana shook his head with determination. He could not let that happen. He looked up at Bhishma with a grimace. 'Grandsire! I wish to keep these arrows with me.' Bhishma looked at Duryodhana with a sad smile. Duryodhana apparently still did not trust him. Bhishma spoke in a shaken voice thus: 'I have created these weapons. I think it would be best if they remain with me....' Duryodhana shook his head nervously. 'No! No!' he said ferociously. 'I want to keep them safe with me and will give them to you in the morning....!' Bhishma tried arguing with Duryodhana but his grandson was adamant. Finally Bhishma gave in and Duryodhana carried the five arrows back with him to his own camp. He lovingly looked at the arrows. The war was going to end tomorrow, he thought. Of that he had no doubt. The Pandavas were doomed. Krishna slept badly that night. He was wondering why. Then Krishna sensed what the matter was through his faculty of supramental consciousness and his spies confirmed his grave misgivings. Bhishma had made what he had been dreading: the five arrows. Krishna knew that Bhishma had the capacity to make these arrows. Krishna had been wondering what he could do about it. He knew that once those arrows were fired, there was precious little he could do to save the Pandavas.

'So Bhishma has these arrows with him?' Krishna said, thinking aloud. The spy shook his head. 'Duryodhana has them in his camp, sir!' Krishna was startled out of his wits. 'What?' He asked incredulously. The spy nodded his head. He told Krishna all about the conversation between Bhishma and Duryodhana. At the end of the story the Lord's face broke into a happy smile. He dismissed the spy. Krishna hurriedly went to Arjuna's camp. While the Kaurava army slept, tired from the day's battle, a hooded figure marched through their camp. The figure entered Duryodhana's camp. He saw

that Duryodhana was awake. He was looking at the five arrows lovingly in front of him. The hooded figure spoke softly, 'Duryodhana!'. Duryodhana shuddered and turned violently. As a reflex action he picked up his mace and pointed it towards the figure coming towards him. Only some instinct prevented him from swinging the mace. The voice of the figure was familiar. Duryodhana clutched the mace and spoke quietly. 'How did you get in? Who are you? Speak or I will kill you!'. The man removed his hood and Duryodhana glanced incredulously at Arjuna. He blinked. Arjuna was the last person Duryodhana expected to see here. Arjuna, Duryodhana knew, was a noble man, and he would never attack another man from behind or without warning. Feeling suddenly afraid Duryodhana spoke harshly. 'What do you want, Arjuna?'. Arjuna came forward with a calm smile. 'You promised me a boon once, remember?' As if Duryodhana could ever forget that unlucky happening! 'What of it?' Duryodhana asked, his voice still sounding harsh. 'I have come to ask for the boon, Duryodhana!' Arjuna said. Duryodhana found that he was unable to talk out of bewilderment. With trembling hands he signaled Arjuna to continue. Arjuna pointed to the five arrows. 'I want these! I want the five arrows that Bhishma made! That is the boon I want from you!'. Duryodhana felt like an idiot as the intelligent words of his grandfather came to his mind unbidden. Duryodhana tried to hide the arrows from Arjuna. He could not give away the arrows. But Duryodhana also realized that if he ever broke his promise, he would never be able to respect himself. He had promised this wretch a boon and Duryodhana with a broken heart realized that he was trapped. Why had he had to bring the arrows with him? Duryodhana cursed himself. He watched with a defeated expression as Arjuna picked up the arrows and was about to leave the camp. 'Who told you about the arrows?' Duryodhana asked listlessly. Arjuna smiled. 'Krishna!', he responded. Duryodhana bit back a curse from being uttered by his tongue as he fell on his bed and as Arjuna walked out with the arrows. That dark cowherd was going to be the ruin of him. Krishna! For the first time Duryodhana was afraid of the Dark Lord. Krishna was frighteningly clever. Duryodhana had heard that Krishna was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. He had always dismissed the idea as improbable. But now Duryodhana was afraid. Duryodhana realized accurately that the dark man could take away the entire war from him; not by his weapons but by the sharpness of his mind. Duryodhana regretted

choosing the armies of Krishna; if only he had chosen Krishna himself, he might have won the war! Duryodhana shivered. Stumbling, Duryodhana walked back to the camp of his grandfather who looked as though he was asleep. Unmindful of the fact, Duryodhana woke him up. Bhishma woke up and beheld Duryodhana, who looked like he had just had the fright of his life. He did not look like the jubilant Duryodhana of a few hours back. 'What is it, my child?' Bhishma asked anxiously. Duryodhana said sheepishly, 'Arjuna took away the arrows!'. Bhishma looked aghast. Slowly, with tears in his eyes, Duryodhana explained everything. Bhishma kept quiet, not saying anything. 'You were the one who made the arrows...can you make them again?' Duryodhana asked feeling desperate. He could not bear the thought that he had come so close to winning the war and had now lost the opportunity to win owing to his foolishness. Bhishma laughed and said, 'Son! I deposited my life-force in those arrows, and the powers of my penance...'. Bhishma shook his head sadly. 'I cannot do so again; I do not have the power or energy to do so....' Duryodhana's hopes sank as he heard Bhishma. He looked at Bhishma. Bhishma looked back pathetically at Duryodhana. 'I begged you to leave the weapons with me. I was not bound by any promise to give Arjuna anything. So, the weapons would have been safe with me. Instead you distrusted me and now see the consequence!' Duryodhana felt tears in his eyes as these words left the mouth of the grandsire.

4.

Jamadagni was a warrior-sage skilled in the use of bow and arrow. His wife, Renuka, was so devoted to her husband that she would run after every arrow he shot and collect it as soon as it hit the ground. One day, however, she ran after an arrow and did not return even after nightfall. When asked the reason for the delay, she blamed the heat of the sun. Hearing these words, the furious Jamadagni decided to shoot an arrow at the sun. The sun begged for mercy and offered another solution: He gave her an umbrella to protect her from his heat the next time she ran after an arrow. Renuka was so chaste that she had the power to collect water in unbaked pots. However, she lost this power when she had adulterous thoughts after watching a king make love to his wives on the riverbank. When he became wise to the fact, her husband, Jamadagni, ordered his five sons to behead Renuka. Four of them refused. The fifth son, Parashurama, who was an incarnation of Vishnu, raised his axe and did what was needed.

As he was pleased with his son's unquestioning obedience, Jamadagni offered Parashurama a boon. Parashurama requested his mother back. So Jamadagni restored Renuka to life using his spiritual powers. When Parashurama raised his axe to kill his mother, she ran and took refuge amidst a low-caste community in the hope that her son, who was an orthodox brahmin, would not follow her there. He did follow her there and swung his axe again and again, beheading not just Renuka but also another woman who had tried to prevent this matricide. When Parashurama asked that his mother be restored, Jamadagni gave him a pot of magical water to be poured on the corpse, at the spot where the head had been rejoined. In his haste to have his mother back, Parashurama attached the low-caste woman's head to his high-caste mother's body and vice versa. Jamadagni accepted the former as his wife. The latter was left behind to be worshipped by the low-caste people as Yellamma, the mother of all creation.

5

The sage Bhringi wanted to circumambulate Shiva to demonstrate his devotion and affection. Shakti stopped him, saying, "You must go around both of us, because each of us is incomplete without the other." Bhringi was adamant in circling only Shiva. To foil his plans Shakti sat on Shiva's lap. Bhringi took the form of a bee and tried to fly between them, so Shakti fused her body with Shiva's and became his left half. Shiva then came to be known as Ardhanarishwarar. Even so, Bhringi then took the form of a worm and tried to bore a hole between them. In exasperation over Bhringi's stubbornness, Gauri said, "If you only want him then may you be deprived of every tissue that a human gets from a woman." Instantly Bhringi was transformed into a skeleton, his body stripped of flesh and blood. He could not even stand. Shiva felt sorry for him and gave him a third leg so that he could stand up like a tripod. Bhringi then apologized to Shakti, having realized the complementary relationship between the God and the Goddess.

6

Once, a Pandya king of Madurai felt that his queen's hair had some kind of natural fragrance. A doubt arose in his mind as to whether human hair could have natural fragrance, or could be rendered fragrant only through association with flowers or scents. He went to the Sangham Assembly the next day, suspended a bag containing one thousand gold coins to the ceiling and said to the poets there

that anyone who would write a poem clearing the doubt he entertained in his mind would at once get the gold pieces as a prize. Many poets composed poems but they were not able to satisfy the king. Darumi, a Brahmin priest in the temple, was extremely poor. He requested Lord Siva thus: "O all-merciful Lord! I am exceedingly impoverished. I wish to marry now. Relieve me of my poverty. Help me to get these gold pieces now. I take refuge in Thee alone.". In response, Lord Siva gave him a poem and said: "Take this poem to the Sangham. You will get the gold pieces.". The king was immensely pleased with the song as it cleared his doubt, but the Sangham poets did not accept it. Nakirar, one of the poets of the Assembly, said that there was a flaw in the poem. The poor priest was greatly afflicted at heart. He came back to the temple, stood in front of the Lord and weepingly said: "O Lord! Why did You give me a poem which contained a flaw? I feel dejected on this account.". The meaning of the poem is: "O fair-winged bee! You spend your time in gathering flower-dust. Do not speak out of love, but speak out of truth. Is there any among the flowers known to you that is more fragrant than the hair of this damsel who is most loving, is of the colour of the peacock and has beautiful rows of teeth!" Thereupon, Lord Siva assumed the form of a poet, went to the Sangham and asked: "Which poet found out a flaw in this poem?" Nakirar said: "It is I who said that there is a flaw." Lord Siva asked: "What is the flaw?" Nakirar said: "There is no flaw in the composition of words. There is flaw in the meaning." Lord Siva said: "May I know what defect is there in the meaning?" Nakirar said: "The hair of a damsel has no natural fragrance. It gets its fragrance only from association with scented-oils and flowers." Lord Siva said: 'Does the hair of Padmini also possess fragrance only by reason of association with flowers?' Nakirar said, "Yes." Lord Siva said: "Does the hair of celestial damsels also possess fragrance only by reason of association with flowers?" Nakirar replied, "Yes. Their hairs become fragrant through association with Mandara flowers." Lord Siva said: "Does the hair of Uma Devi who is on the left side of Lord Siva whom you worship possess fragrance only by reason of association with flowers?" Nakirar replied: "Yes. Quite so." Lord Siva slightly opened His third eye. Nakirar said: "I am not afraid of this third eye. Even if you are Lord Siva, even if you show eyes throughout your whole body, there is a flaw in this poem." The fire from the third eye of Lord Siva fell upon Nakirar. Nakirar was not able to bear the heat. At once he

jumped into the neighbouring lotus-tank pond to cool himself. Then all the poets in the Assembly approached Lord Siva and said: "O Lord! Pardon Nakirar." Lord Siva appeared before Nakirar; through the grace of Lord Siva his body was rendered cool. He repented for his mistake and said: "I pointed out defect even in relation to the hair of Uma Devi. No one but the Lord can pardon me." He sang a song with intense devotion. Lord Siva entered the tank and brought him to the shore. Then Nakirar and the other poets gave the bag containing gold-coins to Darumi.

7

Uddalaka was a great rishi. He had a son by name Svetaketu. After giving him the sacred thread at the proper age, the rishi called him one day and said, "Svetaketu, proceed to the house of a guru and living there as a student, learn the Vedas well; for, there is none in our family who is not learned in the Vedas." As directed by his father, Svetaketu went to a gurukula or the ashrama of a guru and studied the Vedas under the guru. He returned home when he was twenty-four years of age, a proud scholar. He thought that there remained little else for him to know. His father was a shrewd man. He at once knew that his son's head was swollen with pride. He wanted to correct him. One day he called him and said, "Son, I think you feel you have mastered all knowledge on the face of the earth; but, have you ever learnt that knowledge, by means of which we can hear what is not heard, perceive what cannot be perceived, and know what cannot be known?" Svetaketu was somewhat upset. He asked humbly, "Sire, won't you tell me what this knowledge is?" Seeing that his son was coming round, the father said, "My dear, let me explain myself fully. When, for instance, you know one lump of clay, you can know all which is made of clay. When you know a nugget of gold, you can know all ornaments made of gold, because the essence of them is gold. When you know the substance of a hammer, you can know all that is made of iron, since the truth is that that all of them that are constituted by iron are iron only. The only difference is in their names and forms. That is the knowledge I am talking about." Svetaketu said, "Sir, my venerable gurus did not perhaps know it. Had they known, why would they have not taught it to me? Please teach it to me." Uddalaka said, "All right. I shall teach you; listen. Brahman or Sat alone is in all names, because every name is His name. He alone is all power, because every power is His. All forms that belong to others are merely reflections of His actual form of formlessness. He is only

One, without an equal or second. He is the best of all. He being the Chief, He is called Sat or the True Being. Knowing Him we know everything else. When a man sleeps soundly, he comes into contact with Sat. When man dies, his speech merges in the mind, the mind in his breath, his breath in the element of fire and the element of fire in the Highest God, the True Being. Thus the soul or jivatman is born again and again. All of the cosmos is controlled by Sat. He pervades it all. He is the destroyer of all. He is full of perfect qualities. O Svetaketu, you are not that God." Svetaketu asked, "Sire, please teach me more." Uddalaka said, "The bees, my child, collect honey from different flowers and mix them in the hive. Now, honeys of different flowers cannot know one from the other. My child, rivers that run in different directions rise from the sea and go back to the sea. Yet the sea remains the same. The rivers, while in the sea, cannot identify themselves as one particular river or another. So also creatures that have come from Sat know not that they have come from that Sat, although they become one or the other again and again." Uddalaka then asked his son to bring a fig fruit. When he did so, Uddalaka asked him to break it. He broke it. Uddalaka: "What do you see in it?"

Svetaketu: "I see small seeds."

Uddalaka: "Break one of the seeds and say what you see."

Svetaketu: "Nothing Sir."

Uddalaka: "You are unable to see the minute particles of the seed after breaking it. Now, the mighty fig tree is born out of the essence of that minute particle. Like so, that which is True Being is the essence of all creation." Uddalaka asked his son to bring some salt and put it into a cup of water and bring the cup next morning.

Svetaketu did so.

Uddalaka: "You put the salt into the water in this cup. Will you now kindly take the salt out?"

Svetaketu: "I am unable to find the salt; for it has dissolved."

Uddalaka: "Taste a drop from the surface of this water."

Svetaketu: "It is saltish."

Uddalaka: "Now taste a drop from the middle of the cup."

Svetaketu: "It tastes the same, saltish."

Uddalaka: "Now taste a drop from the bottom."

Svetaketu: "It is saltish just the same."

Uddalaka: "Now child, you do not see the salt, although it is certainly in the water. Even so, the True Being is present everywhere in this



universe, although you do not see Him. He is the essence of all, and the desired of all. He is known to the subtlest intellect."

Svetaketu became humble thereafter, and became a great rishi himself in course of time.

8

In ancient India when men were honest and truthful and kings were ever engaged in striving for the welfare of their people, there once lived a king whose name was Rantideva. He had a large and generous heart and every being came within his embrace of love for he saw Lord Hari in every living creature. Rantideva was always making gifts to the poor and the needy. He said to himself, "The Lord gives me all these things in plenty. Should I then sit back and enjoy them when so many mouths of Sri Hari are yet to be fed? Although I give away my wealth freely for charitable purposes, I shall not be in want, because He has made me His blessings in the world." And sure enough, he would always have plenty of food and clothing to distribute. The king was famous in the world for his warm hospitality which he extended to rich and poor alike. Whenever anyone was in trouble, he would go to the king. And whenever Rantideva was of service to anyone, he would feel that it was a service rendered by him unto Sri Hari. Thus he gave a mother's love to his people. Like a child runs to its mother with its troubles, hurts and pains, so too his subjects would go to him. He would try to remove the cause of their sorrow and if he was unable to do so, it would pain him immensely. Thus passed many years of prosperity and people basked in the generous love of their king. But then a time came when the country was hit by famine. The crops failed, the cattle died and men, women and children starved in large numbers. They flocked to the gates of the king's palace. Rantideva would sit and pray, "O Lord, give me the strength to remove their suffering." Then he would go out and distribute to his people what little he had left. And yet the famine continued. In fact it grew worse from day to day. And there was a time when he did not have enough to eat for himself. The king could not even feed his own family; for according to their custom none of the members of his household ate unless the masses had been fed. So, sometimes there would be food for himself and his family, but the king would have to go hungry. Nevertheless, he was happy, because his mind was satisfied when his people were fed. As the conditions grew worse, he did not have anything left to give to the hungry and the starving. No help came to him. And yet his faith in Sri Hari only

increased. Day after day, the king and his dependents starved and the famine persisted. When the king had thus fasted for forty-eight days, someone brought him a bowl of porridge made of flour, milk and ghee. By this time the king was in no position to even move, so weak had he become consequent to continuous starvation. Overcome by hunger and thirst, Rantideva and his family were indeed glad to see an unexpected meal before them. They were about to eat when there came to the door, a wrinkled old brahmin, much in need of food. The king received him respectfully and gave him some of the porridge to eat. As they were about to eat again, a beggar came to the door. His face appeared pinched with hunger, so Rantideva gave him, too, some of the meal to eat. Then there came a sudra and he brought with him his dogs. He looked at the king dejectedly and said, "Maharaj! My dogs and I have not had any food for many days now. We are starving for want of food. Now we have come to you, for if you will not help us, who will?" So the king gave him the remaining porridge. Now the king and his family again had no food to eat. There was just a little drink left. Just then, came a chandala, his throat parched with thirst, his eyes heavy with exhaustion. He begged the King to moisten his dry lips with a little bit of water. Rantideva saw him as yet another form of Sri Hari and held the cup to his cracked lips. He prayed to the Lord and said, "Please, Lord! I do not care for the rewards of this earth. Nor do I care for thaumaturgic powers of any kind. My only prayer is- give me the capacity to feel the pain of others and the power to serve them. Let me never be indifferent to their sorrows and their sufferings. Make me Thy instrument to give them relief, and to make them happy." The chandala drank the water. The sparkle of life came back into his eyes. And wonderfully enough, the king felt his own hunger, thirst and fatigue dropping away from him. He felt refreshed and fulfilled, as a hungry man is after a splendid and satisfying meal. Suddenly there appeared before him Maya and all her attendants. She smiled at him and said, "O King, I am indeed pleased to see your devotion and your extraordinary love for your people. You have suffered much. If you worship me now, I can remove all your wants for all of time to come. I can give you all the riches of heaven and the entire wealth of the world." Rantideva showed them due respect, but only regarded them as being different forms of Hari. He asked Maya for nothing, for his mind was absorbed in Sri Hari. He said to her, "I have no use for all the riches you say that you have to offer unto me. I have no wish

to live any longer than I have to. I do not hanker after the enjoyments of the world, because my mind does not run after them." And at once Maya, the queen of the world, the mistress of all creatures, the consort of Sri Vishnu, fled from his presence with her whole retinue of attendants. She vanished like a dream does when a person awakes. Then Rantideva was blessed by the presence of the Lord Himself. He worshipped His feet and prayed that he might never be separated from Him. In time, Rantideva became one of the greatest yogis of the land. He merged himself in Brahman. By reason of his wonderful service to his people and his love for all living creatures, whom he worshipped as Sri Hari, he attained the blissful Being of Lord Narayana once and for all.

9

Once upon a time, there lived a frog in a large, deep well. It had lived there for a long time. It was born there and brought up there. This frog everyday fed on the worms and fleas that lived in the water of the well, and became a fat frog with a lot of muscular power. One day another frog that lived in the sea came and fell into the well. Our well frog asked the sea frog, "Where are you from?". "I am from the sea.", answered the sea-frog. "The sea!" exclaimed the well frog, "How big is that? Is it as big as my well?", and he took a leap from one side of the well to the other. "My friend", said the sea frog, "how do you compare the sea with your little well?". Then the well frog took another leap across the well and asked, "Is your sea so big, as big as these two leaps of mine combined?". The shocked sea frog exclaimed "What nonsense you speak, to compare the sea with your well!". "Well, Well," said the well frog, "nothing can be bigger than my well; there can be nothing bigger than this."; he then shouted, "This fellow is a liar, turn him out."

10

Once upon a time there lived a great king called Shibi. He was very kind and charitable and became very famous for his kind nature and charitable disposition. His fame spread all over the earth and spread in the heavens too. The lord of heaven Indra wanted to test and see if king Shibi was really as great as his fame proclaimed him to be. So Indra and the god Agni started from heaven. Agni assumed the form of a dove and Indra, of a fierce hawk. Agni flew in front of Indra fluttering his wings as though terrified and Indra followed at a distance as if in hot pursuit. They straight flew to the palace of the king. Shibi was in the garden distributing charities to the poor. The

little fluttering frightened dove came and perched upon the wrist of Shibi looking at him with tearful eyes full of fear. Shibi immediately took her in his hands. Stroking her back kindly he said, "Fear not, O dove, I will save you from all harm.". Just as he was saying this, the hawk came there. He was angry and haughty and tried to snatch the dove away from the king's hands. But the king raised his hand in a flash and obstructed the hawk. The hawk looked at the king angrily and said, speaking like a human being, "This dove is my bird of prey. I had been pursuing it from the morning. Why do you obstruct me in having my food, O king?" Surprised at hearing the hawk speak like a man, Shibi replied, "I do not know who you are, O hawk, who can thus speak like a man. This poor frightened dove has sought my shelter. It is my duty to protect her from all harm. I won't allow you to snatch her away from me and make her your prey." The hawk then said, "O king, you are renowned as a kind man. Perhaps it is your duty to protect those in distress. But is your kindness limited only to the dove? What about me? Am I not equally entitled to claim your pity? I am a bird who can live only by eating the meat of small birds. By depriving me of my food are you not condemning me to die? Is this your dharma?" King Shibi was nonplussed. The hawk could not only speak like a human being but also argue like one! Evidently his duty was towards both the dove and the hawk. He thought over the situation carefully. At last he said, "Hawk, what you say is true. I won't deprive you of your food. But at the same time I can't give up this poor frightened dove. Will you accept my offer if I give you some other flesh as a substitute?" The hawk replied, "Very well, O king. I have no objection as long as my hunger stands satisfied. But you must give me flesh to eat exactly equal in mass to that of the dove. I shall not accept less." And he further mockingly added, "But where shall you get substitute flesh from? Will you kill another life to save the life of this dove?" Shibi hastily replied, "No, no, I cannot even think of harming another life; of that fact you may be sure. I will give you my own flesh in the place of this dove." He then turned to his attendants; he ordered them to bring a balance. The attendants accordingly brought the same and erected it before the king. Shibi placed the dove on one side of the balance. He took out his sword and cutting off small portions of his flesh placed it on the other side. But strangely, the dove which looked so small and frail in the pan could not outbalance it! King Shibi went on cutting portion after portion from his body and placing it in the balance: yet to no purpose;

till at last no more flesh remained in his body to cut away. Wondering at the strange heaviness of the dove, Shibi then threw away the sword and himself mounted the balance. Lo! behold, now the balance was perfectly equal. Rejoicing that he was at last able to give the hawk its due, Shibi turned to the hawk and said, "O hawk, my weight is equal to the weight of the dove. Please eat me and kindly spare the dove." As he spake these words there was a cheering applause from the gods who had gathered in the sky to witness the test. They beat their heavenly drums and showered flowers on the king. The hawk and the dove shed their assumed forms and stood before him in their shining, glorious, godly forms. Shibi looked at them in shocked astonishment. Indra said, "O kindly king, know that we are Indra and Agni come down from heaven to test you. You have indeed proved yourself to be worthy of your fame. You will be blessed with long life and vast riches. Your name will remain in the world as long as the sun and the moon remain." So saying, Indra touched Shibi with his hand. Lo! behold, all the cuts and wounds vanished from Shibi's body and he stood there as strong as ever. He bowed to the gods with great devotion, who blessed him and returned to their abodes.

11

A heron lived near a big lake, which was full of fishes and other water-dwelling creatures. The heron had grown so old that he could not catch fishes from the lake anymore by means of deployment of the usual modus operandi. He became lean and weak with every passing day owing to lack of food. Unable to bear his hunger anymore, he hit upon a plan. As planned, one day he sat at the edge of the lake for everybody to see, and began crying. On seeing this, a crab took pity on him and went near him, speaking the following consoling words: "Sir, What is the matter? Why are you crying instead of catching fishes?" Continuing to pretend, the heron replied, "My child, I cannot touch any fish anymore. I have decided to renounce all worldly pleasures, and vowed to undertake a fast unto death.". The crab asked, "If you have indeed renounced all worldly concerns, why is it that you cry?" The heron explained, "My child, I have been in this lake from my birth. I grew up here. And it is now when I have grown so old that I hear that this lake will dry up as there will be no rains for the next twelve years.". The crab was surprised to hear this: "Sir, please tell me if this information is true. Please tell me where you have heard such a thing." The heron replied, "I have

heard news from a wise astrologer that there will be no rains for the next twelve years. You see, there is already not much water in the lake. And very soon, due to lack of rains, the lake will dry up completely very soon." The crab was taken aback by the news of what was to befall them, and went to convey this shocking news to the other water-dwelling creatures. On hearing this piece of news, everybody started to panic. They believed the heron's words, as he was not trying to catch any fish at all. So, they met the heron to seek advice: "Please guide us so as to save us from this disaster.", they said. The wicked heron said, "There is a large lake not far from here. It is full of water, and beautifully covered with lotus flowers. There is so much water in that lake, that it would not become dry even if it did not rain for twenty-four years. I can take you there, if you can ride on my back." He had already gained their confidence. So, they gathered around him and requested the evil bird to carry them one at a time to the other lake and so save them from the calamity which they believed was hanging over their heads imminently. The wicked heron had succeeded in his plan. Every day, he would carry one of them on his back pretending to take them to the other lake. After flying a little away from the lake, he would smash the trusting creature he had carried on his back against a rock and eat it up. He would then return after some time to the lake and furnish false messages as to how the creatures he had saved were living happily in the other lake. This happened for many days; then one day the first crab said to the heron, "Sir, you take others to the lake but it is me who am your first friend. Please take me to the other lake and save my life." The heron was happy to hear this. He started carrying the crab to the same rock on which he would smash his prey usually before eating it. The crab looked down from above and saw a huge heap of bones and skeletons. At once, the crab understood what the heron was up to. He remained calm, and said to the heron, "Sir, the lake seems far and I am quite heavy. You must be getting tired, let us stop for some rest.". The heron was confident that there was no way the crab could escape from him in the sky. The heron replied, "There is no lake in fact. This trip is just for my own meal. As I do every day, I will smash you against a rock and make a meal out of you." The moment the heron confessed the truth, the crab got hold of the heron's neck with its strong claws, and strangled him to death. The crab laughed proudly upon contemplating his achievement, for he had saved himself and the other water-dwelling creatures of the lake from the

trick played by the heron. He dragged the dead heron back to the lake. The other water-dwelling creatures in the lake were surprised to see him return. They became curious, and asked all sort of questions. The crab laughed and replied, "We were being made fools of! The heron was a fraud and what he told us about the lake drying up was all false. He was taking one of us every day for his meal to a rock not far from here." He proudly added, "I understood what he was up to, and have killed the trickster. There is no need to worry, for we are safe in this lake. It is not going to dry up at all."

12

The King of Ratnagiri, a long time ago, was ruling well and there was peace in the kingdom. He was blessed with three sons, and the princes were soon growing into handsome young men. Realising that one of them would have to succeed him on the throne whenever he decided to give up his royal duties and spend his time in contemplation of the Almighty, the king called them by his side and expressed his desire to them. "From now on, I want you to go round the kingdom and watch how the people live and fare. Go in different directions and come back by evening and tell me if you have noticed anything unusual." So, the next morning the three princes set out on foot, carrying the food they would need till they went back to the palace. Rajkirti the eldest took the road on the left; Rajmurti told his brothers that he would go along the road at right; the youngest Rajsnehi said he would take the path that went straight ahead. They promised to get back to the palace before it became dark. Rajkirti walked on and on for a long time till he reached a forest, where he was attracted by the sight of three fine horses grazing near a pond. Not far away he found a yogi sitting below the shade of a tall tree watching the horses as they grazed. The prince went up and prostrated before the yogi. As he got up, the yogi asked him, "Son, who are you? What has brought you to the forest?" Rajkirti revealed his identity and told him what had taken him away from the palace. "O holy one! With your permission, may I ride one of the horses, so that I can reach many areas and meet the people there?" "Take any one of them, but ensure that you come back here before sunset and tell me of your adventures and their significance," said the yogi and blessed him. Rajkirti got on to one of the horses and rode fast. He did not stop anywhere till he came upon a garden growing vegetables. When he looked around for the gardener who tended the plants so carefully, he was astonished to see the garden all fenced

up without an opening on any side. As he watched, he could also not believe his eyes when the wooden spikes of the fence suddenly turned into sickles and began cutting down the vegetables. If he so wanted, the prince could have now entered the mysterious garden, but he dared not. He rode back to the forest, dismounted and walked up to the yogi. "Yes, son, you seem to be excited. What is the matter?" Rajkirti gave him a description of the mysterious garden. "What did you learn from it, O prince?" asked the yogi. His eyes twinkled at that time. "I don't know, O holy one! It was all a mystery and I can't find an explanation for the strange happening," confessed the prince, looking pleadingly at the yogi. "If you can't understand such simple things, then, how are you going to rule the kingdom? For your stupidity, I shall turn you into a stone pillar!" The next moment Prince Rajkirti became a stone pillar. The king and the other two princes, who had returned to the palace, spent anxious moments when Rajkirti did not make his appearance even by night. The king did not remember to ask his younger sons about their experiences. He found them tired after their day-long wanderings. He told them that they would discuss a strategy to find Prince Rajkirti the next morning. It was decided that Rajmurti would take the road at left and go in search of his brother. Rajsnehi said he would take the road at right, as the pathway he took the previous day had led him to hills and mountains where there was not much of habitation. Rajmurti, like his brother, soon came upon the forest, the three handsome horses and the yogi watching the horses grazing. He forgot about his brother and offered his salutations to the yogi and sought his permission to ride one of the horses. "I have come this way earlier, O holy one, but I have never come across such handsome horses." "Go ahead, O Prince, but come back before sunset and tell me of your adventures," said the yogi, wearing on his face a cheerful smile. Rajmurti in his excitement to jump on to the back of a horse, failed to notice the stone pillar, the top of which had a great resemblance to the face of his brother. He rode on, looking at his left now and at his right then, to find whether he could see Rajkirti anywhere standing, sitting, or lying down. No, he could not find anyone resembling his brother. But, then there was this old man, almost bent double with the heavy load of firewood that he was carrying on his back. Rajmurti pulled up the horse and asked: "Grandfather! Can I help you?" The man did not even raise his head, nor did he speak a single word, but went on picking up more firewood. Rajmurti thought that what he saw was



something strange and he should report it to the yogi. He rode back and when he approached the yogi, he dismounted and paid his obeisance to the holy man. "Tell me, what was your experience?" Rajmurti gave a description of the old man and how he offered to help him. "Why didn't he accept your offer?" queried the yogi. "I don't know, O holy one; he wouldn't speak to me a word," said Rajmurti. "O Prince! If you don't know such simple things, how will you rule the kingdom when you get an opportunity? You're stupid, and you won't remain a prince. I'm turning you into a stone pillar!" When Rajmurti failed to turn up, Rajsnehi was very upset, and the king became enormously worried. His youngest son tried to pacify him and said he would go in search of his brothers the next day. In the morning, the prince took the left path and walked on till he came to the forest. He, too, was captivated by the sight of the horses and the yogi watching them grazing in peace. Suddenly, the prince noticed the two stone pillars. He thought it strange, but the top of the pillars had some resemblance to his brothers' faces. He was intrigued. Rajsnehi approached the yogi and asked, "O holy one, did my brothers come this way?" "Yes, they did, O prince," said the yogi with a smile. "They wished to ride the horses and when they came back they could not answer my questions properly, so I turned them into stone pillars!" "How can they be brought back to life, O holy one?" pleaded Rajsnehi. "You ride a horse, go out and if you see anything strange, come back and explain it to me," said the yogi. "If you give me a satisfactory answer, all three of you can go back riding the three horses." Prince Rajsnehi thought for a while and decided to try his luck; such course of action on his part might also save the lives of his brothers. He mounted one of the horses and rode out as directed by the yogi. He could not find any strange happening or meet any strange character who could help him with a clue to any answer that might satisfy the yogi. He was feeling thirsty and he also wanted to give the horse a rest before proceeding further. He saw a pond at a distance and on reaching the place, he dismounted and let the horse graze for some time. He went near the pond and as he was about to scoop up some water in his hands, he saw the pond receding. He moved forward and got into the water in the hope that he could have a drink where there was plenty of water. Lo! behold; the pond receded further and in no time, the prince found himself standing on the dry bed of a pond! Now this certainly was something really strange and he decided to go back to the yogi. When he narrated his

experience to the yogi, he asked him, "Yes, now please tell me, what do you understand from the phenomenon?" However much the prince racked his brain to find a plausible answer, he could not think up anything that could be acceptable to the yogi. "You are no better than your brothers, O prince. I'm afraid you shall have to meet with the same fate!" The next moment Prince Rajsnehi was turned to a stone pillar. The turmoil in the palace when the youngest prince also did not turn up till late in the night was humungous. The king was full of remorse because it was at his instance that the three princes had gone out. And nobody knew what had happened to them! Despite the minister's suggestion that the army should fan out in search of the princes, the king announced that he himself would go in search of his sons. The king took the same pathway and soon came to the forest and saw the yogi keenly watching the horses grazing peacefully. The king thought the yogi with his powers would be able to tell him something about the princess. "O holy one, I'm sure my three sons came this way during their wanderings in the kingdom-" The yogi did not allow him to proceed further. "Yes, they came, and I put unto them simple questions, which they could not answer. I found them to be stupid and not qualified to become king when their turn came. So, I turned them into stone-pillars. You can see them here!" The king was surprised to see the three pillars and on the tops thereof busts resembling their faces. "What were the questions, O holy one? May I answer them for the sake of my sons?" The yogi then told him of the eldest prince's adventure. "The prince saw a vegetable garden with none to protect them. The spikes of the fence suddenly turned into sickles, and started cutting down the vegetables. What does it mean?" "The fence was there to protect the plants and the vegetables. The fence was like a bad servant who destroys his master's property." The yogi smiled and then narrated the second prince's experience. "The old man, unmindful of the heavy load he was carrying, went on gathering more firewood adding to the weight. What do you make out of it, O King?" The king said, "The firewood stands for karma. The man was not satisfied with whatever he had. He craved for more without realising the karmic-consequences." The yogi was still smiling. "Your youngest son wanted a sip of water but found himself being cheated by the pond. How will you explain that, O king?" "A man who is extravagant and wastes his wealth on

useless things, will be left with nothing in the end; moreover, material fulfillment can never genuinely quench the thirst of desire,” said the king. He heard laughter and found his three sons standing by his side. The pillars had vanished. “O holy one!” said the king, prostrating before the yogi. “I shall serve you all my life for giving back life to my three sons. Today I shall take them back to my palace and I would be obliged if you could join us to teach the boys how to be good kings.” The yogi accepted the king’s invitation and told the princes, “You take a horse each and go back with your father.” After some days, the yogi was ceremonially taken to the palace and installed as the Rajguru of the princes.

13

A nobleman named Ancaeus had led a life of adventure. He had been the captain of a ship and had performed all the difficult tasks in his life well. Now he was tired. He chose a lovely hill-top to build for himself a castle. He had no dearth of wealth. He employed many servants to look after the castle and the orchards and gardens around it. “My son, God has given you enough experience and enough treasure. Now devote your time to some good work and for quiet reflection on the purpose of life,” advised an old venerable teacher of Ancaeus. The nobleman nodded, as if he agreed with the counsel, but that was all he did. He had several friends who knew nothing except to make merry. They always kept him in good humour and he in his turn did everything possible to make them happy. That was a time when small kingdoms fought among themselves. Those who were victorious drove thousands of men and women from the conquered lands into their own kingdom and employed them as slaves. One could buy them in the market. Among such captive slaves were many learned and talented people. But their masters did not care for their merits. They were crushed under hard labour. No mercy was shown to a slave even if he was old or sick or on the verge of death. Ancaeus had a number of slaves. They worked under a very stern and cruel supervisor. Ancaeus had decided to raise a vineyard of choice grapes. The slaves had to work day and night for preparing the rocky ground around his castle for the delicate creepers to grow. “Hurry up, hurry up, you lazy donkeys!” the supervisor would shout at the slaves whilst at the same time whipping them. “Our master would like to have a sumptuous harvest of quality grapes to prepare the best possible wine from them.” “Yes, indeed,” commented Ancaeus, who one day overheard the

supervisor's exhortation to the slaves. "Experts say that the grapes I am planting are the best in the world and this land, too, is eminently suitable for the crop. I look forward to the day when I will taste the first cup of wine made out of my own grapevines." "Do you hear, you fools? Our master is keenly looking forward to tasting the wine from the grapes you are to raise. The sooner the better," shouted the supervisor swinging his whip over the backs of the unfortunate labourers. "Ha!" blurted out one of the slaves; "The master would never be able to taste the wine from the grapes these creepers would produce." Even though the slave said this in a subdued voice, the supervisor heard him. "What did you say, you rogue?" he demanded at a thundering pitch of his voice. "What, what did the fellow say?" queried Ancaeus, turning back. The supervisor caught hold of the slave and shoved him forward. "The fellow has gone mad. He said something that only a lunatic can utter," said the supervisor. "Will you repeat what you said?" demanded Ancaeus. "I said that our master will not be able to taste the wine to be produced from these tender creepers," said the slave. There was a grim silence. Everybody expected the master to punish- probably to kill- the audacious slave. But Ancaeus gravely walked away and ordered his servants to keep a close watch on the slave so that he does not escape. The vineyard yielded a large quantity of delicious grapes. Expert winemakers were commissioned to churn the drink out of them. The job was done and the first cup of wine was brought before Ancaeus. He received it and set it down on the table before him and sent for the slave who had made that unusual prophecy. Everybody understood that the master would punish the fellow whilst enjoying the drink. The slave, looking as solemn as ever, but without the slightest sign of either repentance or fear, stood before his master. Ancaeus laughed. "Do you remember your silly prophecy? Now see, I'm going to taste the wine!" announced the proud master, looking at his friends and flatterers, who stood flanking him. "What have you got to say now?" he asked the slave after yet another hearty laugh. "There's many a slip between the cup and the lip," quietly answered the slave. Ancaeus laughed louder than ever and lifted the cup. Just then a servant came rushing and shouting, "My lord, a terrible boar is laying waste our prize vineyard!" "What! A mere boar!" exclaimed the master, setting the cup down on the table. Picking up his sword, he rushed into his orchard to kill the boar. Lo! behold, the boar killed him. The wine on the table remained untasted.

Upon the banks of a river there once lived a hermit. Unlike the hermits found in the puranas, this hermit was an arrogant creature who thought that none could surpass him in penance. He took great pride in his magical powers and often boasted of his superhuman abilities. "I can save a man from the jaws of a crocodile by means of simply staring at the reptile!" he once told the inhabitants of a nearby village. One day, when he was preparing himself for his morning rituals, a little boy came wandering into the hermitage. He was a skinny lad, bare-bodied and in torn, dirty clothes which hung loosely below his knees. He had, out of curiosity, strayed into the hermit's territory, ignorant of the hermit's terrible temper. As he was about to sit on a rock near the river, the hermit spotted him. "What are you doing here, lad?" he roared. Afraid, the boy jumped up and turned around to face the hermit. "Nothing," he managed to mumble. "Nothing?" bellowed the hermit. "Don't you know that you are about to disturb my meditation? Tell me, who are you?" "I'm Ramu," replied the boy, "son of the fisherman, Shyamu. I live in a village nearby." "Why have you come here?" asked the hermit. "Oh, just to catch fish," replied the boy. "To catch fish? If you've come to catch fish, where's your fishing rod and net?" "I catch fish with pebbles and stones, sir!" murmured the boy. "With stones and pebbles?" boomed the hermit. "O revered sir, I have acquired this skill through practice from the time I was a tiny boy," answered Ramu. "Nonsense!" grunted the hermit. "Now, go away; or else, I'll turn you into a fish!" Terrified, the boy was about to flee when he saw a young girl, a few yards away, filling her pot with water. As she daintily stepped into the shallow waters, a gigantic splash was heard and in a moment a big crocodile came out of the river and in a flash caught the girl's leg and pulled her into the water. "Help me! Help me!" screamed the girl. The hermit and the boy stood speechless with horror for a few seconds, but the boy was the first to react. "Help her, O revered sir! Please deploy your thaumaturgic powers and free the girl from the wretched creature's jaws," pleaded the boy. But the hermit just stood there, trembling with fear. At length, all he could say was: "I can't do it because I haven't yet taken my bath; how can I ever chant my mantras without having taken a bath?" "A girl's life is at stake; use your supramental powers to save her, please!" screamed the boy pleadingly. But the hermit just stood there, shaking like a leaf in the wind. The boy, now feeling disgusted, picked up big stones lying

strewn around the river bank and started aiming at the crocodile. His aim was accurate. Every stone thrown by him struck the reptile's head. Within a few minutes, blood was oozing out from the crocodile's eyes and head. Helpless, the creature let go of the girl and swam away to safety. The courageous boy thus rescued the unfortunate girl. She had, luckily, only suffered a few deep wounds made by the crocodile's sharp teeth. The boy quickly found some herbs and rubbed them on the wounds. The girl smiled at him thankfully. By then, a large crowd of villagers had gathered near the river after having heard the screams of the girl. These people had also witnessed the entire scene; so, when they saw that the girl was safe, they turned angrily on the hermit and asked him why he had not saved the girl's life. "Because I hadn't taken my bath, and I did not have my saffron robes on," replied the hermit nonchalantly. "Robes don't make a saint nor does water purify the soul. You're merely a fraudulent hermit. Shame on you!" cried the villagers. Terrified by the mob's fury, the hermit quickly retreated into the forest. That night, there was a celebration in the village where Ramu was hailed a hero. When asked what he thought of all the praise heaped upon him, he humbly replied: "Robes don't make a man nor does water purify the soul."

15

When Prasenajit was the King of Kosala, he built the capital Sravasti into a great city. An ardent devotee of the Buddha, he had a special regard for the monks who went about spreading the message of the Buddha. He built viharas for the monks where they could go for worship, and put up resting places for them. It was a custom among the monks to seek alms. King Prasenajit arranged for feeding them from the palace. One day he was told that the monks did not eat at the palace, but collected the food at the gates and went back to their resting-houses where they shared the food with others. The king was intrigued. He asked his minister to find out the reason. A few days later, the minister came back to the King with information. "Your majesty, the monks are all from the Sakya clan and they consider themselves socially superior to the people of Kosala." King Prasenajit began thinking of a peaceful solution to the problem. The solution came from the minister himself. "Your majesty, if you married a Sakya princess, the monks would consider at least the royal family as enjoying the same social status as theirs." It so happened that one day, while hunting, the king got separated from his entourage.

Undaunted, he rode on and soon found himself in the Sakya kingdom. When he was recognised, the Sakyas received Prasenajit, who was a votary of Buddhism, with much warmth and great respect. The king accepted the hospitality offered to him and stayed in the Sakya capital for some days. By and by, he made his wish known that he would like to marry a Sakya princess. The Sakyas had some reservations about a princess being given away in marriage to Prasenajit. Their leaders wondered how they could avoid disappointing the Kosala king. The chief of the Sakyas, Mahanama, announced that he would deal with the problem. He cleverly suggested that his daughter, Vasavi, who was born of a slave woman and a concubine, would be offered to the king. The girl, though not a true princess, was young and beautiful. The wedding of Vasavi with King Prasenajit was a grand affair. After three days of celebrations in Kapilavastu, King Prasenajit on horseback and Vasavi in a decorated palanquin were escorted up to the borders of Kapilavastu. The people of Kosala greeted their royal bride with great respect and admiration. However, when Prasenajit went to the bridal chamber, he found Vasavi in tears. He thought Vasavi was missing her people back in Kapilavastu. But when he asked her, she told him, "I am shedding tears because the Sakyas have cheated you. They did not want to give you a real Sakya princess. True, I'm a daughter of chief Mahanama, but my mother is a slave woman and a concubine." King Prasenajit was shocked and wanted to cancel all celebrations in Sravasti and lead his army against the Sakyas. But the Buddhist in him did not allow him to think of revenge and bloodshed. So, he decided to forgive the Sakyas. He assured Vasavi that in Kosala, she would enjoy the status of a queen. Prasenajit proved to be a very loving husband. The more he loved her, the more Vasavi came to hate the Sakyas. A son was born to Vasavi. He was named Birudhak. As time passed, he grew into a handsome young prince. He expressed a desire to visit Kapilavastu and call on his grandfather and grandmother. However, Vasavi found one excuse or another to put off such a visit. At last, she agreed to his journey to Kapilavastu. The Sakyas were not very enthusiastic to accord a welcome to the son of a slave-woman, although he was the prince of a kingdom. However, at the instance of Mahanama, he was given a seat in the Council Hall, next to that of Mahanama. The Sakyas heaved a sigh of relief when the prince announced his departure for Sravasti after just two days in Kapilavastu. Hardly had the prince and his escorts

left Kapilavastu when one of his bodyguards realised he had left his spear in the Council Hall. The prince permitted him to go back to fetch it. As soon as he entered the hall, he was shocked to see a slave girl washing the chair on which Prince Birudhak had sat for two days. On enquiry, he was told, "This is the chair on which the slave-woman's son was sitting. It must be washed before anyone else uses it." The bodyguard went back and promptly reported the matter to his master, the prince. The prince was shocked. On his return, he straight away went to his mother and asked, "Mother, are you the daughter of a slave-woman?" Vasavi was taken aback, though she always knew that some day her son would surely pose unto her the question. "Yes, my son, my mother was a slave woman although I'm the daughter of the Sakya chief. The Sakyas cheated your father by marrying me to him as though I were a true princess." "Mother, someday I shall teach the Sakyas a good lesson.": Birudhak took such vow in the presence of his mother who, as mentioned before, had hated the Sakyas all along. The prince waited till he ascended the throne after the death of his father. Soon afterwards, he mustered a huge army and marched against the Sakyas. Kapilavastu was razed to the ground.

16

Once upon a time the eldest amongst the pandavas went to Bhishma for the purpose of obtaining advice. This is the conversation that transpired between them: "Yudhishtira said, 'Time, which is destructive of every created thing, is passing on. Tell me, O grandsire, what is that good thing which should be sought.' "Bhishma said, 'In this connection, O king, is cited the old narrative of a discourse between sire and son, O Yudhishtira! A certain Brahmana, O Partha, who was devoted to the study of the Vedas, obtained a very intelligent son who (owing to his superior intelligence) was called Medhavin. One day, the son, well conversant with the truths of the religion of Emancipation, and acquainted also with the affairs of the world, addressed his sire who was devoted to the study of the Vedas.' "The son said, 'What should a wise man do, O father, seeing that the period of human life is passing away so very quickly? O father, tell me the course of duties that one should perform, without omitting to mention the fruits. Having listened to thee, I desire to observe those duties.' "The sire said, 'O son, observing the Brahmacharya mode of life, one should first study the Vedas. He should then wish for children for rescuing his ancestors.



Setting up his fire next, he should seek to perform the (prescribed) sacrifices according to due rites. At last, he should enter the forest for devoting himself to contemplation.' "The son said, 'When the world is thus surrounded on all sides and is thus assailed, and when such irresistible things of fatal consequences fall upon it, how can you say these words so calmly?' "The sire said, 'How is the world assailed? What is that by which it is surrounded? What, again, are those irresistible things of fatal consequences that fall upon it? Why dost thou frighten me thus?' "The son said, 'Death is that by which the world is assailed. Decrepitude encompasses it. Those irresistible things that come and go away are the nights (that are continually lessening the period of human life). When I know that Death tarries for none (but approaches steadily towards every creature), how can I pass my time without covering myself with the sheath of knowledge? When each succeeding night, passing away lessens the allotted period of one's existence, the man of wisdom should regard the day to be fruitless. (When death is approaching steadily) who is there that would, like a fish in a shallow water, feel happy? Death comes to a man before his desires have been gratified. Death snatches away a person when he is engaged in plucking flowers and when his heart is otherwise set, like a tigress bearing away a ram. Do thou, this very day, accomplish that which is for thy good. Let not this Death come to thee. Death drags its victims before their acts are accomplished. The acts of tomorrow should be done today, those of the afternoon in the forenoon. Death does not wait to see whether the acts of its victim have all been accomplished or not. Who knows that Death will not come to him even today? In prime of age one should betake oneself to the practice of virtue. Life is transitory. If virtue be practised, fame here and felicity hereafter will be the consequences. Overwhelmed by ignorance, one is ready to exert oneself for sons and wives. Achieving virtuous or vicious acts, one brings them up and aggrandises them. Like a tiger bearing away a sleeping deer, Death snatches away the man addicted to the gratification of desire and engaged in the enjoyment of sons and animals. Before he has been able to pluck the flowers upon which he has set his heart, before he has been gratified by the acquisition of the objects of his desire, Death bears him away like a tiger bearing away its prey. Death overpowers a man while the latter is still in the midst of the happiness that accrues from the gratification of desire, and while, still thinking, 'This has been done; this is to be done; this has been half-

done.' Death bears away the man, however designated according to his profession, attached to his field, his shop, or his home, before he has obtained the fruit of his acts. Death bears away the weak, the strong, the brave, the timid, the idiotic, and the learned, before any of these obtains the fruits of his acts. When death, decrepitude, disease, and sorrow arising from diverse causes, are all residing in thy body, how is it that thou livest as if thou art perfectly hale? As soon as a creature is born, Decrepitude and Death pursue him for (effecting) his destruction. All existent things, mobile and immobile, are affected by these two. The attachment which one feels for dwelling in villages and towns (in the midst of fellowmen) is said to be the very mouth of Death. The forest, on the other hand, is regarded as the fold within which the senses may be penned. This is declared by the Srutis. The attachment a person feels for dwelling in a village or town (in the midst of men) is like a cord that binds him effectually. They that are good break that cord and attain to emancipation, while they that are wicked do not succeed in breaking them. He who never injures living creatures by thought, word, or deed, is never injured by such agencies as are destructive of life and property. Nothing can resist the messengers (Disease and Decrepitude) of Death when they advance except Truth which devours Untruth. In Truth deathlessness alone is immortality. For these reasons one should practise the vow of Truth; one should devote oneself to a union with Truth; one should accept Truth for one's Veda; and restraining one's senses, one should vanquish the Destroyer by Truth. Both Immortality and Death are planted in the body. One comes to Death through ignorance and loss of judgment; while Immortality is achieved through Truth. I shall, therefore, abstain from injury and seek to achieve Truth, and transgressing the sway of desire and wrath, regard pleasure and pain with an equal eye, and attaining tranquillity, avoid Death like an immortal. Upon the advent of that season when the sun will progress towards the north, I shall restraining my senses, set to the performance of the Santi-sacrifice, the Brahma-sacrifice, the Mind-sacrifice, and the Work-sacrifice. How can one like me worship his Maker in animal-sacrifices involving cruelty, or sacrifices of the body, such as Pisachas only can perform and such as produce fruits that are transitory? That person whose words, thoughts, penances, renunciation, and yoga meditation, all rest on Brahma, succeeds in earning the highest good. There is no eye which is equal to (the eye of) Knowledge. There is no penance

like (that involved in) Truth. There is no sorrow equal to (that involved in) attachment. There is no happiness like (that which is obtainable from) renunciation. I have sprung from Brahma through Brahma. I shall devote myself to Brahma, though I am childless. I shall return to Brahma. I do not require a son for rescuing me. A Brahmana can have no wealth like to the state of being alone, the state in consequence of which he is capable of regarding everything with an equal eye, the practice of truthfulness, good behaviour, patience, abstention from injury, simplicity, and avoidance of all rites and visible sacrifices. What use hast thou, O Brahmana, of wealth or kinsmen and relatives, of wives, when thou shalt have to die? Seek thy Self which is concealed in a cave. Where are thy grandsires and where thy sire?' "Bhishma continued, 'Do thou also, O monarch, conduct thyself in that way in which the sire (in this story), conducts himself, devoted to the religion of Truth, after having listened to the speech of his son.' This conversation is further elucidated hereasunder: "Yudhishtira said, 'Time, that is fraught, with terror unto all creatures, is running his course. What is that source of good after which one should strive? Tell me this, O grandsire!' "Bhishma said, 'In this connection is cited the old narrative of a discourse between a sire and a son. Listen to it, O Yudhishtira! Once upon a time, O son of Pritha, a regenerate person devoted only to the study of the Vedas had a very intelligent son who was known by the name of Medhavin. Himself conversant with the religion of Emancipation, the son one day asked his father who was not so conversant with such religion and who was engaged in following the precepts of the Vedas, this question.' "The son said, 'What should a man of intelligence do, O sire, knowing that the period of existence allotted to men runs fast away? Tell me this truly and in proper order, O father, so that, guided by thy instructions I may set myself to the acquisition of virtue.' "The sire said, 'Having studied the Vedas all the while observing the duties of Brahmacharya, O son, one should then desire for offspring for the sake of rescuing one's sires. Having established one's fire then and performing the sacrifices that are ordained, one should then retire into the woods and (having lived as a forest-recluse) one should then become a Muni (by casting off everything and calmly waiting for dissolution of the physical frame).' "The son said, 'When the world is thus assailed and thus besieged on all sides, and when such irresistible (bolts) are falling in every direction, how can you speak so calmly?' "The sire said, 'How is the world assailed? By what is it

besieged? What are those irresistible bolts that are falling on every side? Dost thou frighten me with thy words?' "The son said, 'The world is assailed by Death. It is besieged by Decrepitude. Days and Nights are continually falling (like bolts). Why do you not take heed of these? When I know that Death does not wait here for any one (but snatches all away suddenly and without notice), how can I possibly wait (for his coming) thus enveloped in a coat of Ignorance and (heedlessly) attending to my concerns? When as each night passes away the period of every one's life wears away with it, when, indeed, one's position is similar to that of a fish in a piece of shallow water, who can feel happy? Death encounters one in the very midst of one's concerns, before the attainment of one's objects, finding one as unmindful as a person while engaged in plucking flowers. That which is kept for being done tomorrow should be done today; and that which one thinks of doing in the afternoon should be done in the forenoon. Death does not wait, mindful of one's having done or not done one's acts. Do today what is for thy good (without keeping it for tomorrow). See that Death, who is irresistible, may not overcome thee (before you accomplish thy acts). Who knows that Death will not come to one this very day? Before one's acts are completed, Death drags one away. One should, therefore, commence to practise virtue while one is still young (without waiting for one's old age); for life is uncertain. By acquiring virtue one is sure to eternal happiness both here and hereafter. Overpowered by folly one girds up one's loins for acting on behalf of one's sons and wives. By accomplishing acts foul or fair, one gratifies these (relatives). Him possessed of sons and animals, and with mind devotedly attached to them, Death seizes and runs away like a tiger bearing away a sleeping deer. While one is still engaged in winning diverse objects of desire, and while still unsatiated with one's enjoyment, Death seizes one and runs away like a she-wolf seizing a sheep and running away with it. 'This has been done',--'this remains to be done',--'this other is half done',--one may say thus to oneself; but Death, unmindful of one's desire to finish one's unfinished acts, seizes and drags one away. One that has not yet obtained the fruit of what one has already done, amongst those attached to action, one busied with one's field or shop or house, Death seizes and carries away. The weak, the strong; the wise, the brave, the idiotic, the learned, or him that has not yet obtained the gratification of any of his desires, Death seizes and bears away. Death, decrepitude, disease, sorrow, and many things of

a similar kind, are incapable of being avoided by mortals. How, then, O father, canst thou sit so at thy ease? As soon as a creature is born, Decrepitude and Death come and possess him for his destruction. All these forms of existence mobile and immobile, are possessed by these two (viz., Decrepitude and Death). When the soldiers that compose Death's army are on their march, nothing can resist them, except that one thing, viz., the power of Truth, for in Truth alone Immortality dwells. The delight that one feels of residing in the midst of men is the abode of Death. The Sruti declares that that which is called the forest is the true fold for the Devas, while the delight one feels in dwelling in the midst of men is, as it were, the cord for binding the dweller (and making him helpless). The righteous cut it and escape. The sinful do not succeed in cutting it (and freeing themselves). He who does not injure other creatures in thought, word and deed, and who never injures others by taking away their means of sustenance, is never injured by any creature. For these reasons, one should practise the vow of truth, be steadily devoted to the vow of truth, and should desire nothing but the truth. Restraining all one's senses and looking upon all creatures with an equal eye, one should vanquish Death with the aid of Truth. Both Immortality and Death are planted in the body. Death is encountered from folly, and Immortality is won by Truth. Transcending desire and wrath, and abstaining from injury, I shall adopt Truth and happily achieving what is for my good, avoid Death like an Immortal. Engaged in the Sacrifice that is constituted by Peace, and employed also in the Sacrifice of Brahma, and restraining my senses, the Sacrifices I shall perform are those of speech, mind, and acts, when the sun enters his northerly course. How can one like me perform an Animal Sacrifice which is fraught with cruelty? How can one like me, that is possessed of wisdom, perform like a cruel Pisacha, a Sacrifice of Slaughter after the manner of what is laid down for the Kshatriyas,--a Sacrifice that is, besides, endued with rewards that are terminable? In myself have I been begotten by my own self. O father, without seeking to procreate offspring, I shall rest myself on my own self. I shall perform the Sacrifice of Self, I need no offspring to rescue me. He whose words and thoughts are always well-restrained, he who has Penances and Renunciation, and Yoga, is sure to attain to everything through these. There is no eye equal to Knowledge. There is no reward equal to Knowledge. There is no sorrow equal to attachment. There is no happiness equal to Renunciation. For a Brahmana there can be no

wealth like residence in solitude, an equal regard for all creatures, truthfulness of speech, steady observance of good conduct, the total abandonment of the rod (of chastisement), simplicity, and the gradual abstention from all acts. What need hast thou with wealth and what need with relatives and friends, and what with spouses? Thou art a Brahmana and thou hast death to encounter. Search thy own Self that is concealed in a cave. Whither have thy grandsires gone and whither thy sire too?' "Bhishma said, 'Hearing these words of his son, the sire acted in the way that was pointed out, O king! Do thou also act in the same way, devoted to the religion of Truth.'"

17

Once upon a time whilst the Pandavas were staying in the forest the following incident transpired in relation to the sage Durvasa:

Janamejaya said, "While the high-souled Pandavas were living in the forest, delighted with the pleasant conversation they held with the Munis, and engaged in distributing the food they obtained from the sun, with various kinds of venison to Brahmanas and others that came to them for edibles till the hour of Krishna's meal, how, O great Muni, did Duryodhana and the other wicked and sinful sons of Dhritarashtra, guided by the counsels of Dussasana, Karna and Sakuni, deal with them? I ask thee this. Do thou, worshipful Sir, enlighten me." Vaisampayana said, "When, O great king, Duryodhana heard that the Pandavas were living as happily in the woods as in a city, he longed, with the artful Karna, Dussasana and others, to do them harm. And while those evil-minded persons were employed in concerting various wicked designs, the virtuous and celebrated ascetic Durvasa, following the bent of his own will, arrived at the city of the Kurus with ten thousand disciples. And seeing the irascible ascetic arrived, Duryodhana and his brothers welcomed him with great humility, self-abasement and gentleness. And himself attending on the Rishi as a menial, the prince gave him a right worshipful reception. And the illustrious Muni stayed there for a few days, while king Duryodhana, watchful of his imprecations, attended on him diligently by day and night. And sometimes the Muni would say, 'I am hungry, O king, give me some food quickly.' And sometimes he would go out for a bath and, returning at a late hour, would say, 'I shall not eat anything today as I have no appetite,' and so saying would disappear from his sight. And sometimes, coming all on a sudden, he would say, 'Feed us quickly.' And at other times, bent on some mischief, he would awake at midnight and having

caused his meals to be prepared as before, would carp at them and not partake of them at all. And trying the prince in this way for a while, when the Muni found that the king Duryodhana was neither angered, nor annoyed, he became graciously inclined towards him. And then, O Bharata, the intractable Durvasa said unto him, 'I have power to grant thee boons. Thou mayst ask of me whatever lies nearest to thy heart. May good fortune be thine. Pleased as I am with thee, thou mayst obtain from me anything that is not opposed to religion and morals.' Vaisampayana continued, "Hearing these words of the great ascetic, Suyodhana felt himself to be inspired with new life. Indeed, it had been agreed upon between himself and Karna and Dussasana as to what the boon should be that he would ask of the Muni if the latter were pleased with his reception. And the evil-minded king, bethinking himself of what had previously been decided, joyfully solicited the following favour, saying, 'The great king Yudhishtira is the eldest and the best of our race. That pious man is now living in the forest with his brothers. Do thou, therefore, once become the guest of that illustrious one even as, O Brahmana, thou hast with thy disciples been mine for some time. If thou art minded to do me a favour, do thou go unto him at a time when that delicate and excellent lady, the celebrated princess of Panchala, after having regaled with food the Brahmanas, her husbands and herself, may lie down to rest.' The Rishi replied, 'Even so shall I act for thy satisfaction.' And having said this to Suyodhana, that great Brahmana, Durvasa, went away in the very same state in which he had come. And Suyodhana regarded himself to have attained all the objects of his desire. And holding Karna by the hand he expressed great satisfaction. And Karna, too, joyfully addressed the king in the company of his brothers, saying, 'By a piece of singular good luck, thou hast fared well and attained the objects of thy desire. And by good luck it is that thy enemies have been immersed in a sea of dangers that is difficult to cross. The sons of Pandu are now exposed to the fire of Durvasa's wrath. Through their own fault they have fallen into an abyss of darkness.'" Vaisampayana continued, "O king, expressing their satisfaction in this strain, Duryodhana and others, bent on evil machinations, returned merrily to their respective homes." Vaisampayana said, "One day, having previously ascertained that the Pandavas were all seated at their ease and that Krishna was reposing herself after her meal, the sage Durvasa, surrounded by ten thousand disciples repaired to that forest. The

illustrious and upright king Yudhishtira, seeing that guest arrived, advanced with his mothers to receive him. And joining the palms of his hands and pointing to a proper and excellent seat, he accorded the Rishis a fit and respectful welcome. And the king said unto him, 'Return quick, O adorable sir, after performing thy diurnal ablutions and observances.' And that sinless Muni, not knowing how the king would be able to provide a feast for him and his disciples, proceeded with the latter to perform his ablutions. And that host of the Muni, of subdued passions, went into the stream for performing their ablutions. Meanwhile, O king, the excellent princess Draupadi, devoted to her husbands, was in great anxiety about the food (to be provided for the Munis). And when after much anxious thought she came to the conclusion that means there were none for providing a feast, she inwardly prayed to Krishna, the slayer of Kansa. And the princess said, 'Krishna, O Krishna, of mighty arms, O son of Devaki, whose power is inexhaustible, O Vasudeva, O lord of the Universe, who dispellest the difficulties of those that bow down to thee, thou art the soul, the creator and the destroyer of the Universe. Thou, O lord, art inexhaustible and the saviour of the afflicted. Thou art the preserver of the Universe and of all created beings. Thou art the highest of the high, and the spring of the mental perceptions Akuli and Chiti! O Supreme and Infinite Being, O giver of all good, be thou the refuge of the helpless. O Primordial Being, incapable of being conceived by the soul or the mental faculties or otherwise, thou art the ruler of all and the lord of Brahma. I seek thy protection. O god, thou art ever kindly disposed towards those that take refuge in thee. Do thou cherish me with thy kindness. O thou with a complexion dark as the leaves of the blue lotus, and with eyes red as the corolla of the lily, and attired in yellow robes with, besides, the bright Kaustubha gem in thy bosom, thou art the beginning and the end of creation, and the great refuge of all. Thou art the supreme light and essence of the Universe! Thy face is directed towards every point. They call thee Supreme Germ and the depository of all treasures. Under thy protections, O lord of the gods, all evils lose their terror. As thou didst protect me before from Dussasana, do thou extricate me now from this difficulty." Vaisampayana continued, "The great and sovereign God, and Lord of the earth, of mysterious movements, the lord Kesava who is ever kind to the dependents, thou adored by Krishna, and perceiving her difficulty, instantly repaired to that place leaving the bed of Rukmini who was sleeping by his side. Beholding



Vasudeva, Draupadi bowed down to him in great joy and informed him of the arrival of the Munis and every other thing. And having heard everything Krishna said unto her, 'I am very much afflicted with hunger, do thou give me some food without delay, and then thou mayst go about thy work.' At these words of Kesava, Krishna became confused, and replied unto him, saying, 'The sun-given vessel remains full till I finish my meal. But as I have already taken my meal today, there is no food in it now. Then that lotus-eyed and adorable being said unto Krishna, 'This is no time for jest, O Krishna.--I am much distressed with hunger, go thou quickly to fetch the vessel and show it to me.' When Kesava, that ornament of the Yadu's race, had the vessel brought unto him,--with such persistence, he looked into it and saw a particle of rice and vegetable sticking at its rim. And swallowing it he said unto her, 'May it please the god Hari, the soul of the Universe, and may that god who partaketh at sacrifices, be satiated with this.' Then the long-armed Krishna, that soother of miseries, said unto Bhimasena, 'Do thou speedily invite the Munis to dinner. Then, O good king, the celebrated Bhimasena quickly went to invite all those Munis, Durvasa and others, who had gone to the nearest stream of transparent and cool water to perform their ablutions. Meanwhile, these ascetics, having plunged into the river, were rubbing their bodies and observing that they all felt their stomachs to be full. And coming out of the stream, they began to stare at one another. And turning towards Durvasa, all those ascetics observed, 'Having bade the king make our meals ready, we have come hither for a bath. But how, O regenerate Rishi, can we eat anything now, for our stomachs seem to be full to the throat. The repast hath been uselessly prepared for us. What is the best thing to be done now?' Durvasa replied, 'By spoiling the repast, we have done a great wrong to that royal sage, king Yudhishtira. Would not the Pandavas destroy us by looking down upon us with angry eyes? I know the royal sage Yudhishtira to be possessed of great ascetic power. Ye Brahmanas, I am afraid of men that are devoted to Hari. The high-souled Pandavas are all religious men, learned, war-like, diligent in ascetic austerities and religious observances, devoted to Vasudeva, and always observant of rules of good conduct. If provoked, they can consume us with their wrath as fire doth a bale of cotton. Therefore, ye disciples, do ye all run away quickly without seeing them (again)!" Vaisampayana continued, "All those Brahmanas, thus advised by their ascetic

preceptor, became greatly afraid of the Pandavas and fled away in all directions. Then Bhimasena not beholding those excellent Munis in the celestial river, made a search after them here and there at all the landing places. And learning from the ascetics of those places that they had run away, he came back and informed Yudhishtira of what had happened. Then all the Pandavas of subdued senses, expecting them to come, remained awaiting their arrival for some time. And Yudhishtira said, 'Coming dead of night the Rishis will deceive us. Oh how, can we escape from this difficulty created by the facts?' Seeing them absorbed in such reflections and breathing long deep sighs at frequent intervals, the illustrious Krishna suddenly appeared to them and addressed them these words: 'Knowing, ye sons of Pritha, your danger from that wrathful Rishi, I was implored by Draupadi to come, and (therefore) have I come here speedily. But now ye have not the least fear from the Rishi Durvasa. Afraid of your ascetic powers, he hath made himself scarce ere this. Virtuous men never suffer. I now ask your permission to let me return home. May you always be prosperous!'" Vaisampayana continued, "Hearing Kesava's words, the sons of Pritha, with Draupadi, became easy in mind. And cured of their fever (of anxiety), they said unto him, 'As persons drowning in the wide ocean safely reach the shore by means of a boat, so have we, by thy aid, O lord Govinda, escaped from this inextricable difficulty. Do thou now depart in peace, and may prosperity be thine.' Thus dismissed, he repaired to his capital and the Pandavas too, O blessed lord, wandering from forest to forest passed their days merrily with Draupadi. Thus, O king, have I related to thee the story which thou askedest me to repeat. And it was thus that the machinations of the wicked sons of Dhritarashtra about the Pandavas in the forest, were frustrated."

18

There was a Brahmin named Kaushika in a village which was situated at the confluence of two rivers. He was very strict in the observance of his vows. One of his vows was "I will ever speak the Truth." Therefore he became famous as a truthful man. Once, the people of the village were afraid of robbers. They went into the forest. The robbers tried to find them out even in the forest. The robbers approached Kaushika and said, "O truthful man! Please tell us which way these persons have passed a little while ago? Tell us if you have seen them, in the name of Truth." Kaushika told them the truth. The robbers seized those persons and killed them. Kaushika,

who had no knowledge of the subtleties of religion, fell into horrible hell for the grave sin of uttering the truth which should not have been uttered. Even Truth divorced from the principle of Ahimsa can be a source of sin- as we have seen in this case!

19

After the Mahabharata war was over, the Pandavas did the ceremonial rites of all their relatives. Yudhishtira then assumed rulership of his kingdom. He ruled the country peacefully and justly for a number of years. When Lord Krishna, who was the chief support and the mainstay of the Pandavas passed away to his original abode in the Heavens, the whole world lost its charm for Yudhishtira. The Pandavas and Draupadi made preparations for their journey towards Heaven. They took leave of their kingdom and marched towards the Himalayas. A faithful pet-dog of the Pandavas which could not bear the separation from them even for a second also followed them. They were clad in birch-bark and walked barefooted. They reached the snowy regions of the Himalayas. All save Yudhishtira fainted on the way and died. Yudhishtira alone proceeded on his journey, followed by the dog. Yudhishtira went on walking amidst the snowy peaks of the Himalayas; he had long lost his way. He had no further interest left in life; his wife and brothers had dropped dead like ripe fruits from a tree; the eldest Pandava also expected to go this way; therefore he roamed about aimlessly in the intense cold of the Himalayan mountain ranges, hoping that the low temperature would contribute to a quick demise of his body. He was unaware that his destiny lay in entering Heaven whilst still retaining a body- i.e., in the corporeal form. At length, after months of wandering, Yudhishtira saw that a celestial light was moving towards him. In the midst of the celestial light was Indra, the god of Heaven, in his chariot approaching to welcome him. Indra said, 'O noble Yudhishtira! You have got the rare privilege of entering Heaven in your human form, as you led a virtuous and untainted life. Please ascend this chariot which will take you at once to the abode of Heaven.' Yudhishtira said, 'I have no desire to enter Heaven without my brothers and Draupadi by my side. They should also accompany me. Even Heaven itself is not worthy of attainment, if its realisation meant separation from one's beloved persons who have been allotted to remain with one amidst one's pains and sufferings in this life. Really I do not want such a Heaven which could separate me from my devoted brothers and devoted wife.' Indra said, 'O

Yudhishtira! Ascend the chariot and come to Heaven. You will find them there. Be assured.' Then Yudhishtira accepted the invitation and allowed the dog to go first into the chariot. Indra said, 'O king! You have won immortality. Enjoy the happiness of Heaven. Send away this dog. There is no place for a dog in Heaven. It will pollute the place. You left your brothers and Draupadi behind dying, as you were ascending to Heaven. Is a dog worthier than them? Can you not renounce this dog?' Yudhishtira said, 'The scriptures have impressed on us that to spurn a suppliant is equal in sin to the murder of a Brahmin. Therefore, not even for the bliss of the highest Heaven, I am prepared to forsake, O Mahendra, this poor faithful dog, who has no hope or friend other than me, so helpless, and has taken shelter with me- me, who, among men, was called steadfast and just. As for my brothers and my beloved Draupadi, it is well known that none can hurt or help the dead. They, my dear ones, who died would not have arisen even if I had turned- therefore I did not turn back for them. I would have turned back if it would have helped them. The dog has been my faithful companion throughout its life. How can I renounce this faithful dog who has ever followed me like a shadow and has helped me in my adversity? This is unworthy of a true Kshatriya. It will surely bring me a bad name. It will bring a great taint on my character and the virtuous life I had led. I will be an object of contempt even in my own eyes. I will be charged with selfishness and ingratitude. To abandon such a dog, at a time when I am about to enjoy the Highest Bliss, is a great sin and crime indeed. There are four sins, O Sakra, grievous sins: the first is making a suppliant despair, the second is to slay a nursing wife, the third is spoiling Brahmins' goods, the fourth is injuring an ancient friend; but even these four, I consider to be not as worse as the sin of abandoning a humble comrade at the time of coming out of woe and weal and entering into a happier state. Therefore I am determined not to enter Heaven itself, if I am not permitted to take this dog with me.' That very instant the dog disappeared and Yudhishtira saw in its place Lord Yama- Lord of Dharma- the god of Righteousness. He said, "O Yudhishtira! You renounced even Heaven itself for the sake of a mere dog. Thrice blessed art thou! There is no one in Heaven who is equal unto thee. Regions of eternal bliss are thine forever." Yudhishtira thus ascended Heaven in his mortal frame. However, even Yudhishtira was not perfectly sinless. The sin appurtenant to the slaughter of Drona was in part borne by him. Therefore,

Yudhishtira first had to undergo sometime in hell before he could enter Heaven.

20

Dhritarashtra said: "O Venerable Vidura! Tell me at full length the story of the Brahmin who was caught in the wilderness of life." Vidura said: "Once a certain Brahmin was caught in a vast thick forest which was inhabited by wild beasts like lions, tigers, leopards and other kinds. The Brahmin became perturbed and frightened. He went hither and thither to find out some place of refuge. He did not succeed. He found the forest enmeshed in a net. He saw a terrible woman standing there with outstretched hands. Many five headed snakes also lived in that terrible forest. There was a pit within the forest which was covered by trees, herbs and creepers. The Brahmin fell into the pit in the course of his wanderings. He got himself entangled in the spreading branches of a big tree. He was hanging there with feet upwards and head downwards. In this position, he saw a big snake within the pit. He also saw a huge six-faced, twelve-footed elephant slowly approaching the pit and a number of black and white mice and rats gnawing and eating the very roots of the tree. Bees swarmed in large numbers to drink the honey in the comb that was hanging from a branch of the tree. The honey was trickling down in drops. The man who was thus hanging from the tree drank the honey but his thirst was not quenched. He did not obtain any satisfaction. On the other hand the thirst became more and more intense. He was restless and discontented. He was not disgusted with life. He was still clinging to life. The thirst for life became intense. His desire to continue his existence even in such miserable conditions was growing stronger and stronger. Imagine the miserable plight of the Brahmin! He got terrified of the carnivorous beasts, of the gigantic woman with outstretched arms, of the huge snake at the bottom of the pit, of the elephant near the tree, of the impending fall of the tree through the action of the rats and lastly of the bees flying about to taste the honey. But the ignorant Brahmin continued to dwell in this miserable condition. He lost his power of discrimination. He was lost to all sense of right understanding and intelligence. But he did not lose, at any time, the hope of prolonging his life."

Dhritarashtra said: "O learned Vidura! Tell me, what is that wilderness you refer to? What is the snake that dwells in the bottom of the pit? What is that six-faced elephant? Please explain to me in detail all about this excellent parable." Vidura replied: "The

'wilderness' is this mysterious universe. The limited sphere of one's own life is the enmeshed 'forest' within it. The 'beasts' that dwell in this forest are the various diseases to which man is subject to. The 'gigantic woman' who resides in this forest is decrepitude which destroys beauty. The 'pit' is this physical body. The 'huge snake' that dwells in the bottom of that pit is time, the universal destroyer of all creatures. Desire for life is the 'tree' that grows in the pit. Man is attached to the spreading branches of this 'tree' and hangs down. The 'six-faced elephant' is the year. This marches towards the tree that stands at the mouth of the pit. The 'six faces' are the seasons. Its 'twelve legs' are the twelve months. The 'rats and the mice' that are cutting off the tree are the days and nights that are continually lessening the span of life of all creatures. The 'bees' are our desires. The 'drops of honey' that are oozing out are the sensual pleasures derived from the gratification of our desires. The ignorant man clings to the sensuous objects perceived by him. He is thus caught in the wheel of births and deaths. The sages know life's course to be even such. They tear off the bonds of this mundane life through discrimination, dispassion and knowledge of the Self and enjoy Eternal Bliss and Immortality."

21

The following is the story of Yayati: Vaisampayana said unto Janamejaya, "Yayati was a monarch of great prowess and virtue. He ruled the whole Earth, performed numerous sacrifices, worshipped the Pitris with great reverence, and always respected the gods. And he brought the whole world under his sway and was never vanquished by any foe. And the sons of Yayati were all great bowmen and resplendent with every virtue. And, O king, they were begotten upon (his two wives) Devayani and Sarmishtha. And of Devayani were born Yadu and Turvasu, and of Sarmishtha were born Drahyu, Anu, and Puru. And, O king, having virtuously ruled his subjects for a long time, Yayati was attacked with a hideous decrepitude destroying his personal beauty. And attacked by decrepitude, the monarch then spoke, O Bharata, unto his sons Yadu and Puru and Turvasu and Drahyu and Anu these words, 'Ye dear sons, I wish to be a young man and to gratify my appetites in the company of young women. Do you help me therein.' To him his eldest son born of Devayani then said, 'What needest thou, O king? Dost thou want to have your youth?' Yayati then told him, 'Accept thou my decrepitude, O son! With thy youth I would enjoy myself.

During the time of a great sacrifice I have been cursed by the Muni Usanas (Sukra). O son, I would enjoy myself with your youth. Take any of you this my decrepitude and with my body rule ye my kingdom. I would enjoy myself with a renovated body. Therefore, ye my sons, take ye my decrepitude.' But none of his sons accepted his decrepitude. Then his youngest son Puru said unto him, 'O king, enjoy thyself thou once again with a renovated body and returned youth! I shall take thy decrepitude and at thy command rule thy kingdom.' Thus addressed, the royal sage, by virtue of his ascetic power then transferred his own decrepitude unto that high-souled son of his and with the youth of Puru became a youth; while with the monarch's age Puru ruled his kingdom. Then, after a thousand years had passed away, Yayati, that tiger among kings, remained as strong and powerful as a tiger. And he enjoyed for a long time the companionship of his two wives. And in the gardens of Chitraratha (the king of Gandharvas), the king also enjoyed the company of the Apsara Viswachi. But even after all this, the great king found his appetites unsatiated. The king, then recollected the following truths contained in the Puranas, 'Truly, one's appetites are never satiated by enjoyment. On the other hand, like sacrificial butter poured into the fire, they flame up with indulgence. Even if one enjoyed the whole Earth with its wealth, diamonds and gold, animals and women, one may not yet be satiated. It is only when man doth not commit any sin in respect of any living thing, in thought, deed, or speech, it is then that he attaineth to purity as that of Brahman. When one feareth nothing, when one is not feared by anything, when one wisheth for nothing, when one injureth nothing, it is then that one attaineth to the purity of Brahman.' The wise monarch seeing this and satisfied that one's appetites are never satiated, set his mind at rest by meditation, and took back from his son his own decrepitude. And giving him back his youth, though his own appetites were unsatiated, and installing him on the throne, he spoke unto Puru thus, 'Thou art my true heir, thou art my true son by whom my race is to be continued. In the world shall my race be known by thy name.' Then that tiger among kings, having installed his son Puru on the throne, went away to the mount of Bhrgu for devoting himself to asceticism. And, having acquired great ascetic merit, after long years, he succumbed to the inevitable influence of Time. He left his human body by observing the vow of fasting, and eventually ascended to heaven with his wives."

The following narrative contains the story of Jajali and Chirakarini:  
"Yudhishtira said, 'All men that inhabit this earth are filled with doubts in respect of the nature of righteousness. Who is this that is called Righteousness? Whence also does Righteousness come? Tell me this, O Grand sire! Is Righteousness for service in this world or is it for service in the next world? Or, is it for service both here and hereafter? Tell me this, O grand sire!' Bhishma said, 'The practices of the good, the Smritis, and the Vedas, are the three indications (sources) of righteousness. Besides these, the learned have declared that the purpose (for which an act is accomplished) is the fourth indication of righteousness. The Rishis of old have declared what acts are righteous and also classified them as superior or inferior in point of merit. The rules of righteousness have been laid down for the conduct of the affairs of the world. In both the worlds, that is, here and hereafter, righteousness produces happiness as its fruits. A sinful person unable to acquire merit by subtle ways, becomes stained with sin only. Some are of opinion that sinful persons can never be cleansed of their sins. In seasons of distress, a person by even speaking an untruth acquires the merit of speaking the truth, even as a person who accomplishes an unrighteous act acquires by that very means the merit of having done a righteous act. Conduct is the refuge of righteousness. Thou shouldst know what righteousness is, aided by conduct. (It is the nature of man that he neither sees nor proclaims his own faults but notices and proclaims those of others). The very thief, stealing what belongs to others, spends the produce of his theft in acts of apparent virtue. During a time of anarchy, the thief takes great pleasure in appropriating what belongs to others. When others, however, rob him of what he has acquired by robbery, he then wishes forthwith for a linc (for invoking punishment on the head of the offenders). At even such a time, when his indignation for offended rights of property is at its highest, he secretly covets the wealth of those that are contended with their own. Fearlessly and without a doubt in his mind (when he is himself the victim of a robbery) he repairs to the king's palace with a mind cleansed of every sin. Within even his own heart he does not see the stain of any evil act. To speak the truth is meritorious. There is nothing higher than truth. Everything is upheld by truth, and everything rests upon truth. Even the sinful and ferocious, swearing to keep the truth amongst themselves, dismiss all grounds of quarrel and uniting with one another set themselves to their (sinful) tasks,



depending upon truth. If they behaved falsely towards one another, they would then be destroyed without doubt. One should not take what belongs to others. That is an eternal obligation. Powerful men regard it as one that has been introduced by the weak. When, however, the destiny of these men becomes adverse, this injunction then meets with their approval. Then again they that surpass others in strength or prowess do not necessarily become happy. Therefore, do not ever set thy heart on any act that is wrong. One behaving in this way hath no fear of dishonest men or thieves or the king. Not having done any injury to any one, such a man lives fearlessly and with a pure heart. A thief fears everybody, like a deer driven from the woods into the midst of an inhabited village. He thinks other people to be as sinful as himself. One that is of pure heart is always filled with cheerfulness and hath no fear from any direction. Such a person never sees his own misconduct in others. Persons engaged in doing good to all creatures have said that the practice of charity is another high duty. They that are possessed of wealth think that this duty has been laid down by those that are indigent. When, however, those wealthy men meet with poverty in consequence of some turn of fortune, the practice of charity then recommends itself to them. Men that are exceedingly wealthy do not necessarily meet with happiness. Knowing how painful it is to himself, a person should never do that to others which he dislikes when done to him by others. What can one who becomes the lover of another man's wife say to another man (guilty of the same transgression)? it is seen, however, that even such a one, when he sees his lady with another lover, becomes unable to forgive the act. How can one who, to draw breath himself think of preventing another by a murderous act, from doing the same? Whatever wishes one entertains with respect to one's ownself, one should certainly cherish with respect to another. With the surplus wealth one may happen to own one should relieve the wants of the indigent. It is for this reason that the Creator ordained the practice of increasing one's wealth (by trade or laying it out at interest). One should walk along that path by proceeding along which one may hope to meet with the deities; or, at such times when wealth is gained, adherence to the duties of sacrifice and gift is laudable. The sages have said that the accomplishment of the objects by means of agreeable (pacific) means is righteousness. See, O Yudhishtira, that even this is the criterion that has been kept in view in declaring the indications of righteousness and iniquity. In days of

old the Creator ordained righteousness endowing it with the power of holding the world together. The conduct of the good, that is fraught with excellence, is subjected to (numerous) restraints for acquiring righteousness which depends upon many delicate considerations. The indications of righteousness have now been recounted to thee, O foremost one of Kuru's race! Do not, therefore, at any time set thy understanding upon any act that is wrong.' Yudhishtira said, 'Thou sayest that righteousness or duty depends upon delicate considerations, that is indicated by the conduct of those that are called good, that it is fraught with restraints (from numerous acts), and that its indications are also contained in the Vedas. It seems to me, however, that I have a certain inward light in consequence of which I can discriminate between right and wrong by inferences. Numerous questions that I had intended to ask thee have all been answered by thee. There is one question, however, that I shall presently ask. It is not prompted, O king, by desire of empty disputation. All these embodied creatures, it seems, take birth, exist, and leave their bodies, of their own nature. Duty and its reverse, therefore, cannot be ascertained, O Bharata, by study of the scriptures alone. The duties of a person who is well off are of one kind. Those of a person who has fallen into distress are of another kind. How can duty respecting seasons of distress be ascertained by reading the scriptures alone? The acts of the good, thou hast said, constitute righteousness (or duty). The good, however, are to be ascertained by their acts. The definition, therefore, has for its foundation, a begging of the question, with the result that what is meant by conduct of the good remains unsettled. It is seen that some ordinary person commits unrighteousness while apparently achieving righteousness. Some extraordinary persons again may be seen who achieve righteousness by committing acts that are apparently unrighteous. Then, again, the proof (of what I say) has been furnished by even those that are well conversant with the scriptures themselves, for it has been heard by us that the ordinances of the Vedas disappear gradually in every successive age. The duties in the Krita age are of one kind. Those in the Treta are of another kind, and those in the Dwapara are again different. The duties in the Kali age, again, are entirely of another kind. It seems, therefore, that duties have been laid down for the respective ages according to the powers of human beings in the respective ages. When, therefore, all the declarations in the Vedas do not apply equally to all the ages, the

saying that the declarations of the Vedas are true is only a popular form of speech indulged in for popular satisfaction. From the Srutis have originated the Smritis whose scope again is very wide. If the Vedas be authority for everything, then authority would attach to the Smritis also for the latter are based on the former. When, however, the Srutis and the Smritis contradict each other, how can either be authoritative? Then again, it is seen that when some wicked persons of great might cause certain portions of certain courses of righteous acts to be stopped, these are destroyed for ever. Whether we know it or know it not, whether we are able to ascertain it or not to ascertain it, the course of duty is finer than the edge of a razor and grosser than even a mountain. Righteousness (in the form of sacrifices and other religious acts) at first appears in the form of the romantic edifices of vapour seen in the distant sky. When, however, it is examined by the learned, it disappears and becomes invisible. Like the small ponds at which the cattle drink or the shallow aqueducts along cultivated fields that dry up very soon, the eternal practices inculcated in the Smritis, falling into discontinuance, at last disappear totally (in the Kali age). Amongst men that are not good some are seen to become hypocrites (in respect of the acquisition of righteousness) by suffering themselves to be urged by desire. Some become so, urged by the wishes of others. Others, numbering many, tread in the same path, influenced by diverse other motives of a similar character. It cannot be denied that such acts (though accomplished by persons under the influence of evil passions) are righteous. Fools, again, say that righteousness is an empty sound among those called good. They ridicule such persons and regard them as men destitute of reason. Many great men, again, turning back (from the duties of their own order) betake themselves to the duties of the kingly order. No such conduct, therefore, is to be seen (as observed by any man), which is fraught with universal benevolence. By a certain course of conduct one becomes really meritorious. That very course of conduct obstructs another in the acquisition of merit. Another, by practising at his pleasure that conduct, it is seen, remains unchanged. Thus that conduct by which one becomes meritorious impedes another in the acquisition of merit. One may thus see that all courses of conduct are seen to lose singleness of purpose and character. It seems, therefore, that only that which the learned of ancient times called righteousness is righteousness to this day: and through that course of conduct (which

the learned so settled) the distinctions and limitations (that govern the world) have become eternal.' Bhishma said, 'In this connection is cited the old narrative of the conversation of Tuladhara with Jajali on the topic of righteousness. There was once a Brahmana of the name of Jajali who lived in a certain forest, practising the ways of a forest-recluse. Of austere penances, he proceeded on a certain occasion towards the sea-shore, and having arrived there began to practise the most severe penances. Observing many vows and restraints, his food regulated by many rules of fast, his body clad in rags and skins, bearing matted locks on his head his entire person smeared with filth and clay, that Brahmana possessed of intelligence passed many years there, suspending speech (and engaged in Yoga meditation). Possessed of great energy, that regenerate ascetic, O monarch, while living within the waters (of the sea), roamed through all the worlds with the speed of the mind, desirous of seeing all things. Having beheld the whole earth bounded by the ocean and adorned with rivers and lakes and woods, the ascetic one day, while sitting under the water, began to think in this strain, 'In this world of mobile and immobile creatures there is none equal to me. Who can roam with me among the stars and planets in the firmament and dwell again within the waters.' Unseen by the Rakshasas while he repeated this to himself, the Pisachas said unto him, 'It behoves thee not to say so. There is a man, named Tuladhara, possessed of great fame and engaged in the business of buying and selling. Even he, O best of regenerate persons, is not worthy of saying such words as thou sayest.' Thus addressed by those beings, Jajali of austere penances replied unto them, saying, 'I shall see that famous Tuladhara who is possessed of such wisdom.' When the Rishi said those words, those superhuman beings raised him from the sea, and said unto him, 'O best of regenerate persons, go thou along this road.' Thus addressed by those beings, Jajali proceeded onwards with a cheerless heart. Arrived at Varanasi he met Tuladhara whom he addressed saying the following words.' Yudhishtira said, 'What, O sire, are those difficult feats that Jajali had performed before in consequence of which he had acquired such high success? It behoveth thee to describe them to me.' Bhishma said, 'Jajali had become engaged in penances of the severest austerities. He used to perform ablutions morning and evening. Carefully tending his fires, he was devoted to the study of the Vedas. Well-conversant with the duties laid down for forest recluses, Jajali (in consequence of his

practices) seemed to blaze with effulgence. He continued to live in the woods, engaged all the while in penances. But he never regarded himself as one that had acquired any merit by his acts. In the season of the rains he slept under the open sky. In autumn he sat in water. In summer he exposed himself to the sun and the wind. Still he never regarded himself as one that had acquired any merit through such acts. He used to sleep on diverse kinds of painful beds and also on the bare earth. Once on a time, that ascetic, while standing under the sky in the rainy season, received on his head repeated downpours from the clouds. He had to pass through the woods repeatedly. What with exposure to the rains and what with the filth they caught, the locks of that sinless Rishi became entangled and intertwined with one another. On one occasion, that great ascetic, abstaining entirely from food and living upon air only, stood in the forest like a post of wood. Unmoved at heart, he stood there, without once stirring an inch. While he stood there like a wooden post, perfectly immovable, O Bharata, a pair of Kulinga birds, O king, built their nest on his head. Filled with compassion, the great Rishi suffered that feathery couple in building their nest among his matted locks with shreds of grass. And as the ascetic stood there like a post of wood, the two birds lived with confidence on his head happily. The rains passed away and autumn came. The couple, urged by desire, approached each other according to the law of the Creator, and in complete confidence laid their eggs, O king, on the head of that Rishi. Of rigid vows and possessed of energy, the ascetic knew it. Knowing what the birds had done, Jajali moved not. Firmly resolved to acquire merit, no act that involved the slightest injury to others could recommend itself to him. The feathery couple going away and moving every day from and to his head, happily and confidently lived there, O puissant king! When in the progress of time the eggs became mature and young ones came out, they began to grow up in that nest, for Jajali moved not in the least. Firm in the observance of his vows, the righteous-souled Rishi continued to hold and protect those eggs by standing on that very spot perfectly motionless and rapt in Yoga meditation. In course of time the young ones grew and became equipped with wings. The Muni knew that the young Kulingas had attained to that stage of development. That foremost of intelligent men, steady in the observance of vows, one day beheld those young ones and became filled with pleasure. The parent-birds, seeing their young ones equipped with wings, became very happy

and continued to dwell in the Rishi's head with them in perfect safety. The learned Jajali saw that when the young birds became equipped with wings they took to the air every evening and returned to his head without having proceeded far. He still stood motionless on that spot. Sometimes, after he saw that, left by their parents, they went out by themselves and returned again by themselves. Jajali still moved not. A little while after, the young birds going away in the morning passed the whole day out of his sight, but came back in the evening for dwelling in the nest. Sometimes, after that, leaving their nest for five days at a stretch, they returned on the sixth day. Jajali still moved not. Subsequently, when their strength became fully developed they left him and returned not at all even after many days. At last, on one occasion, leaving him, they came not even after a month. Then, O king, Jajali left that spot. When they had thus gone away for good, Jajali wondered much, and thought that he had achieved ascetic success. Then pride entered his heart. Firm in the observance of vows, the great ascetic, seeing the birds thus leave him after having been reared on his head, thought highly of himself, and became filled with delight. He, then, bathed in a stream and poured libations on the sacred fire, and paid his adorations to the rising Sun indeed, having thus caused those chataka birds to grow on his head, Jajali, that foremost of ascetics, began to slap his armpits and proclaim loudly through the sky, "I have won great merit." Then an invisible voice arose in the sky and Jajali heard these words, 'Thou art not equal, O Jajali, to Tuladhara in point of righteousness. Possessed of great wisdom, that Tuladhara lives at Baranasi. Even he is not fit to say what thou sayest, O regenerate one.' Hearing these words, Jajali became filled with wrath, and desirous of meeting Tuladhara, O monarch, began to roam over the whole earth, observing the vow of silence and passing the night at that spot where evening overtook him. After a considerable time he reached the city of Baranasi, and saw Tuladhara engaged in selling miscellaneous articles. As soon as the shop-keeper Tuladhara beheld the Brahmana arrived at his place, he cheerfully stood up and worshipped the guest with proper salutations. Tuladhara said, 'Without doubt, O Brahmana, it is known to me that thou hast come to me. Listen, however, O foremost of regenerate persons, to what I say. Living on a low land near the sea-shore thou underwentest very austere penances. But thou hadst no consciousness of having achieved righteousness or merit. When thou didst at last attain to

ascetic success, certain birds were born on thy head. Thou tookest great care of the little creatures. When at last those birds became equipped with wings and when they began to leave thy head for going hither and thither in search of food, it was then that, in consequence of having thus assisted at the birth of those Chatakas, thou beganest to feel the impulse of pride, O Brahmana, thinking thou hadst achieved great merit. Then, O foremost of regenerate persons, thou heardest in the sky a voice that referred to me. The words thou didst hear filled thee with wrath, and as the consequence thereof thou art here. Tell me, what wish of thine I shall accomplish, O best of Brahmanas!' Thus addressed by the intelligent Tuladhara on that occasion, Jajali of great intelligence, that foremost of ascetics, said these words unto him. Jajali said, 'Thou sellest all kinds of juices and scents, O son of a trader, as also (barks and leaves of) large trees and herbs and their fruits and roots. "How hast thou succeeded in acquiring a certitude or stability of understanding? Whence hath this knowledge come to thee? O thou of great intelligence, tell me all this in detail.' Thus addressed by that Brahmana possessed of great fame, Tuladhara of the Vaisya order, well-acquainted with the truths touching the interpretations of morality and contented with knowledge, discoursed to Jajali who had undergone severe penances, upon the ways of morality. Tuladhara said, 'O Jajali, I know morality, which is eternal, with all its mysteries. It is nothing else than that ancient morality which is known to all, and which consists of universal friendliness, and is fraught with beneficence to all creatures. That mode of living which is founded upon a total harmlessness towards all creatures or (in case of actual necessity) upon a minimum of such harm, is the highest morality. I live according to that mode, O Jajali! This my house hath been built with wood and grass cut by other people's hands. Lac dye, the roots of Nymphaea lotus, filaments of the lotus, diverse kinds of good scents and many kinds of liquids, O regenerate Rishi, with the exception of wines, I purchase from other people's hand and sell without cheating. He, O Jajali, is said to know what morality or righteousness is, who is always the friend of all creatures and who is always engaged in the good of all creatures, in thought, word, and deed. I never solicit any one. I never quarrel with any one, I never cherish aversion for any one. I never cherish desire for anything. I cast equal eyes upon all things and all creatures. Behold, O Jajali, this is my vow! My scales are perfectly even, O Jajali, with respect to

all creatures. I neither praise nor blame the acts of others, viewing this variety in the world, O foremost of Brahmanas, to be like the variety observable in the sky. Know, O Jajali, that I cast equal eye upon all creatures. O foremost of intelligent men, I see no difference between a clod of earth a piece of stone, and a lump of gold. As the blind, the deaf, and they that are destitute of reason, are perfectly consoled for the loss of their senses, after the same manner am I consoled, by their example (for the enjoyments I abstain from). As they that are overtaken by decrepitude, they that are afflicted by disease, and they that are weakened and emaciated, have no relish for enjoyments of any kind, after the same manner have I ceased to feel any relish for wealth or pleasure or enjoyments. When a person fears nothing and himself is not feared, when he cherishes no desire and hath no aversion for anything, he is then said to attain to Brahma. When a person does not conduct himself sinfully towards any creature in thought, word, or deed, then is he said to attain to Brahma. There is no past, no future. There is no morality or righteousness. He who is not an object of fear with any creature succeeds in attaining to a state in which there is no fear. On the other hand, that person who for harshness of speech and severity of temper, is a source of trouble unto all creatures even as death itself, certainly attains to a state which abounds with fear. I follow the practices of high-souled and benevolent men of advanced years who with their children and children's children live in the due observance of the ordinance laid down in the scriptures. The eternal practices (laid down in the Vedas) are entirely given up by one who suffers himself to be stupefied by some errors that he may have noticed in the conduct of those that are admittedly good and wise. One, however, that is endued with learning, or one that has subdued one's senses, or one that is possessed of strength of mind, succeeds in attaining to Emancipation, guided by that very conduct. That wise man who, having restrained his senses, practiseth, with a heart cleansed from all desire of injuring others, the conduct that is followed by those called good, is sure, O Jajali, to acquire the merit of righteousness (and Emancipation which is its fruits). In this world, as in a river, a piece of wood that is being borne away by the current as it pleases, is seen to come into contact (for some time) with another piece that is being similarly borne away. There, on the current, other pieces of wood that had been joined together, are seen again to separate from one another. Grass, sticks, and cowdung



cakes are seen to be united together. This union is due to accident and not to purpose or design. He of whom no creature is frightened in the least is himself, O ascetic, never frightened by any creature. He, on the other hand, O learned man, of whom every creature is frightened as of a wolf, becomes himself filled with fear as aquatic animals when forced to leap on the shore from fear of the roaring Vadava fire. This practice of universal harmlessness hath arisen even thus. One may follow it by every means in one's power. He who has followers and he who has wealth may seek to adopt it. It is sure to lead also to prosperity and heaven. In consequence of their ability to dispel the fears of others, men possessed of wealth and followers are regarded as foremost by the learned. They that are for ordinary happiness practise this duty of universal harmlessness for the sake of fame; while they that are truly skilled, practise the same for the sake of attaining to Brahma. Whatever fruits one enjoys by penances, by sacrifices, by practising liberality, by speaking the truth, and by paying court to wisdom, may all be had by practising the duty of harmlessness. That person who gives unto all creatures the assurance of harmlessness obtains the merit of all sacrifices and at last wins fearlessness for himself as his reward. There is no duty superior to the duty of abstention from injuring other creatures. He of whom, O great ascetic, no creature is frightened in the least, obtains for himself fearlessness of all creatures. He of whom everybody is frightened as one is of a snake ensconced within one's (sleeping) chamber, never acquires any merit in this world or in the next. The very gods, in their search after it, become stupefied in the track of that person who transcends all states, the person, viz., who constitutes himself the soul of all creatures and who looketh upon all creatures as identical with his own self. Of all gifts, the assurance of harmlessness to all creatures is the highest (in point of merit). I tell thee truly, believe me, O Jajali! One who betakes himself to acts at first wins prosperity, but then (upon the exhaustion of his merit) he once more encounters adversity. Beholding the destruction of (the merits of) acts, the wise do not applaud acts. There is no duty, O Jajali, that is not prompted by some motive (of happiness). Duty, however, is very subtle. Duties have been laid down in the Vedas for the sake of both Brahma and heaven. The subject of duties hath many secrets and mysteries. It is so subtle that it is not easy to understand it fully. Amongst diverse conflicting ordinances, some succeed in comprehending duty by observing the acts of the good.

Why dost thou not consume them that emasculate bulls and bore their noses and cause them to bear heavy burthens and bind them and put them under diverse kinds of restraint, and that eat the flesh of living creatures after slaying them? Men are seen to own men as slaves, and by beating, by binding, and by otherwise subjecting them to restraints, cause them to labour day and night. These people are not ignorant of the pain that results from beating and fastening in chains. In every creature that is endued with the five senses live all the deities. Surya, Chandramas, the god of wind, Brahman, Prana, Kratu, and Yama (these dwell in living creatures), There are men that live by trafficking in living creatures! When they earn a living by such a sinful course, what scruples need they feel in selling dead carcasses? The goat is Agni. The sheep is Varuna. The horse is Surya. Earth is the deity Virat. The cow and the calf are Soma. The man who sells these can never obtain success. But what fault can attach to the sale of oil, or of Ghrita, or honey, or drugs, O regenerate one? There are many animals that grow up in ease and comfort in places free from gnats and biting insects. Knowing that they are loved dearly by their mothers, men persecute them in diverse ways, and lead them into miry spots abounding with biting insects. Many draft animals are oppressed with heavy burthens. Others, again, are made to languish in consequence of treatment not sanctioned by the scriptures. I think that such acts of injury done to animals are in no way distinguished from foeticide. People regard the profession of agriculture to be sinless. That profession, however, is certainly fraught with cruelty. The iron-faced plough wounds the soil and many creatures that live in the soil. Cast thy eyes, O Jajali, on those bullocks yoked to the plough. Kine are called in the Srutis the Unslayable. That man perpetrates a great sin who slays a bull or a cow. In days of yore, many Rishis with restrained senses addressed Nahusha, saying, 'Thou hast, O king, slain a cow which is declared in the scriptures to be like unto one's mother. Thou hast also slain a bull, which is declared to be like unto the Creator himself. Thou hast perpetrated an evil act, O Nahusha, and we have been exceedingly pained at it.' For cleansing Nahusha, however, they divided that sin into a hundred and one parts and converting the fragments into diseases cast them among all creatures. Thus, O Jajali, did those highly-blessed Rishis cast that sin on all living creatures, and addressing Nahusha who had been guilty of foeticide, said, 'We shall not be able to pour libations in thy sacrifice.' Thus said those high-

souled Rishis and Yatis conversant with the truths of all things, having ascertained by their ascetic power that king Nahusha had not been intentionally guilty of that sin. These, O Jajali, are some of the wicked and dreadful practices that are current in this world. Thou practisest them because they are practised by all men from ancient times, and not because they agree with the dictates of thy cleansed understanding. One should practise what one considers to be one's duty, guided by reasons, instead of blindly following the practices of the world. Listen now, O Jajali, as to what my behaviour is towards him that injures and him that praises me. I regard both of them in the same light. I have none whom I like and none whom I dislike. The wise applauded such a course of conduct as consistent with duty or religion. Even this course of conduct, which is consistent with reasons, is followed by Yatis. The righteous always observe it with eyes possessed of improved vision.' Jajali said, 'This course of duty that thou, O holder of scales, preachest, closes the door of heaven against all creatures and puts a stop to the very means of their subsistence. From agriculture comes food. That food offers subsistence even to thee. With the aid of animals and of crops and herbs, human beings, O trader, are enabled to support their existence. From animals and food sacrifices flow. Thy doctrines smack of atheism. This world will come to an end if the means by which life is supported have to be abandoned.' Tuladhara said, 'I shall now speak on the object of the means of sustenance. I am not, O Brahmana, an atheist. I do not blame Sacrifices. The man, however, is very rare that is truly conversant with Sacrifice. I bow to that Sacrifice which is ordained for Brahmanas. I bow also to them that are conversant with that Sacrifice. Alas, the Brahmanas, having given up the Sacrifice that is ordained for them, have betaken themselves to the performance of Sacrifices that are for Kshatriyas. Many persons of faith, O regenerate one, that are covetous and fond of wealth, without having understood the true meaning of the declarations of the Srutis, and proclaiming things that are really false but that have the show of truth, have introduced many kinds of Sacrifices, saying, 'This should be given away in this Sacrifice. This other thing should be given away in this other Sacrifice. The first of this is very laudable.' The consequence, however, of all this, O Jajali, is that theft and many evil acts spring up. It should be known that only that sacrificial offering which was acquired by righteous means can gratify the gods. There are abundant indications in the scriptures

that the worship of the deities may be accomplished with vows, with libations poured on the fire, with recitations or chanting of the Vedas, and with plants and herbs. From their religious acts unrighteous persons get wicked offspring. From covetous men are born children that are covetous, and from those that are contented spring children that are contented. If the sacrificer and the priest suffer themselves to be moved by desire of fruit (in respect of the Sacrifices they perform or assist in), their children take the stain. If, on the other hand, they do not yield to desire of fruit, the children born to them become of the same kind. From Sacrifices spring progeny like clear water from the firmament. The libations poured on the sacrificial fire rise up to the Sun. From the Sun springs rain. From rain springs food. From food are born living creatures. In former days, men righteously devoted to Sacrifices used to obtain therefrom the fruition of all their wishes. The earth yielded crops without tillage. The blessing uttered by the Rishis produced herbs and plants. The men of former times never performed Sacrifices from desire of fruits and never regarded themselves as called upon to enjoy those fruits. Those who somehow perform sacrifices, doubting the while their efficacy take birth in their next lives as dishonest, wily, and greedy men exceedingly covetous of wealth. That man who by the aid of false reasoning holds up all the authoritative scriptures as fraught with evil, is certain to go, for such sinful act of his, into the regions of the sinful. Such a man is certainly possessed of a sinful soul, O foremost of Brahmanas, and always remains here, bereft of wisdom. That man who regards those acts obligatory which have been laid down in the Vedas and directed to be accomplished every day, who is penetrated with fear if he fails to accomplish them any day, who takes all the essentials of Sacrifice as identical with Brahma, and who never regards himself as the actor, is truly a Brahmana. If the acts of such a person become incomplete, or if their completion be obstructed by all unclean animals, even then those acts are, as heard by us, of superior efficacy. If, however, those acts are done from desire of fruit (and their completion be obstructed by such impediments), then expiation would become necessary. They who covet the acquisition of the highest object of life (viz., Emancipation), who are bereft of cupidity in respect of all kinds of worldly wealth, who discard all provision for the future, and who are freed from envy, betake themselves to practice of truth and self-restraint as their Sacrifice. They that are conversant with the distinction between body

and soul, that are devoted to Yoga, and that meditate on the Pranava, always succeed in gratifying others. The universal Brahma (viz., Pranava), which is the soul of the deities, dwells in him who is conversant with Brahma. When, therefore, such a man eats and is gratified, all the deities, O Jajali, become gratified and are contented. As one who is gratified with all kinds of taste feels no desire for any particular taste, after the same manner one who is gratified with knowledge hath everlasting gratification which to him is a source of perfect bliss. Those wise men who are the refuge of righteousness and whose delight is in righteousness, are persons that have certain knowledge of what is to be done and what should not be done. One possessed of such wisdom always regards all things in the universe to have sprung from his own Self. Some that are endued with knowledge, that strive to reach the other shore (of this ocean of life), and that are possessed of faith, succeed in attaining to the region of Brahman, which is productive of great blessings, highly sacred, and inhabited by righteous persons,--a region which is freed from sorrow, whence there is no return, and where there is no kind of agitation or pain. Such men do not covet heaven. They do not adore Brahma in costly sacrifices. They walk along the path of the righteous. The Sacrifices they perform are performed without injury to any creature. These men know trees and herbs and fruits and roots as the only sacrificial offerings. Covetous priests, for they are desirous of wealth, never officiate at the sacrifices of these (poor) men. These regenerate men, although all their acts have been completed, still perform sacrifices from desire of doing good to all creatures and constituting their own selves as sacrificial offerings. For this reason, grasping priests officiate at the Sacrifices of only those misguided persons who, without endeavouring to attain to Emancipation, seek for heaven. As regards those, however, that are really good, they always seek, by accomplishing their own duties, to cause others to ascend to heaven. Looking at both these kinds of behaviour, O Jajali, I have (abstained from injuring any creature in the world and have) come to regard all creatures with an equal heart. Endued with wisdom, many foremost of Brahmanas perform Sacrifices (which with respect to their fruits are of two kinds, for some of them lead to Emancipation whence there is no return, and others lead to regions of bliss whence there is return). By performing those Sacrifices, they proceed, O great ascetic, along paths trodden by the gods. Of one class of Sacrificers (viz., they who sacrifice from desire of fruit) there

is return (from the region which they reach). Of those, however, that are truly wise (viz., those who sacrifice without being urged thereto by desire of fruit), there is no return. Although both classes of sacrificers, O Jajali, proceed along the path trodden by the deities (in consequence of the sacrifices they perform), yet such is the difference between their ultimate ends. In consequence of the success that attends the purposes formed in the mind of such men, bulls, without being forced thereto, willingly set their shoulders to the plough for assisting at tillage and to the yoke for dragging their cars, and kine pour forth milk from udders untouched by human hands. Creating sacrificial stakes (and other necessities of Sacrifice) by simple acts of the will, they perform many kinds of Sacrifice well-completed with abundant presents. One who is of such a cleansed soul may slaughter a cow (as an offering in Sacrifice). They, therefore, that are not of that kind should perform Sacrifices with herbs and plants (and not animals). Since Renunciation hath such merit, it is for that reason that I have kept it before my eyes in speaking to thee. The gods know him for a Brahmana who has given up all desire of fruit, who hath no exertion in respect of worldly acts, who never bows down his head unto any one, who never utters the praises of others, and who is endued with strength though his acts have all been weakened. What, O Jajali, will be the end of him who doth not recite the Vedas, unto others, who doth not perform Sacrifices (properly), who doth not make gifts unto (deserving) Brahmanas, and who followeth an avocation in which every kind of desire is indulged? By properly reverencing, however, the duties that appertain to Renunciation, one is sure of attaining to Brahma.' Jajali said, 'We had never before, O son of a trader, heard of these recondite doctrines of ascetics that perform only mental Sacrifices. These doctrines are exceedingly difficult of comprehension. It is for this reason that I ask thee (about them). The sages of olden days were not followers of those doctrines of Yoga. Hence, the sages that have succeeded them have not propounded them (for general acceptance). If thou sayest that only men of brutish minds fail to achieve sacrifices in the soil of the Soul, then, O son of a trader, by what acts would they succeed in accomplishing their happiness? Tell me this, O thou of great wisdom! Great is my faith in thy words.' Tuladhara said, 'Sometimes sacrifices performed by some persons do not become sacrifices (in consequence of the absence of faith of those that perform them). These men, it should be said, are not

worthy of performing any sacrifice (internal or external). As regards the faithful, however, only one thing, viz., the cow, is fit for upholding all sacrifices by means of full libations of clarified butter, milk, and curds, the hair at end of her tail, her horns, and her hoofs. (The Vedas declare that sacrifices cannot be performed by an unmarried man). In performing sacrifices, however, according to the mode I have pointed out (viz., by abstaining from slaughter of animals and dedicating only clarified butter, etc.), one may make Faith one's wedded wife, for dedicating such (innocent) offerings to the deities. By duly reverencing such sacrifices, one is sure to attain to Brahma. To the exclusion of all animals (which are certainly unclean as offering in sacrifices), the rice-ball is a worthy offering in sacrifices. All rivers are as sacred as the Saraswati, and all mountains are sacred. O Jajali, the Self is itself a Tirtha. Do not wander about on the earth for visiting sacred places. A person, by observing these duties (that I have spoken of and that do not involve injury to other creatures), and by seeking the acquisition of merit agreeably to his own ability, certainly succeeds in obtaining blessed regions hereafter.' Bhishma continued, 'These are the duties, O Yudhishtira, which Tuladhara applauded,--duties that are consistent with reason, and that are always observed by those that are good and wise.' Tuladhara said, 'See with thy own eyes, O Jajali, who, viz., those that are good or those that are otherwise, have adopted this path of duty that I have spoken of. Thou shalt then understand properly how the truth stands. Behold, many birds are hovering in the sky. Amongst them are those that were reared on thy head, as also many hawks and many others of other species. Behold, O Brahmana, those birds have contracted their wings and legs for entering their respective nests. Summon them, O regenerate one! There those birds, treated with affection by thee, are displaying their love for thee that art their father. Without doubt, thou art their father, O Jajali! Do thou summon thy children.' Bhishma continued, 'Then those birds, summoned by Jajali, made answer agreeably to the dictates of that religion which is not fraught with injury to any creature. All acts that are done without injuring any creature become serviceable (to the doer) both here and hereafter. Those acts, however, that involve injury to others, destroy faith, and faith being destroyed, involves the destroyer in ruin. The sacrifices of those that regard acquisition and non-acquisition in the same light, that are endued with faith that are self-restrained, that have tranquil minds, and that perform sacrifices from a sense of duty

(and not from desire of fruit), become productive of fruit. Faith with respect to Brahma is the daughter of Surya, O regenerate one. She is the protectress and she is the giver of good birth. Faith is superior to the merit born of (Vedic) recitations and meditation. An act vitiated by defect of speech is saved by Faith. An act vitiated by defect of mind is saved by Faith. But neither speech nor mind can save an act that is vitiated by want of Faith. Men conversant with the occurrences of the past recite in this connection the following verse sung by Brahman. The offerings in sacrifices of a person that is pure (in body and acts) but wanting in Faith, and of another that is impure (in respect of their worthiness of acceptance). The food, again, of a person conversant with the Vedas but miserly in behaviour, and that of a usurer that is liberal in conduct, the deities after careful consideration, had held to be equal (in respect of their worthiness of acceptance). The Supreme Lord of all creatures (viz., Brahman) then told them that they had committed an error. The food of a liberal person is sanctified by Faith. The food, however, of the person that is void of Faith is lost in consequence of such want of Faith. The food of a liberal usurer is acceptable but not the food of a miser. Only one person in the world, viz., he that is bereft of Faith, is unfit to make offerings to the deities. The food of only such a man is unfit to be eaten. This is the opinion of men conversant with duties. Want of Faith is a high sin. Faith is a cleanser of sins. Like a snake casting off its slough, the man of Faith succeeds in casting off all his sin. The religion of abstention with Faith is superior to all things considered sacred. Abstaining from all faults of behaviour, he who betakes himself to Faith, becomes sanctified. What need hath such a person of penances, or of conduct, or of endurance? Every man has Faith. Faith, however, is of three kinds, viz., as affected by Sattwa, by Rajas and by Tamas, and according to the kind of Faith that one has, one is named. Persons endued with goodness and possessed of insight into the true import of morality have thus laid down the subject of duties. We have, as the result of our enquiries, got all this from the sage Dharmadarsana. O thou of great wisdom, betake thyself to Faith, for thou shalt then obtain that which is superior. He who has Faith (in the declarations of the Srutis), and who acts according to their import (in the belief that they are good for him), is certainly of righteous soul. O Jajali, he who adheres to his own path (under the influence of Faith) is certainly a superior person.' Bhisma continued, 'After a short while, Tuladhara and Jajali, both of whom had been



endued with great wisdom, ascended to heaven and sported there in great happiness, having reached their respective places earned by their respective acts. Many truths of this kind were spoken of by Tuladhara. That eminent person understood this religion (of abstention from injury) completely. These eternal duties were accordingly proclaimed by him. The regenerate Jajali, O son of Kunti, having heard these words of celebrated energy, betook himself to tranquillity. In this way, many truths of grave import were uttered by Tuladhara, illustrated by examples for instruction. What other truths dost thou wish to hear?' Bhishma said, 'In this connection is cited an old narrative of what was recited by king Vichakhy through compassion for all creatures. Beholding the mangled body of a bull, and hearing the exceedingly painful groans of the kine in a cow-slaying sacrifice, and observing the cruel Brahmanas that gathered there for assisting at the ceremonies, that king uttered these words, 'Prosperity to all the kine in the world.' When the slaughter had commenced, these words expressive of a blessing (to those helpless animals) were pronounced. And the monarch further said, 'Only those that are transgressors of defined limits, that are destitute of intelligence, that are atheists and sceptics, and that desire the acquisition of celebrity through sacrifices and religious rites speak highly of the slaughter of animals in sacrifices. The righteous-souled Manu has applauded (the observance of) harmlessness in all (religious) acts. Indeed, men slaughter animals in sacrifices, urged by only the desire of fruit. Hence, guided by authority (in respect of slaughter and abstention from slaughter or harmlessness) one conversant (with the scriptures) should practise the true course of duty which is exceedingly subtle. Harmlessness to all creatures is the highest of all duties. Living in the vicinity of an inhabited place and injuring oneself to the observance of rigid vows, and disregarding the fruits indicated of Vedic acts, one should give up domesticity, adopting a life of Renunciation. Only they that are mean are urged by the desire of fruit. Reverentially mentioning sacrifices and trees and sacrificial stakes, men do not eat tainted meat. This practice, however, is not worthy of applause. Wine, fish, honey, meat, alcohol, and preparations of rice and sesame seeds, have been introduced by knaves. The use of these (in sacrifices) is not laid down in the Vedas. The hankering after these arises from pride, error of judgment, and cupidity. They that are true Brahmanas realise the presence of Vishnu in every sacrifice. His worship, it has been laid

down, should be made with agreeable Payasa. (The leaves and flowers of) such trees as have been indicated in the Vedas, whatever act is regarded as worthy and whatever else is held as pure by persons of pure hearts and cleansed natures and those eminent for knowledge and holiness, are all worthy of being offered to the Supreme Deity and not unworthy of His acceptance.' Yudhishtira said, 'The body and all sorts of dangers and calamities are continually at war with each other. How, therefore, will a person who is totally free from the desire of harming and who on this account will not be able to act, succeed in keeping up his body?' Bhishma said, 'One should, when able, acquire merit and act in such a way that one's body may not languish and suffer pain, and that death may not come.' Yudhishtira said, 'Thou, O grandsire, art our highest preceptor in the matter of all acts that are difficult of accomplishment (in consequence of the commands of superiors on the one hand and the cruelty that is involved in them on the other). I ask, how should one judge of an act in respect of either one's obligation to do it or of abstaining from it? Is it to be judged speedily or with delay?' Bhishma said, 'In this connection is cited the old story of what occurred with respect to Chirakarin born in the race of Angirasa. Twice blessed be the man that reflects long before he acts. One that reflects long before he acts is certainly possessed of great intelligence. Such a man never offends in respect of any act. There was once a man of great wisdom, of the name of Chirakarin, who was the son of Gautama. Reflecting for a long time upon every consideration connected with proposed acts, he used to do all he had to do. He came to be called by the name of Chirakarin because he used to reflect long upon all matters, to remain awake for a long time, to sleep for a long time, and to take a long time in setting himself to the accomplishment of such acts as he accomplished. The clamour of being an idle man stuck to him. He was also regarded as a foolish person, by every person of a light understanding and destitute of foresight. On a certain occasion, witnessing an act of great fault in his wife, the sire Gautama passing over his other children, commanded in wrath this Chirakarin, saying, 'Slay thou this woman.' Having said these words without much reflection, the learned Gautama, that foremost of persons engaged in the practice of Yoga, that highly blessed ascetic, departed for the woods. Having after a long while assented to it, saying, 'So be it,' Chirakarin, in consequence of his very nature, and owing to his habit of never

accomplishing any act without long reflection, began to think for a long while (upon the propriety or otherwise of what he was commanded by his sire to do). How shall I obey the command of my sire and yet how avoid slaying my mother? How shall I avoid sinking, like a wicked person, into sin in this situation in which contradictory obligations are dragging me into opposite directions? Obedience to the commands of the sire constitutes the highest merit. The protection of the mother again is a clear duty. The status of a son is fraught with dependence. How shall I avoid being afflicted by sin? Who is there that can be happy after having slain a woman, especially his mother? Who again can obtain prosperity and fame by disregarding his own sire? Regard for the sire's behest is obligatory. The protection of my mother is equally a duty. How shall I so frame my conduct that both obligations may be discharged? The father places his own self within the mother's womb and takes birth as the son, for continuing his practices, conduct, name and race. I have been begotten as a son by both my mother and my father. Knowing as I do my own origin, why should I not have this knowledge (of my relationship with both of them)? The words uttered by the sire while performing the initial rite after birth, and those that were uttered by him on the occasion of the subsidiary rite (after the return from the preceptor's abode) are sufficient (evidence) for settling the reverence due to him and indeed, confirm the reverence actually paid to him. In consequence of his bringing up the son and instructing him, the sire is the son's foremost of superiors and the highest religion. The very Vedas lay it down as certain that the son should regard what the sire says as his highest duty. Unto the sire the son is only a source of joy. Unto the son, however, the sire is all in all. The body and all else that the son owns have the sire alone for their giver. Hence, the behests of the sire should be obeyed without ever questioning them in the least. The very sins of one that obeys one's sire are cleansed (by such obedience). The sire is the giver of all articles of food, of instructions in the Vedas, and of all other knowledge regarding the world. (Prior to the son's birth) the sire is the performer of such rites as Garbhadhana and Simantonnayana. The sire is religion. The sire is heaven. The sire is the highest penance. The sire being gratified, all the deities are gratified. Whatever words are pronounced by the sire become blessings that attach to the son. The words expressive of joy that the sire utters cleanse the son of all his sins. The flower is seen to fall away from the stalk. The fruit is seen to fall away from the

tree. But the sire, whatever his distress, moved by parental affection, never abandons the son. These then are my reflections upon the reverence due from the son to the sire. Unto the son the sire is not an ordinary object. I shall now think upon (what is due to) the mother. Of this union of the five (primal) elements in me due to my birth as a human being, the mother is the (chief) cause as the firestick of fire. The mother is as the fire-stick with respect to the bodies of all men. She is the panacea for all kinds of calamities. The existence of the mother invests one with protection; the reverse deprives one of all protection. The man who, though divested of prosperity, enters his house, uttering the words, 'O mother!'--hath not to indulge in grief. Nor doth decrepitude ever assail him. A person whose mother exists, even if he happens to be possessed of sons and grandsons and even if he counts a hundred years, looks like a child of but two years of age. Able or disabled, lean or robust, the son is always protected by the mother. None else, according to the ordinance, is the son's protector. Then doth the son become old, then doth he become stricken with grief, then doth the world look empty in his eyes, when he becomes deprived of his mother. There is no shelter (protection against the sun) like the mother. There is no refuge like the mother. There is no defence like the mother. There is no one so dear as the mother. For having borne him in her womb the mother is the son's Dhatri. For having been the chief cause of his birth, she is his Janani. For having nursed his young limbs into growth, she is called Amva. For bringing forth a child possessed of courage she is called Virasu. For nursing and looking after the son she is called Sura. The mother is one's own body. What rational man is there that would slay his mother, to whose care alone it is due that his own head did not lie on the street-side like a dry gourd? When husband and wife unite themselves for procreation, the desire cherished with respect to the (unborn) son are cherished by both, but in respect of their fruition more depends upon the mother than on the sire. The mother knows the family in which the son is born and the father who has begotten him. From the moment of conception the mother begins to show affection to her child and takes delight in her. (For this reason, the son should behave equally towards her). On the other hand, the scriptures declare that the offspring belongs to the father alone. If men, after accepting the hands of wives in marriage and pledging themselves to earn religious merit without being dissociated from them, seek congress with other people's wives, they then cease to

be worthy of respect. The husband, because he supports the wife, is called Bhartri, and, because he protects her, he is on that account called Pati. When these two functions disappear from him, he ceases to be both Bhartri and Pati. Then again woman can commit no fault. It is man only that commits faults. By perpetrating an act of adultery, the man only becomes stained with guilt. It has been said that the husband is the highest object with the wife and the highest deity to her. My mother gave up her sacred person to one that came to her in the form and guise of her husband. Women can commit no fault. It is man who becomes stained with fault. Indeed, in consequence of the natural weakness of the sex as displayed in every act, and their liability to solicitation, women cannot be regarded as offenders. Then again the sinfulness (in this case) is evident of Indra himself who (by acting in the way he did) caused the recollection of the request that had been made to him in days of yore by woman (when a third part of the sin of Brahmanicide of which Indra himself was guilty was cast upon her sex). There is no doubt that my mother is innocent. She whom I have been commanded to slay is a woman. That woman is again my mother. She occupies, therefore, a place of greater reverence. The very beasts that are irrational know that the mother is unslayable. The sire must be known to be a combination of all the deities together. To the mother, however, attaches a combination of all mortal creatures and all the deities.--In consequence of his habit of reflecting long before acting, Gautama's son Chirakarin, by indulging in those reflections, passed a long while (without accomplishing the act he had been commanded by his sire to accomplish). When many days had expired, his sire Gautama's returned. Endued with great wisdom, Medhatithi of Gautama's race, engaged in the practice of penances, came back (to his retreat), convinced, after having reflected for that long time, of the impropriety of the chastisement he had commanded to be inflicted upon his wife. Burning with grief and shedding copious tears, for repentance had come to him in consequence of the beneficial effects of that calmness of temper which is brought about by a knowledge of the scriptures, he uttered these words, 'The lord of the three worlds, viz., Purandara, came to my retreat, in the guise of a Brahmana asking for hospitality. He was received by me with (proper) words, and honoured with a (proper) welcome, and presented in due form with water to wash his feet and the usual offerings of the Arghya. I also granted him the rest he had asked for. I further told him that I had

obtained a protector in him. I thought that such conduct on my part would induce him to behave towards me as a friend. When, however, notwithstanding all this, he misbehaved himself, my wife Ahalya could not be regarded to have committed any fault. It seems that neither my wife, nor myself, nor Indra himself who while passing through the sky had beheld my wife (and become deprived of his senses by her extraordinary beauty), could be held to have offended. The blame really attaches to the carelessness of my Yoga puissance. The sages have said that all calamities spring from envy, which, in its turn, arises from error of judgment. By that envy, also, I have been dragged from where I was and plunged into an ocean of sin (in the form of wife-slaughter). Alas, I have slain a woman,--a woman that is again my wife--one, that is, who, in consequence of her sharing her lord's calamities came to be called by the name of Vasita,--one that was called Bharya owing to the obligation I was under of supporting her. Who is there that can rescue me from this sin? Acting heedlessly I commanded the high-souled Chirakarin (to slay that wife of mine). If on the present occasion he proves true to his name then may he rescue me from this guilt. Twice blessed be thou, O Chirakaraka! If on this occasion thou hast delayed accomplishing the work, then art thou truly worthy of thy name. Rescue me, and thy mother, and the penances I have achieved, as also thy own self, from grave sins. Be thou really a Chirakaraka today! Ordinarily, in consequence of thy great wisdom thou takest a long time for reflection before achieving any act. Let not thy conduct be otherwise today! Be thou a true Chirakaraka today. Thy mother had expected thy advent for a long time. For a long time did she bear thee in her womb. O Chirakaraka, let thy habit of reflecting long before acting be productive of beneficial results today. Perhaps, my son Chirakaraka is delaying today (to achieve my bidding) in view of the sorrow it would cause me (to see him execute that bidding). Perhaps, he is sleeping over that bidding, bearing it in his heart (without any intention of executing it promptly). Perhaps, he is delaying, in view of the grief it would cause both him and me, reflecting upon the circumstances of the case.' Indulging in such repentance, O king, the great Rishi Gautama then beheld his son Chirakarin sitting near him. Beholding his sire come back to their abode, the son Chirakarin, overwhelmed with grief, cast away the weapon (he had taken up) and bowing his head began to pacify Gautama. Observing his son prostrated before him with bent head, and beholding also his wife almost petrified with

shame, the Rishi became filled with great joy. From that time the highsouled Rishi, dwelling in that lone hermitage, did not live separately from his spouse or his heedful son. Having uttered the command that his wife should be slain he had gone away from his retreat for accomplishing some purpose of his own. Since that time his son had stood in an humble attitude, weapon in hand, for executing that command on his mother. Beholding that his son prostrated at his feet, the sire thought that, struck with fear, he was asking for pardon for the offence he had committed in taking up a weapon (for killing his own mother). The sire praised his son for a long time, and smelt his head for a long time, and for a long time held him in a close embrace, and blessed him, uttering the words, 'Do thou live long!' Then, filled with joy and contented with what had occurred, Gautama, O thou of great wisdom, addressed his son and said these words, 'Blessed be thou, O Chirakaraka! Do thou always reflect long before acting. By thy delay in accomplishing my bidding thou hast today made me happy for ever.' That learned and best of Rishis then uttered these verses upon the subject of the merits of such cool men as reflect for a long time before setting their hands to any action. If the matter is the death of a friend, one should accomplish it after a long while. If it is the abandonment of a project already begun, one should abandon it after a long while. A friendship that is formed after a long examination lasts for a long time. In giving way to wrath, to haughtiness, to pride, to disputes, to sinful acts, and in accomplishing all disagreeable tasks he that delays long deserves applause. When the offence is not clearly proved against a relative, a friend, a servant, or a wife, he that reflects long before inflicting the punishment is applauded.' Thus, O Bharata, was Gautama pleased with his son, O thou of Kuru's race, for that act of delay on the latter's part in doing the former's bidding. In all acts a man should, in this way, reflect for a long time and then settle what he should do. By conducting himself in this way one is sure to avoid grief for a long time. That man who never nurses his wrath for a long while, who reflects for a long time before setting himself to the performance of any act, never does any act which brings repentance. One should wait for a long while upon those that are aged, and sitting near them show them reverence. One should attend to one's duties for a long time and be engaged for a long while in ascertaining them. Waiting for a long time upon those that are learned, are reverentially serving for a long time those that are good in behaviour, and keeping one's

soul for a long while under proper restraint, one succeeds in enjoying the respect of the world for a long time. One engaged in instructing others on the subject of religion and duty, should, when asked by another for information on those subjects, take a long time to reflect before giving an answer. He may then avoid indulging in repentance (for returning an incorrect answer whose practical consequences may lead to sin). As regards Gautama the pious sage of austere penances, that Rishi, having adored the deities for a long while in that retreat of his, at last ascended to heaven with his son.

23

Once upon a time, in the parched rice-fields of Bengal, there lived an impoverished, righteous and God-fearing couple, Mohan and Shyamala. They were suffering everyday for want even of basic necessities but they never complained to anybody, nor did they ever lose their faith in God. The village they lived in was parched for want of rain, and their crop had dried up. For the past 3 days, Mohan had not had anything to eat, but yet today as usual he went to his regular self-allotted place in the house and sat with his tattered copy of the Gita, poring over it studiously. His eyes rested upon the verse, 9:22. He frowned in consternation and called his wife near him. He told her that the person in charge of printing the book had made a mistake. She asked what the matter was. 'The word in this verse is mentioned as vahami; I think that it is a mistake; should it not be dadhami? For, it is an absurdity to suppose that the Supreme Lord would carry anything to his devotees personally.', said he.

S.: Perhaps the Lord loves His devotees enough to carry things to them.

M.: The difference between the words carry and give is a subtle one; nevertheless the distinction is important. Certainly the Lord loves His devotees. It is His Grace that sustains the cosmos and makes it move. It is verily through Him that all things are possible. He creates the circumstances whereby His devotees may realise their various desires. Everything comes to pass on account of His will. For instance, I performed a homam last year in order so that a male child should be born to our neighbour, Balaram. The Lord has granted my prayer. What did He do? He blessed Balaram with the child; He did not personally carry the child in His arms and deliver the infant to the adjacent door. Do you imagine that the Supreme Lord of the cosmos would demean Himself by so doing? Does a maharaja carry the objects of his people's petitions to them? Certainly not! He grants the



petitions. He sets in motion the powers that will make it possible for his subjects to have what they desire- provided He sees fit so to do.

S.: Would not a highly gracious king carry gifts himself to his subjects if he were well pleased with their loyalty? Have there not been kings in this country who distributed their treasure to the poor themselves? Did not Krishna give a palace to Vidura?

M.: A king merely presides over the giving of gifts. He does not personally carry them from door to door. Krishna bestowed the palace upon Vidura. Did He carry the palace upon His back? It is highly unnecessary for the Lord to carry things to His devotees. His power is so great that He need merely will and all stands accomplished. The sun does not come down from the sky to enliven the earth; it does not tend personally to each and every single blade of grass. But all the same, it is the light of the sun that makes the whole of the earth flourish. Now do you understand the difference between dadhami and vahami?

So saying, Mohan used his pen to scratch out the word vahami in the text; he struck two black lines on the word vahami; above it he wrote in his tidy hand the word dadhami.

M.: Now the text is as it was meant to be; the Lord has been gracious enough to make me His instrument in correcting this copy of the Gita.

S.: I must remind you that there is nothing in the house left to eat. The last of our supplies now stand exhausted. Where will you go and ask for food? Our neighbours will want to save food because of this draught that the village is facing; they will not be willing to give us anything to eat. What shall we do?

M.: I shall ask Sashidhar. Perhaps he will be kind enough to spare us a morsel or two. After all, he is the richest land-lord in the village. The Lord will grant us food by warming the heart of Sashidhar; he will not carry it to us on His head! [laughs derisively]

Somehow inside her heart Shyamala felt sad at the fact that he was taking such an attitude; but outwardly she kept quiet. Mohan left the house and Shyamala began to attend to her usual household chores.

After sometime she heard a cheerful song being sung in the distance. Presently the young voice grew louder. She came to the door to see who it might be. Presently around the bend of the street came a golden-skinned youth carrying a large basket on his head. The boy seemed vaguely familiar to Shyamala; yet she was unable to recognise him. He certainly was no inhabitant of this village. Yet it seemed to her that he was a greatly familiar figure. She was puzzling

over the fact when the boy walked close to her. As he drew near she could see that his eyes had a strange other-worldly lusture to them; they seemed to have a smile of their own. Deep within herself recognition stirred- but yet she could not place him. She smiled back at him innocently. Then with a flowing movement the boy took the basket from his head and laid it at her feet. As he bent over, she saw that across his back were two ugly, fiery streaks, as though a whip had recently cut into his skin. She could see the purple blood pulsing in the welts, and she gave a small cry. She wondered which heartless person could ever have laid a whip to this beautiful boy, who was surely the soul of goodness. She asked him his name, and he told her that it was Krishna. She thought to herself that it was certainly an appropriate name, for the youth looked just like Krishna. The boy smiled at her so guilelessly that her anger at his cruel master increased.

S.: Who has done this wicked thing to you?

K.: What wicked thing, mother?

S.: I am referring to the marks on your back!

K.: Your husband did this to me this afternoon.

Shyamala was shocked. She inferred that her husband had gone mad on account of prolonged starvation; after all, such things were known to happen. The basket was filled with fruits and vegetables, spices and grain and other delicacies such as these poor villagers rarely saw. Doubtless, Mohan had come across this innocent youth passing through the village carrying all this food. He had whipped the boy and forced him to deliver the food at their house. This poor, frightened, simpleton of a boy had, doubtless terrified out of his wits, done so, obeying the violent Mohan spontaneously.

S.: Boy, please take this basket away. Take it to wherever you were going before you met my husband today afternoon. It does not belong here and is not meant for this house. You must pardon my husband for striking you. He has not been himself lately.

K.: No, mother. This is meant for you. Be at peace.

He smiled at her mischievously. Then he turned and walked off down the lane, singing the same carefree song.

Shyamala carried the basket of food inside the house and waited for her husband to arrive. In a few minutes he came.

M.: Sashidhar gave me only a handful of grain, unfortunately. We shall have to make do with the same for this week.

S.: [bursts into tears] Why did you beat that poor, innocent boy?

M.: What boy?

She thereupon told him the whole occurrence. He thought that perhaps she had gone mad; then he caught sight of the basket of food waiting inside the courtyard. As though lightning had struck inside his brain, he suddenly understood everything. Screaming with ecstasy, he went towards the copy of the Gita that he had corrected that afternoon. He opened it at the relevant page and gave a scream of shock.

S.: What is the matter?

M.: Look at this!

The manuscript was as good as new. The passage where he had that afternoon struck two black scars across the word vahami now bore no signs of any correction having been made. There were no marks there now, and the word dadhami that he had written also was nowhere to be seen. The entire page was as clean as if no correction had ever been made. Repeatedly Mohan screamed, 'Forgive me, Lord!'. Finally Shyamala understood what had happened. The boy Krishna had been the actual Krishna Himself!

Translator's Note:

The above 108 stories were told by Sri Ramana Maharshi during the period 1929-1932. They have been written down in the Thenungu language by Sri Griddalooru Narayana Rao, foremost devotee and admirer of our master Sri Bhagawan. I have translated some of the stories; as to the rest, they are from the Mahabharata, and so I have not translated them myself. Instead, I simply reproduced the relevant sections from the book-series, 'The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa Translated into English Prose by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli; published by Sri Pratap Chandra Roy.'; the reason is that the books are an excellent piece of work, having been prepared with capital-assistance from the great Herr Max Müller himself; I have, however, not included the footnotes forming part of that work; they are excessively academically inclined and so will not interest the general reader. I hope this short work contributes to the spiritual upliftment of Sri Bhagawan's devotees; for, being his words, they cannot fail so to do. - Sri G. V. Subbaramayya.

The work as well as the translation were highly appreciated in the Hall by one and all, including the Maharshi. Then the master left for his usual walk. As discussions were being made in the Hall as to the publication of the work, the sarvadhikari came hurriedly into the Hall. He addressed Mr. Subbaramayya:

Ozy.: What is this talk about books about Sri Bhagawan being published privately? There is a rule in the ashram against such things. We must have some track over who publishes works concerning Bhagawan. Kuppusamy Aiyangar started this evil trend two years ago and now everybody has started behaving perversely like this. What am I to do? Just because Bhagawan does not raise any objection, can we entitle ourselves to do whatever we like? Knowing that such a rule prevails at the ashram, I wonder how the conscience of certain people has permitted them to behave like this. Please tell me who is behind all this.

S.: Mr. Sundaram Chettiar wrote to the ashram last week suggesting that the opinion of Mr. Bose and-

Ozy.: We approached that judge for help regarding the court-case faced by us on account of Perumal; now he thinks that he can do these things without having to ask anybody. This is the trouble in going somewhere to ask for help. They extend help in relation to the one occasion but thereafter seem to expect that you should drink milk only from their lap. You may write to him saying that there is no need to privately publish anything, and that the ashram itself will publish the manuscript as and when it is able to find the funds so to do. I hope, sir, that my words are intelligible to you.

S.: Yes.

Ozy.: Hand over that manuscript to me, please.

He left with the manuscript and that was the last I ever saw of it. When the master came back Mr. Subbaramayya tearfully related the incident to him.

B.: If it is destined to go, let it go. Why are you attached to it? You have done your duty in translating the work, and done it well. Why bother about anything further? After we have played our part, we should not bother about what happens subsequently. Learn to be detached and aloof. That is the way to happiness.

The gentleman cheered up considerably after the advice.

22nd September, 1936

Q.: Does Sri Bhagawan advise sadhakas to tread the path of karma-yoga?

B.: An Aathma Jnani alone can be a good karma-yogi.

Q.: What does that mean?

B.: Why are you asking others? You Realise and see for yourself. After the sense of doership has gone let us see what happens. People say Sri Sankara advised indolence. Can it be true? Did he not himself write commentaries and take part in disputations? Do not be worried about doing action or keeping yourself idle. First Realise the Self- gnothi seauton. Thereafter let us see whose action or indolence it is that we need to worry about. Who is worried

about action and indolence? Whom does the worry pertain to? Actions which are destined to occur through your body will complete themselves by using you as an instrument; you need not worry yourself about it- let the destined action complete itself.

Q.: But action involves creation of fresh karma.

B.: So long as a doer remains, he must reap the fruits of his actions. If one does not imagine himself to be the doer of the actions performed by the body, there can be no karma for him. He alone is an sannyasi who has renounced the karta. So, relinquish the karta, instead of struggling to give up action.

Q.: How did the ego arise?

B.: It is not necessary to know it. Know the present. The rest will take care of itself automatically. Attend exclusively to what IS; then what IS not will cease to bother you. You do not even know the present properly. Why do you worry about past and future?

S>M>

Q.: Is the world real or not?

B.: Is there any world apart from you? Is the world within you or without? Can it exist apart from you? Does the world come and tell you 'I exist.'?

Q.: So the world is only imaginary?

B.: When your standpoint becomes that of Jnana, then the world will be found to be not apart from the Self. Drishtin jnanamayim kritva pashyaet Brahmanam jagat. So, the question is one of outlook. Make your outlook inward-bent and the world will be found to be indistinguishable from pure bliss. Find your own Reality and the reality or otherwise of the world will become clear to you. Know your Self and the truth about the world is known thereby. Find the Self and all doubts and anxieties are set at rest, once and for all.

S>M>

Q.: How do we know whether actions performed by the body are ours or not?

B.: If fruits arising from the body's actions do not affect you, you are free from action.

Q.: To Realise, is intellectual knowledge enough?

B.: Mere intellectual knowledge will not do. Learn Ajata-advaita intellectually first, but then, do not stop with that. Practise it. Carry on the practice until the Self is Realised.

Q.: Does Bhagawan support only the Ajata-advaita school of Vedanta?

B.: If you profess one doctrine exclusively you are obliged to condemn all others. That is the case with madathipatis.

S>M>

Q.: Why does not Bhagawan ask all those who come here to practice vichara?

B.: All people cannot be expected to do the same kind of sadhana. Each one acts according to his poorvasamskaras and vishayavasanas. Jnana, bhakti, karma are all intertwined. Sagunopasanam may be more suitable for the man on the Clapham omnibus. It is aimed at ridding oneself of other forms and confining oneself mentally to one form exclusively. It leads to the nirgunopasanam, which is the same as vichara. It is impossible to straightaway fix the mind in the Heart. So, to begin with, these other aids might be necessary, such as pranayamam, mantra-japam, etc.; but in due course, everyone must come to vichara. Vichara is the ultimate route. Each individual conceives of God according to his own degree of spiritual advancement. There is nothing wrong in it. You say that you are the body in wakeful state; but there is no body to be found in deep sleep. The presence of body being contingent upon the incumbent mental state at the level of an individual, why should not there be infinite possibilities for God? Whichever method one wants to follow according to his poorvasamskaras and vishayavasanas, that method is encouraged by the Guru. When the time is ripe, the Guru converts him over to the path of vichara sadhana.

S>M>

Q.: Do heaven and hell exist or not?

B.: They are as real as your own body.

Q.: Do time and space exist in those places also?

B.: Do you not experience time and space in your dreams?

S>M>

Q.: How to get rid of anger, lust, envy, etc.?

B.: You must be there to feel anything; that witness is pure consciousness. Resign yourself to it.

Q.: Practically speaking, how can I be rid of such negative emotions?

B.: By giving up thoughts. You need not do anything else.

Q.: Is it good to go on sacred pilgrimages?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: What effort is necessary for reaching the Self?

B.: The spurious "I" must be annihilated. The Self is not to be reached. Is there any moment when your Self is not? There is nothing new to be discovered. Be as you are. The expectation to achieve something or the desire to attain to some exotic state is a major hurdle or obstacle to Realisation of the ever-present Self. The Self is not to be got anew. It always

IS. What is newly got cannot be permanent; that which is real must always exist; what is newly got will also go as it came.

Q.: What is the meaning of Jnanayagnai?

B.: Offer the ego as an oblation into the Self. In fact the ego already belongs to the Self.

Q.: What about other yajnas- for instance, those mentioned in the sacred-books?

B.: Other schools of thought exist for it.

Q.: May I learn from Bhagawan how many different kinds of jivanmuktas are there?

B.: Why do you bother about these things? What does it matter if the Emancipated-ones differ externally? There is no difference in their Jnana.

Q.: When loyal to one Guru how can we possibly treat other masters with deference?

B.: Guru is only One. He is not physical. He is the Self.

Q.: For how long should we depend upon the Guru in our sadhana?

B.: So long as there is weakness the support of strength is found to be necessary.

Q.: J. Krishnamurti says, 'No Guru is necessary.'. Does Bhagawan agree?

B.: No. One can say so after Realising the Self but not before.

Q.: Sri Bhagawan has performed severe penance to gain the state of Ajata-advaita. I am unable to replicate his efforts. I cannot abandon my family. What am I to do? I also want to become one endowed with Stitha-prajnai or Akhandakara-vritti.

B.: Whether at home or in the forest, you are always in your Self. The Christ said: "My kingdom is not of this world... now is my kingdom not from hence."

Q.: Do heaven and hell really exist?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Where?

B.: In you. It is the mind that is heaven or hell. A mind surcharged with negative emotions [or feelings] is hell. Self-abidance or the nivritti state is heaven.

Q.: Which is the best posture for practising investigation into the Self?

B.: Introversion of mind.

Q.: Yes- but physically-?

B.: Padmasanam, siddhasanam, and svastikasanam are the 3 recommended poses in the sacred-books.

Q.: But what is Bhagawan's personal opinion?

B.: You may try dhandhasanam. But really it is all immaterial. What matters is to keep the mind steadfastly poised in the Self. If abidance in the Real has

become spontaneous and natural, effortless and volitionless, everything is achieved.

S>M>

Q.: Will Bhagawan please explain to me the meaning of the terms mahamaya and parabhakti?

B.: [smiling] Listen to the following story-

Once upon a time, Narada was staying in the house of his beloved Lord Sri Krishna. Kapila-muni had also come there. Narada privately asked Krishna, 'My Lord, you told me only the greatest of your devotees are invited by you to stay personally with you. This nude ascetic, who is lost in samadhi, seems incapable of remembering his own name. How can you call him your devotee when he does not chant your name even once a day? On the other hand, every minute I am saying your name only! How can such a person, to whom devotion is apparently alien, be placed on a par with me? Have you invited him by mistake, my Lord?'. The Lord smiled but did not reply. Soon lunch was announced. Sri Krishna loved his devotees very much and ordered that be served all sorts of exotic delicacies on their plates. Narada greatly relished the food. Krishna did not like attachment of so much importance to such mundane pleasures on Narada's part. He told him, 'Do you not know that sensory experiences are thoroughly illusory? To honour you I arranged all this. But now even after finishing the meal you are continually engaged in thoughts of the food you have eaten. This is not proper.' Narada felt ashamed. At the same time, he wondered, 'How delicious the food was! How can it be that it was all mere illusion?'. Krishna read Narada's thought and told him, 'Come, let us go for a walk.'. As they were walking, suddenly the landscape changed into a scorching desert. Not the slightest sign of life was to be seen anywhere. Suddenly, Krishna said in a pleading voice, "Narada, I am thirsty; will you please fetch some water for me? I will wait here for you until you come back." Narada was eager to please the Lord and therefore he rushed away from the place at once to procure water. But wherever he looked there was only hot sand. He became tired and also found he had lost his way. The heat of the desert was burning his body. Yet he did not have the heart to abandon the quest to fetch water for his master. He walked for months, his once handsome appearance now long forgotten, his skin having fallen off, and his muscles having become blistered and oozing pus on account of the unbearable heat. Suddenly, he noticed that there was green on the horizon. He ran towards it and arrived at a charming little village, and fell asleep near a little hut situated on the outskirts of the village. When he awoke, he no longer bore any recollection of his original purpose in having come there. He saw that somebody had dressed his wounds, together with having ensured application



of liniment. He was lying underneath a small thatched roof. Presently, a slender, fair girl opened the door of the hut with coy bashfulness. She gave him water to drink and kindly made enquiries after his health. At the very sight of her, he immediately forgot even the name 'Krishna'. He felt like talking to the girl day and night, until the very end of time, so sweet did he find her voice. Soon talk ripened into love; he requested the father for the daughter, they were duly married, lived there in the simple little hut, and had many children. Thus twelve years passed. Narada's father-in-law died; he inherited his property. Narada thought, 'How fortunate I am! I have a lovely-looking wife, a beautiful house, children looking like the gems shining in the globe welded atop Indira's crown, hectare after hectare of cultivated fields, herds of healthy cattle, a youthful body... and what not!'. Just then, there came a flood. The river rose until it overflowed its banks, and flooded the whole village. Houses fell, men and livestock were swept away and drowned, and all manners of things were to be seen floating about atop the swirls of the river, which seemed bent on causing maximum possible destruction. Narada's fields were inundated and ruined; his pretty house had fallen like an axed tree. His friends in the village and his precious cows lay about as carcasses here and there, and vultures were circling the air, waiting patiently. Narada was desperate to save his family atleast. With one hand he held his wife, and with the other, two of his children; another child was on his shoulders, and he was trying to escape to safety to the other bank of the river, where the situation was comparatively better off. What he had done to deserve this tremendous flood he could not begin to imagine. The sun went down. Soon, the water of the river had turned ice-cold. Narada's legs were aching badly from the strain of carrying so much weight, for he had always maintained a priority to feed his fledglings well. After a few more steps he found the current to be too strong, and the child on his shoulders fell and was borne away to its doom. A cry of maddened despair came from Narada: in trying to save that child, he had now lost his grasp upon all of the others, and they also had been presently lost. At last his wife, whom he clasped around her slender waist with all his might, was torn away by the merciless current, and he alone was thrown on the bank, weeping and wailing in bitter lamentation. Then he swooned, his mind unable to tackle the horror of the situation. The next thing he became aware of was a familiar, gentle voice calling him. "My child, where is the water? You went to fetch some water for me to drink, and I was waiting for you; you have been gone for an entire hour. I patiently waited for you for 3 quarters of the hour and finally decided to come in search of you. I find you here on the sand, sleeping peacefully." "An hour!" ejaculated Narada. 13 years had passed through his mind, and all these scenes had happened in an hour! 'Now do you

understand the power of illusion[mahamaya]?' asked Sri Krishna with a mischievous, yet tender smile. Narada wept. The Lord embraced his devotee and asked quietly- 'Did you remember me in all those 13 years?'. Narada fell at Krishna's feet and admitted the truth, sobbing all the while. The very next day he remembered to promptly apologise to Kapila-muni for his remarks. The muni smiled and blessed Narada. When the emaciated muni, who had not changed his posture in half-a-century, raised his hand to proffer a benediction, his skin around the shoulders ripped itself, so weak was his body. Inside his rib-cage, Narada saw his heart making the sound, 'Krish-na; Krish-na...', and was stunned. From that day onward, Narada stopped claiming to be Sri Krishna's greatest devotee.

TKS.: [in jocundity] Here I think if we tear Muruganar's skin away, we will hear his heart beating, 'Rama-na; Rama-na...'

Bhagawan foremost, the entire Hall roared with laughter, and Sri Muruganar was laughing and crying at the same time.

TKS.: I believe there is a similar story of Lord Vishnu giving Narada a bowl filled with oil and asking him to come around the world thrice, telling him that not a drop ought to spill...

B.: Yes, yes..

Q.: What is the moral of the story?

B.: Inherence in the Self is verily genuine parabhakti. Mahamaya is simply the faculty of delusion that makes you ignore consciousness, and convinces you into thinking that there is a physical, objectively real world outside you.

S>M>

Q.: The Gita says that if a man fixes his attention between the eyebrows and holds his breath he attains Jnana. Does Bhagawan agree?

B.: The center between the eyebrows is only an upasanasthanam. As for Jnana, do not desire it as though it were something alien to or outside you: you are yourself verily Jnana.

Q.: Does Sri Bhagawan believe in rebirth?

B.: Let what is born raise and worry about the question of its rebirth.

Q.: According to Bhagawan we must meditate upon the Heart in order so as to Realise the Self. Am I correct?

B.: The Heart is not physical.

Q.: What is it then? Is it the Self?

B.: Yes. But from the bodily perspective, it is the place wherein experience of pure consciousness- which is [spatially and temporally] localised to the body- may be said to have its locus.

Q.: Is this locus located on the right-hand side of the chest?

B.: Yes. But experience it subjectively instead of trying to analyse it objectively. Have the experience- its location does not matter.

S>M>

Q.: What is the correct conception of life for an individual to entertain?

B.: Life is as it IS. All trouble arises solely from the fact that we want to have a conception of it. Why conceptualise Life? Let it BE- or rather, you cease to stay away from it and so remain as one with it. If only you will simply allow yourself to merely BE, without giving room for conceptual knowledge to cause the torturous disquietude or agonising mental torment that unequivocally is characteristic of it, you will be able to enjoy unlimited peace of mind.

Q.: How then am I to Realise the Self? If I remain without doing anything, can I Realise the Self? Is not strenuous effort needed to Realise the Self? If I keep quiet, will the Self become Revealed to me of His own accord?

B.: To the extent contrary tendencies remain, to that extent effort is also necessary. You may imagine the mind to be a room filled with all sorts of useless clutter. To the extent there is rubbish waiting to be cleared out, to that same extent you must make effort to clean up. After you have totally emptied the room, then you can abide effortlessly in state of Self-abidance, not before. But how to clear out mental garbage? Everytime you notice something [occupying thought-space] in the room [of the mind], ask yourself 'Who am I?'; this is the only way.

On hearing these words Chadwick rushed out excitedly and soon returned with a thin book- I observed it to be 'A Study in Scarlet' by A.C. Doyle. Bhagawan directed a curious glance at him, whereupon Chadwick asked permission to read out to the Hall a tiny passage from the book; it was given. Chadwick read out as follows presently- "I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skilful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent." Then he spoke to the master thus-

C.: It occurred to me that if we take away the word 'brain' and introduce the word 'mind' instead, this paragraph would mirror Bhaagawan's words uttered just now!

B.: No. Throw everything out. Only then can the room, which is actually a gaol ruining your freedom, itself be demolished.

C.: Then I shall become like a vegetable. I won't even be able to say my name when somebody were to ask me.

B.: Do not harbour these fears. If [-after Realisation-] your senses are destined to function normally in the world they inevitably will.

C.: What if destiny has decreed otherwise?

B.: Either way, one who is an Emancipated-being cannot possibly undergo suffering: for he is one with Jnana [the Impersonal Absolute Reality] Itself. How can there be anymore suffering for one who has nothing left to suffer with? Do not let these silly ideas [ruminations upon the body's probable condition or fate after Realisation] bother you. It does not matter in the slightest whether the body is active or not after Realisation. Is anybody going to be left to bother about the question? So, devote yourself to search for Truth that is here and now within you, rather than wasting time on asinine, inutile speculations. The experience of Jnana perfectly precludes experience of body-consciousness. Why then bother about what is going to happen to the body after Realisation? So, abandon these pointless concerns and dedicate yourself to sadhana lock, stock and barrel.

Q.: Is the mind lodged in the brain? Men of Science opine so. Whereas the sacred-books say that the mind is lodged behind the navel. Which hypothesis to believe?

B.: The body and the individual imagining himself to be occupying it are both lodged in the mind; so also are the world and its creator.

Q.: Is Sri Bhagawan also then my own mental creation?

B.: Absolutely.

Q.: Where to find the Real Bhagawan?

B.: He is your Heart.

S>M>

Q.: 'Jnana' means Realisation. Jnana-margam is also the name for the method of vichara leading upto Realisation. Why so?

B.: Because it is only by the Grace of the Unknowable that the Unknowable is to be known.

Q.: Bhagawan has written moving lines of poetry about Lord Arunachalaeshwara- yet he did not visit the temple at all in this century, I gather. Why?

B. did not make any response.

Chadwick: I am reminded of Rudyard Kipling's lines: "Deeper than speech our love, stronger than life our tether, But we do not fall on the neck nor kiss when we come together."

B. smiled but made no comment.

C.: Does collecting rare rudraksha beads, with 9, 11, 23, etc. faces, result in accrual of any merit?

B.: Mijnheer Olaus Wormius collected the bones and skins of thousands of animals in his Wunderkammer. When [the time of his] leaving the world [drew nigh], did any of them [offer to] give him company? The more exquisite the beauty of the object coveted, the deadlier the distraction from the Self. Action which is destined cannot be avoided, but why do you needlessly wish to invite more action?

C.: Should I try to remain idle all the time, then?

B.: You keep the mind idle- i.e., steadily poised in the Self. That will do. Never mind whether the body is idle or working- the body's prarabdha will take care of the question.

Q.: Is Love for God worthy of being encouraged even though it espouses dvaitam? Does sincere bhakti facilitate one to go to God's heavenly realm?

B.: Yes; it makes you discover the truth- that you never left heaven. If unconditional Love for God is achieved, everything is achieved.

C.: Yes, yes; Sir Walter Scott has told us, hasn't he, that-

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;

In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;

In halls, in gay attire is seen;

In hamlets, dances on the green.

Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,

And men below, and saints above;

For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

S>M>

Q.: How is a man to escape from the bonds of karma?

B.: It is not action that is condemned but the sense of doership. Action cannot be avoided so long as there is a body. Instead of trying to give up action, try to get rid of the sense of doership. In trying to give up action, you will meet only with futility- because one cannot win against the current of prarabdha. Let the body be resigned to its fate, be it action or inaction. Depending upon its prarabdha, the body's actions automatically go on or come to an end. If the body is destined to work, work will surely be done by the body, whether you like or dislike the fact, and you will never succeed in stopping it no matter how hard you may try so to do. Likewise, if the body is destined to not work, work will surely not be done by the body, whether you like or dislike the fact, and you will never succeed in making it work no matter how hard you may try so to do. King Janaka was a Jnani. Did he not rule a kingdom with reasonable efficiency? Listen to the following story-

Once upon a time the king Baghirata was passing through a forest with all his pompous retinue following behind him. His attendant for a moment failed to hold up the royal umbrella properly. It slipped and fell to the ground. Just when it was being gathered up again, some bird-droppings fell on the king's head. The king became enraged, but the bird had long escaped beyond the horizon. So the king, in his ire, cut off the attendant's thumbs. The king's men tried to wash the excreta off the king's head, but they met with no success. So, his hair was tonsured off. The king was sad about the loss of his precious, curly locks. The party continued their journey. On the way, lying on his back nude on the bare ground, without even a koupeenam to cover his groin, was a seeming madman, one leg haughtily cocked over the other. He was happily humming a tune, evidently supremely contented with himself and the world. His body was besmeared with dirt. Insects were crawling about in his bedraggled hair. His skin was covered in bird-droppings here and there and presently some more squirts of bird-dropping landed on his head. But the ascetic took no notice of any of it, and was obviously intently absorbed in some inner bliss. The king was struck by this man's happy state. He thought, 'I am unable to forget one instance of humiliation caused unto me by nature. But look at this man. He has nothing, yet he is supremely happy. I must learn the secret of his happiness.'. Accordingly, he sent for the man. But when the king's men approached the nude ascetic and delivered the command, he took no notice. The king was surprised and thought, 'Perhaps he does not recognise me.'. He himself walked up to the man and said, 'I am King Baghirata.'. At this, the ascetic burst out laughing. The irate king drew his sword from its scabbard, but this only made the man laugh louder. Thereupon it occurred to the king that this must be no ordinary mortal. He fell at the nude man's feet and said, 'Please pardon me for my short-tempered behaviour. I see that you are in a state of supreme bliss. Can you please tell me the secret of your happiness?'. 'I know my identity with the Aathman.' said the other simply. The king also wanted to learn the same, and was told to find a Guru to learn it from. 'Who is your Guru?', asked the king. 'I have 24 Gurus.' said the man. Hearing that famous sentence, the king, with a shock, realised he was talking to the avadhoota Dattatraeya, and covered the ascetic's feet with tears of reverence. He obtained the great master's blessings and left the place after paying him due homage. After that incident, the king's curiosity to discover this thing called 'Aathman', which evidently yielded such supreme ecstasy, left him with little desire to engage in other activities. His interest in worldly concerns and state-related responsibilities waned completely. He started muttering in sleep, 'Aathma, Aathma... Where are you? When will I attain you? When is that sweet day going to arrive?'. Hearing this, the king's consort

asked him in the morning about the matter. Initially he tried to hide it, but broke down under further questioning. The king's intelligent wife sensed her husband's need to find a Guru and suggested that courtiers be sent out far and wide with the message that anybody teaching the king the secret of attaining the Aathman would be richly rewarded; however, coming to hear of the matter, the kula-guru of the Royal-clan suggested that His Royal Highness make a pilgrimage to the Hill known as Shonadhri, located in dakshinabharat, and visit Sri Gauthama Maharshi who was living there. Accordingly the king undertook a strenuous journey and arrived at Tiruvannamalai. He entered the ashram of the Maharshi and duly paid his respectful obeisances. Then he deferentially informed the Maharshi of his desire to discover the Aathman and become one with It. The Maharshi said to him, 'The only way to discover the Aathman is to give up the Anaathman.'. The king interpreted these words uttered by the Maharshi as a statement conveying instruction to renounce the world. So, as soon as he returned, he ordered that a grand yajna be organised. The kula-guru guessed what was passing through the king's mind; he told the king, 'Your Excellency, real renunciation is to give up the delusory ego. The man who has awoken into genuine wisdom of the Spirit does not distinguish between forest, household and kingdom. Please remember your duties towards the country. If you abandon us all, to whom shall we turn for support and guidance?'. The king who was consumed with the fire of Aathmajignyasa paid no attention. He was burning with the thought that all his possessions and his empire were preventing him from Realising the Self and enjoying the unlimited, unfathomable bliss of the Aathman. In the yajna, he gave away all his wealth and possessions. However, nobody consented to accept the responsibility of ruling over his vast empire; so, Baghirata invited a neighbouring king- who was on inimical terms with him and who was waiting for a suitable opportunity to organise a military conquest of invasion and annexation upon his empire- to rule his empire and gifted away the same to him, completely ignoring the fervent pleas of his ministers. Now, thought the king, the only thing remaining to be done so as to become an ascetic is to leave the country. The day the yajna was completed, he disguised himself as a ragamuffin and fled his palace at the stroke of midnight. He reached a far away country and lived there happily on alms, as a wandering beggar. Having neither empire, nor title, nor family nor any other cares, eventually he Realised Jnana and lost himself absolutely in the Sahaja-stithi. He wandered about from place to place calling out for alms sometimes and absorbed in samadhi at other times. One day he inadvertently reached his own former kingdom. He recognised the streets, but it all made no difference to him- i.e., he felt no regret at having become reduced to his present condition of total

penury. Not a single citizen recognised him. For fun, he decided to go and beg at the palace itself, to see whether anybody there at least would recognise him. He was overjoyed when he found that he was not recognised at the palace also- in fact, so revolting was his dishevelled appearance that the palace guards chased him away, instead of giving him food. But just when he was being ejected unceremoniously from the gates of the palace, the old gardener came rushing and fell at his feet, crying, 'Your Majesty, Your Majesty...'. The guards thought being an old man his brains had become addled. But he explained the situation to them and finally the incumbent king was informed. The king came rushing and made respectful obeisances unto Baghirata; then he requested him to accept the kingdom back, but to no avail. Baghirata simply said, 'Either give me alms or I am going off with an empty stomach.'. Since the situation could not be helped, Baghirata was given food and he went away. After some weeks, he found himself wandering the streets of a neighbouring kingdom, the monarch of which had recently passed away. Suddenly an elephant rushed towards him and garlanded him, and he became the king of that country. After some years, the king of his own country passed away, and he agreed to take over and rule his own former territory also. Before Emancipation, ruling one kingdom had seemed a burden to him. After Emancipation, he was able to handle the responsibility of ruling 2 kingdoms effortlessly. Many people imagine that Jnana implies loss of physical sensations and impairment of intellectual faculties. It need not necessarily be so in all cases; the body's fate depends on its prarabdha. Whatever the body's prarabdha may be, the Jnani is not affected by it.

Q.: The story seems to reinforce the time-honoured notion that Jnana will not come to one staying in the house, and that we must go to the forests to get it, or become beggars.

B.: Listen to the following story-

Once upon a time the kingdom of Malava was ruled by King Sikidhvaja and Queen Chudala. On account of her poorvasamskaras Chudala had a burning desire to find out an experiential answer to the question, Who am I?. In due course of time, she Realised the Self and her face shone with a unique brightness; also, her appearance had become more pulchritudinous than before. The king having observed this fact asked her the reason. The queen told him the truth, but the king laughed at her scornfully, since he was under the impression that Realisation was possible only through severe austerities and could never be attained whilst living in a luxurious palace. Consequent to spending time with her, the king developed a great desire to himself Realise the Self, for such is the benefit derived out of sathsangam. He wanted to leave the kingdom and practise penance[*tapas*] in the forests so that he could



gain Realisation. The queen tried to dissuade him and suggested that if he carried on tapas in the palace itself, he would be able to rule the kingdom as well, and so discharge his responsibilities toward the country in a dutiful manner, adding that for tapas, what mattered was not the place of physical environment but vairagyam. Refusing to heed her advice, the king went to the forests and performed hard penance. The queen was ruling the kingdom in the king's absence. Many years passed in this way. Using her thaumaturgic powers, Chudala found that her husband was not making any progress in his sadhana. Taking pity on her husband and anxious to rescue him from the quagmire of delusion, she disguised herself as one Kumbha Muni and stood in front of him. Using her siddhis, she levitated in the air and stood a few feet above the ground! The king, thinking that some celestial being had descended from the heavens to bless him, fell at Kumbha Muni's feet, told him his woes and sought guidance. The Muni told him: 'Only practising the investigation 'Who am I?' leads to Realisation and not sitting in the forest doing nothing. Those alone who know the real meaning of renunciation Realise the Self.' The king replied that he had renounced everything, including his kingdom and family. Kumbha Muni told him that his renunciation was only external and that his vishayavasanas were still dormant in him. The king then took hold his walking staff, kamandalu, rudrakshas and clothes and threw them all into the blazing fire and stood without any possession. Even his koupeenam he threw into the flames. Still, Kumbha Muni told him that he had not renounced completely. The king then proceeded to abandon his last possession, the body, by jumping from the top of a high cliffside of a mountain. The Muni casually asked him, "You may succeed in killing the body, but what about the one who says 'I', who resides within the body, imagining himself to be one with it? How are you going to kill him?" The nude king stood dumbstruck and did not know what to do. Then the Muni taught him that he would not Realise the Self by destroying the body, but only by destroying the mind which was the cause of all bondage; the snapping of the mind's evil tendency to mistakenly identify the not-Self to be the Self was verily the only genuine renunciation of everything. Then the Muni taught the king in detail how to investigate 'Who am I?'. The king followed the instruction and Realised the Self. He went into deep samadhi. Then Kumbha Muni disappeared and Chudala returned after some time as herself. She found that the king was still in samadhi. Chudala roared like a lion to wake him up, but her efforts were met with total failure. She wanted him to return to the kingdom and rule it wisely, so that the entire kingdom would stand to benefit from his Divinity. But Sikidhwaja was not interested in returning to the quotidian plane of [body-]consciousness after Realising the Self. Chudala did not know what to

do. She prayed to Lord Vishnu, who took the form of an eagle on a subtle plane and entered the king's heart. The Lord chanted the Sama Veda in a melodious voice from within the king's heart and then left. Gradually, like the blossoming of a flower, the king became aware of the world. The king, filled with the ecstatic joy of the Self, remained silent, not knowing how to express his supreme happiness. Then, as advised by the queen, he returned with her to the kingdom; thus, firmly established in the bliss of the supreme Self, he ruled the kingdom together by her side[, and they lived happily ever after].

Q.: What is the moral of the story?

B.: Your physical surroundings are of no help and of no hinderance. Only the mind counts, so far as the quest for the Self is concerned. Forest or household- it makes no difference at all. There is no use in changing the environment- if anything, it will increase your troubles.

S>M>

Q.: Thiruvannamalai is said to have special efficacy in removing the ignorant outlook of sadhakas. But not all can come to Thiruvannamalai, and not all can stay here indefinitely.

B.: Yes. But that Thiruvannamalai which is immanent within the Heart is open to you any time and all the time. God's Grace is operating all the time. It is we who shut our eyes to It. Really, people are merely pretending that they are not Realised. Let them turn the mind Selfwards into the Heart and see whether Jnana is there or not. 'When will Jnana come?' is what people ask. Is Jnana located in another continent, so that it should board a steamship and come to unite with you?

Q.: God's Grace is needed for Realising the Self.

B.: True. But the more you introvert the mind, the more Grace you receive. The totally introverted mind is nothing but Grace Itself.

S>M>

Q.: Are these stories not from the work Yogavasishtam? Bhagawan's versions seem to be slightly different...

B.: This has said what it knows.

Q.: In fact is this what happened?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Do these siddhis- for instance levitation, walking on water, handling fire without hurting oneself, etc.- really exist?

B.: Their reality is on a par with the reality of the world.

Q.: Why does B. not manifest any of these siddhis?

B.: Enough crowds are coming here even as it is...

Q.: Is B. capable of manifesting these siddhis should he wish it?

B.: He cannot wish anything.

S>M>

Q.: Does sharanagati lead to the thought-free state of mind?

B.: Provided it is absolutely unconditional- not otherwise.

Q.: Can philanthropy be a means to Realisation?

B.: Many do it to satisfy their egoistical craving for doing something beneficial to others, thus fattening their egos. Others do it for fame. Rare is the man who does something unselfishly, and for the public good exclusively. Even then the desire to obtain applause may be hidden deep within the mind, unbeknownst to the man himself. So, motiveless[-i.e, volitionless] karma is really possible only for the Jnani.

S>M>

Q.: What is that one thing, consequent to knowing which all doubts stand solved?

B.: Find out who the doubter is. Hold on to the doubter and no doubt will arise. When the doubter himself ceases to exist, can there be doubts arising? From where will they arise? All are Jnanis- only they are not aware of the fact. To know it, doubts must be extirpated- this means that the doubter must be extirpated. Here the doubter is the mind.

Q.: Which is the way leading to Realisation of the Self?

B.: The investigation, 'Who am I?'

Q.: I am after all a man on the Clapham omnibus. What are my odds of success?

B.: Never mind. Before playing a game of football, do you calculatively ponder, 'What are my odds of success at winning this game?'- or do you march into the ground[pitch] with eager relish?

Q.: Is life a mere game?

B.: Yes. Till you win, you play again and again.

Q.: To Realise the Self is to win. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: Can the japam Brahmaivaham lead to Realisation?

B.: Why think 'I am this.' or 'I am that.'? Investigate who the thinker is and thoughts cease- then what IS, namely the Self, stands Revealed as the inescapable residue.

Q.: Is hatha yoga necessary?

B.: Not for all, but only for those who are altogether incapable of otherwise stilling the mind. It depends upon individual temperament. Vichara is the best weapon for killing the ego. Yogis reach Nirvikalpa by practising kevalakumbhaka, which suppresses the prana. But the best way is to trace out the source of the mind or buddhi and stay there permanently. What is

yoga? It is said that yoga refers to the merging of the jivatman into the Paramatman; but this gives rise to the question of how they got separated from each other to begin with. So, in actual fact, yoga is simply the actual Realisation that the jivatman never existed; it is not the same as intellectual understanding of any concept explicating non-existence of the jivatman; in such Realisation, duality is wholly wiped out and thus the Self does not lend itself to be experienced by anything; such state of non-duality is verily the goal of yoga. Sivavakkiyar has elucidated his opinion in relation to the matter in the following fashion:

உருத்தரித்த நாடியில் ஒடுங்குகின்ற வாயுவைக்  
கருத்தினால் இருத்தியே சுபாலம் ஏற்றவல்லீரேல  
விருத்தரரும் பாலராவீர் மேனியும் சிவந்திடும  
அருள்தரித்த நாதர்பாதம் அம்மைபாதம் உண்மையே.

Q.: Hatha yoga is said to cure the diseases of the body.

B.: The body[-consciousness] itself is the biggest disease.

Q.: Is there any individuality for the Jnani after Realization?

B.: No.

Q.: I am trying B.'s vichara method. But it is not working.

B.: The entire mind must be channelised at its source- applying part of the mind's prowesses of concentration will not do.

Q.: What is the difference between neti-neti and vichara? Is the former of any use?

B.: The latter includes the former automatically. Neti-neti stops at the level of the intellect. If you will Realise the Self, then your task is to find the source of the aham vritti- see whence it springs. For Realisation, you must reach the source of "I" without fail. Then the false "I" will disappear and the real "I" stands Realised. It needs vairagyam- otherwise, your half-hearted attempts could only ever result exclusively in infructuity.

Q.: How to cultivate vairagyam?

B.: Again- vichara is the way.

Q.: How long does it take to annihilate the ego using the weapon of vichara?

B.: Why are you asking this question? No matter how long it takes- do it.

S>M>

Q.: How can we call you an avadhoota when you have accumulated so much property around yourself? What use can a man who has wholly given himself upto God possibly have for all this worldly wealth?

B.: What you see about this place is the ashram's property. The ashram does not belong to this; this is merely staying in the ashram like all others you find here.

Q.: But you are the center of adulation here; everybody is worshipping you as a walking, talking, living god.

B.: Did this ever ask to be given any such treatment?

The questioner apparently could not find anything to say to this; he stopped talking.

S>M>

Q.: Will not Sri Bhagawan perform some noteworthy miracles to convince the skeptical of the authenticity of his greatness?

B.: The greatest miracle is that ourself being the Self, we have seemingly become ignorant of the same.

S>M>

Q.: It seems that whilst Sri Bhagawan was living on the Hill, a woman approached him and begged that he should marry her!

B.: [laughing] Who is telling you people all these things? Yes, but she did not want marriage; rather, she wanted to make a baby, a son, with me; her concern was that since she did not have a family, she wanted somebody who would take care of her when she reached old age. A certain leghiyam was administered to me. It was an aphrodisious-effect inducing tonic that was given to male horses to induce them to indulge themselves in concupiscent behaviour, so that they would reproduce. In those days I was not in the habit of refusing anything that was given to me to eat; on numerous occasions wandering sadhus would press me to consume ganja; since I had no inclination to take heed for welfare of this body, I would nonchalantly acquiesce when persuasion happened to be profuse. On this instance, 3/4ths of the bottle of this horse-tonic was given to me; it had a pungent, sweet taste. An hour later the woman eagerly invited me to come to her house, which, she said, was somewhere in Anaikatti-street. I sat motionlessly without saying anything. The leghiyam had absolutely no effect on me. The woman suggestively unfastened the front of her drapery, but was disappointed to find me unmoved. She asked tauntingly, 'Don't you have any manhood? Will you not prove your manhood by demonstrating the same on me?' and so on. I only kept quiet. Sometime later she went away cursing me that I was a useless, impotent creature who had wasted most of her expensive leghiyam. [laughs] What can I do? Poor woman. Her profession was such that nobody was consenting to marry her; but she desperately wanted a son because a few years thereafter she would be unable to earn as she did in her youth; she thought I would grant her a son and she could live comfortably in old age by sending him to work; if it was a daughter, she would probably endeavour to train her up in her own field of work. But what to do? I ate up her leghiyam but dashed all her hopes! [laughs] Many such peculiar cases came to see me

whilst I was staying in Virupaksha-cave... In those days there was no Ramana Maharshi, etc.; I was alone and by myself most of the time. People who came to Virupaksha-cave then could do with me whatever they liked. A swami once came and smeared me all over the body with freshly ground green-chilli paste!

Q.: What?! Why did not Bhagawan stop him?

B.: What could I do? He asked whether he could do so. I merely kept quiet. He interpreted silence to mean consent and started to apply the paste all over the body.

Q.: Was there not immense pain?

B.: For the first few minutes, there was an intense burning sensation. After that the whole body felt cool and refreshed; in fact, I liked it! [laughs]

Q.: Is such procedure good for the body? May we also try it?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between Paramatman and Parashakti?

B.: The Jnani alone knows that there is no difference.

Q.: But I see a world around me, and therefore I desire to know the origin of its manifestation.

B.: You desire to know the origin of the world, you say. But do you know your own origin? Without knowing your own origin, what is the use of endeavouring to know the origin of the world? Your origin is the origin of the world.

Q.: When I am asleep, there are others who recall having seen the world at that time; after my waking from sleep, they tell me that the world was going on as usual even whilst I was sleeping.

B.: When does this corroboration become available to you? Only when you yourself are in the jagrat state. What is the implication?

Q.: I am not able to follow Maharshi's line of explication.

B.: The world conjured up by the mind does not usually leave any gap in the fabric of virtuality or simulation that it creates. The dream you are experiencing now is a perfectly integrated, seamless whole. We intellectually break it down into components and then argue that these several parts are observed to be consistent with one another. In a dream, would it not happen that your friends corroborate that that dream-world went on whilst you were taking a nap therewithin? There is no difference between jagrat and swapna, in actual fact. On account of arbitrary mental conceptualisations appurtenant to something called 'time', we say that these 2 states are different from each other. But again, what is time? Time is also merely a mental concept. Time and space are only our ideas and nothing more.

S>M>

Q.: Will uninterrupted attention to subjective consciousness result in Revelation of the Self?

B.: For Realisation, it is necessary to surrender [to the Self] without reserve; we cannot wrest Realisation from the Self by force. You want somehow to be assured that you will certainly succeed in Realising the Self; but such attitude runs contrary-wise to the spirit of self-surrender.

Q.: What is the use in surrendering if Realisation does not result?

B.: Surrendering with the motive of Realising the Self, or with any other motive in mind, is not genuine surrender at all. Surrender is effectuated out of Love, not out of desire. One who is devoid of Love will not be able to surrender easily. If the ego has not unconditionally surrendered itself, there is no use in going on watching the feeling of subjective consciousness- it will only result in either a total blank or an inexplicable feeling of great fear. Many mumukshus fall victim to the venomous delusion that since they inhere in subjective awareness of being always, they are Jnanis. This practice of concentrating on subjective consciousness of being implies and reinforces the pretended existence of a subtle "I" who witnesses the fact of his being subjectively aware or conscious; how can it be the Final-state in which the Jnani stands established, wherein "I" has perished once and for all? There are many who succeed in the practice of watching subjective consciousness always, and go on to imagine that they have become Jnanis; this is a false sense of Realisation that must be crossed before one can reach the actual Goal safely; unfortunately, not many manage to recognise this practice as being only an activity of mind sustained by intellect or power of will; they go on to announce themselves as being Jnanis, amass followers, and bring wholesale spiritual ruin upon both themselves and their unlucky followers; only those whose minds have been melted in the crucible of Guru's Grace with the fire of Love manage to avoid being trapped by this false sense of Realisation. The mind is devious enough to present before you all sorts of states so that you mistake the same for Realisation, and thus avoid going in for actual manonasha; such is the brutal savagery of the mind's strong desire to continue to survive. Only a very few [mumukshus] manage to cross this kind of false sense of Realisation [without being deluded thereby and thus forsaking the means to actually attain the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani]. It is true that for neophytes, watching the mind's subjective consciousness of being or watching the aham-vritti might be easier than 'Who am I?' or sharanagati; in due course of time, it may be better to shift to either of these 2 safe methods. The fruit of vichara or sharanagati is to remain as That-which-IS; this cannot be attained by observing That-which-IS. The act of observation creates duality; it splits the mind into observer and observed; it makes the mind think that it is engaged in

action, since it happens to be occupied in performing the act of observation; it gives the mind work to do and makes it move; it runs contrary-wise to the ideal, motionless state of mind of summa-irutthal; therefore, it may be regarded as being exclusively a beginner's practice only. You are asked to BE. Why create problems by watching yourself being, imagining yourself to be, etc.?

Q.: Meher Baba is a crook who is operating only on the level of such a false sense of Realisation. Am I correct?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: Sometimes while investigating 'Who am I?' I feel pain at these regions. [touches himself at the cranial-bregma and then at the abdominal-fundus]

B.: You are telling me. When I was in Madurai I also felt these same pains; but I did not tell anybody. I would be lying down with head tightly clutched in hands and my atthai would ask what the matter was; but from me no reply would be forthcoming. So she would rub my forehead vigorously with wintergreen-oil of her own accord. There was no relief. The pains subsided only after I came here.

Q.: I cannot follow the remedy of renunciation. I have dependant family-members at home for whom my earning is the sole source of sustenance.

B.: Ask yourself 'Who feels this pain?'. Shift your attention away from the pain to the one who becomes aware of the pain. Then the pain will fly away.

Q.: Then is there no need to consult a doctor?

B.: [no response]

Q.: Should I atleast apply some zambuk over the painful regions?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: The famous Chinese military-leader Sunsu is reputed to have said- 'The supreme art of war lies in subduing the enemy without having to resort to fighting.' Likewise, Maharshi's vichara seems to kill mind or the ego without having to fight him.

B.: How to kill something that is not there at all? How to kill a snake that one sees in a rope? Likewise here. If mind exists it can be killed. See if it exists.

Q.: I think thoughts; therefore I infer that I have a mind.

B.: Turn your mind completely back on itself and see if it remains. See mind with mind. Then you will know that there is no such thing by name 'mind'. Mind is useful for seeing objects and worlds. But the moment the mind turns inward to look at itself, only Self remains.

Q.: What is the cause for arising of maya?



B.: Who is complaining that maya has arisen? Is it the Self that so complains or is it maya that so complains? The one who complains of being affected by maya is himself the one and only maya and there is no other maya.

S>M>

Q.: What is moola-prakrithi?

B.: Ultimately, one finds it as being the same as the aham-vritti; there is no cosmos capable of being perceived in the absence of perceiver thereof.

Q.: This world contains many people. Even when I am not looking at it or paying attention to it, others who inhabit this world continue to spectate it.

B.: The others you mention appear to exist only in the realm of your own imagination.

Q.: But there is diversity in perception; this same world is seen differently by multiple persons; each individual interprets both his immediate environment and the larger world around him in his own distinctive way. Does this fact not indicate that there are multiple people looking at the world?

B.: There is no such thing known as 'world'. Only Self exists.

Q.: Why am I unaware of this Self?

B.: Because you continue to remain aware of something known by you as 'world'.

Q.: How shall I become aware of the Self?

B.: By renouncing or relinquishing that which is not-Self.

Q.: The Self is said to be obnubilated by avarana.

B.: The avarana is nothing but "I". In discovering that there is no such thing lies true wisdom.

Q.: Is "I" a myth?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then who am I?

B.: [smiling] Find out.

Q.: But really what is the answer to the question?

B.: The answer cannot be discovered by the intellect. The Jnana-vichara 'Who am I?' is not an intellectual exploration. The purpose of the practice is to sink the mind in the Heart and prevent it from straying outwards again. Destruction of thought and faculty of thought-manufacture is the goal of investigating 'Who am I?', not searching for the answer by the aid of the intellect. Permanent submergence of mind in the Heart alone genuinely leads to Emancipation.

Q.: What is the difference between saguna-brahman and nirguna-brahman?

B.: Before wanting to know about Brahman, know yourself first. Discover who you are. Then there will be time enough to worry about whether Brahman has any attributes or not. Without even knowing who we are, what is the use of making effort to know about other things? First and foremost, find out 'Who

am I?'. Once we have succeeded in this elementary quest, then if need be let us worry about other things, not now. The fact is that the idea of saguna-brahman is a nullity as respects those who have perished in the radiant light of self-awareness of the Self.

Q.: Does not B. then perceive shapes, forms, patterns and colours in the world around him?

B.: Gold does not undergo any change when it is cast into ornaments; as far as gold is concerned, gold is always gold and gold remains always gold whether it is a necklace or a bracelet or a ring or anything else. The external shapes exist from the point of view of the extrinsic observer only; gold is not aware of them. Likewise Brahman or Self is indeed always formless or nirguna, but depending upon the onlooker's weltanschauung objects seem to appear in it. The Jnani has no weltanschauung; although his eyes might be wide open, he does not see anything; there is no anything for him to see.

S>M>

Q.: "Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds." wrote Tennyson. But the same Enoch Arden is betrayed by God: "My God has bowed me down to what I am; My grief and solitude have broken me..."

E.Z.: Some years ago the American director Mr. David Griffith made a heart-rending cinematograph-picture out of the tragedy, I remember...

B.: [pensively] If the dream [continues to] be sweet, the dreamer wants to continue dreaming forever...

S>M>

A certain Dr. Mees has written to the ashram praying for the master's advice and guidance. Mr. TKS read out his letter to the master, wherein he says he has now reached a stage in his sadhana, or so he feels, when he is no longer able to tell whether he is awake or dreaming. For the past few weeks, he is being regularly blessed by visions, hallucinations or dreams- he is not sure which- in which he is having conversations with Sri Bhagawan. He has noted down the conversations diligently in a notebook and the same is now being forwarded by him to the ashram for the perusal of the Maharshi and others in the ashram who might happen to be interested. He hopes the Maharshi's blessings lie upon him at all times.

B.: You may write to him saying that the true state of waking lies beyond these 3 transitory states, and that all 3 of them are equally unreal; it is incorrect to suppose that jagrat is of a more enduring character as compared to swapna.

S>M>

Q.: The objects we see today we have already seen yesterday and will see yet again tomorrow; but as far as the swapna state is concerned, each time we go to sleep it is a different dream which visits us.

B.: Inside a dream, don't you sometimes have the feeling that you have already visited the place that you then happen to be stationed in, before?

Q.: Admittedly, yes; but that happens only occasionally; whereas here the world is the same day after day.

B.: You may then take it that the world is a dream having a longer term or span of life; but strictly[accurately] speaking this hypothesis is not correct. Why? Because standards of length of time-span such as 'long' and 'short' also pertain only to the mind; they are also merely mental fabrications or arbitrary mental conceptualisations. Time or space has no relevance or meaning in the Self. Corresponding to a dream lasting for 5 hours in this world, in the world conjured up by the dream you may have lived an entire lifespan. If you look at the clock on waking up, you find that a mere 5 hours have passed; but whilst dreaming those long years of life you led seemed quite real to you. It is the mind which projects jagrat and swapna and then enters into arguments as to whether it is all real or not. Deeply immersed in its own fanciful creations and having cultivated desire for or attachment towards them, the mind is unable to infer the fact of their fictitiousness. Continuous inherence in the Self will make you see things differently. It is true that the more the extent of or the higher the level of worldly attachment, the more it is that the world seems real.

Mr. TKS.: Shall I include these words of instruction also in the ashram's letter of response to Dr. Mees?

B.: Yes.

After the master had gone through it, the afore-mentioned notebook of Dr. Mees was then passed around for inspection by those incumbently present in the Hall. I made a note of the contents, and now reproduce them hereasunder-

Q.: It is said that the Buddhists deny the individual soul. But on the other hand, Hindus believe in a reincarnating ego. Which of these two conflicting views is correct? Is the individual soul a continuous entity which reincarnates again and again, or is it a mere agglomeration of poorvasamskaras or vishayavasanas?

B.: The latter. The actual Self is the only continuous entity. It remains eternally unaffected by the activities of its egos. The reincarnating ego belongs to the illusory dimension or plane of thought; it is transcended by means of Realisation of the Real Self. The Buddhists deny reincarnation because of their belief in the non-Reality of anything but the Self. The states of jagrat and swapna are neither of total darkness, as in sleep, nor of total light, as in samadhi; they arise on account of the fact that we mix up chit and jada. Chit refers to one's own beingness, whereas jada includes sensory perceptions

and the apparently objectively real and permanent cosmos which they seem to reveal. If you go on investigating the true nature of chit, jada disappears completely and only infinite chit remains. What is known as vichara is nothing but such investigation into the chit aspect of the ego.

Q.: Can you please explain in detail what vichara is and why the same is necessary?

B.: The mind presently sees itself diversified as the cosmos; if it remains in its own essence, namely pure consciousness maintained effortlessly, such diversity can then be understood to be merely an appearance. Our real nature is formless consciousness to which limitation is alien. Yet we mistake ourself to be this body, which was born one day and will certainly perish one day, which is insentient and lifeless like a log of wood, and which cannot say "I" or anything else. It is thought which creates the body and the cosmos perceived by it. It is thought which prompts us to presume ourselves to be this inert body made of flesh and blood. Whereas our true nature is unqualified bliss, we undergo all sorts of miseries because of the fact that our mind keeps extroverting itself in the form of thought. If the habit of thinking is given up and the mind is made to effortlessly remain as pure consciousness on a permanent basis, the mind returns to its source, which is the Self, and is dissolved there like a salt-doll in the ocean. This dissolution is the goal of all our spiritual practice, and Hindus refer to it by the name "Mukti". The effort to transform the thinking mind into a simple expanse of pure consciousness, which is its primal nature, may be accomplished in many ways. The safest and easiest way is that of vichara, or the investigation 'Who am I?'

Q.: There is a feeling among followers of Bhagawan that constantly watching the thought "I" will lead to the same results as vichara.

B.: No. Watching the "I" thought is only a preliminary-level practice meant for neophytes who are new to the path of vichara. It cannot serve as a substitute for vichara. Once he feels that sufficient maturity has been gained by means of constantly watching the "I" thought, the aspirant should switch over to vichara.

Q.: Does vichara involve concentrating on the heart-center on the right-hand side of the chest?

B.: No. The practice of concentrating on the heart-center on the right-hand side of the chest has its own benefits such as increase in mental ability to concentrate, focus, etc.; but the same has nothing to

do with vichara; furthermore, the same is not a fit practice to lead to Realisation of the Self.

Q.: Can I, while remaining in the life of the world, practice vichara?

B.: Why not?

Q.: Our day to day life requires us to think thoughts and take decisions. But as far as your method is concerned, the goal is to remain without thinking thoughts, to remain as pure consciousness- is that correct? How can day to day life go on in the state of absence of a thinking mind which takes decisions and solves problems?

B.: When one has mastered the art of simply BE-ing, all his worldly concerns are automatically taken care of by some Higher Power, which works through his body in some mysterious way, uses it as an instrument in its hands, and gets the job done. It might be hard to understand how this could be possible. By long-established habit, we are used to considering ourselves to be the doer of all actions performed by the body. But the body is merely a tool in the hands of the Higher Power, which alone in truth does everything. The figure at the base of a sculpted tower appears to be carrying the weight of the entire structure on its shoulders. It has been sculpted in such a way that the look on its face indicates that it is under great strain on account of bearing so much weight. But the whole idea is a creative sham, because the sculpted figure is part of the tower and the entire weight of the tower, including such figure's own weight, is borne by the earth and the earth only. Likewise here. The actions destined to be carried out by the body in the present lifetime will be executed whether you wish it or not. The body has a pre-written script according to which its actions proceed automatically. If you associate or identify yourself with the body, misery is bound to result. So, remain as you blissfully ARE. Let the body work or be idle as destined; pay no attention to the matter.

Q.: But without my participation, how can my day to day routine go on?

B.: Once we cease to believe, pretend or behave as though it is ourselves who direct and control the body's actions, which are in fact only according to the body's pre-written script exclusively, the Higher Power takes complete charge over the body's functions and directs it to act accordingly; in fact, even all along this is what was happening- only we unwisely believed otherwise!

Q.: Should an individual who wants to practice vichara retire into solitude?

B.: Mental solitude or absence of thoughts is necessary.

Q.: Is it not necessary to avoid fellow human company, and physically and mentally isolate oneself?

B.: Solitude depends upon your mind only. One man might be in the thick of the world and maintain serenity of mind; he may be said to be in solitude. Another may be camping in a remote forest all hours of the day, but his mind may be running riot; can we say that he is in solitude? So, solitude does not lie in physical surroundings- rather, the same is a function of the mind. Moreover, where you stay depends upon the body's destiny; it is not upto you to decide. But your mind is always at your disposal. Keep it in perfect solitude- i.e., wholly free from thought. Work performed with any sort of attachment is a shackle. But work carried out in absence of attachment does not affect the doer; even while working he remains at peace and solitude.

Q.: Will aspiring for occult powers distract one from the quest for Realisation?

B.: Certainly. With limited powers man is unhappy. With extended powers, his misery will increase exponentially.

Q.: It is said that without a living human Guru, Realisation of the Self is not possible. What is your opinion on the matter?

B.: Guru is certainly necessary for Realisation. But He need not be in human form. As in the case of Dattatreya, even inanimate objects may be Gurus.

Q.: But for the vast majority of people, it needs a living human Guru to show the way. Am I correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is dikshai or initiation required for the path of vichara?

B.: Commencement of vichara is itself the necessary initiation into vichara.

Q.: It is said that in the absence of descent of Guru's Grace, Realisation is impossible.

B.: Grace is earned by means of introverting the mind. The further or deeper the introversion of mind, the more is the Grace earned.

Q.: How shall I attain or know Parabrahman, the Impersonal Absolute of Hinduism?

B.: First know what is intimate and first-hand before seeking to know that which seems to be alien and afar.

Q.: Meaning that I should first Realise the Self before bothering about Parabrahman, etc.?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How does intellect help in Realisation of the Self?

B.: Use the intellect to turn the mind inwards, towards its source. That is the purpose to which the intellect ought to be harnessed.

Q.: A person whose mind is immersed in pure consciousness always- will his actions be always right?

B.: Such a person is not concerned with the right or wrong of his actions. Yathoevachoenivarthanthae aprapya manosa sahad anandham brahmanoevidhwan na shibhaethi kuthashravanethi ethagamha vava na thapathi kimahagam sadhu nakaravam kimaham papamakaravamithi.

Q.: Onlookers may pass judgements upon him.

B.: He is not affected by anything. Yasmin sarvani bhoothanyathmaiva bhoothvi janathaha thathra koe mohaha kaha shoka ekathvamanu pashyathaha.

Q.: I do not understand how somebody could be so indifferent.

B.: That is because you are still under the impression that spontaneously remaining as pure consciousness to which thought is alien is sadhana or effort made to Realise the Self. In your case it might be so. But in the case of the person who is burning with immeasurable zeal to Realise the Self, that would be his natural state. He does not remain without thinking because remaining without thinking is in his opinion going to make him Realise the Self; he remains without thinking because absence of thought is his natural state.

Q.: How can I also reach this exalted state?

B.: Only by ceaseless practice.

Q.: Some say that Enlightenment takes only a moment.

B.: To remove darkness from a cave that has remained in the dark for thousands of years, it is enough to roll away the boulders at the entrance and let the sunlight come in. The sunlight which has gained admission into the cave's interior takes only a moment to illumine the entire space of darkness inside the cave. But to roll away the boulders at the entrance needs centuries of toil.

Q.: A certain man claiming to be your student has now set himself up as a spiritual teacher in his own right, and claims that merely ridding oneself of the notion that one is not Enlightened completely tantamounts to, or is totally the same as, Enlightenment. He goes so far as to ridicule the practice of vichara suggested by you, saying that all attempts at mental purification are a total waste of time because

one is already the Self here and now, and therefore free or Liberated even as the situation stands. Many Westerners are falling prey to his nebulous, stupid words. What do you have to say on this?

B.: While it is true that the Self is ever present and always in the here and now, to actually rid oneself of jivabodha [the delusion that one is a mortal, finite being who is the same as the body] requires maniacal effort spanning several lifetimes. Mind will be cleansed of its impurities or predispositions only by a desireless performance of duties during several births, getting a worthy Guru, learning the art of keeping the mind permanently submerged in the Heart from Him, and incessantly practising the skill of keeping the mind poised in the state of pure consciousness to which thought or movement is altogether alien. The transformation of the mind into the world of inert matter on account of the quality of darkness (tamas) and its restlessness on account of the quality of activity (rajas) will cease only after prolonged practice extending for a substantial number of lifetimes; only thereafter could the mind possibly regain its native state of subtlety and composure. If somebody tells you 'If you think "I am free.", then that very instant you are free.', he is not a Guru, but Yama the Lord of Death who has arrived in disguise; he will fasten the noose of bondage tighter and tighter around your neck until your rebirth is guaranteed not once but for as long as the incumbent Brahma's lifespan lasts; for verily life with limitations is the true death, and death of limitations alone is birth into true life. Know that the Bliss of the Self can manifest only in a mind rendered subtle and steady by assiduous practice of vichara for a prolonged period of time extending to several lifetimes. How will an earthworm feel when thrown into a bag filled with salt? How will a fish feel when taken out of water? How will a man feel when he is plunged headfirst into a huge cauldron of sizzling oil? How will a man feel when kerosene is poured on him and he is set on fire while still alive? How will a man feel when his head is pressed underneath the surface of the ocean? If you genuinely feel precisely that same desperation to Realise the Self, you will be able to accomplish it, and NOT otherwise. Realisation of one's Absolute Being is no joke, although some persons are, indeed, making a joke out of it by saying, "You are already free.". One must be able to court death fearlessly if one wants to awaken into Eternal Life. "...for whoever may will to save his life, shall lose it, and whoever may lose his life for my sake shall find it..." says the Bible. What does it mean? Those who imagine the



body to be themselves and try to prolong its lifespan will lose God's gift of Eternal Life to them; on the other hand, those who do not care for the body but long to lose their individuality in the Absolute will be blessed with reawakening into the Immortal Self, in which state death is a laughable impossibility. In order for Liberation to ultimately dawn, you should know that on the phenomenal level, you are bound by samsara, because your consciousness is still defiled by the appearance of the three states of waking, dream and sleep, whereas the Jnani has one state only, namely Reality. If you believe that you are already free, where will you have the incentive to make effort to Liberate yourself? Is it not nonsensical? What are we to say of those who go about suggesting such things?

Q.: It is all the more painful to observe that certain people come and attach themselves to Bhagawan for some time, pretending to be good devotees, but all along having the ulterior, selfish motive to go out at a later point of time and make unearned name and fame for themselves under the pretence of being Enlightened Masters, by means of proclaiming themselves to be disciples of Sri Ramana Maharshi. For instance, this particular man calls himself Bhagawan's disciple, and claims to have received Jnana under him. Now he has established a lucrative spiritual teaching career for himself. He is injuring and contaminating Bhagawan's precious teachings and legacy by misrepresenting them through silly ideas and preposterous notions of his own, such as 'If you accept "I am free.", then you are free.'. What can we say about such iniquitous, mephistophelean persons?

B.: [smiling ruefully] What, indeed, except 'Et tu, Brutus?'?

Q.: Many Westerners say that he has given them an experience of the Self. Is there any genuinity to such experiences?

B.: There is no such thing as 'experience of the Self'. Mind and Self cannot co-exist on the same plane. When the mind really sees the Self, it does not survive to tell the tale. Through occult powers, it is undoubtedly possible for an advanced hypnotist or thaumaturgist to convince another person that he is 'having an experience of the Self'. The truth of the matter is that what is effected is merely a temporary cessation in mental activities, which produces no enduring benefit whatsoever; it is known as yoga-nidra.

Q.: This man even sends congratulatory letters to those who have had such experiences, and assures them through such letters that they have Realised the Self!

B.: [laughs] O-ho!

Q.: If it takes lifetimes to Realise the Self, I have a feeling I don't even want to try. It seems to be too hard.

B.: Don't feel discouraged. It is true that it takes many lifetimes, but how do you know what the ordinal position of this birth is? You might even be in your last lifetime. So, go on making effort- i.e., vichara. And please do not bear any rancour towards those who try to make you believe that Liberation consists exclusively in getting rid of the thought that you are not Liberated. Everything has a purpose in God's creation. Let these people do as they please. After all, does it not serve the purpose of some comic relief?!

[laughter in the Hall]

Q.: Who am I? needs effort. But effort is said to be an obstacle to Realisation.

B.: All effort is made only so that we can remain without any effort.

Q.: Please explain further.

B.: The effortless state of thoughtlessness is the goal. Till it is attained, effort is necessary. Effort is made only to get rid of predispositions. Effort is only to get rid of the not-Self, not to Realise the Self. The Self is already Realised. Yet true freedom is not 'already there for the taking'; it can be Realised only after all latencies have been burnt into annihilation in the fire of Jnana.

Q.: Can bhakti, surrender and vichara be all practiced together?

B.: Certainly. Complete surrender is another name for Jnana or Liberation. There is also partial surrender, or attempt made to completely surrender: this is surrender in the sense of abhyasa or spiritual practice, about which you are evidently asking. Whatever path you might be following, loss of interest in not-Self is essential. The seeker must learn to distinguish between sat and asat-sentience and insentience.

Q.: All living things are said to be sentient.

B.: Yes. But look at it from your point of view. As far as you are concerned, your own feeling of being in existence is the only thing that is sentient. Everything else is just sensory perception supported by intellectual activity. Suppose you are seeing... shall we say- Ramana Maharshi. Ramana Maharshi is now sitting on this sofa and delivering a lecture on what is sentient and what is insentient and how to tell the difference. Is that so?

Q.: Yes.

B.: No. It appears so to your eyes and ears. That is all. There is nothing 'out there'. What is seen is only that image that is cognised, and nothing more- and so on for other sensory perceptions. On the other hand, you own beingness is self-evident or pratyaksha to you. The feeling of being subjectively aware- hold on to it to the exclusion of everything else and this alone will take you to the Final Destination. This simple self-awareness alone is sat. Everything else is asat or jadam. Subjective self-awareness is not to be mixed up with the thought of one's being self-aware. Self-awareness has got nothing to do with thought. It is unrelated to the intellect and unrelated to anything. Pure consciousness shines in the Heart in self-luminous fashion. Realise it by BE-ing it.

Q.: What are vishayavasanas and poorvasamskaras?

B.: Predispositions- i.e., thought in seed form. They cause thoughts to arise again and again.

Q.: How shall we put an end to their existence?

B.: By the investigation 'Who am I?'. That is the safest and surest way. Vichara becomes easier and easier as you go on practising the same.

Q.: Can not Sri Bhagawan help me to Realise? I am after all a weak creature.

B.: Guru is only an aid. Your constant effort is a sine qua non. Divine Grace is also a sine qua non. But the same is vouchsafed only to him who is a true sadhaka, who has striven hard and ceaselessly on the path towards freedom. To even think about Liberation means that God's Grace has been operative in you.

Q.: Are even good thoughts inconsistent with Realisation?

B.: Yes. Thoughts are one thing and Realisation quite another.

Q.: Some people have visions of God. Is it in their own imagination only?

B.: Even this conversation you now think you are having is within your own imagination only.

Q.: Even in vichara there is perception of an "I" which wants to engage itself in the practice of vichara.

B.: Vichara does not take the existence of "I" for granted. You are not told, "This thing known as "I" exists. Discover it.". Many misunderstand vichara, thinking that they are being asked to discover the non-dual Self. What is the purpose underlying the investigation of oneself 'Who am I?'. It is not to discover the Self. There is no second self with which one may effect discovery of the

first. The purpose of investigating 'Who am I?' is to scrutinise whether something called "I" exists.

Q.: What is the result- i.e., the consequence of such scrutiny? Is "I" found or not?

B.: Intellectual answers are not of any use. Find out for yourself; that is the only way.

Q.: I shall do so. But I should like to hear the answer from Sri Bhagawan's lips.

B.: Searching for "I", "I" is never found. The searcher himself vanishes and "I-I" manifests itself spontaneously. But this is an experience and you must yourself undergo the same to find out what it is. Intellectual explanations are of no use.

Q.: What is this "I-I"? Is it the same as Jnana?

B.: No. "I-I" is the stage before the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani. It is known as aham-sphurana ["I" pulsation]. When the sphurana becomes continuous, unstoppable and spontaneous- i.e., when it has solidified itself, so to speak, into a permanent phenomenon, it leads to the Sahaja-stithi [the state of the Jnani]. In Vedantic parlance aham-sphurana is known as vritti-jnana. It may otherwise be known as cosmic consciousness. It is called 'cosmic' because the mind in that state is in a generic form- i.e., it is not held captive by the aham-vritti [the primordial mental modification "I"] for the duration of the experience. If the destruction of poorvasamskaras [latent predispositions] is incomplete, afterwards the aham-vritti asserts itself and the usual flow of thoughts resumes itself as usual. The sphurana when held on to continuously weakens the aham-vritti which alone is the cause of the hrudaya-granti [knot between the sentient and the insentient- i.e., the ego] and bestows Mukti [freedom from embodiment and future births].

Q.: How to hold on to the sphurana continuously?

B.: The effort or will or volition to do it is itself an obstacle to the shining of the sphurana. If you remain as you ARE, the sphurana shines forth of its own accord.

Q.: Has Bhagawan said that the experience of the sphurana is accompanied by a prickly sensation on the right hand side of the chest?

B.: Leave alone the physical sensation; it might be brought about by the sphurana, but it is profitless to think that merely having experienced the sensation means that you have accomplished something. The important thing is to always remain in the state of

effortless thoughtlessness. The subtle "I" which witnesses the fact of the mind remaining in this state must also vanish. Only then is Realisation made possible.

Q.: All this sounds highly difficult. I am only a mere layman. What can I do?

B.: Go on with vichara. Perseverance is the secret of success. Mind-control is not your birth right. The few who succeed owe their success to perseverance and perseverance alone. Go on being maniacally pertinacious; one day you will See the Light. Mr. Churchill has said, "If you're going through hell, keep going." It is good advice. Follow it.

Q.: I hope I shall be able to tide over the cycle of birth and death.

B.: First learn to tide over the mind. Then we can bother about other things.

Q.: It is the nature of the mind to indulge itself in thoughts.

B.: Whatever we practice- that becomes mind's nature. Practise permanent submergence of mind in the Heart, and that becomes mind's nature.

Q.: How to plunge mind in the Heart?

B.: By remaining without thinking- but absence of thought must not be kept up with effort, nor must it endure as a result of volition, nor must it have been brought about as a result of slothfulness or sleepiness.

Q.: It all sounds fiendishly difficult.

B.: A little practice will make you think differently.

Q.: How can I ensure that Guru's Grace is available to guide me along the path?

B.: If you go on working with the light available, you will Realise Guru's Grace, consequent to the fact that if you want to merge in Him, you may be assured that He Himself is actively seeking you with an assiduousness far greater than anything you ever could be able to imagine.

Q.: It is said that unless karma be exhausted, Jnana is not possible. Please indicate how we can get rid of karma.

B.: The present method of 'Who am I?' will do.

Q.: Action is said to create fresh karma.

B.: This is not a correct understanding. If you purposely remain idle without doing anything, do you think that will not lead to accumulation of karma?

Q.: Then what shall I do?

B.: Let the body act as may suit it. Do not get confused thinking that the body's destiny is your destiny. The body is no doubt doomed to undergo its fated destiny. But are you the body? No. You remain permanently submerged in the Heart. Don't care what happens to the body.

Q.: Only a Maharshi can have such an attitude.

B.: In that case, you may also become a Maharshi.

Q.: Sadly, I cannot leave off everything and come to the forest, although I would like to. I have family members dependant on me for their daily bread and butter.

B.: Renounce everything inwardly. Look at your household, as also the rest of the world, as a mere dream or figment of the imagination. As for yourself, remain established in the Real.

Q.: Will my productivity of work suffer as a result of such attitude?

B.: On the other hand, it will become even more efficacious.

Q.: Hatha-yoga and pranayama are excellent aids for beginners on the path, it is said. Does Maharshi agree?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How to achieve control of mind?

B.: If you search by means of a deeply introverted mind as to whether mind exists, it will be found that mind does not exist; this is the only way to control the mind. On the other hand, if you make the incorrect assumption that mind exists, and endeavour to control it, all your attempts will prove futile. Why? Mind cannot control mind; it is like a thief disguising himself as a policeman to catch that very same thief. Will the thief ever be apprehended? Impossible.

Q.: I go on questioning myself Who am I? but there is no answer forthcoming from anywhere.

B.: You are yourself the answer. What else are you waiting for? What comes afresh will also be lost. What always IS, alone is truth. Be- and there is an end of your ignorance.

Q.: But we are worldly people who have to function in a practical world. If action is antagonistic to spiritual progress on account of the fact that it begets fresh karma, what are we to do?

B.: These are only your own silly notions. It is not work that hinders, but the idea, 'I am the doer.'. Give up all ideas and remain in peace. Let the body and senses play their role as pre-ordained, unimpeded by your interference.

Q.: Is the Self aware that I am making efforts to Realise Him?

B.: The ocean is not aware of its waves. Likewise, the Self is not aware of His egos.

Q.: How to help the suffering world?

B.: One blind man cannot lead another. First Realise the Self.

Q.: The mahavakyas proclaim that I am already Parabrahman. But you want me to investigate 'Who am I?'. Why this investigation? Is it not already emphatically stated in the mahavakyas that my Self is Parabrahman?

B.: Hearing it, why then does not one rest content? Because poorvasamskaras have not been destroyed. Moreover, the mahavakyas are referring to the state of oneself being Parabrahman and not to the mode of mind; so, repeating the mahavakyas does not mean that repeating those mantras will elevate you to that state. All that is meant is that Parabrahman is not elsewhere, but is simply your own Self. Realise the Self and Parabrahman is found.

Parabrahman has not been hidden or secreted away in some far away place beyond seven hills and seven seas and locked up inside the body of some parrot languishing away in a golden cage; Parabrahman is behind the "I". Get rid of this "I" and all will be well.

Q.: If the Self is nitthyasiddha [ever Realised], why make efforts to Realise Him?

B.: He is Realised, no doubt. Are you?

Q.: Meaning that I am not He?

B.: Suppose somebody is rushing furiously towards you with the obvious intention of chopping off your head with a gigantic axe. Will it disturb you?

Q.: I think so.

B.: Why fear for the body's life? Are you not Parabrahman?

Q.: I don't know.

B.: Exactly. Ahambrahmasmi is potential truth. It has to be Realised. Only then does it hold good. The present identification with the body must cease. Only then can good results follow.

Q.: How to give up the bodily identification?

B.: It cannot be done by means of imagining yourself to be Brahman. There is only one way: WHO AM I?

Q.: While practising vichara there is often felt an urge to give up everything and retire to some remote forest uninhabited by mankind.

B.: Within a few days of having gone to such forest, you will again feel like moving somewhere else. The mind, in order to divert our attention away from the one and only actual issue at hand, namely

itself, comes up with such tricks to delude us. Pay no attention to the mind, but only continue to seek and abide at its source, the self-resplendent Heart.

Q.: What is the difference between the happiness obtained on Realising the Self and that obtained by means of enjoying objects of sensory enjoyment?

B.: The happiness of the Self is of the nature of Shanti or Abiding Peace. Sensory enjoyments are of the nature of fleeting pleasures. However, it may be borne in mind that any kind of happiness is made possible only on account of the Self. When the mind imagines itself to be enjoying objects of sensory perception, what it is really doing is temporarily submerging itself in the Heart, although unconsciously; the resultant happiness, we presume, comes from the object that we are interacting with. But what is the truth? Such happiness also comes from the Self only. If you dive consciously in the Heart the same is known as abhyasa or spiritual practice.

Q.: In the introductory paragraph accompanying the essay 'Who am I?', why does Bhagawan write, "Everybody loves himself most of all."? Does this statement actually hold good in all cases? For instance, I love my son more than my own life.

B.: Everything is dear to us only because of the Self. The paragraph in question itself indicates that happiness is the reason why the feeling of Love is possible; and the explanation as to how any happiness derives its origin from the Self only has been given to you. You say that your son is exceedingly dear to you. Examine your own statement closely. You love your son. He is dear to you in so far as it is true that he is your son. How is this affection made possible? Because of the idea that this other human being is your child who has been crafted out of your flesh and blood. The central idea supporting this feeling is 'my son'- i.e., the idea of this other person being related to YOU. When you say 'my', an "I" is implied. Without "I" there cannot be "my". What is this "I"? "I" is the faculty of intellection which takes yourself to be this body and the other body as being your son's. The faculty of intellection derives its origin from the mind and the mind is in essence a reflected ray of light emanating from the Self. So, we see that when the mind loves something, what it loves is not anything apart from itself. Whether I love myself or my son or anybody or anything else, it is only myself that I love, because the other things emanate only from this primordial "I" which is the origin of all I perceive. You love your son



more than you love yourself, you say. Suppose a man's infant son goes missing. The man and his child coincidentally cross each other after several decades and do not recognise the relationship that exists between them. The two men become good friends but remain without the slightest inkling that they are father and son. Suddenly the son dies. When the news reaches the father, he feels sad for a few days because he thinks he has lost his good friend; but if he had known it was his son his grief would be vastly greater. What does this show? Our responses to the world and its events are conditioned by how we perceive them. The boy is the same boy whether he is friend, foe or son. But we react differently based on how we look at the other person. There is a similar story in Panchadasi. Two young men of a village went on a pilgrimage to a remote place in North India. One of them died there. But the other having picked up some occupation decided to return to his village only after some time. Meanwhile he came across a wandering pilgrim and sent word through him to his village about himself and his dead friend. The pilgrim conveyed the news and in doing so inadvertently interchanged the names of the living and the dead man. The result was that the dead man's people were rejoicing that he was doing well and the living man's people were in grief that he was dead. You love not that other human being- you love your son. He is dear to you exclusively and only because he is your son. My is in turn based on I. I is based on the Self. So, everything dear to you is so because of the Self only. No matter what it is that you love, you love yourself only. The Jnani alone knows the meaning of unselfish love.

Q.: In mindless sleep or deep sleep there is no world perceived. But in the jagrat state we are in a world which constantly demands our attention. We are required to make decisions, choices and so on. Is not using the mind thus rendered inevitable? When movement of mind stands necessitated in the jagrat state, how can that state of mind be attained wherein there is no movement, as in the state of deep sleep?

B.: Once one has surrendered completely to the Higher Power, He shows the way. The mind may be fixed in the Self and still one's day to day activities would go on unimpeded. It is really a question of fitness of mind. When one has genuinely surrendered without reserve, it means that the mind has become indistinguishable from pure consciousness of being. When one is in that state, wherein thoughts have become alien to the mind, everything is automatically

taken care of by the Higher Power and we need not bother about what we ought to do and what ought not. But in order to gain that state you should first surrender yourself.

Q.: I am of a devotional temperament. I worship a personal God and consider Him to be my saviour and my all-in-all. Is bhakti [loving devotion] the same as surrender or sharanagati? Will bhakti lead to Self-Realisation?

B.: Provided it is intense enough to melt down the mind into a state of absence of individual will or volition, which is the same as perfect self-surrender. By bhakti people usually mean decorating an idol of God with flowers, sandal-paste, etc. and waving camphor-flame in front of it. But that bhakti alone is dear to the Lord wherein the bhakta is lost and dissolved in Him. If you want to Realise the Self through the path of devotion, you must Love Him so much that you develop the natural conviction that you are a helpless toddler in His hands who depends upon Him for everything, that He alone does everything and you are a helpless child in His mighty arms. This way, the mind is prevented from thinking about worldly affairs and remains arrested in the Self.

Q.: In worldly life, we often encounter problems that need to be solved. If I surrender to God or Love Him to the point wherein I am able to no longer think about anything except Him, how can I satisfactorily resolve such problems?

B.: Having surrendered to the Almighty, when you encounter a problem, mentally hand over the problem to God, telling Him that it is now His duty to look after it, not yours. Thereafter, provided you have lost the will or volition to solve the problem by yourself, a mysterious intuition will arise which will take you through the appropriate solution. But that solution may not be to your liking. However, having surrendered, there is no question of complaining about how God has solved your problem. Accept whatever solution it is that He is pleased to bestow upon you. All this is for the neophyte. The one whose surrender is absolute will never even perceive any situation as a 'problem'. Therefore for him problems do not arise at all.

Q.: On what basis does Bhagawan emphasise that I am not my body?

B.: Your question itself contains the answer. You say 'my' body, 'my' intellect, and so on. That means you stand apart from your body, intellect, etc.. These are mere accretions which cannot affect your true Self, which is of the nature of consciousness.

Q.: So I am really consciousness?

B.: You are not being asked to believe intellectually that you are consciousness. Instead of mentally believing that you are consciousness, BE consciousness- which you ARE. Be as you are, that is all. Practice of vichara-abhyasa is not for any fresh gain. It is only to get rid of pre-dispositions and latent tendencies which obstruct one from remaining or abiding as pure consciousness- which one already is.

Q.: If I am already at the goal, where is the need for practice?

B.: Since you are of the nature of consciousness, you ought to be content to remain simply as consciousness. But does it happen so? No. There is a constant stream of thought which passes over and obstructs one from remaining as what one really is- pure, volitionless, motiveless Being. It is at getting rid of thought that our practice is directed. No efforts need be made for cultivating awareness of the Self, because it is already there and is forever shining as "I" in the Heart. All our effort is made only to eliminate the not-Self- in other words, thought and the faculty of thought manufacture. Freedom from thought is bliss- it is your real nature. It is the contrary-wise tendencies which must be eradicated.

Q.: Bhagawan asserts that 'Awareness' is the real nature of "I". But what exactly is this awareness? Awareness of what?

B.: Do you exist or do you not?

Q.: Yes.

B.: How do you know?

Q.: I don't understand what Maharshi is trying to tell me.

B.: Do you need a mirror to be placed in front of your eyes in order so as to enable you to infer that you have eyes? You see- therefore you can tell that you have eyes which are functioning. Likewise, awareness of the world or bodily-awareness is not necessary for ascertaining your own existence. You know that you exist because of the awareness 'I-AM'. This awareness is nothing but subjective consciousness of being. This consciousness is always there whether you are asleep, dreaming or supposedly awake. It is unchanged and unaffected always. Recognise it as your own being. Man thinks he is made of flesh and blood. But this attitude is a mistake. You are pure consciousness. Whatever is physical comes afterward and its disappearance or destruction cannot affect you, who are non-physical and eternal as the one Self. All phenomena have a beginning and an end. What is born dies and what is created is

destroyed. Were you ever born? If you take yourself to be the body, yes. But are you the body?

Q.: What is the proof that I am not this body?

B.: The fact that the body, which you now erroneously believe to be identical with yourself, is lost in the states of dream and deep sleep is the proof. Yet on waking you find yourself in the same body. This is continuity of memory and nothing more. What proof do you have that you are this physical body made of flesh and bone?

Q.: All my memories pertain to this body only. I have no memory of occupying any other body.

B.: The experience of occupying a body is only a mental phenomenon which is super-imposed on top of pure consciousness. Suppose you are riding a bicycle, and seriously thinking about something all along the way. After a time you find yourself at the intended destination. But you have no recollection or memory of having made the journey because your faculty of concentration was fixed in its entirety upon the problem you were trying to solve inside your head whilst you were busily pedalling all the while. Even with you attention elsewhere, your hands and feet have carried you to your destination involuntarily. What does it show? We super-impose the sense of doership upon ourselves; in fact all activities take place spontaneously only. The body has a pre-destined script of its own that it carries out automatically. If we concentrate on being the Self, our responsibilities in life will be smoothly performed by the body without need for the slightest intervention on our part. You say you remember occupying this body only. Even in dreams we occupy so many bodies. Does that mean we are any of those dream bodies? In our dreams, bodies came and went, but ourself, the dreamer, remained unaffected. So also, many are the bodies that you have found yourself in over the ages- but none of them is YOU. You are, I repeat, the bodiless Self.

Q.: Why did I then come to mistake myself for this body?

B.: In dreams you have many strange experiences. It is only after waking up that you ascertain that the experiences in your dreams never actually happened, but were all imaginary only. Likewise here. Our Real Nature is that we are and always were the bodiless, formless and indestructible Self. But we imagine that we are trapped within a body and are making strenuous attempts to become free from the illusion of being tied down to the experience of carrying around a body, while we in fact are all the time free. This fact will be

understood only when we reach that stage. We will be surprised that we were desperately trying to attain something which we have always been and ever are. An illustration will make this clear: A man goes to sleep in this hall. He dreams he has gone on a world tour, is roaming over hill and dale, forest and country, desert and sea, across various continents and, after many years of weary and strenuous travel, returns to this country, reaches Tiruvannamalai, enters the ashram and walks into the hall. Just at that moment he wakes up and finds he has not moved an inch, but was sleeping where he lay down. He has not returned to the hall after great efforts, but is and always has been in the hall. It is exactly like that. If it is asked, why being the formless Self we imagine we are tied down to a body, I answer, 'Why being in the hall did you imagine you were on a world adventure, crossing hill and dale, desert and sea?' It is all mind or maya.

Q.: What is meant by maya? I understand that it is a Sanskrit word which translates into 'illusion'.

B.: When mind pays attention to anything other than itself we say that it is under the influence of maya. When mind pays attention to itself exclusively, it discovers itself to be the Self and there is then no maya. Illusion means that we have mistaken ourselves to be the body or mind or intellect or anything else- i.e., we have taken ourselves to be what we are not. If, on the other hand, we remain as we truly are, we stand liberated from illusion. Freedom from identification is immortality. We imagine or think that we are the perishable body and thus delude ourselves into believing that we are mortal creatures. If this false identification with body and mind drops away, we Realise ourselves to be the immortal Self.

Q.: How can I convince myself that I am the Self?

B.: There is no need to do so. Give up the thought that you are the not-Self and only the Self is left as the reminder. That will do: that is all there is to be done. The Self does not affirm Itself to be the Self. It merely remains as the Self. No purpose is served by telling yourself, 'I am the Self.'. What meaning is there in doing so? Does a man go on repeating, 'I am a man, I am a man...'? If a doubt arises in your mind that you might be a cow or a dog you might go on assuring yourself that you are indeed a man. Only in such a case should one be continuously reminding oneself 'I am a man.'. But does this ever happen? We know that we are neither cows nor dogs but men and women. Likewise, being always the imperishable Self, we need not

contemplate on the immortality of the Self. It suffices if we abide as pure consciousness which is not perturbed by thoughts.

Q.: If I want to Realise the Self, should I close my eyes to the world?

B.: It is enough if the mind be made insensitive to the goings-on of the world. It is like exposing photographic film to light; the more exposed the film becomes, the less discernable is the image formed upon it. If the film is left exposed to bright light for a long time, thereafter no image can be discerned from it. Likewise here. If the mind continuously and exclusively inheres in the light of consciousness for a long time, it loses the capacity to register objects or think about the things of the world. Then it remains in its own native state, the state of pure consciousness.

Q.: Will a person whose mind is fixed in pure consciousness lose the capacity to function normally in the world? Does he become a mere vegetative form of life, like one who has slipped into the state of comatose?

B.: No. The activities destined to be carried on by the body go on of their own accord without any intervention from you.

Q.: That means I would no longer have any control over what my body does! Is this not a dangerous situation?

B.: Once we have surrendered to the Higher Power, He automatically takes care that only the right thing is done at any given point in time. He knows what to do and when and how. Leave everything entirely to Him. But you should not try and judge Him. Even if what He does is not to your liking or preference, do not interfere. If you have surrendered, it means that you must totally accept God's will as being the supreme guiding force of your life, and that the exclusive consideration or priority in your life is to not permit your own ideas for your life come into conflict with God's. After perfect self-surrender, only complete acceptance remains. There can be no room for making any complaint about one's perceived defects and deficiencies if surrender to God has been genuinely unconditional or without reserve.

Q.: Meaning that we must blindly trust God? But that obviously requires a huge leap of faith!

B.: The explanation relating to surrendering to God was given to you since you wanted reassurance that things would go on in an amicable way even after your mind ceased to pay attention to the world. But the fact is, one who is truly desperately interested in Realising the Self will not bother about whether life in the world

proceeds positively or not; if it did not, yet he would not bother about the matter. When the mind becomes introverted owing to the investigation 'Who am I?', and remains merged in the Heart, the conditions of outer life automatically continue as destined, owing to the force of prarabdha. Do not worry about how life in the world would come to be affected if you dedicate your mind to the quest; it may even be that there might be no change in the outer life at all. If you calmly focus on remaining as the beingness of the Self, the upheavals and perturbations of the outer world will gradually begin to fade out or distance themselves from you and you will rest in the shanti [peace] of the Self while the body's activities and your roles as a person will be automatically fulfilled by the Higher Power. This is a matter for experience and you will understand only when you sink yourself deeper and deeper into the bliss of the Self, by means of holding the mind steadily in that state where there is alert consciousness of being but neither thoughts nor sleepiness.

Q.: If the world disappears, is that not a bad thing? Were we not born into this world in order so that we might live in it and experience it?

B.: You are asking this question because you are under the impression that you are the body. Imagining yourself to be the body, you ask me whether you were not born into the world in order so that you might experience the same. Was there ever any birth for you? Know that you, the changeless Self, were never born. What was born was only the body. What do you have to do with the body? You are not the body. In dreams you take up one body after another but after waking up do any of them ever remain with you? Likewise here. The body and the world it is experiencing are super-impositions over your nature of pure consciousness. When you Realise your Self, the world disappears as an objective Reality and is seen to be what it really is—merely an appearance in the Self. According to you, you are a finite subject, made of physical matter, living in and spectating a permanently existing, objectively real world. This attitude must go. You are pure Spirit. Appearance of gross matter is a delusion. There is nothing physical at all. What IS, is only Spirit.

Q.: But we are able to touch and feel solid matter.

B.: That is the beauty of maya. You think you touch and feel solid matter. All sensory perceptions that we feel, including bodily sensations such as hunger, cold, pain, etc., together are like a strip of film-reel permitted to run in front of the light from a projector's light bulb. The projector is the Self and the light emitted is pure

consciousness. In a cinema show, when the film starts running, pre-recorded images are projected on the screen, but the light that gives life to the pictures remains unchanged. Likewise, pure consciousness remains unaffected always. In our unwisdom, we identify ourselves with one of the characters seen on the screen and complain that we are mere perishable mortals. You are that unseen force of contentless consciousness that gives life to the body and also to the world that is apparently the body's environment. The body together with all the rest of this cosmos is only an appearance in the pure consciousness of the Self.

Q.: But how to know this is a direct experience? I am able to understand your words only at the level of the intellect. How shall I have the practical experience that the world is only an appearance in me?

B.: Such experience comes naturally to those who have Realised their Self.

Q.: So, if I completely cease to regard the world as being real, shall I be able to Realise my true Self?

B.: Yes, that is it. The mind can either diversify itself into the cosmos or it can stay fixed or quiescent in the Heart; in the latter case it quickly stands transformed into the Self.

Q.: Can you please tell me what exactly is this Self that you are talking about?

B.: It is that unlimited expanse of consciousness which has nothing to do with and is in no way capable of being limited by temporal or spatial considerations, which are merely mental constructs or ideas. It is different from your feeling of subjective awareness, which, owing to your perverse imagination 'I am the body.', finds itself to be locked into a particular body and therefore is inevitably bound by time and space.

Q.: What prevents me, then, from being aware of my true Self?

B.: Each and every person in the world styles himself as "I", taking himself to be the physical body which was born. But nobody investigates into what "I" means. If the investigation is seriously pursued, no such thing called "I" is ever found and then only the Self remains. What prevents Self-awareness? "I" is the culprit. It is "I" that is known as maya or illusion. "I", which is nothing but the ego or mind, cannot remain in isolation; it always latches itself onto, or associates itself with, something. In the jagrat state, it takes itself to be the gross body made of flesh and blood, in dreams a dream body,



and so on. These adjuncts or unwarranted outgrowths are manufactured by the mind because the mind does not want to sink down into the Self and become one with it. If the mind's tendency to associate itself with objects is killed, the mind stands destroyed. In the state of absence of association with thoughts, objects and mental concepts, the mind's actual nature can be discovered to be pure consciousness in which there is not the slightest ripple of perturbation. In order to recover our original nature of freedom from false limitations, we must search continuously and incessantly for the source of the mind. Then the mind subsides and we remain as our true Self. Continuous search for the mind or what the mind is results in its disappearance.

Q.: I am frightened to imagine a state without mind.

B.: How are you in the state of deep dreamless sleep?

Q.: In deep sleep there was no awareness of anything.

B.: You say so now, but did you say this or anything else in the state of sleep itself?

Q.: No.

B.: The state of sleep is considered to be emptiness or blankness from the perspective of the jagrat state. The mind cannot remember what it was to be like without mind. How can something recollect its own absence? In sleep there was no mind. Therefore anything the mind says about sleep is necessarily false. Taking the mind's testimony in relation to the state of sleep is meaningless, because the mind was not there then to witness anything. Mind cannot know no-mind, because no-mind implies total absence of mind. The fact is that sleep is a state of Unity. We are quite happy in sleep because we are entirely free from thought or imagination. We say we have woken up when "I" comes into play again. But what is the fact? Are you awake now? No. You are fast asleep- to your true Self. The same Unity that existed in the state of deep sleep exists now also; there can be no break in it. The present diversity perceived in the cosmos is the handiwork of the mind. If mind is transcended, only unqualified Bliss, which is your true nature, remains.

Q.: But how to do this?

B.: No special efforts are needed to Realise the Self. Only remain or BE as you ARE.

Q.: I don't understand what you are trying to say.

B.: Awareness of the Self need not be cultivated, because it is always existing. The only thing which needs to be done is to give up

awareness of the not-Self. Then only the Self is left as the eternal residue. Man's mind is crowded with attachments, desires and thoughts of all sorts; if all these are discarded, only the mind's essence, which is pure consciousness, is left as the underlying, undying substratum. Suppose you want to make space inside a room filled with useless junk. Do you bring or import additional space from outside? No. You simply throw out everything that is in the room and the room is found to have become perfectly spacious. Likewise, relinquish or abandon all of the mind's contents. Thereafter we need not do anything further- the Self stands automatically Realised. Realisation of the Self only means and is only possible through abandonment of the not-Self.

Q.: But if I am really the formless Self, why do I have this body?

B.: It was explained to you that the body is nothing more than a mental phenomenon. Owing to the fact that you pay attention to it and mistake it to be yourself, the body appears real. The world, not excluding the body, is nothing more than the impression in your mind that something called 'world' exists. What people call 'world' is only a mere concept in their minds. So, if you pay attention to your Self exclusively, you will soon discover that you never did have any body at all, and that you always have been the bodiless and formless Self, the one perfect Reality underlying the myriad variety of names and forms you see around you.

Q.: So, I am only imagining that I have a body, whereas in actual fact I already have no body?

B.: That is so.

Q.: But the bodily sensations such as pain seem very real to me. I am unable to dismiss them or explain them away as being mere mental creations or imagination.

B.: It was explained to you that all sensory perceptions and impressions- including those pertaining to bodily awareness- are super-impositions of ideas on top of pure consciousness. You mentally identify yourself with bodily sensations instead of remaining as pure consciousness; therein lies the mischief.

Q.: But when we feel pain, cold, etc. in our body, these sensations are not the result of our thoughts; they have a physical reality quite apart from our mind or its thoughts.

B.: The pain does not occur to you as the body; the pain occurs in you as the Self. When there is pain, you become miserable because, thinking that you are the body, you imagine that pain is being inflicted

upon you. But is there anything apart from you, from yourself? The pain is you, the body is you, everything is verily yourself and there is nothing apart from YOU. You are not the body or mind you imagine yourself to be. You are that plenary, unbridled expanse of pure consciousness that knows not limitation whatsoever. But to remain as pure consciousness, without spilling over into the quagmire realm of thought, requires continuous, sustained practice.

Q.: What is the difference between mind and Self?

B.: There is no difference. The mind, turned outwards, becomes thoughts and objects of sensory perception; turned inwards, it discovers itself as being the Self.

Q.: I mean, how did the mind become separated from the Self?

B.: What we call 'mind' is a self-contained illusion. Remaining trapped in the plane of illusion, any conclusion we arrive at in relation to how or why the illusion was formed will also be illusory only.

Undertaking study of the illusion whilst remaining still stuck in the same illusion is a fatuous, ludicrous and meaningless exercise. If the mind pays attention to itself or its underlying substance of pure consciousness exclusively, it turns out that there never was any mind or illusion. The surest way to transcend mind or illusion is to go on paying close attention to it all the time. Seek the mind and then it will disappear. Truly speaking there is no such thing known as 'mind'.

The body is only a mass of organic chemicals put together. It is insentient and therefore incapable of saying "I". The Self is pure consciousness and non-dual; it also cannot say "I". What then is this phantom-like entity known as mind or "I"? This entity appears to be there only in the states of jagrat and swapna, since in deep sleep nobody says "I". So, what exactly is this "I"? It is something intermediate between the inert body and the self-luminous Self. This ego, mind or "I" is a spurious, fallacious entity. It has no locus standi. If sought for it vanishes like a ghost. Suppose a superstitious man is travelling on a dark lane during the time of night; he fancies he sees something and imagines that there is something by his side in the darkness; it might be, he thinks, some malevolent demon waiting to devour him. In actual fact, it may simply be some object upon which there is scanty illumination falling. If he looks closely the demon is not to be seen, but only some dark object which he could easily identify to be a tree or a lamp post. If he does not look closely the demon or ghost strikes terror in the person. All that is required is only to look closely and the ghost vanishes. The ghost was never there.

So also with mind or the ego; it is an intangible link between the body and pure consciousness. It is not real. So long as one does not look closely it continues to give trouble. But when one looks for it, it is found not to exist. Another example we might take is that of a Hindu marriage celebration, where the feasts go on for a week. A stranger wandering about on the premises was once mistaken to be a relative of the bridegroom by the bride's party and they therefore treated him with special regard. Seeing him treated with special regard by the bride's party, the bridegroom's party considered him to be some man of importance related to the bride's party and therefore they too showed him special respect. The stranger had altogether a happy time of it. He was also all along aware of the actual situation, which was that he was defrauding these people for the purpose of filling his own belly with food day after day. On one occasion the groom's party wanted to refer to him on some point. They sent for him. He scented trouble and made himself scarce. So it is with the ego. If looked for, it disappears. If not, it continues to give trouble. On the plane of mind, no truthful answer to the question of why the mind got separated from the Self can be found, because fiction cannot manufacture truth; once the mind is transcended the question does not arise at all because then only the Self remains. So, the only answer that can be given to your question is that the mind never got separated from the Self. One who is established in the state of Realisation knows it to be living Truth that no such entity known as 'mind' is capable of existing at all. Mind is a myth.

Q.: If mind is a myth, it follows that free-will also is a myth.

B.: That is so.

Q.: So, everything is pre-destined?

B.: Yes.

Q.: In that case, why should I attempt to seek and gain Realisation? It may be that I am pre-destined not to Realise the Self. Also, if everything is pre-destined, what freedom has the Creator given to man?

B.: How do you know what your destiny is? What gave you the right or the inclination to decide arbitrarily or peremptorily that you are not destined to gain Realisation? As for freedom, you are always free not to identify yourself with the body; one who thus forsakes the bodily-identification is not and cannot possibly be affected by the pleasures and pains consequent on its activities.

Q.: If there is no such thing as mind apart from the thoughts it contains, will total destruction of all thoughts lead to the mind's disappearance?

B.: Not merely thoughts themselves, but the habit of extroversion of chittam [consciousness, the stuff out of which thoughts are made] must itself come to a standstill. Thoughts veil your true nature, which is to remain as pure consciousness. When you are thinking thoughts, you are not aware of yourself as pure consciousness. For this reason, the habit of thinking thoughts is to be eschewed. People think intellectually understanding themselves or their self to be one with pure consciousness means Realisation of the Self. It is not so. The faculty of thought manufacture, namely the mind, must perish altogether before Realisation can be had. The mind can be killed only by means of keeping it in jagrat-sushupti always.

Q.: Please explain what is meant by 'jagrat-sushupti'.

B.: Keep the mind awake and alert, but also both without thoughts and without sleepiness; this is the same as remaining as pure consciousness. In the beginning of your practice, it requires conscious and deliberate effort to keep thoughts at bay. When the mind remains in jagrat-sushupti always but the effort involved from your side in keeping it in that state has subsided entirely, the mind returns to its origin, the Self and is extinguished there once and for all. This is known as Jnana.

Q.: How am I to do something if the very effort involved in the doing of it turns out to be an obstacle?

B.: In the beginning, effort is needed to remain without thinking. But with prolonged practice, we reach the state of effortless thoughtlessness. It has to be remembered that there is nothing new about this state of mind, and nothing extraordinary or fantastic. It is the fundamental, natural state. But we have strayed away from it and are wandering around in the realm of thought. It is to return to the natural state that all this effort is necessary. The mind becomes acclimatised to whatever habit you bring it under the influence of. The more you think thoughts, the more you feel like thinking thoughts. On the other hand, if you make a habit out of remaining still without thinking, that becomes the mind's nature. It is entirely upto you what you do with your mind. No amount of effort can reveal the Self. Only when all effort has completely ceased will the Self Reveal Himself. You are asked to continually make the effort to remain without thinking only so that you can eventually reach the state of

effortless thoughtlessness. All our effort is directed only at becoming totally effortless. The path is effort and the goal is effortlessness.

Q.: Is the world made up of my thoughts only? The world has a solid existence. My thoughts are within my own head only. How can it be that thoughts create the world?

B.: What you call world is nothing but mind. How do you know that any world exists at all? Only because of the sensory perceptions or experiences that you are having. How do you know that you have a body? Because you are aware of its sensations such as respiration, hunger, cold, pain, etc.. I say that both sensory perceptions and bodily sensations are mind-generated delusions. The only thing that really exists is BE-ing.

Q.: What proof can you possibly offer for such a radical theory?

B.: Consider the state of deep sleep. Was there any world? Did you have a body? Were you not happy then?

Q.: I have no recollection regarding the state of deep sleep. To me it is a mere blankness.

B.: Deep sleep is a mindless state. On the other hand, now your mind is in operation. It was explained to you that the mind cannot possibly recollect its own absence.

Q.: On the whole this path seems to be difficult.

B.: The idea of difficulty is the principal difficulty. Remain free from this idea also. Effort is now needed to remain as pure consciousness only because we have unfortunately become accustomed to straying away from that state. The aim of all our effort is to make the mind wholly lose its abominable tendency of wandering away from its native state of pure consciousness sustained effortlessly.

Q.: What is cosmic consciousness?

B.: Mind denuded of "I".

Q.: Is it the same as Realisation of the Self?

B.: No. In Realisation or Jnana there is no mind at all.

Q.: Could you please explain further?

B.: Cosmic consciousness is called vritti-jnana in Vedantic parlance. When the mind effortlessly and permanently inheres in pure consciousness in which there is not the slightest trace of thought or proclivity, and when it has lost all volition to emerge from or leave that state or aspire or desire for any other state, we say that it is in the state of cosmic consciousness. While it is in this state, the mind becomes aware of the Heart as "I-I". But still, this is not the final state of Realisation. The final state is automatically brought about by the

Self Itself in the case of one who has reached the state of vritti-jnana and remains permanently established therein; no further effort is needed for it.

Q.: Sometimes you talk about something called aham-sphurana. Is this the same as cosmic consciousness?

B.: Yes. It is called so because when in that state the subtle mind feels the Heart as a pulsating vibration; the accompanying physical sensation on the right-hand side of the chest may also manifest. But this sensation on the whole is not worthy of any deep consideration; it only serves as an indication that the mind, through long practice, has become largely subtle and serene; it is a symptom of progress but should not itself be mistaken to be the goal. The important thing is for the mind to always remain in its native state of effortless absence of thought.

Q.: I try to contemplate all the time, "I am the Self, transcending all phenomena."

B.: It is futile to do so.

Q.: And why is that, please?

B.: Find out what you are and remain eternally as THAT. What is the use in repeating that you are the Self? Is it the Self that is repeating that it is the Self? That which truly IS, does not even say "I", but remains forever as Its own Being. The Self is always silent. So, that which repeats 'I am the Self.' is in actual fact nothing but the ego or mind. The dissolution of mind is the goal of all our effort. Repeating 'I am this.' or 'I am that.' will only strengthen the mind and not get rid of it. So, such contemplation is not useful; rather, it is counter-productive because it fattens or nourishes the ego further and further. You are asked to give up the idea that you are this body, this person or so-and-so. Instead you bring in this idea that you are the Self. Freedom from ideas is the blissful silence of Self, not the idea 'I am the Self.'. Give up all ideas and keep quiet if you want the bliss of the Self. As far as Realisation is concerned, the thought 'I am the Self' is just as bad as any other thought. Avoid all thoughts. Absence of thought is bliss. When such absence becomes totally effortless, it is bliss beyond imagination, beyond the mind's capability for conceptualisation. One has to experience it to know it.

Q.: When you use the word Heart, are you referring to the Self?

B.: Heart is simply another name for Self.

Q.: The Self is everywhere because it is all pervasive. But you mentioned that one could become aware of the Heart on the right-

hand side of the chest. Does it mean that, owing to my ignorance, the Self appears to be confined to the right-hand side of the chest?

B.: The right-hand side of the chest is the spatial location where the chitjadagranti is situated.

Q.: What is this chitjadagranti?

B.: The ego functions as the knot between the Self which is pure consciousness and the physical body which is inert and insentient; for this reason, the ego is called the chitjadagranti. Chitjadagranti is merely another name for the ego.

Q.: You said that there is nothing physical. That being the case, how can a particular place in the body be assigned to the ego? Did you not say that the body itself is a mere mental phenomenon? Is the body a creation of the ego or does the ego find a place in the body?

B.: Both. The body and the cosmos perceived by it are undoubtedly both part of the same fabric of illusion, for which the ego's mental projections or creations alone are responsible. Yet there is a place in the body which functions as the locus of one's awareness till one overcomes ignorance in its entirety. This locus is the seat of bodily awareness or body-consciousness. From one particular junction board in your house, electricity spreads out through wires to all parts of your house. Similarly, from a pinpoint-like place in the right-hand side of the chest, two digits right of the median, consciousness streams out to all parts of the body through the nadis or invisible psychic channels. All this is true only on the relativistic plane which admits the existence of the cosmos. It does not hold good in the Jnani's case because as far as He is concerned, everything is verily Himself as the Self and therefore everything is conscious or alive. But till that stage is reached wherein all sthoulyam [grossness or physicality] has completely vanished, one has to admit the existence of the heart-center.

Q.: According to Sri Bhagawan's views in relation to the matter, mind always depends upon one source of support or another for its sustenance; it cannot subsist alone. Could you please explain this idea further?

B.: The mind takes itself to be this gross body made of flesh and blood; that is its principal error. For all other thoughts, the thought 'I am this physical body, made of flesh, sinew and bone.' is the backbone. If that thought is dispensed with in its entirety, no further thoughts can arise. If the thought, idea or conviction that you are this



body, that you are a person, that you are so-and-so stands completely relinquished, can even a single thought arise after that?

Q.: So, the mind uses the conviction 'I am a person and an individual who occupies or lives in this body, which represents me and my personality to the world.' to continue to survive. Is that right?

B.: Yes. And attempting to believe 'I am the Supreme Self, etc..' is not the remedy. You are not asked to do away with one idea and institute another in its place. You are asked to do away all ideas.

Q.: J. Krishnamurti said, 'The mind has to be empty to see clearly.'

B.: Exactly.

Q.: After all ideas have disappeared from the mind, what happens to the mind? Does it remain at all?

B.: Ideas in the mind make it think; without ideas there will be no thoughts; therefore in the state of total absence of ideas, the mind simply remains in its native state of pure consciousness to which thought or effort is wholly alien. Once this pure consciousness has become your natural state of mind, it also ceases to exist as a separate entity and is absorbed into the One Reality; this is known as Jnana.

Q.: Without ideas and thoughts will I be able to function normally in the world?

B.: Actions go on spontaneously even after thoughts have ceased to impinge themselves upon your mind.

Q.: Where does one begin in this path?

B.: Begin with yourself, work with yourself and end with your Self. What else can there be to do? Start by watching the mind all the time. How does it function or work? How does it go on? All this time you have accustomed yourself to using the mind to interact with the world. Now turn the mind back upon itself. See mind with mind. Then you will find that there is no such thing as 'mind', but only pure consciousness. This is the way. You are not being asked to analyse the contents of the mind with the intellect, but to search for this thing, that you call 'mind', itself. What is it that you mean by 'mind'? Does such a thing really exist? Find out. Seek the mind. Mind can never be destroyed because it never actually existed; it is an imaginary entity like the horn of a horse. All that is possible to do is only to transcend the incorrect or false idea that there is such a thing called 'mind' that is capable of existing. In discovering that itself never existed or is wholly incapable of existence, the mind melts away into nothingness; this is called Enlightenment or Revelation; this is not an intellectual

process. Conceptually understanding that no such thing called mind exists is useless: who then arrives at that understanding? The mind is a finite, transient entity born out of the reflected light of the Self; no understanding arrived at by it can have any meaning or genuineness, because the mind is itself unreal and fictitious. Mind believing that mind does not exist is an absurdity- who or what then is the one that harbours such belief? So, when you are told that mind does not exist, discover its non-existence for yourself and do not intellectualise the words.

Q.: Krishnamurti says that when there is complete attention towards oneself, there is no observer in that state.

B.: Precisely. When one remains aware of oneself as pure consciousness exclusively, in that state the distinction between observer and observed, which is only an intellectual phenomenon, is lost and dissolved in the blissful light of pure self-attention. You think that you are observing the mind. But who are you, the observer apart from the mind, who happens to be watching the mind he wants to observe? Can there ever be any such independent observer? So, watching the mind means watching yourself- i.e., remaining subjectively aware without giving scope for thought to arise. This practice of remaining merely aware without thoughts arising is to be continued until it has become one's effortless, natural state of mind. To reach and permanently, effortlessly and inherently remain in this natural state of thoughtlessness of mind is the goal.

Q.: What sets apart Bhagawan's method from those professed by other spiritual luminaries?

B.: In other methods, the existence of mind or ego, in other words the follower of the practice, is taken for granted and based on this erroneous perception or assumption some practice or other is recommended to be followed; but if your practice itself tacitly acknowledges the existence of limitations, how can it help you transcend them? Search for the one called "I" who thinks that he requires freedom or that he is bound; he is never found because he never existed; the result of the search will be that the Self survives as the eternal residue.

Q.: What is the relationship between the pure consciousness of the Self and my own subjective self-awareness, and what is the difference?

B.: If the Self were to be compared to the sun, your subjective self-awareness may be likened to a ray of light proceeding from the sun;

this individual ray of consciousness is known as mahat or shudda-manas in Vedantic parlance; further, it falls on the person's latent tendencies or predispositions and illumines them, giving rise or birth to the phenomenon of reflection known as the jiva or one's individual self; thus comes about the origin of the world and perceiver thereof simultaneously; after such reflection, the ray of consciousness aforesaid is known as malina-manas. If the Self is to be Realised, malina-manas should be transformed into shudda-manas; the native state of mind, free from predispositions and consequent thoughts, must be regained. So, the purpose of spiritual practice is simply to rid or empty the mind of predispositions, which cause thoughts to occur. The Self keeps the jiva's predispositions close to Him, just like a miser goes to sleep hugging his wealth close to his chest. If all these perfidious predispositions, which direct attention away from one's own being, stand destroyed, no further reflection of consciousness is possible and Self remains as Self, as It indeed always was. The question of Realisation is only for the jiva or ego. The Self does not need any fresh Realisation. He is always in Eternal Realisation.

Q.: How did the almighty Self fall into the confusion of having come to regard Himself to be the little self?

B.: Did he come and tell you that He has fallen into confusion? All confusion is only for you. As far as the Self is concerned, there never was any illusion or ignorance, and there never could be.

Q.: How did illusion come over me? Why did I, the sempiternal Self, come to mistake myself to be a finite, mortal and perishable being?

B.: Is it the Self which is now asking me this question? You want to know all about illusion but when confronted with the question 'For whom is this ignorance or illusion?' you fall silent. Illusion is somewhere outside and unknown; whereas the one who claims that he is perturbed or affected by illusion is considered to be inside and known. Find out that which is immediate and intimate first. Once that stands accomplished, we may bother ourselves with trying to find out that which is distant and unknown, if the need still persists.

Q.: If, as suggested by Maharshi, one remains fixed in pure consciousness always, how then to know, in the absence of the thinking mind, whether actions performed by one are right or not?

B.: Be and always continue to remain fixed in the Self or Heart and act according to nature without the slightest thought of doership; then the results of action cannot and will not affect you, be they good or

otherwise. These doubts torment one only until he is fully established in the Real; thereafter they do not arise.

Q.: How and why does reflected consciousness [chidabhasam] emerge from Absolute Consciousness [chidabrahmam]?

B.: When the reflected consciousness ceaselessly and continuously endeavours to ascertain its own nature, it no longer remains. The one who is now raising this question is none other than that same reflected consciousness. There is actually possibility of one consciousness only to hold the field. When Self shines unimpeded by poorvasamskaras one is not aware of such a thing called mind or cosmos. On the other hand, when one is still operating in the realm of mind and perceiving an apparently objectively real cosmos around himself, Self appears to have receded into the background. Since we seemingly have strayed away from the Real, it appears as though Self has undergone reflection or abhasa. Remain firmly established or fixed in the Self and then see if there is any abhasa.

Q.: I have the feeling that in deep sleep I enter into samadhi unconsciously. Is there any meaning in such an idea?

B.: Was this question raised by the sleeping "I"? It is the so-called waking "I" that raises these questions. There is only one way to put these doubts to rest, and that is to incessantly abide in the state of jagrat-sushupti, which is the same as samadhi. Samadhi is one's natural state. It serves as the under-current for these three transient and fleeting states. The Self encompasses these states; these states are in and of the Self only; yet, the state of Self lies beyond these states. If you practise jagrat-sushupti in the waking state, the same will persist in the state of deep sleep also. The distinction or bifurcation between the states of consciousness and unconsciousness pertains to the realm of mind only; it is not to be found in the state of Self.

Q.: Sometimes whilst meditating, I feel highly peaceful, blissful and relaxed. Have I Realised my true Self?

B.: An aspirant[mumukshu] must be able to distinguish between the various states of manolayam, chittavrittinirodham and manonigraham. Manolayam is simply a kind of sleep; it is a dangerous retardation on the spiritual path. Chittavrittinirodham aims at controlling the physical outgrowth of the mind- i.e., the body in order so as to make an impact amounting to subduement on its subtle counterpart, namely the mind; accordingly, yogis, for extended periods, subject themselves to practices such as retaining the breath

within the lungs, staring at the eye-brow center or tip of the nose, and so on and so forth; here the mind is forcibly restrained from wandering for the duration of the practice but returns to its former mischievous state the moment the practice is paused.

Manonigraham means forcibly controlling the mind by an act of sheer exercise of will-power, so that the mind sticks to one particular predominant thought to the exclusion of all others. Both volition and effort are necessary of being expended in order so as to sustain this practice; therefore it is only a preliminary stage in one's sadhana. The feeling of relaxation you mention is manolayam. Avoid it like the plague. Ask yourself, 'Who becomes aware of this bliss or feeling of relaxation?'; and go on with your effort.

Q.: What is the significance of the name Annamalai? I mean, why is this mountain regarded as being unapproachable?

B.: He cannot be reached by or with the mind. Surrender to Him without reserve; that is the only way to know Him, who is the Self.

Q.: If I continuously concentrate on the beingness or subjective awareness of the Self, will I be able to Realise the Self as quickly as I would like to?

B.: Who asked you to concentrate on anything? Remain as That-which-IS. That is the way, not concentrating on being. Why?

Because there are no 2 selves, so that the one may concentrate upon the other or the other upon the one. You ARE. Therefore BE. That is all there is to Realisation- to simply and merely BE.

Concentrating upon anything is a mental activity; the same is suggested in the case of those who lack the strength to check the mind's varying vicissitudes and straightaway turn it inward; but for those who are able to effortlessly abide as subjective consciousness in which there is not the least ripple of thought, where is the need to use concentration on beingness as abhyasa?

Q.: But how shall I avoid thoughts? It is not as though I want to think. Thoughts come to me uninvited and unsolicited. What am I to do?

B.: Thoughts are only manifestations of vasanas in seed-form accumulated over the ages; their extirpation is the aim of our abhyasa. That state of mind which is free from vasanas is its intrinsic, primal and natural state.

Q.: Even after making intense efforts to keep the mind still- even after severely exerting myself in putting up strenuous struggle to merge the mind in its source, which I experience to be pure

consciousness of being- still I find that the mind eludes me; further I am not aware of the mischief until after some time.

B.: In the earlier stages of practice, the mind reverts to the search or quest at long intervals; with continued practice, it reverts at shorter intervals until, finally, it does not wander at all; it is then that the fruit of practice reveals itself.

Q.: How shall I cultivate awareness of the Self?

B.: By giving up being aware of the not-Self. In fact the not-Self comes forth apparently into existence only because we unwittingly slip away from the primal state of self-awareness. In truth the not-Self does not exist at all- i.e., in actuality, there is no such thing as not-Self. Sensory perceptions reveal fiction only. It is like images projected on a screen from a projector in a cinema-show. The light that reveals them is real, but the events that are revealed are not actually taking place at all. When an ocean is shown, does the screen get wet? When fire is shown, does the screen burn? No; likewise here. Consciousness, which makes object-cognition possible, alone is worth our attention, and not objects which are revealed by the light of such consciousness. Why? Because those objects themselves are only appearances or formations in Consciousness, which is their underlying substratum. Gold may be fashioned into a necklace, ring or bracelet, but it is only gold. Awareness or simple consciousness of being alone is direct knowledge [pratyaksha]. No aids are required to know one's Self- i.e., to BE aware. What is Moksha? It is only to remain aware of the Self. Although "I" is always experienced, yet one's attention must be consciously drawn and riveted onto it- only then does Salvation dawn.

Q.: You say that the Self is always self-aware. Then why am I now unaware of the same?

B.: Only when the ever-present consciousness is Realised will it permit permanent Peace to abide. Consciousness is always with us; is there anybody who does not know "I am" or who will deny his own beingness? In the state of deep sleep one is not aware of any limitation. While awake one says that one was unaware in the deep sleep state but is aware now. Yet it is the same one who slept who is now asserting the fact of his present awareness and making the claim that he was unaware in deep sleep; the one who slept is the one who is now awake; there is no change in him. In deep sleep there was no awareness of the body and there was no body-

consciousness. Now there is awareness of the body and there is body-consciousness. So, what is the inevitable conclusion? The difference between the present state and the state of sushupti lies in the emergence and subsidence of body-consciousness; there never was any change in Real Consciousness and there never can be. Body and body-consciousness rise and sink together. In deep sleep one does not observe any limitation; but in the so-called waking state there are limitations. Why? It is on account of bondage. Bondage is nothing but one's dehatma-buddhi or the idea that one is the same as the body. The feeling 'I am the body.' is the error. This "I" which claims to be one with the body is the false "I"; it must disappear before good results can follow. The Real "I" is always there; it is in the here and now; it is not something which appears and disappears. The Self is the one and only Reality and He persists forever. On the other hand, that which appears newly will also be lost later. For instance, while making comparison between jagrat and sushupti, we observe that the body is an outgrowth or accretion which appears in jagrat but not in sushupti. So, loss of the body, which appears in one state but not the other, cannot be prevented or avoided. The Real "I"-Consciousness was pre-existent and it survives the destruction of the body. Everybody knows the awareness "I-am"; yet he complains that he is unable to Realise the Self! What a strange world! It is the wrong knowledge 'I am the body.' that has given rise to all the mischief. If this wrong knowledge is removed, the Self Shines forth; this is what we call Realisation. Realisation is not a new dimension or faculty of knowledge; it does not involve acquisition of anything new, but only relinquishment of all limitation. Realisation is simply the same as removal of all mental camouflage. The ultimate truth is quite simple; it is nothing further than being in one's own pristine state; this is all that need be learnt in order so as to effect Realisation of the Self.

Q.: if nothing but the Self exists, then how is perception of world made possible?

B.: The world is the same as the mind that sees it. The Self is the Heart, which is self-luminous. Light arises from the Heart and reaches the brain, which is the seat of the active mind, whereas the seat of the quiescent mind is the Heart Itself. The world is seen or perceived with the aid of the mind- i.e., by the reflected light of the Self. When the mind receives illumination from the Self, it projects a world in front of itself for itself to see. So really, the world is only in one's own mind. When mind is illumined by the light of the Self, it is

unaware of the Self Itself but only of its own self-created world; when it is not itself so illumined, there is no world available for it to see.

The mind contains the world in seed-form. When the mind is turned inwards, towards the source of light, objective knowledge ceases and the Self alone Shines forth as the Fruit of the Heart [Idhayakkani].

Q.: If the Self is beyond mind, how then is Realisation made possible with mind?

B.: Realise the Heart by means of deploying the mruta-manas [dead mind]; when the mind, which at present sees itself diversified as the cosmos, is denuded or divested of thought and willingness to luxuriate in indulgence in cognition of physical objects and mental concepts, and turned inwards towards its own source, in seeing that source it discovers itself to be THAT. The question and quest for Realisation occurs and arises to the ego only; the Self is eternally and perpetually in Realisation. The ego restlessly seeks his own extirpation so that he may abide as the Self, which is his natural state. Until the Self is Realised there can be no peace for the ego; in other words, the ego finds peace only in the discovery that he never existed, which discovery puts an end to his apparent existence. The Self cannot be perceived or glimpsed by the ego akin to a subject experiencing an object; rather the subject must lose himself in his own source, the subject of the subject. When a room is dark, a lamp is necessary to shed light and eyes to cognise objects; but when the sun is risen there is no need for any lamp, and objects are seen without one; further, to see the sun itself no lamp is necessary; it is enough that you turn your eyes toward the self-luminous sun.

Likewise with the mind. To cognise objects and mental concepts, the reflected light of the mind is necessary; but to see the Heart it is enough that the mind be turned towards it; then the mind loses itself and the Heart Shines forth. There is nothing as simple as being the Self. It requires no effort and no aid. Have you not seen moths wantonly colliding themselves against bright sources of light and perishing in the flame? Likewise the mind is attracted to its own source, the Self, delves deliberately therein, and finally perishes therein. The mind's attraction towards its own source may be a subconscious one to begin with; as one makes progress with regard to introversion of mind, such attraction commences to manifest itself as a palpable yearning for Realisation. This Loving yearning melts down the mind and paves the way for Realisation.



Q.: Would I be correct in surmising that such yearning must itself disappear sometime prior to dawn of the state of Realisation?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How shall I know whether I am progressing in my tapas or not?

B.: Merely continuously carrying out tapas is its progress also.

Steadiness- i.e., pertinaciousness is what is needed; visions, auditory hallucinations, feeling a sense of lightness in the body, out-of-body experiences, etc. are not genuine signs of progress.

Q.: They say that a Jnani cannot leave behind a body at the time of kaivalyam or relinquishment of the physical frame, and that only one whose body disappears in a flash of blazing light at the time of death can rightly be called a Jnani. Do you support this view?

B.: No. From the Jnani's point of view, he ceased to have a body when his ego died once and for all.

Q.: The Jnani and ajnani both die by casting off the body. However, the ajnani is reborn whilst the Jnani is not. Why is this so?

B.: The Jnani enters into the Beingness of the Self [Sat] consciously and merges [his individual or reflected consciousness] thereinto; whereas the other enters unaware and is thrown out unawares also.

Q.: How did the Absolute Self come to be covered up with avarana or veiling on account of ignorance?

B.: For whom is this avarana? Did the Absolute Self come and tell you that He is veiled? It is you who say that there is an Absolute Self and that He is enveloped by avarana; He is always silent. That which Really IS does not even say "I" or "I am". That which complains about avarana is itself the one and only avarana.

Q.: I still do not understand how the Absolute became reduced into the relative.

B.: There is only one home [for the Self that you verily are]- and that is the Heart. You are under the impression that the Absolute has become reduced into the relative. It is not so. The Absolute is quite THAT; so, how can he know any limitation or relativity? Relativity is only for the one who raises the question of relativity and is troubled by it. Ask yourself, 'For whom is relativity?'. Who is that one who feels that there is relativity or imperfection, or that he is affected by the same? Who becomes aware of or feels imperfection? The Absolute is not imperfect and He does not ask anything. The insentient also cannot ask any question. Between these two something has arisen which raises such questions and feels perturbed by such doubts. What is this something? Who is it?

Investigate. Know that the ego arises only by means of holding on to you, who are verily the Self and nothing but THAT; hold yourself and the ego vanishes.

Q.: Please grant me the Grace to Realise the Self.

B.: Grace always IS; it is not to be given or taken; it is in the here and now all along. The fact is that Grace is always and ever ready to absorb or devour us; only we stand in the way with our wandering thoughts and perverted inclinations of mind.

Q.: If I imagine myself to be witness of my thoughts, will such attitude on my part result in Realisation of the Self?

B.: No. Such practice is merely bhavana [mental contemplation].

Q.: How can samadhi be practised in the midst of worldly life, which is of the nature of never-ending activity?

B.: It is not work that hinders samadhi, but the idea that it is you who happen to be doing such work. Ask yourself, 'Who works?'. Remain as pure consciousness in which there is no scope for volition, effort or thought to manifest itself, even whilst worldly work goes on. Then the work will not bind you. It will go on automatically. Work performed with attachment is a shackle, whereas the detached man is always in samadhi; although the onlooker might imagine that he engages himself in working vigorously, such a man really does nothing because everything is done for him by the Higher Power and he never moves his mind. Your body may do the work but yet you can keep the mind still; you are that which never moves. Absorption is samadhi with closed eyes is without doubt meritorious, but one must certainly go further until it is realised that actionlessness and action are not hostile to each other. Fear of loss of the state of samadhi while one is [physically] active is a sign of ignorance. Samadhi is the natural state and it continues as such whether the body is idle or active. Why then fear to engage in action? There is a stage beyond our effort or effortlessness; until the same is Realised, effort is necessary. Any kind of activity cannot affect the Jnani; He remains in Eternal Peace.

Q.: Is it possible for the Jnani to think thoughts?

B.: It is as difficult for the Jnani to engage in thought as it is for the ajnani to remain free from thought.

Q.: The ego keeps giving me trouble. I try to concentrate on remaining as simple consciousness of being as suggested by you, but the ego keeps manufacturing thoughts and is therefore persistently causing me annoyance. What shall I do?

B.: Take no notice of the ego and its activities, but see only the light behind.

Q.: When you say 'light', you are referring to the light of consciousness [chidjyothi]. Is that right?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Swami Vivekananda took his message to all four corners of the civilised world, tirelessly giving lectures and participating in debates. JK is now doing the same thing. However, as far as you are concerned, although it cannot be denied that your teachings are just as stupendously fascinating as they are refreshingly original, it is true that you are making no effort at all to make people aware of them. Should you not spread your teachings in the world, so that people come to be aware of them? You give no lectures, no seminars and conduct no training programmes. You are silently sitting in a corner and morosely moping all the time. What is the good of this? Please put in some effort so that more people come to be aware of your teachings. I like your teachings; I find them wonderful. I should like more people to discover them.

B.: Lectures may entertain people for hours without bringing about any actual change in them; on the other hand, there is a certain power in the Jnani's silence which brings about temporary subsidence of the mind in those who frequent his vicinity.

Q.: Why should I agree that vichara alone is the direct means to Enlightenment?

B.: All other methods are exercised only by means of retaining the ego; in these other paths many doubts might arise along the way and the eternal question 'Who am I?' remains to be tackled finally; on the other hand, as far as this direct method is concerned, the final question is the only one and the same is raised from the very beginning. Reality is simply loss of the ego. Transcend the false idea of the ego's apparent existence by means of continuously and incessantly pursuing the search for its locus standi or identity; this search is the same as the investigation 'Who am I?'. Since the ego is no entity at all, it will automatically vanish and Reality will shine forth of and by Itself. The quest 'Who am I?' is the axe with which to cut off the ego.

Q.: I feel dejected and despondent because I am not able to Realise the Self. Please show me your Grace and thereby help me.

B.: Instead of falling prey to the web of thought-stuff spewed out by the mind and in consequence roaming around without peace, trace

the mind to its source and remain there once and for all.

Q.: What is the mind's source? Is it pure consciousness?

B.: When you hold on to pure consciousness by means of making an effort so to do, it cannot be said then that you have successfully traced the mind back to its source. The mind's source is pure consciousness in which there is not the slightest trace of thought, volition, effort, individuality, or personality. Pure consciousness is always here and now and it is unrelated to anything; it is self-luminous and it is always spontaneously self-evident. No effort or volition is needed to inhere in and as it, because you verily are it. If our experience is otherwise, it means that our mind is clouded with latencies and predispositions; these must be eliminated if Reality is to be regained; for this 'Who am I?' is the means.

Q.: Will it be enough to raise the question once?

B.: Wield the weapon of vichara whenever you find that the mind has strayed away from its source. As and when you find that the mind has forsaken its natural place in the Heart, drag it back gently by means of deploying 'Who am I?'

Q.: Is it possible that knowledge gained by means of direct experience could be lost at a later point in time?

B.: Experience gained without rooting out all of one's vasanas cannot remain steady. Efforts must be made to destroy all vasanas. Even if a single vasana is left in the mind, permanent Realisation is an impossibility and rebirth into ignorance is inevitable. Self-knowledge can remain unshaken only after all vasanas stand extirpated.

Q.: Master, how shall the grip of the ego be loosened?

B.: By not adding new vasanas to it.

Q.: Is cosmic consciousness the same as Realisation of the Self?

B.: No. Cosmic consciousness is the light of pure beingness, uncontaminated by one's ideas or personalityhood, which is projected from Absolute Reality; in Vedantic parlance the same is called mahat and it is the stage prior to Realisation of the Self. When one enters into it consciously- i.e., with full awareness, but yet without feeling any volition or making any effort to reach or remain in that state, it manifests itself or makes itself felt as aham sphurana or 'I-I'.

Q.: Does it not follow by inference that even those who reach cosmic consciousness have not yet escaped from the clutches of ignorance?

B.: Yes. That is what is implied when it is said that no loka [realm], not even Brahma-loka, releases one from the curse of having to be

reborn. Freedom from rebirth is available exclusively for those who have reached the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani.

Q.: Having reached cosmic consciousness or 'I-I', how to proceed beyond even this stage, so that we can reach the final state of Realisation?

B.: Simply incessantly, effortlessly and volitionlessly remain as 'I-I'; it will take you into the Beyond of its own accord, provided all of one's vasanas stand having been annihilated.

Q.: How shall I destroy my vasanas? I am exceedingly eager to do it, so that I can Realise the Self.

B.: Incessant, effortless and volitionless inherence of mind in the beingness of the Self- this is the way.

Q.: But how shall I inhere in the Self without making the effort so to do?

B.: In the beginning conscious effort is needed for it; but with prolonged, persistent and pertinacious practice, it becomes effortless.

Q.: Is it the collection of my latent predispositions [poorvasamskaras] which is the cause for the mind to come up with thoughts?

B.: Yes. The essence of the mind is only awareness or consciousness; but when the ego dominates it, it functions as the reasoning, thinking or analytical faculty. The ego-ridden mind has its strength sapped and has thus become too weak to resist the onslaught of torturous thoughts manufactured by its own faculty of intellect; whereas the mind which has lost itself to and in cosmic consciousness is not limited by the ego; it does not perceive anything as being apart or separate from itself and is therefore only aware; that is what the Bible means by 'I am that I am'. The mind becomes subject to misery and agony when the ego infests or infects it; the egoless mind is perfectly happy, as we clearly see in deep, dreamless sleep. In dreamless sleep there is no world, no ego and no unhappiness or discontentment; the Self alone remains undisturbed and as It IS. In the so-called waking state, all these come into play; yet even then there is the Self, as unaffected and perfectly aloof as it was during the state of deep sleep. So, what does this indicate? One has only to remove the transitory happenings in order to Realise the ever-present beatitude of the Self; find that on which all the rest are superimposed and thus then remain as pure Self. Your actual nature is Bliss and nothing but That. That is the state of the Jnani in which there is no mind at all.

Q.: How to achieve yogic super-powers such as handling fire without injuring oneself, levitation, walking on water, healing the sick, raising the dead back to life, and so on and so forth? I am not asking for selfish reasons. I want to get these powers only so that I can help this suffering world. I want to help humanity. That is why I crave for these powers. My motives are not selfish.

B.: First Realise the Self and then, if you still want these powers, you can go after them.

Q.: What is the best way to achieve mind-control?

B.: Seek the mind; look for it continuously; then its activities cease automatically. Incessant search for what the mind is leads to its disappearance.

Q.: I am mentally too weak by temperament to engage in any sadhana; that being so, how shall I discover Absolute Reality?

B.: Surrender to the substratum of appearances unreservedly; then, Reality alone will be left over as the residue.

Many in the Hall expressed surprise upon reading the gentleman's notebook; they felt it accurately portrayed the master's teachings in a lucid, first-hand manner. When the matter was mentioned to the Maharshi, he merely smiled innocently.

S>M>

Q.: A few months ago, did Bhagawan read the reports carried by the various newspapers about a certain distinguished personage of spiritual eminence, Yogi Subbaiah Pullavar, who seems to have floated in the air for about 4 minutes continuously?

B.: [smiling] Yes.

E.Z.: Why did they cover him up with a tent whilst he was supposedly ascending and descending? What does the fact show? Did he have anything to hide? He was shown being fixedly suspended in the air, but why not also show him as he is going up into the air and coming back down again?

Chadwick: Yes, there is definitely something fishy about the fact that a tent was used both before and after the act. What were they concealing?

B.: Even supposing he possesses the power of transvection, what good will that do?

Q.: We can impress others with such powers; they will admire us; thus, being at the receiving end of immense public adoration, we shall become rich and powerful!

B.: Real power is to be free from all limitation.

Q.: I don't understand what Bhagawan is trying to say.

B.: Why should you, who are originally unlimited, boundless and eternal like the sky, be trapped within a tiny, perishable human frame that is doomed to disappear or expire one day?

Q.: But I was born as a human-being. What can I do about it now?

B.: Birth is not commencement of existence; it is assumption of limitations. Discover your deathless, immortal, imperishable nature; that is the only real power worth aspiring for. Floating in the air, handling fire, etc. are amusing tricks which doubtless afford profuse entertainment, but can they awaken you into knowledge of your Real Immortal nature?

Q.: What should I do then?

B.: Yearn for that which is permanent and ineradicable, not for fleeting appearances which come and go. Find out who you are.

23rd September, 1936

Q.: Ishwaranugrahatheva pumsamadvaitavasana mahadhbaya parithranat vipranamupajayate. The first verse in Avadootha-geethai seems to make it wholly clear that it is through Ishwara's Grace that Moksha is made possible; whereas Sri Bhagawan has made his opinion clear in and through his written works that the Guru and Guru alone is responsible for bringing about Moksha. Which point of view shall we consider as being authentic- Sri Bhagawan's or Dattathreya's?

B.: Ishwara is Parabrahman manifest; Guru is Ishwara manifest. However, Nayana asked this same doubt many years ago, and a detailed reply was furnished unto him; Kapali-sastry inscribed the answer supplied in the form of Sanskrit-verses in his notebook; later Subbaramayya-garu found the notebook and translated the verses into Thenungu-prosody and English-prose. At the present point in time the notebook is not to be found, but these are the translations made by Subbaramayya-garu-

The master walked to the larger book-case in the Hall, extracted a few leaves from a file, and resumed his seat; the matter in Thenungu, which was wholly unintelligible to me, was read out by the Maharshi; the Shylock was asked to read out the English content-

[Dattathreya says that] from the Grace of Ishwara alone springs forth the vasana for Advaita in satiated creatures, which rescues them from the great terror [which is nothing but the false impression that one is identical with the body]. The meaning of the expression 'satiated creature' is that the jiva has already recognised the total futility of continuing to remain within the delusory folds of samsara, and thus has had enough of or is 'satiated' with samsara, once and for all; the great terror is nothing but samsara; Sri Krishna uses the same term in 2:40 of the Gita. Ishwara does not create the Advaita vasana in

the jiva; he merely arranges the jiva's prarabdha in such a way that the vasana becomes kindled into vigorous patency just before the appropriate time or circumstance for him to meet his Jnana-guru. Thus, when he meets the Guru the jiva makes the most out of him, on account of the strong yearning for Emancipation in him produced as a repercussion of such ignited vasana. The vasana for Advaita itself must already exist in the jiva in dormant fashion; otherwise Ishwara is helpless to do anything. Ishwara's Grace may suffice to earn a bout of prarabdha for one's lifetime that is conducive for attaining Realisation, but for actual Realisation it is Guru's Grace that is required. By glimpsing Realised-souls, the vasana for Advaita is automatically planted deep within the mind, usually without one's being aware of the fact.

Q.: So, the vasana for Advaita can be brought about only by means of coming into contact with Mahanubhavs, and not through worshipping Ishwara or praying to him. Is that right?

B.: One may say so.

S>M>

A small Iyyengar boy, whose family has come to visit Sri Bhagawan from the neighbouring village of Nedungunam, and who has accompanied his parents and relatives to the ashram, had brought along a pambaram and was playing with the same in the Hall. The attendant felt that it would be a disturbance unto those who were meditating in the Hall and tried to seize away the boy's toy. The boy understood what the attendant was moving towards him for and cried out, 'I shall not play with it hereaftermore, but please let the presently rotating pambaram go on to spin and cease of its own accord; pray do not stop it!'. His childish voice rang out with these words in so shrilly earnest a fashion that everybody smiled, including Sri Bhagawan. The boy's father apologised to the Hall, came forward and grabbed the pambaram off the floor, and thrust it into a pocket of his khadar-jibba. Then he roughly lifted his son off the floor by the arm and deposited him in his mother's lap. The boy started whimpering, but was swiftly lulled into sleep by his mother, who rocked him up and down and uttered soothing words in his ear. The master jocundly remarked unto the boy's father, 'See, your son has answered your query.'.

Q.: I don't understand what B. is trying to tell me; it is hoped fervently by me that he will kindly pardon my ignorant son for having-

B.: Yesterday you asked a question about the Jnani's prarabdha- do you remember?

Q.: Yes; if the Jnani has transcended all prarabdha, how come there yet remains a body for him, is my doubt; but Sri Bhagawan silenced me by saying, 'Why bother about Jnanis? Attend to yourself first and foremost. If the truth about one's Self is discovered, all doubts stand resolved.'.



B.: Did you notice what your son said? What was his request? He would stop playing with his pambaram, but the present session of rotation must come to a close naturally! You, of course, paid no attention to his imploration, but stopped the pambaram then and there. However, Ishwara is not like this. The prarabdha which is attached to the Jnani's body will have to exhaust itself inevitably. It has to be remembered that this explanation does not hold good as far as the Jnani is concerned; from his point of view he already has no body at all. It is only the onlooker who thinks that the Jnani is the body; the Jnani Himself does not make that mistake. The body, being insentient, is not capable of saying, 'Look here, I am you; you must take good care of me, who am yourself.'. It is you who imagine, 'I am the body'. Put an end to such imaginary identification and all will be well.

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that the experience of the Jnani's Sahaja-stithi cannot be comprehended by the mind?

B.: Yes. The Self can never be apprehended by the mind; It is the Beyond. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Here we may take the word 'heart' as connoting 'mind'.

Q.: I have been practising vichara for the past few months. It is by me ascertained as being my experience that after tracing thought to its source, I find that a certain nothingness remains. Shall I ask, 'Who becomes aware of this nothingness? Or is experience of this nothingness the intended fruit of the investigation, 'Who am I?'

B.: No. Ask yourself who experiences what you refer to as 'nothingness'. The needed[sought-after] consequence or result of vichara is that subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly spontaneously manifest itself; this awareness is not divisible into subject[experiencer], object[experience] and process[act of experiencing] by means of which the former becomes aware of the latter; this awareness is not itself the Self but is only the means for Realising the Self; incessantly holding on to this awareness leads to Realisation of the Self. You mention that nothingness is experienced by you; that means that you are there to experience it; never mind nothingness or somethingness or anythingness; focus on that 'you'; merge into it and become one with it; this is the way. The phrase 'holding on to subjective awareness' should not be misinterpreted to give scope for the perverse understanding that there is anything apart from such awareness when one is so holding on. There is limit to which language can be used to explain such a simple matter. You may understand 'holding on' to be connoting 'remaining as'.

S>M>

Q.: They say that the Jnani experiences Himself as being everything under the sun.

B.: The intellectual conviction 'I am everything.' or 'I am Parabrahman.' has nothing at all to do with the Jnani's actual state of Sahaja-stithi; the former is only a chitta-vritti; the latter is the one and only Absolute Itself.

Q.: One man investigates 'Who am I?' and Realises the Self. What about the rest?

B.: Suppose you dream that you are living in a world that is inhabited by millions of other people who live there alongside yourself. Then you wake up and narrate your dream to your friend. He asks, 'What happened to those other people who lived in that world along with you? Where are they now?'. What will be your answer?

Q.: I shall only be able to laugh at the question.

B.: Exactly.

Q.: But this world is said to be similar to a dream only...

B.: No. It is precisely a dream.

Q.: How then does it appear to the eyes of the Jnani? Surely one who has awakened into Realisation from this dream world should not continue to dream.

B.: For Him there is no further possibility of dreaming. For Him all is the Self. The cosmos does not exist at all from His point of view, but only the Self.

Q.: But B. seems to perceive and interact with the world just as we do.

B.: The Jnani cannot see the world because there is no seer to see anything; rather, He abides as the world. He is the substratum or fabric of Reality in which the world appears and into which it disappears. So, what can be there for Him to see, and who would be there to do any seeing? People ask such questions because when they see a body with life, they imagine immediately that somebody is living within it. [tapping at own right shoulder] There is nobody [living] here.

S>M>

Q.: For 'Who am I?' the answer is Ahambrahmasmi and the other Mahavakyas; the answer thus being known, why make efforts to enquire further?

B.: Is it Brahman who is asseverating 'Ahambrahmasmi.'? Is He not always the silent One?

Q.: When one has practically, as opposed to intellectually, discovered that "I" does not exist, he has Realised the Self. Am I correct?

B.: No. "I"-lessness must become permanent. Otherwise there can result no Realisation.

Q.: Can the mind survive without the aham-vritti?

B.: Mind and its aham-vritti are one and the same thing.

Q.: The thoughtless mind is the Self. Am I correct?

B.: No. When mind has become completely denuded of all content, and is therefore reduced into simple, pure subjective consciousness of being to which all volition, motive or effort is alien, it is referred to as being in the state of vritti-jnana, cosmic consciousness or aham-sphurana; this is the state immediately preceding the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani. Continuous inherence in this state leads to Jnana.

S>M>

Q.: Why is God partial in dispensing of His Grace? B. was blessed with Realisation at 16. I am 61, possess reasonably good knowledge of Sanskrit, and have learnt much of what the Sacred-books have got to say. I have also studied the Bible. Yet there is no Realisation for me. Should not God take pity on me? Ought He not to bestow Realisation on this yearning soul?

B.: Who can say why God does or does not do this or that? You say you have read the Bible. What does the Bible say? "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." It is not for us to sit in judgment over Him. So, let us surrender to Him and keep quiet. Let His will be done.

Q.: It is said that vairagya is needed to Realise the Self.

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: What can be said to be vairagya?

E.Z.: It is aversion towards family-life, sir. The Christ has said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

B.: Vairagya simply means to shun the not-Self and inhere in the Self. "...whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord..." The bodily idea of the self must become totally unacceptable and intolerable; only then is Realisation made possible. One who is content with and lies dissolutely cosseted within his apparent bodily existence makes effort to Realise totally in vain.

S>M>

Q.: Does B. agree that the message contained in Plato's allegory which describes a group of people chained to the wall of a cave can be used to veridically explain his own teachings?

B.: No. There a transition from illusion to reality is described; but Realisation of the Self is not like this. When you awaken into Absolute Reality, ignorance does not prospectively perish; rather it turns out never to have existed.

Suppose, sitting in this Hall, you find Ramana Maharshi's words to be exceedingly boredom-inducing and so drowse off; subsequently you have a dream that you are walking on a street in London. When you wake up, have you journeyed all the way from London to Tiruvannamalai? Did you ever leave Tiruvannamalai at all? So, illusion is NOT whereas Realisation IS. Maya is really yama.

S>M>

Q.: What is the difference between surrender, summa-irutthal and Jnana?

B.: There is no difference at all. Jnana is nothing but the state of absolute surrender.

Q.: Yet at times I have heard the Maharshi mentioning that surrendering can be deployed as a sadhana.

B.: Partial surrender is means for gradually wearing down or attenuating the ego-sense; whereas absolute surrender is simply another name for Self.

Q.: Completely surrendering implies that any individual effort and volition should be given up altogether; is that right?

B.: Yes.

Q.: This means that the aspiration to Realise the Self should also be given up; is that right?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What is to be said concerning the question of effort? After I surrender, should I make effort to Realise the Self- or should I not?

B.: You yourself have correctly indicated that surrender refers to nothing but destruction or ruination of the faculty of individual volition; so, after true surrender, how can such doubts, or indeed any question at all, arise? Unto whom could they arise? After surrender only mouna is left. You ask whether effort is necessary after surrender. After genuine surrender [personal] effort is impossible. Surrender is both the means and the goal; the goal alone could ever be the means to the goal. We imagine we are making efforts to Realise the Self; but think- does He [the Absolute] require any fresh Realisation to be added unto Him? Efforts are made only to discard one's habits and perversities of mind. The question of Realisation arises to the ego only and never to the Self. Ignorance can never defile or blight even the remotest fringes of the Self. The Self is nithya shudda bhudda mukta- i.e., He is in Eternal Realisation.

S>M>

Q.: Are you the physical incarnation of Lord Maitreya according to the Blavatskian theological principles? Being a Theosophist, If I assume so, I shall find meditation on your form, which practice I am regularly observing, easier.

B.: [smiling] You may assume so.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that God's true nature is that of unlimited Love.

B.: Yes. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

Q.: Why would such a caring and Loving being inflict so much suffering upon the inhabitants of the world? Does it not pain Him to see it when we are in pain?

B.: Those who suffer are only receiving His mercy. It is only when dream turns into nightmare that there arises any inclination to wake up from it at all.

S>M>

Q.: So the purpose of inflicting suffering upon one is to turn him inwards, into the Heart, so that he may Realise the Self?

B.: Yes.

Q.: The Jnani who is perfectly one with the Self ought to have transcended all suffering; yet, his body also ages like that of the man on the Clapham omnibus; moreover, he too is subject to numerous ailments.

B.: How can a Jnani have a body?

Q.: But at this very moment, what is the object I see stretched out on the Sofa in front of me- and who is addressing these words to me now? Is it not Bhagawan's body?

B.: Bhagawan is the talking body, He is the listening body, and He is every other body. Yet these bodies cannot limit or otherwise affect Him in any manner whatsoever because they are only an appearance in Him. The Jnani's consciousness is altogether free from any upadhi and therefore it is wholly incapable of being locked into any particular physical frame. One cannot point at something and say, 'This is the Jnani.'. "...when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." So, no part of the cosmos can be said to be the Jnani, but the entirety of the cosmos is vested only in Him.

Q.: Timrod wrote-

**If thou hast ever slighted one old thought,  
Beware lest Grief enforce the truth at last;  
The time must come wherein thou shalt be taught  
The value and the beauty of the Past.**

Shall we try to fulfill our thoughts instead of tracing them to their source and endeavouring to abide as that source as usually suggested by Bhagawan? Is fulfillment of thought a way to bring about their eventual extirpation?

B.: Can you quench a fire by pouring kerosene in it?

S>M>

There is going on a discussion in the Hall amongst certain Caucasians as to whether or not the present-day German-government is going in the direction

of realising Nietzsche's dream of man's metamorphosis into Super-man.

E.Z.: Nietzsche's Super-man is not based on race. I am aware that his ideas deal with evolution of mind into Super-mind.

Chadwick: I know that in our Bhagawan's vocabulary, Super-mind refers to the state of cosmic consciousness or "I-I". I remember him mentioning that this is the stage which is known to occur just before dawn of final Realisation.

Mr. Knowles: What is meant by "I-I"?

B.: Mind denuded of "I" is "I-I"; when such bereftitude has become permanent it automatically results in Realisation of the Self.

Q.: Can we agree that Nietzsche's idea of the Super-man is fundamentally irreconcilable with Marx-Engelsism? Marx writes, 'From each according to his ability...'; on the other hand, Nietzsche writes that work '...keeps everybody in harness and powerfully obstructs the development of reason, of covetousness, of the desire for independence, for it uses up a tremendous amount of nervous energy and takes it away from reflection, brooding, dreaming, worry, love, and hatred; it always sets a small goal before one's eyes and permits easy and regular satisfactions.'

K.: Yes, listen to this if it should please you so to do, sirs- [reading out from Germany's Third Empire by Moeller van den Bruck] ' Even the world revolution can only be realized nationally. Each nation has its own peculiar mission. We believe that it is the mission of the German nation to translate the world revolution into the salvation of Europe. The world revolution, however, will not be that which Marx envisaged; it will rather be that which Nietzsche foresaw. Here again Marx and Nietzsche are poles apart. Marx spoke of "the legal and political superstructure" reared on "the sum of the conditions of production"; this he proposed to overthrow and destroy. Nietzsche saw "state and society" as "substructure"; he had the wider outlook of the great mind unfettered by time and party. Nietzsche, writing The History of the Coming Centuries, describing "what is coming, and what must inevitably come, the advent of nihilism," did not shirk the problem of the proletariat. Claiming to "have lived through nihilism in his own soul, to have put it behind him and under him and out of him," he hoped to see that "substructure of social feeling-values" established to form a "basis" on which, as he put it, a "higher species can take its stand and live for its own tasks." Marx was thinking of the masses; Nietzsche was thinking of the individual. In this he was a romantic. In this, on his own lofty aesthetic plane, he was a reactionary. The future belongs not to the problem-monger, but to the man of character. '

C.: Bruck was a critic of Hitler's, wasn't he?

K.: Yes; he was in love with Mussolini and Mussolini only...

S>M>

Q.: I have heard that Bhagawan once spoke highly of Schopenhauer.

B.: He has discovered that the world is an inherently and incorrigibly unhappy place; he has also discovered that man's true purpose is happiness; furthermore, he states correctly that extirpation of one's personal will leads to Emancipation. However, what seems to be missing is practical technique. How shall the wille-zum-leben, which is the cause for all suffering, be defeated and annihilated? Will cannot be conquered by will. Mind cannot kill mind. Only absolute surrender can result in ruination of the wille-zum-leben or ego.

E.Z.: Schopenhauer is said to have been extremely impressed by the Upanishads.

Q.: Schopenhauer is also said to have been a follower of the Bhudda's teachings; he likewise contended that desire alone is the cause for all sorrow in life. This is evident from his writings; for instance- "Es giebt nur einen angeborenen Irrthum, und es ist der, daß wir dasind, um glücklich zu seyn. Angeboren ist er uns, weil er mit unserm Daseyn selbst zusammenfällt, und unser ganzes Wesen eben nur eine Paraphrase, ja unser Leib sein Monogramm ist: sind wir doch eben nur Wille zum Leben; die successive Befriedigung alles unsers Wollens aber ist was man durch den Begriff des Glückes denkt. So lange wir in diesem angeborenen Irrthum verharren, auch wohl gar noch durch optimistische Dogmen in ihm bestärkt werden, erscheint uns die Welt voll Widersprüche. Denn bei jedem Schritt, im Großen wie im Kleinen, müssen wir erfahren, daß die Welt und das Leben durchaus nicht darauf eingerichtet sind, ein glückliches Daseyn zu erhalten. Während nun hiedurch der Gedankenlose sich eben bloß in der Wirklichkeit geplagt fühlt, kommt bei Dem, welcher denkt, zur Pein in der Realität noch die theoretische Perplexität hinzu, warum eine Welt und ein Leben, welche doch ein Mal dazu dasind, daß man darin glücklich sei, ihrem Zwecke so schlecht entsprechen? Sie macht vor der Hand sich Luft in Stoßseufzern, wie: "Ach, warum sind der Thränen unter'm Mond so viel?" und dergleichen mehr, in ihrem Gefolge aber kommen beunruhigende Skrupel gegen die Voraussetzungen jener vorgefaßten optimistischen Dogmen. Immerhin mag man dabei versuchen, die Schuld seiner individuellen Unglücksägigkeit bald auf die Umstände, bald auf andere Menschen, bald auf sein eigenes Mißgeschick, oder auch Ungeschick, zu schieben, auch wohl erkennen, wie Diese sämtlich dazu mitgewirkt haben; Dieses ändert doch nichts in dem Ergebnis, daß man den eigentlichen Zweck des Lebens, der ja im Glücklichseyn bestehe, verfehlt habe; worüber dann die Betrachtung, zumal wenn es mit dem Leben schon auf die Neige geht, oft sehr niederschlagend ausfällt: daher tragen fast alle

ältlichen Gesichter den Ausdruck Dessen, was man auf Englisch disappointment nennt."

B.: Yes- and by that time it is usually too late to do anything. If one's vasanas are to be destroyed and Realisation achieved, perfect vairagya is necessary. Vairagya is not the petty frustration that develops toward the world when one has failed in all of one's pursuits and is left with no successful standing to speak of in the world; vairagya is the matured conviction that samsara is futile, pointless and inherently devoid of meaning or purpose; it is the former that Herr Schopenhauer is referring to when he mentions that some elderly people seem to have expressions on their faces that could indicate presence of disappointment within the mind. This mood of disappointment or frustration is not vairagya and it is certainly not enough to check one's vasanas; it is merely a transitory inclination of mind that soon passes off without having left behind any noteworthy consequence; vairagya is not like this. Vairagya scorches the mind. Repeated failures and frustrations in life might lead to mental bitterness, which does harm but not good; but if such adverse experiences in life must result in or blossom into vairagya, which does good but not harm, Guru's Grace is absolutely necessary.

Q.: How to get Guru's Grace?

B.: By surrendering yourself unconditionally.

Q.: Whom shall I surrender to?

B.: Absolute surrender cannot involve surrendering "to" anything.

Surrendering to God can at best be called partial surrender. To totally surrender is to simply altogether LET GO. If everything is given up including the renouncer or relinquisher, only Reality remains, and that alone is the true Self. Asking 'Whom shall I surrender to?' is the same as asking 'If I am to let go, who will catch me as I fall?'. You want to be 'caught' again; that is why this question arises. Mature souls want to fall; they do not want to be caught at all. What is the point of letting go if you would only be caught again? So, the paripakvi does not surrender "to"; he simply surrenders.

Q.: And thereafter?

B.: There is no thereafter.

Q.: I meant, what is the state after surrendering perfectly?

B.: Is the one that surrendered perfectly asking this question? Can he?

Q.: No, but I am asking.

B.: The only way to truly know is to yourself do it and see. There cannot be anything to witness the Self.

S>M>

Q.: The image of the snake biting its own tail seems to be a good metaphor for the ego destroying itself so that the Self Shines forth.



B.: The ego does not have the power to destroy itself. It can attenuate itself to a single, infinitesimally tiny point of consciousness, but that is all. "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further..."

Q.: Then how is Realisation brought about?

B.: God's clemency [ ஈஸ்வரகிருபை ].

Q.: I heard Ajata-advaita teaches that Ishwara is also unreal.

B.: He is just as real as you are in this body. The Jnani alone can rightfully claim that God does not exist- but would He ever do so? The state of Self, which is the same as the Sahaja-stithi of the Jnani, is totally unrelated and unconnected with the material or physical plane. The Self can never be co-eval with appearance of any world, and appearance of any world can never be co-eval with the Self. The Jnani does not see, hear or sense anything, although he might appear to be functioning normally in the world. World-perception is alien to Him. There simply cannot be available for Him any world to perceive or pay attention to.

Q.: How shall we inhere in the Self?

B.: Are there 2 selves, so that one may inhere in the other or the other in the one? Find out who it is who wants to inhere in the Self. Is it the Self or anything besides the Self? Does the Self want to inhere in Himself? Can there be anything apart from or besides the Self?

Q.: I see the absurdity of it. What shall I do then?

B.: Remain as That-which-IS- i.e., BE as you ARE. You are. Therefore, be. Nothing further is needed.

S>M>

Q.: Cawthorn wrote-

**Enjoy thy triumphs, dear illusion! see  
This sad apostate from his God to thee;  
See, at thy call, my guilty warmths return,  
Flame through my blood, and steal me from my urn.  
Yet, yet, frail Abelard! one effort try,  
Ere the last lingering spark of virtue die;  
The deadly charming sorceress control,  
And spite of nature tear her from thy soul.  
Long has that soul in these unsocial woods,  
Where anguish muses, and where horror broods,  
From love's wild visionary wishes strayed,  
And sought to lose thy beauties in the shade,  
Faith dropt a smile, devotion lent her fire,  
Woke the keen pang, and sanctified desire;  
Led me enraptured to the blest abode,**

**And taught my heart to glow with all its God.**

**But oh, how weak fair faith and virtue prove!**

I am often sorely tempted by lust. 'Who am I?' proves to be inadequate. What shall I do?

B.: Even after those disturbing thoughts mentioned by you have passed away from your mind of their own accord, you seem to wish to voluntarily still carry them around inside your head, because you go on mentally reflecting upon the fact of such thoughts having occurred unto you. What is to be said about this?

Q.: It is my desire that some mental mechanism ought to be put in place in order so as to ensure that thoughts do not arise at all.

B.: No such thing as suggested by yourself is possible- even during sleep thoughts are contained in the mind in latent form. Returning the mind to its source unflinchingly each and every time it strays away therefrom is the one and only course of remedial action available to us with which to tackle the rambunctious mind. Thought arises only owing to one's latencies, predispositions and predilectious inclinations [vikshepakalpas, poorvasamskaras and vishayavasanas], which lie buried deep within the mind; to make the noxious spring of thought run dry, these must first be annihilated.

Q.: How shall I annihilate them?

B.: The more you continuously inhere in the beingness of the Self, the more they wither off of their own accord.

Q.: But inherence in the beingness of the Self is made possible only if we are able naturally to remain without thinking- for which freedom from vasanas is necessary.

B.: These paradoxes and self-contradictions will always remain on the theoretical level. If you remain in the natural state, they vanish.

Q.: Is the sadhaka himself the very illusion that he is trying to overcome?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then how is success in Realisation made possible?

B.: When the sadhaka surrenders unconditionally in the face of his utter inability to Realise the Absolute, God takes pity on him and kills his ego once and for all.

Q.: Is everything- the cosmos I spectate around me, I mean- my own dream only?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What of Sri Bhagawan? Is he also unreal, being nothing more than a mere figment of my own imagination?

B.: Yes. Find the Real Bhagawan. He is within.

Q.: How did this dream arise?

B.: Remaining incarcerated within dream, what is the point of asking this question? Some response you obtain from anybody will also only be a dream-answer and therefore completely useless. The best thing to do is to first wake up. Thereafter let us ask these and more questions if we still feel like so doing.

Q.: The sadhaka is told that he is living within a dream; what about the Jnani? Does the Jnani also see the world only as a dream?

B.: There is no such thing as 'world' available for the Jnani to see; there cannot be.

Q.: It is said that the world is unreal in itself but real as the Self.

B.: That explanation is provided to those who will not be satisfied otherwise; they want to know how it is that the Jnani continues to function normally in the world like other people if he maintains no awareness of the world and could not possibly maintain any awareness of the world, and thus the answer you mentioned is given to set their minds at rest. What, however, is the actual position? The Self is formless, illimitable and unconnected with anything. It can never be aware of any world. The Jnani is one with the Self and therefore the same applies to him also. A child awoken from sleep, given water to drink, and then put back to sleep again does not recollect in the morning that it drank water during the previous night. Likewise does the Jnani function in the world. All these doubts are merely for the onlooker only. One who is identical with the Self cannot raise such questions. The sounds, textures, smells, tastes, shapes, forms, colours and patterns you happen to perceive in the world are exclusively your mental creations; apart from thoughts appurtenant to them there is nothing called world. In the Jnani the mind is dead and therefore there is nothing available to process sensory information into the thought, 'I am seeing this.' or 'I am hearing that.'. So, he is quite altogether free from the burden of having to live in the world, although outwardly he might be leading the life of a routine householder with all sorts of worldly cares.

S>M>

Q.: Since only the Self exists, how is it that I delude myself into seeing a world that never was?

B.: The example generally given is that some people think, based on what is observed by them, that there is a gigantic rabbit living on the moon; they argue what its diet must be and what the colour of its fur must be; more sensible persons, however, know that there is in all likelihood nothing on the moon but rocks and dust. In the absence of the "I" that perceives it, the world cannot sustain. When "I" disappears, the cosmos vanishes.

S>M>

Q.: People are always thinking that they can find perfection in this world, and that they will certainly eventually find it here one day. Are they deluded souls?

Chadwick: I am reminded of the carnivorous warlus and carpenter mentioned by Carroll that wept at the limitless stretch of sand they saw at the beach, and hoped in futility that it could all be cleared away by 7 maids with 7 mops sweeping away for half-a-year... heh, heh!

There was no response from Bhagawan.

S>M>

H. J. Pye wrote-

**Mark yon starved wretch who views with eager eye  
The heaps of useless gold that round him lie!  
That man when Fortune less profusely gave  
Enjoyed her scanty gifts, nor wished to save,  
What she bestowed with chearful hand he spent,  
Nor wanted millions while he had content;  
His pleasures lessen as her smiles increase,  
Till wealth immense completely blasts his peace;  
Now to himself each comfort he denies  
That public care to poverty supplies,  
Lets his drear mansion totter over his head,  
And amid profusion dies for want of bread.**

Q.: Man knows that material wealth brings him only transitory happiness. Why then does he so assiduously seek out and acquire the same?

B.: The mischief lies in the fact that we consider ourselves to be limited beings living in time and space; since we consider ourselves to be limited, we seek out accretions to and possessions for ourselves. Man, not knowing that his true nature is Infinity, wants to grow or expand, thinking that such is the correct direction in which he ought to proceed. What is the consequence? The bulkier the ego the more the misery, because the bigger the ego has become the more has one deviated and departed away from one's true nature of being the Self. He that would Realise the Self must become as innocent or egoless as a child.

S>M>

Q.: Has Sri Bhagawan read Kant's essay, 'Was ist Aufklärung?'?

B.: Yes.

Q.: In the opening sentence of the essay Kant states, 'Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbst verschuldeten Unmündigkeit.'.

Does Sri Bhagawan agree with this view?

B.: The phase of immaturity referred to by Kant concerns itself exclusively with dearth or absence of intellectual or psychological maturity. Such maturity is not a necessary pre-condition for Realisation of the Self.

Q.: Nietzsche has discussed the concept of 'amor fati'. What does Bhagawan think about it? Will not developing the mental temperament of loving acceptance of fate be highly useful in the man aspiring for Realisation of the Self?

B.: Such temperament automatically comes in the man whose mind is perpetually turned inwards to face the Heart.

Q.: Schopenhauer's wille zum leben and Nietzsche's wille zur macht- can we say that they are the same thing?

B.: The same ego is known by its various different attributes, like Shiva is called Neelakanta, Chandrachoodeshwara, and so on.

Q.: The Buddha said, 'Accept the pain.'

B.: To the surrendered mind, acceptance and acceptance alone is perpetual, automatic and natural, come what may, pain or gain. Where is the need to purposely make separate efforts to accept or reject anything?

S>M>

A certain American gentleman from the city of Montreal, Quebec, Dr. Douglas Mayes-Beasley, who had visited the ashram sometime at the beginning of this year or at the end of the preceding one, has written to Chadwick to convey that the master's blessings have made him a better man. 'Until I met the Maharshi, all my life I was deciding what to do next, where to go and how to set about doing things; but after spending time in his blessed company, I feel that my actions are now automatic and guided by some Higher Power...

Swami Vivekananda said of his master, "Merely a simple glance from him could change a whole life...". It is my earnest impression that the same thing is true of the Maharshi also. Ever since his eyes set themselves on me, I feel weightless and carefree. A feeling of profound mental relaxation has settled deeply into me. Occasionally the Maharshi's face, and in particular his eyes, present themselves in front of my mind's eye and an ineffable peace floods the entirety of my being...' The letter is signed off with words that invariably aroused my curiosity: 'Your fellow Lovecraftian-'. Later I asked Chadwick about it and he said, laughing, 'It isn't what it seems to be, I assure you! Mr. Lovecraft is the name of a writer. He is not one of your Jacobean-era litterators; he is only a pulper, but I still find his writings intriguing... And so does Dr. Mayes-Beasley, I discovered whilst meeting him here. A pulper? It is somebody who writes for these inexpensive magazines that generally sport somewhat ribald cover illustrations; the contents carry serialised stories of all sorts... The kind of thing Mr. Knowles was showing everybody sitting in the

Hall on the day of his arrival here- that would be a good example, now...'  
Chadwick then showed me a sample of this Mr. Lovecraft's work, and I feel constrained to admit that this particular gentleman seems to possess a few ounces of some especially eccentric brainous-membrane underneath his cranium that permit him to deploy words in so spectacularly creative a fashion-

**I hate the moon; I am even afraid of it- for when it shines on certain scenes familiar and loved it sometimes makes them unfamiliar and hideous. It was in the spectral summer when the moon shone down on the old garden where I wandered; the spectral summer of narcotic flowers and humid seas of foliage that bring wild and many-coloured dreams. And as I walked by the shallow crystal stream I saw unwonted ripples tipped with yellow light, as if those placid waters were drawn on in resistless currents to strange oceans that are not in the world. Silent and sparkling, bright and baleful, those moon-cursed waters hurried I knew not whither; whilst from the embowered banks white lotos blossoms fluttered one by one in the opiate night-wind and dropped despairingly into the stream, swirling away horribly under the arched, carven bridge, and staring back with the sinister resignation of calm, dead faces. And as I ran along the shore, crushing sleeping flowers with heedless feet and maddened ever by the fear of unknown things and the lure of the dead faces, I saw that the garden had no end under that moon; for where by day the walls were, there stretched now only new vistas of trees and paths, flowers and shrubs, stone idols and pagodas, and bendings of the yellow-litten stream past grassy banks and under grotesque bridges of marble. And the lips of the dead lotos-faces whispered sadly, and bade me follow, nor did I cease my steps till the stream became a river, and joined amidst marshes of swaying reeds and beaches of gleaming sand the shore of a vast and nameless sea. Upon that sea the hateful moon shone, and over its unvoiced waves weird perfumes brooded. And as I saw therein the lotos-faces vanish, I longed for nets that I might capture them and learn from them the secrets which the moon had brought upon the night. But when the moon went over to the west and the still tide ebbed from the sullen shore, I saw in that light old spires that the waves almost uncovered, and white columns gay with festoons of green seaweed. And knowing that to this sunken place all the dead had come, I trembled and did not wish again to speak with the lotos-faces. Yet when I saw afar out in the sea a black condor descend from the sky to seek rest on a vast reef, I would fain have questioned him, and asked him of those whom I had known when they were alive.**

**This I would have asked him had he not been so far away, but he was very far, and could not be seen at all when he drew nigh that gigantic reef. So I watched the tide go out under that sinking moon, and saw gleaming the spires, the towers, and the roofs of that dead, dripping city. And as I watched, my nostrils tried to close against the perfume-conquering stench of the world's dead; for truly, in this unplaced and forgotten spot had all the flesh of the churchyards gathered for puffy sea-worms to gnaw and glut upon. Over those horrors the evil moon now hung very low, but the puffy worms of the sea need no moon to feed by. And as I watched the ripples that told of the writhing of worms beneath, I felt a new chill from afar out whither the condor had flown, as if my flesh had caught a horror before my eyes had seen it. Nor had my flesh trembled without cause, for when I raised my eyes I saw that the waters had ebbed very low, shewing much of the vast reef whose rim I had seen before. And when I saw that this reef was but the black basalt crown of a shocking eikon whose monstrous forehead now shone in the dim moonlight and whose vile hooves must paw the hellish ooze miles below, I shrieked and shrieked lest the hidden face rise above the waters, and lest the hidden eyes look at me after the slinking away of that leering and treacherous yellow moon. And to escape this relentless thing I plunged gladly and unhesitatingly into the stinking shallows where amidst weedy walls and sunken streets fat sea-worms feast upon the world's dead.**

P>S>

The reader might justifiably ask why such prima facie irrelevant material should find place in a book that supposedly deals with the experiences of a person who stayed in the Maharshi's ashram for a few months; the answer I can give is that whenever I find such refreshingly new material the nature of which is as to lend gravitas to the mind and plunge it into depths hitherto unexplored, I make a point of noting it down; these notes I feel impelled to share with my readers, so that they might feel the same transports of fantastic delight that I did on these occasions transpiring during the tenure of such stay. I might record the master's conversations only and leave it at that, but that would be doing this memoir a grave injustice. Even as it is, there is much from my diaries I have excluded from appropriation into this book, since it ought not, I feel, to become inordinately bulky or unreasonably unwieldy.

S>M>

Q.: In the American country of Estados Mexicanos, there exists a unique, antediluvian, man-made structure known as the pyramid of Kukulkan. I hope Sri Bhagawan is aware of the fact.

B.: Yes- what is your doubt?

Q.: It is said that by visiting such places and routinely practising meditation there, supernatural abilities may be gained, such as telepathy, telekinesis, television, and so on. I want to know from you if that is true. I have always wanted to read other people's thoughts.

B.: You have eagerly asked some question, which is a highly pertinent one according to you; but here we do not attach any value to such abilities; moreover, this does not know anything about such things. The only worthwhile feat is to break free of the shackles of maya and awaken into Reality; this is the only philosophy followed by us here. In a dream, you might acquire so many talents, abilities and skills: do any of them serve you the slightest purpose or use once you have woken up from the dream? So, learn to hold on to what is permanent and true instead of chasing after shadows.

S>M>

Q.: Can we practice nihilism as suggested by Nietzsche? Is it good? Would Sri Bhagawan recommend that we observe nihilism?

B.: Such an attitude must not be deliberately cultivated. As one's immersion of mind in the Self becomes more and more profound- i.e., as the depth of one's introversion of mind becomes greater and greater, indifference to everything results; this is natural and harmless. The effect cannot produce the cause.

S>M>

Q.: Does the Jnani possess extra-sensory perceptivities? For instance, it is said that apart from visible light, other electromagnetic undulations and excitations cannot possibly be perceived by the human eye, and that only sounds belonging to a certain conducive range of wave-frequencies can possibly be perceived by the human ear; but can Sri Bhagawan, for example, see Röntgen rays- or can he hear sound that is characterised by possessing a wave-frequency that falls outside the normal human ear's capacity to assimilate? If he cannot see and hear such extra-sensory information in the environment, can he become aware of them in some other way?

B.: It all depends on the Jnani's prarabdha, which exists exclusively from the onlooker's point of view, because prarabdha can affect the body only; it cannot bind down Spirit. If it is the Jnani's prarabdha that the body must wield such powers, it shall. Powers or no powers, the Jnani remains ever the same. He is not affected by the presence or absence of powers.

Q.: There is so much suffering in the world. Why do not the Mahatmas and Siddha-purushas, who have so many miraculous preternatural abilities, help?

B.: Who said they don't?

Q.: Is the world what it is, despite it continually receiving help from the Mahatmas and Siddha-purushas?



B.: Yes.

Q.: One can only conclude that their help is weak and ineffective.

B.: No. Their help is not directed at ensuring that only those things happen in the cosmos which according to the weltanschauung of the man on the Clapham omnibus may be considered good and morally sound. They help karma to do what karma needs to do- that is all.

Q.: If it is ordained according to karma that Tiruvannamalai must be hit by a gigantic, ferocious cyclone, will you help to save people's lives or will you suggest to God new areas for the cyclone to target so that it may go and strike at the same?

B.: Neither. I AM. Actions are not performed by Me; they take place in and of Me but are unable to affect Me.

Q.: Shall I also cultivate this attitude of seeing my Self alone in everything?

B.: The Jnani's asseveration 'I alone verily am everything.' is not a manobhavana- the same is His actual experience. On the other hand, what is being suggested by you is only a mental idea or attitude; it has nothing to do with the Jnani's actual State of being Reality.

Q.: Is everything pre-destined?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Are my thoughts also pre-destined? Are the contents of my thoughts also pre-destined?

B.: The thinking mind is a slave to destiny. The wholly introverted mind alone is totally free from destiny.

S>M>

Q.: The Bible asks me to "Be still, and know that I am God". If I am already God, where is the need to make effort to Realise the Self?

B.: The Bible asks you to know that you are God, not think that you are God. You are not asked to think, but to know with none to make known to. To truly know is to merely BE. Although our true identity is that we are the Absolute or Parabrahman, effort is needed to Realise Him. The effort is not for acquisition of Realisation but only for elimination of ignorance. It is only for the ego that the question of Realisation arises and never to the Self. The Self is in eternal Realisation, even here and now.

Q.: How to metamorphose the ego or mind into the Self?

B.: There is no such possibility. When the ego or mind dies the Self stands Realised- as it indeed was even all along.

Q.: If the Self is already Realised even at this very moment, where is the need to put in efforts to Realise Him?

B.: Your awareness or consciousness is at present locked or tied up into this body; could you deny the fact? When the body suffers injury, does not the

thought occur to you, 'I am injured.'? What is the reason? It is because the Self is mistakenly understood to be the body or mind; this wrong habit of identification must come to an end before good results can follow; only with continuous and incessant practice can all these false beliefs be extirpated.

Q.: What is the purpose of creation?

B.: Creation is only a mental phenomenon; it is a mirror for "I" to see itself. What is seen outside is only a reflection of the thoughts going on inside; this may not be apparent, but in fact is so. What you call 'world' is nothing but thought.

Q.: Objects are solid things having measurable properties, whereas thoughts are intangible. Moreover my thoughts are known only to myself whereas objects in public view such as buildings and trees are seen by everybody in the locality.

B.: Does anything you see in a dream remain on waking? It is only after waking up that you realise that the dream was merely a mental creation. Likewise here.

Q.: We dream a different dream each night. On the other hand, this world has been the same for thousands of years.

B.: You say all this because of your memories pertaining to the past. Inside a dream also one finds that one has memories pertaining exclusively to that specific dream. Your memories are also illusory.

Q.: Is there anything Real at all? Or is Reality also an illusion?

B.: Find out yourself by Realising the Self.

Q.: It is said that illusion itself is illusory.

B.: Yes. Therefore, Reality alone exists, and that is the Self.

S>M>

Q.: How shall we get rid of sthoulyam [grossness of mind]?

B.: Sthoulyam means the tendency of the mind's eye to perceive gross objects by means of omitting to remain in its own nativistic essence, which is simply pure consciousness; this habit of mind can be overcome by means of exercising prolonged and continuous practice in turning it inward.

Q.: God's Grace is necessary for it.

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: How to get God's Grace?

B.: If you turn your mind inwards, God will bless you with His Grace. This is an indirect way of saying that introversion is in itself a manifestation of His Grace, or that Grace is the same as perfect introversion.

S>M>

Q.: What am I to do when bad things happen to me in life?

B.: Be grateful to God for it.

Q.: I said 'bad things'.

B.: Yes. Be grateful all the same. Remember Job from the Bible.

Q.: God tells Job to be content with Him no matter how bad his situation might be.

B.: Yes. "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it." So, there is no question of arguing with the wisdom of God's ways. He and He alone knows best. Leave everything entirely upto Him.

Q.: What is God's advice to His followers who are in pain and undergoing suffering?

B.: Mamekamsharanamvraja.

S>M>

A scene took place in the Hall, wherein the master upbraided the sarvadhikari in front of all the attendees. Seeing the dilapidated condition of the Draupdiamman-temple near the ashram, Mr. Knowles had donated a sum of 75 rupees toward its upkeep and maintenance, with a view to prevent atleast further incremental damage to the somewhat neglected ancient shrine on account of efflux of time; he had donated the sum to Sri Sadai Chettiar, the temple's manager. The sarvadhikari had come to know about this, and had wrested away the sum in part from the poor man, telling him, 'That Caucasian has come to Tiruvannamalai not to see your Draupdiamman-temple but only to see our Bhagawan. Only because of Bhagawan have you received this endowment toward the temple's welfare; had it not been for him, would somebody from such a distant country ever dream of setting foot in this place? No. So, give 50 rupees to the ashram and the rest you can use for the temple. We are in dire need of funds. What are you going to do with 75 rupees? It will encourage you to go in for wasteful expenditure, whereas even for necessities we find ourselves in a tight corner in the ashram. For buying flowers, sandal-paste and vermilion-powder will anybody need so much money? You require no expenditure to the massive tune of 75 rupees; for day-to-day pooja expenses 25 rupees is more than enough. So, come to the ashram now and hand over 50 rupees. That Caucasian is staying in the ashram; don't forget it; and so, the ashram has a right of say over this money...'. The Chettiar was sitting in the Hall with a sad face and the master at once found out that his felings were perturbed. Soon the cat was out of the bag. Bhagawan, addressing the sarvadhikari, spoke thus: 'Why should we behave like this? If we trust in God to take care of our needs, He will provide us with everything we need. There is no need for undue anxiety.' The sarvadhikari directed a baleful look of baneful resentment at the poor Chettiar who had meekly huddled himself together at the foot of the Sofa, with his

arms clasped around his knees and chin nestled betwixt them, and who was pointedly avoiding looking at him; at once, the master told the sarvadhikari, 'Do not find fault with Chettiar for having revealed these happenings; he was sitting quietly in the Hall; it was this that wanted to know the truth of the matter...'. The sarvadhikari dolefully said that he would return the money at once. Now Mr. Knowles spoke up- 'I was thinking that I would pay my respects to the ashram monetary-wise at the time of my departure herefrom; that is why I have not paid any donations here yet. There is no need for the manager to return the money. I shall pay the temple-man again; it is no matter; please let us discuss the issue no further, I beg you all.' . This seemed to promptly satisfy everybody, and the matter was dropped then and there.

S>M>

Q.: [in a tremulous voice] You are a rarefied creature- a Sage. More people should come to know about your teachings. For that it will be better if you go about lecturing to the world like JK or Swami Vivekananda. Instead of doing that, you are- kindly pardon me- wasting your time here making walking sticks and stitching cups from banana-tree leaves. Yes, I have noticed these things. Whenever I see you doing these things I feel sad to think that a great spiritual genius is eclipsed under a cloak of nondescriptitude and banality. Even I can make walking sticks and banana-leaf cups. What is so great in it? On the other hand, your message of applied or practical Vedanta is unique and must reach the people. Everyday you get up at 2/30 A.M. to do work in the kitchen. Are there not other people available to carry out these menial chores? Why do you not announce yourself to the world and function as the jagadhguru that you truly are, instead of living here like this in ajnatavasa? I feel sad to see you like this... [bursts into sobs].

B.: [gently] Why do you think that there is nobody to take care of me? How was I made to come here? Is not Arunachala taking care of us all as both Mother and Father? Why then should we permit ourselves to become perplexed and befuddled?

The elderly lady at length stopped crying and smiled up at the master like a small child.

S>M>

Q.: Yes, she has spoken true words. You have become a lamp within a pitcher. Your worth should be known to four people.

B.: [curtly] You please mind your own business.

S>M>

Q.: It seems Sri B. told Sri Subbaramayyagaru the following words- "Why don't you do what the first-class railway passenger does? He tells the guard his destination, locks the bogey's doors and goes to sleep. The rest is done

by the guard. If you could trust your Guru as much as you trust the railway guard, it would be altogether enough to make you reach your destination. Your business is to shut the door and windows and fall asleep. The guard will wake you up at your destination." I do not understand this advice. Should I keep sleeping all the time? Is sadhana not required to Realise the Self?

B.: The sleep that is recommended here is not sushupti but jagrat-sushupti.

Q.: What does the word 'jagrat-sushupti' mean?

B.: It refers to that state of thoughtlessness in which there is no drowsiness, no sleep, no effort, no desire, no volition and no tendency to mentally respond to input of sensory information.

Q.: How shall I reach this state?

B.: By giving yourself upto it; by abandoning the idea that there exists an "I" which aspires to reach it. The state free from all thoughts and urges is the natural state.

S>M>

A facsimile of a painting made by the famous Dutch artist Simon de Vlieger is presented to the master by a Caucasian who wishes to convey to the Maharshi his farewell greeting or solicitation of blessing, as he is presently departing from the ashram. Bhagawan inspected the ornately framed work of art carefully; there are many men-of-war stationed near the coastline, and tiny canoes also float alongside them; all vessels exhibit mastheaded an orange-white-green flag high up in the air; the sky looks dismal and overwhelmed with gloom. When Bhagawan handed it back with a smile, the Caucasian whose belonging it was explained that it was his gift to the Maharshi.

Q.: I have been visiting you everyday for the past 3 weeks. I sat silently in a corner without asking questions. I have benefited immensely from the benevolent power radiating from or accompanying your presence and now feel serene, calm and happy. The moment my eyes settled upon your form, I knew that I had found my God and Guru. I do not know if shall ever return here, but I do know that I shall never forget you. Please accept this as a small token of my humble gratitude.

B.: Remain without parting from yourself; that is the best manifestation of gratitude. Your gift is not being spurned, but take it with you. We have no use for such things here- somebody will take it away and that will give rise to all sorts of unwarranted troubles.

But the Caucasian was adamant and kept pleading.

B.: Very well. You have done what you set out to do. Good. You have gifted this to me. Am I at liberty to do with it as I like now?

Q.: Of course.

B.: Here, take it as a gift from me. No, do not refuse. When you felt as though I was refusing your gift, how wretched and miserable did you feel! Would I also now not feel the same if you refuse?

The young man laughed; seeing the futility of further argument, he accepted the 'gift', bowed low and then left the Hall.

S>M>

Q.: Men infused with keenness of scientific spirit are striving hard to bring about all sorts of marvellous inventions in their respective fields of technological expertise. If they were to come to know that the world was merely a dream, they would feel foolish, since endeavours carried out inside a dream produce only dream results- and why would anybody work hard only to bring forth results that are unreal in character? So, Ajata-advaita should be kept secret and not be made known to the man on the Clapham omnibus- otherwise man would lose the initiative to expend effort towards the betterment of the world he sees around him and we would all have to move back into the jungles with our furry simian friends. The idea that the world is a dream is a dangerous one; it has the potential to lead in the direction opposite to advancement of civilisation. Does the Maharshi agree with me?

B.: The idea that the world is only a mental phenomenon will not appeal to all; those [few blessed souls] who find it agreeable embrace it wholeheartedly and thus sooner or later Realise the Self [,because] to Realise the Self, there is only one thing needed, and that is to abandon what is not-Self. If not-Self is abandoned Self stands Revealed. All spiritual effort is suggested to be made only so as to coax the mumukshu into gradually giving up the not-Self; no effort is needed to Realise the Self because He is in Eternal Revelation.

Q.: How shall we resurrect India to her former glory, as she was in Vedic times?

B.: One must himself be perfect before he can successfully set out to bring perfection into the world.

Q.: You are a perfect being. Yet you have done nothing to bring perfection into this world- it is as it always was: a miserable, cruel place.

B.: And that is how it will always be- because it is something to be escaped from, not lived in. Instead of pointlessly aiming to perfect your surroundings in a world that obeys the second law of thermodynamics, therefore tending to become more and more entropised or randomised over time, and thus needing constant effort or expenditure of energy to maintain order or symmetry so that the flow of entropisation inherent in the cosmos might be counteracted for the time being, look within and find there effortless perfection, which is bliss without beginning or end.

Q.: Should I remain idle then?

B.: Work will come to you if that is your destiny; but whilst working remain free from mental attachment; thus even in the midst of work peace can be found.

S>M>

Q.: 'Brahman is elusive like the setting sun, ever within the farthest periphery in the horizon of perception, but always unapproachably at the same distance no matter how far you travel or how hard you try to reach.', it is said. Does the master agree?

B.: Yes. Brahman can never be reached or grasped by the intellect. The secret is to TOTALLY LET GO- i.e., unconditionally surrender. People look for God outside themselves and complain that He is not able to be seen. Is He to be seen? Can He be seen? Is He not the Self of the seer?

Q.: Yogis are able to remain for weeks without breathing so much as once, without food and without water. What is the secret?

B.: Absence of body-consciousness.

Q.: How can the same be achieved?

B.: By Realising the Self. 'Who am I?' is the quest.

Q.: Sri Krishna says in the Gita, 'Just like a person discards worn-out garments and makes use of new ones, so too at the time of death, the soul casts off its worn-out body and enters into a new one.' This seems to support the idea of rebirth.

B.: Different temperaments require different conceptual explanations to satisfy them; Truth cannot be grasped by means of conceptual knowledge. Birth is a mental experience. You have memories of the past and so you say that you have been in existence for so-and-so number of years. Death destroys memories but the same ideas [vrittis] entertained incumbently by the jiva in question are caught up again in the light of the Self because they are not destroyed by vichara. So, where the faculty of memory is concerned there is no rebirth, but where the question of ideas is concerned there is rebirth because one's ideas are carried forward and do not perish at the time of dropping the body. However, this is only a generic explanation. Some people are able to recall memories of past lives; we read reports of 4 year old children speaking far-away languages and recollecting people they could not possibly have known in the current lifetime. What is to be said of this? Again, even during the course of a single lifetime certain events may lead to amnesia; these persons may be said to be reborn, because they have no recollection of anything prior to the event which caused such loss of memory. So, if asked whether there is rebirth, we can only say, 'Yes and no.'. Even the body is reduced into the elements, becomes food for vegetative life-forms, is subsequently eaten by us, and is thus reborn through presently living people. So, no definite answer is possible to the question of rebirth. Birth is only an

assumption; it is merely a mental impression; it is not fact. These questions arise because we have lost hold of what is Real.

S>M>

Q.: I have read that the pineal gland is said to be the seat of man's soul; many refer to it as man's third eye; if this eye be opened or this organ harnessed to its full capacity, by means of activating the kundalini-shakti lying coiled at the coccyx and merging it in the sahasrara, which is said to be the ancient Sanskrit name for this particular gland located in the brain, man is said to acquire all sorts of thaumaturgic powers, such as levitation, reading other people's minds, mentally manipulating objects without any physical intervention, and so on and so forth. Is all this true?

B.: Even if it is, such persons have not escaped bondage; if anything, they have in all likelihood strengthened their own fetters.

Q.: Why so?

B.: Thaumaturgic powers are longed for so that we may impress others with our talents. Otherness and Jnana lie in opposite directions.

Q.: Powers can be used to help the suffering world.

B.: Did anybody come and tell you that the world is not meant to suffer?

Q.: So- God is a sadist.

B.: If that is your opinion, be it so.

S>M>

Q.: What about expelling bad thoughts from the mind and replacing them with good ones?

B.: All thoughts are inimical to Realisation. Thought is one thing and Realisation quite another.

Q.: Everyday early in the morning I practise visualisation- I imagine that I am in a beautiful, peaceful garden, that there are colourful birds flying over my head, that there is sweet music playing in the background, that I am in a place where cruelty and morally unacceptable happenings cannot possibly take place, that I am relaxing in the shade of some trees, that those trees are raining down flowers on me gently, that the air carries a pleasant fragrance, and so on and so forth. Is this practice of any use?

B.: It is a worthwhile preliminary practice [,but no more].

S>M>

Q.: 'Constantly holding on to the thought "I" to the exclusion of every other thought will sooner or later lead to Realisation or Emancipation.' Is it so?

B.: Yes.

Q.: 'Whatever happens, accept it as Guru's prasad.' Should we cultivate this attitude?

B.: Eradicate every other attitude.



S>M>

Q.: In California there is a mountain known as Mt. Shasta. In the Peruvian-republic there is a mountain known as Mt. Waeinapfikshu. Here we have Mt. Arunachala. Having visited all 3 places, I feel it in my bones that there must be some connection between them, both spiritually and geologically. What does Sri Bhagawan say? Is he aware of the existence of these other 2 mountains?

B.: Yes. [smiling] One might say that they are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva respectively.

S>M>

Q.: But I was under the impression that Lord Shiva resided in Mt. Kailash.

B.: Yes. Do not wealthy people maintain more than one household? Likewise with Lord Shiva, whose only wealth is penury, in which He abounds and which He shares freely with all those who surrender unto Him without reserve.

Q.: In Mylapour Shiva goes by the name Kapalishwara. What is the significance of using a skull for a begging bowl?

B.: It indicates absence of dehabhimanam. The Emancipated-one does not fear for loss of the body- in fact, he looks forward to it, like the portador-man who carries heavy luggage on his head anticipates the time he can arrive at his destination, set it down upon the ground, and be at ease.

S>M>

Sri Sankaracharya's Devyaparadhakshamapana-stotram is chanted before the master.

B.: Yes, that is the ideal bhava the bhakta must have towards God.

Q.: Making use of the expression 'mahadevi yathayogyamthathakuru' is how Sri Sankara concludes this hymn. Sri Bhagawan also concludes Aksharamanamagizhmalai with 'poruttharulishtampin arunachala'. Is it Sri Sankara who has now come to us in the guise of Sri Bhagawan?

B.: [smiling] Perhaps. Who can say?

S>M>

Through him, Chadwick's friend and correspondent Dr. Douglas Mayes-Beasley has sent to the master some of the former's diary entries for the latter's perusal, since he thinks that it might be of interest to Sri Bhagawan to go through the same. The content is structured in the following way, that is to say, Dr. Mayes-Beasley is having a conversation with Mt. Arunachala in his dream; this was originally a long Greek poem penned by him that has been translated into English prose by the gentleman so that those at the ashram may read it with ease; Chadwick now read out to the Hall-

DMB: The mother who bore me in the flesh is now no more; yet I am not concerned, for you, my Real Mother, are always with me; I know it. With ease

you have annihilated the boy from Madurai who came seeking after you- will you not do likewise with me? Mother Arunachala, will you not be so kind as to vanquish me so completely that I never rise again and find my way back into this world of innumerable harsh, monstrous cruelties, where attachment to 'woman and gold' is the norm? Will I never find Eternal Peace by your ambrosial Grace, mother? Are you not roused to compassion by my pleas, to fury by my vile curses, to pity by my vain, imaginary suffering? Will the day never arrive when I am blind and asleep to the world forever and only awake to thine brilliant effulgence forever? Can you not hear my bleatings like those of a domesticated goat that has tragically separated itself from its shepard unwittingly and unwisely? Will you not come to my rescue, oh! one who pretends to be stone to those whose eyes are coated with the execrable film of maya? Will you not heed my cry of terror? Will you not totally obliterate me and thereby make me one with your sweet self? I pine for your Grace, mother. Please deliver me from this boundaryless samsarasagaram. I tremble and quake, for long ago, when I beheld your spectacularly beautiful frame with my eyes and in awe mutely uttered your name with the eye of my mind, I lost the ability to swim in this fetid ocean known as samsara; I have now not only thoroughly forgotten the depraved art of swimming about in this ocean, but also wholeheartedly despise it. Prior to meeting you, mother, this ocean was my natural home and I enjoyed being and moving around in it. Today it is to me living Hell. The pores of my skin burn with the blaze of fiercely intense Hellfire, for now the waters of maya are uniquely anathema and perfectly poisonous to me. You and you alone, known simultaneously by the names of Arunachala and Parabrahman, are now truly my rightful and permanent home. Mother, please deliver me. Whether or not you do so, however, I shall always continue to love you... for you are my beloved mother, the only friend, the only foe, the only companion and the only 'other' I have in this vast, empty, bewildering wilderness that is the cosmos. The woman who meets her chosen beloved at a roadside may feel too shy to talk to him, but within she trembles with the apprehension that the elders at home might marry her off to somebody else, any stranger. This love at first sight may or may not ever be consummated; but never can anything stop me from loving. If it is my Lord's right to scoff at and spurn my love, it is my right to love him all the more fiercely and adamantly. Either I shall be devoured alive, thus establishing my consummation, or I shall die with a heart pining and aching for my beloved to the death; and if I am born again I shall continue to love; never shall the youthful spring of my love cease. Always, I love. Forever, I love. Time and space might decide to retire from the world, taking up superannuation, but still yet I love. I love, I love, I love. This sweet love that I bear towards my master,

my 5 faced Lord and self-supposed lover, sends shock after shock of ecstasy to tear my body to shreds; yet I shall not cease in loving. Those in entrapment in samsara have many objects to captivate their attention and upon which they can shower their love; if their love is not received at one place they can go to another, and from there yet another, and so on; but woe unto him who dares to fix his sight upon the ruler of the cosmos , the unrivalled Emperor of all creation and non-creation, Lord Arunachala, and loves him and him alone to the exclusion of everything else: there is only 1 Arunachala, and thus he must pine and waste away until his love is accepted and reciprocated, until his Lord swallows him whole with his orifice of rock, until his union with his beloved lover and Lord stands finally consummated and thus until he thereby Realises once and for all that supreme state of quiescence, silence and peace from which there is no return. Oh! Arunachala, abattoir from which no return is possible, and no escape, except by way of total annihilation: cool the heat of the fire of my lustful longing for you with the moon-beams of your unparalleled Grace! Those who come to Tiruvannamalai, be warned; this is not like other holy places; this is the formidable mountain from which there is no return, no escape, no respite. Mother Arunachala does not let you go without completely obliterating you; beware!

Now the wailing poet is addressed by the Lord Himself-

MA: It was I who manifested as your mother. I have now withdrawn my anthropomorphic form into myself, for now there is no need for the same. As long as there was need for me to remain in the world with a body, I manifested in bodily form; now that need has come to an end and therefore so has my anthropomorphic form. All along you were too immature to worship me in the form of my lingaswaroopa, and thus needed a human form to guide you; now there is no need for any such crutch or prop, and thus I have withdrawn the same into myself; henceforth you may love, adore and worship me directly as my Arunachala form. Pouring out your love toward the form of Arunachala that you see before you is the only means worthy of removing for good the deleterious illusion known as maya that, hiding your own Self from you, makes you think that you and I are not One. As for your mother, there is no need to grieve after her physical departure; it was I who came in the garb of a feminine anthropomorphic form to guide you until the stage had been reached when you could love me directly as my lingaswaroopa Arunachala form, which is the loftiest kind of devotional love there ever conceivably could be; and for me there is neither birth nor death: what was never born can never die. The appearances of various objects, living creatures and personalities on the earth and their disappearances are merely images projected by me on my own blemishless formlessness of pure beingness; these images are born from me,

constituted by me and finally consumed by me; I am their substratum, origin and destination. Whatever happens, happens only in me; whatever abstains from happening so forbears only in me. I am all; there is never anything apart from me; nothingness also is vested exclusively in me. Whomsoever you love, hate, spurn or despise, you love, hate, spurn or despise me and me only; yet, he who loves me as Arunachala, who I-AM, has endeared himself to me most exceedingly; he has made me his beloved by his fondness towards Arunachala, who I-AM. At times I may outwardly appear to have lost interest in my devotee, but know that I shall neither forget nor forsake him. He who in times of pain and distress, joy and sorrow, remembers me and me only: he resides in my Heart and I in his. There are some who doubt my existence; it is precisely as foolish as doubting theirs own. Those who are insanely devoted to me will not harbour the slightest doubt but with perfect pertinacity go on believing that I am their only succour. You asked me when you can give up life in the world and come to me; this absurd question shows that you are still identifying yourself with a body. The moment I died or vanished in the anthropomorphic form as your mother, the relevance of your anthropomorphic form also ceased. For a long while you have been considering a four-limbed bundle of bone, blood and flesh to be your place of residence; now you may hand over this burden to me; I shall make it do the things it is destined to to; it need not be a source of botheration for you anymore; I am now incharge of its functioning, and of its survival or otherwise; whether it remains amidst human habitation or in a forest seldom frequented by mankind, whether it remains engaged in activity or keeps idle, whether it remains at all or has dropped off and reduces itself into the elements it is made up of: all this is no concern of yours, for this body and its temporal possessions are now mine, and I may deal with them in any way I wish to or see fit- there is no need for you to bother about it all at all. With the absorption of my anthropomorphic form into my primordial, autochthonic lingaswaroopa form, your requirement to bother about this body, which you formerly fancied to be yours, and its supposed worldly possessions, has ceased in its entirety. There is no question of giving up life in the world at some point of time in the future, for even now you are not in the world: you are with ME and ME alone. Have I not told you unequivocally, many times, that you are answerable to me and me alone? Your only moral responsibility is to obey me and abide by my will at all times, come what may, and no matter what the consequence might happen to be, be it the state of jagrat or swapna. Praise, censure, blame, exaltation: whatever comes in your way, simply be and remain unconcerned about it in the knowledge that all these do not pertain to you, but only to me. Only one thing actually does pertain truly to you: and that is ME. I am your Salvation and you

God. I am your world and your cosmos. I am your All. In speaking you speak only to ME. In thinking, whatever object you may be thinking of, you think only of ME. You have only one dharma: and that is to firmly hold me in your mind and intellect, soul and heart, as the exclusive locus of your attention; in this be steadfast and unwavering; you shall have no other role or concern; when you are steady in holding on to me, there will be no reason for you to worry about your relationship with the world or the relation you might still believe yourself to bear to it. If you remain with me without swerving, that alone suffices: whatever this body, which you used to regard as being identical with yourself, is destined or obligated by prarabdha to do, will be done by me using it, in the manner seen fit by me, and you never need bother yourself about its activities, or even pay attention to it. Your one and only duty is to devote your entire attention towards ME as I-AM in the Heart: that suffices and I shall grant unto you DELIVERANCE SUPREME. You are already mine: permanently and irrevocably so; where is the need, child, to seek frequent reassurance about it? You ask me when you can come to me; what a silly question! Even for a moment, whether you are sleeping, dreaming, or in turiya, could you ever be apart from me or escape my watchful eye? Is not your very existence founded and vested in me, and forged of me? Child, am I not always with you? Why then this needless fretful anxiety, this desire to retain a sense of doership over the activities of the body lest things should go wrong or awry? Is it not yet clear that this body is not your possession but mine, and that therefore the responsibility for its activities lies with me and me alone? Even if the body that you assumed to be yours is shattered into pieces or crushed into smithereens, what difference would such fact make to you? For even then you would as always have ME! If this vast cosmos were suddenly to disappear one day without leaving behind the slightest trace, what loss do you think that fact would occasion unto you? For even then you would as always have ME! Is not my Grace sufficient for you? Not infrequently, you complain to me that you feel lonely and abandoned; on these occasions particularly, I observe you fervently pleading with me that I must display unto you some tangible sign of my Grace. If I grant you what you need at a particular moment, thus fulfilling a temporal need or requirement of yours that in your opinion or perception you are urgently or imminently faced with, at the cost of condemning to Eternal Damnation your prospect of Eternal Union with Me, will the name of Harbringer of Salvation be fit to be used in relation to me? You may give yourself to understand that whatever inadequacies, lacunae, defects and deficiencies you observe in the world around you generally or in your immediate environment are the direct result of my will: thus such adjectives ought not to be called into question or put to use to

describe the world. Whatever you may happen to see, you see only me; thus, only perfection prevails and ALL IS WELL ever and always. Is it possible for you, child, to sit in judgment over me? Can you evaluate my activities with or in the light of your puerile intellect? Know that he alone that irrevocably merges in me understands me as I-AM. If you remain in me within the Heart, the problems of the world are seen to not at all exist, nor your problems. Do not make the commonly made foolish mistake of trying to study me, including my mysterious works, as an object and phenomena associated therewith respectively: in other words, seeking me outside the Heart is, through and through, an exercise in total futility. Those who endeavour to understand me as an object, 'scientifically', as they call it, will only find me as an inert lump of enstatite. I am not an object to be studied by you; I am You as you Absolutely Are; I am the subject shining in your heart as 'I-I' always. Instead of trying to understand me as an object, remain with me in the Heart as the subject. Being Myself the Supreme Measurer, could I ever possibly be the subject-matter of any yardstick of measurement? Know that I cannot be defined by anything, for it is with reference to the light emanating from me that everything is defined, that everything derives its name and form. Making me the sole and therefore supreme recipient of all of your mental faculties, using all of your powers of focus and concentration exclusively in thinking of me and me alone whenever you think and whatever you think about, living, breathing, perspiring, ingesting, digesting and excreting for and in me, transforming your very existence into an act of service and penance performed for me alone, and finally surrendering yourself to me completely in the Heart, you will obtain the Supreme Reward of being absorbed in me. There is no question of coming to me at any point of time in the future; you were never apart or away from me and never can be- only, you have unfortunately deluded yourself into imagining otherwise; put an end to all these perverse imaginations and be at peace. I will accept you as mine and extend my protection to you without reserve, provided you make ME your exclusive aim. All duties that your body is destined to perform will be taken over and handled by me; I may execute them with or without the assistance of this fleshy bundle of inert chemicals that you are habituated to referring to as yourself. Your only job, remember, is to merely and simply remain with ME as I-AM. If the world in its entirety were to rise up against you in arms, remain peacefully in bliss with the knowledge that I-AM with you. Do not permit conceptual knowledge to enter or remain within your mind. Do not try to arrive at any systemic or wholistic understanding of the world, for any such effort will certainly impede your abhyasa. The world is not meant to be understood by you. You have nothing to do with the world. You are not of this world; having surrendered yourself to

ME, you are MINE. You may find the body interacting with other components it finds in the world around it; or, you may find it at rest; one way or the other, do not concern yourself with the body or the world, but remain steadfast in your indefatigable devotion towards me, for that alone will avail so as to deliver you. If desires give you trouble, again and again shift your attention unto me and me alone; be it extraneous thoughts, feelings or memories, adopt the same procedure. That alone is certainly, genuinely, Real in this world which does not move; that alone remains unmoving which is the consciousness underlying the act of perceiving the world; that alone is the consciousness underlying all perception which shines as 'I-I' in the Heart all by itself, and that alone is the Heart which I-AM. Thus do I manifest as this miserable world in order that you might seek me. Those who depend upon my divine Grace for survival, and depend so to the exclusion of all other forms and sources of support and assistance, will alone qualify to inherit the treasure of my Heart: of this you may feel certain. Recognise that being in mental possession of chitta-vrittis is not your natural state: your natural state is chittam that is free altogether from vrittis. Vrittis that block the light of pure chittam from shining forth in all its unobscured purity and clarity must be fought and destroyed tooth and nail- else there can be no peace, no rest, no happiness and no end to the insane, cataclysmic dreams within which we currently tend to always entangle ourselves. The final vritti is I-AM; Reality lies even beyond this basic, fundamental vritti; this primordial vritti will also be destroyed by me, but that will happen only when you have by the dint of your unrelenting, unswerving and unremitting effort destroyed every other vritti; you need not, in fact, undertake any super-human penance to eradicate these other vrittis; if you catch hold of the final vritti I-AM, and remain incessantly with it, all the others will collapse automatically and once this task has been fully accomplished I shall myself collapse the aham-vritti, ensuring that there is no separation between me and you. All you need to do is to ensure that you effortlessly remain as simple, pure consciousness of being, as 'I-AM'. The objective of all your effort must solely be to remain effortlessly in that state in which there is complete absence of effort. Do not pay heed to what the prarabdha of the body might seem to be. You cannot control the body's prarabdha, and neither can anybody else. Leave the body to its fate. You know that you are not the body. Why then bother what happens to the body? Do not worry about the body or what its fate might happen to be. Neglect and abandon the body to its fated destiny, perverse or otherwise, and turn inwards- permanently. Do not involve yourself in the body's karma: you have nothing to do with it. Choose not to be entangled in the body's affairs, with its life; neither witness it nor take any notice of it; do not be bothered about it in

any way. All you need to do is to effortlessly remain as 'I-AM'; I shall take care of the rest. Do not trifle with or bring forth attempted retaliation against those who bear spite towards you; know that their allotted and designated function is to drag you down into the infernal pit of Hell, which is nothing but the curse of samsara, along with themselves, the result being that Salvation, Union with Me, Irrevocable and Eternal, will merely remain an unrealised dream, a far-fetched notion and an unfulfilled idea. Stay well away from those who despise you and do not seek to argue with them; know that in approaching these people, you thereby distance yourself from me, the sole beloved of your heart. Do not worry about anything: remember, you have ME.

Dr. Douglas Mayes-Beasley's diary-entry was well appreciated by those in attendance in the Hall; so also by the master.

S>M>

Mons. Greenleaves, a Caucasian who seems to be a serious-minded Blavatskian, has arrived at the ashram late evening today. A few hours after nightfall he was to be found conversing with Chadwick and the Shylock at the gentle giant's little cottage. He is the headmaster of a school at Madanapalli, near Chitthoure. He professes to being a great admirer of Mrs. Annie Besant and Sri Gandhiji. His feelings towards J.K. are mixed. He is yet to fully recover from the shock of the Order's dissolution. From a young age he has been performing a comparative study of all the various religions and faiths around the world- in particular, he is interested in the Gnosticismodic dimensions he gleans in the Christ's teachings. He once had an experience of blissful mindlessness whilst sojourning alone in a tent in a forest. The experience came to him of its own accord. He has given himself to understand that the ecstasy he experienced on that occassion was supra-mental in nature. He is of the opinion that there is a self beyond and behind the mind- he suspects that this is the Aathman that Vedanta spoke about. Ever since that experience so unexpectedly happened to dawn on him he has been burning with the curiosity to somehow discover this Aathman. First thing tomorrow morning he is going to ask the Maharshi questions- appurtenant to this unusual experience that had chanced to come upon him. He has read Sri Narasimhaswami's biography of Bhagawan and Mr. Brunton's Secret India; he loved the former work but believes that the latter was written by the author with the ulterior motive of promoting himself spuriously as a mystical-master so as to gain fortune and fame. He holds a postgraduation degree from Oxford University; he specialises in the Coptic-language. He has no taste for the United-states credo of Mass-market consumerism or Free-market capitalism. The violent, unethical tactics of the Bolsheviks he found morally loathsome and disturbing; he is convinced that it was the Prussian Kaiser who had



meticulously helped Lenin carry out the Revolution, so that the War could end on terms favourable to Germany. He did not particularly approve of the Fascismo regimes going on in Germany and Italy; but so long as they did not threaten the peace, he does not see what there was to feel agitated about. Communism, he feels, was shockingly abhorrent since it deprived man of the joy of exploring and utilising the talents innate to his individual personality, and thus by implication the opportunities those talents would entail for exploitation material, intellectual and even philanthropical. Communism is an outright evil, he asseverates in fact. Of himself he does not have much to add. His father had been a physician employed in the Transvaal. He was pleased with the hospitality extended unto him by the sarvadhikari. Then Chadwick showed him his translations of some of the master's poems in praise of Lord Arunachalaeswara. The fascinated Caucasian sat late into the night perusing B.'s translated lyrics.

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Mons. Greenleaves introduced himself to the master, and B. smiled kindly at him. He handed over a note to the interpreter. As was sometimes done, especially in cases of practice-related doubt raised by Caucasians through a note-paper scribble, for the benefit of all attendees the contents were read out to the Hall, so that the master's [now anticipated] reply [to the extent any came] could be comprehended in the light of enhanced contextual clarity by all present- "One experiences sometimes a flash of Cosmic-consciousness whose locus seems to be without the normal self. Given that the seeker is unescorted by the cumber of having to burden himself with philosophical concepts, how would Bhagavan advise him to work towards a] obtaining, b] retaining and c] extending such flashes? In order so as to be eligible to invoke such flashes at will, should one retire from worldly life?"

B.: You say that the experience was without you. But think- can there be any experience in the absence of the experiencer? All his experiences are vested in the experiencer only. You say that what you experienced was felt to be outside you. Outside or inside whom? Whose outside and whose inside? The one who forms the subject-matter of the bifurcation 'inside' and 'outside'- who is he? Investigate. You will find that the ideas of inside and outside are relevant only if and exclusively insofar as there is a subject and object. Since the perceiver of objects and experiencer of experiences is vested only in the subject, upon introspection it is discovered that all objects and experiences resolve themselves into the subject only. But who is this subject? Investigate. 'Who am I?' or tracing the aham-vritti to its source is the practice. This is the vichara that leads you into the realm of pure consciousness which is beyond

the subject. You talk of a normal self. What, according to you, is this normal self?

Mr. Greenleaves: The mind.

B.: Yes. Mind is only a notion. Have you ever investigated into what it actually is?

GL.: No... I seem to have taken its existence for granted so long.

B.: That is the mistake. The mind is accepted as being the Self. The Self is always- whereas the mind appears and disappears. Is there any mind in deep slumber? But your Self is always there. The mind is beset with limitations. On the other hand, pure consciousness knows no limitation.

GL.: How do I reach this pure consciousness?

B.: By the investigation 'Who am I?'. a] You talk of obtaining consciousness.

Consciousness is always there. Only we attend to other things: this gives rise to the pointless question of how consciousness may be reached.

Consciousness is self-evident; it seems hidden only because our attention happens to be extroverted. Remove the veil of thought obnubilating

Revelation of consciousness and consciousness is Revealed. b] You talk of retaining consciousness. If and when consciousness is Realised as being the true "I", it forms the subject-matter of your direct and immediate experience,

and can never be lost. c] There can be no question of extending consciousness because it is an akhandakara-vritti; it always remains as it ever

IS, without contraction or expansion. d] You talk of retiring from worldly life. Retiring from the world of thought- i.e., abidance in the Real is the only

genuine solitude. Can there be anything alien to the Self? Retirement can only be from one place or state to another. There is neither the one nor the other

apart from the Self. All being the Self, retirement is impossible and inconceivable.

GL.: If the Self always stands Revealed of Its own accord, where is the need for practice?

B.: Abhyasa only means prevention of disturbance to one's inherent Peace. You always remain in the natural state of the Self whether you do abhyasa or not...

To remain as you ARE, without question or doubt, is your natural state.

GL.: In that case we may say that everybody is Self-Realised!

B.: Quite so. People are merely pretending that they are not Realised.

Everybody says "I". How then can he be ignorant of the Self? Only, he is

confounding the not-Self such as body and mind with the Self. If this evil habit is put an end to, Peace alone prevails. From our present standpoint we call

the state of Peace Realisation of the Self; but in fact, Peace is the natural

state and everything else- collectively known as 'mind'- is needless accretion; if these unwanted accretions are eliminated what remains is the Self.

GL.: How shall I extirpate my ignorance of the Self?

B.: Ignorance may be understood to mean either oblivion of the Self or the evil habit of paying attention to that which is not-Self, which obstructs knowledge of the Self. All our effort is directed only at destruction of the habit of thinking; thoughts are re-manifestations of latent pre-dispositions remaining in seed-form; they give rise to diversity, which is the root cause of all trouble.

According to the Vedanta system, effort may be divided into sravana, manana and nidhidhyasana. In case of the kritopasaka, the effect of sravana is immediate, and the sadhaka abides[reposes] in the Self at once. On the other hand, the akritopasaka may feel that he is unable to abide as the Real, even after repeatedly hearing the truth. Why? It is on account of the 3-fold impurity: ignorance, doubt and wrong identity.

GL.: How shall I uproot these impurities?

B.: a] To remove ignorance at the level of the intellect, the sadhaka has to hear the truth repeatedly, until theoretically his knowledge of the subject of Ajata-advaita becomes perfect. b] To remove doubts, he must go on reflecting upon the truth of Ajata-advaita until his confidence in the truth of the doctrine is free from misgivings of any sort. c] To remove the wrong identity of the Self with the not-Self [such as the body, its sensory perceptivities, the mind, the intellect and so on and so forth] his mind must become one-pointed. Chitta-ekagratham is the principal practical[practise-oriented] or applied dimension involved in our effort to reach the state of Ajata-advaita. These criteria accomplished, obstacles are at an end and Peace reigns. Without perfect introversion of mind, wherein the mind is reduced to a single infinitesimally miniscule point, can we achieve Realisation?

GL.: In my quotidian experience, I find my mind crowded with thought even when I am making no conscious effort to think or be without thought.

B.: It means that extroversion has become the natural state. Practice is necessary before perfect stillness can be attained. What is the practice? It is sravana, manana and nidhidhyasana as explained now. These steps are not executed by means of reading books or engaging in discussions on philosophy. Incessant practice to keep the mind withdrawn from sensory perceptivities is necessary. Introversion or stillness of mind is not to be achieved in a day. Keep on practising until the practice becomes as natural and easy as breathing. The practice of withdrawal or introversion of mind should be kept up until no more extroversion is possible.

GL.: Some seem to Realise the Self with no effort at all. Others make efforts but do not succeed. Why?

B.: The sadhaka may be kritopasaka or akritopasaka. The former is fit to realise the Self, even with the slightest stimulus: a few slender doubts may

stand in his way, but they are easily removed if he hears the truth but once from the Guru: immediately he reaches the sashwatamanonivritti state. In case of akritopasakas all manners of aid are necessary; for him doubts cause perturbation even after repeatedly hearing the truth from the Guru; therefore he must not give up contemplation on the words of the Guru until he gains the sashwatamanonivritti state. In sravana, manana and nidhidhyasana, the first 2 are intellectual activities, whilst the last one involves practice- the practice is introversion of mind: it is carried out by means of vichara.

GL.: Does B. support the theory of rebirth or reincarnation?

B.: Birth and death are spurious mental experiences, not fact. On the other hand, one's Existence is an incontrovertible fact. Concern yourself with fact, not fiction. If you are born now, you may always be born later also. But consider- are you born now?

GL.: Meaning that the Self has neither birth nor death?

B.: Yes. Do not perturb yourself over needless questions. What is born will take care of itself and finally fade away as it came. What IS remains always. There is no end to the diversity or variety of mental phenomena. Ignore the mind and sink into the Heart: this is the way to Peace from which no return is possible.

GL.: Will B. kindly be pleased to tell me how the mind arose- how did the mind part or get separated from the Self?

B.: Any answer you receive to this question can only be at the level of the intellect or mind itself. Can such an answer be a genuine answer? The only true answer to this question is to yourself Realise the Self. Realise the Self and see for yourself whether there ever could be anything called mind: then you will see that mind never arose. Theoretical explanations cannot convey the truth.

GL.: If everything is predestined is my Realisation- my discovery of my true, eternal nature- also predestined? What if I am destined to not Realise the Self?

B.: Don't bother about the question but go on with your effort. Before settling down to eat dinner, do you ask yourself, 'Anyway one day I am going to die; that being the case what is the use in feeding this body, which is doomed to inevitably perish one day?' or do you sit down to eat with relish?

GL.: If the food is good, the latter!

B.: [laughing] Likewise, go on with the investigation 'Who am I?'. Incessant, earnest, pertinacious, determined effort cannot fail. Success is bound to result!

S>M>

Q.: Some jivas attain Moksha in their incumbent lifetimes whereas others must necessarily be reborn. Why is this so? The explication that karma is the cause for everything does not satisfy me; there must be some other, concrete reason.

B.: Have you read the book, 'Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'?

Q.: Yes.

B.: No matter how vigorously and energetically Dr. Jekyll tries for a second time to manufacture the drug which makes the transformation possible that forms the fascinating subject-matter of the book, he does not succeed; why? It is not merely his ingenuity that made the drug function, but an inherent impurity in one of the ingredients that was made use of on the first occasion of the drug's manufacture. Likewise, some jivas arrive into the world with an inherent flaw: and that flaw is total inability to remain apart from one's source- i.e., total impossibility of remaining as a jiva. Such jivas [which are undoubtedly exceedingly rare] need not be taught any methods of spiritual practice, and there would be no need to discuss with them concepts or beliefs appurtenant to any schools of metaphysical-philosophy; they would of their own accord recognise the cosmos not as something to be lived in but as something to be escaped from; further, they would of their own accord know that the mind is meant to be deployed not in chasing after thoughts and objects of sensory pleasure, but in plunging the same in the Heart, leaving it there to perish once and for all.

Q.: This seems to be a highly deterministic view to take as regards Realisation. Can this 'flaw' not be manufactured by us in ourselves by means of expenditure of spiritual effort [abhyasa]?

B.: Yes, but it requires a humungous amount of effort sustained over a vast period of time. Not all have the patience to do this. Many go away thinking, 'Ramana Bhagawan confidently asserts that the Self is already Realised, that It abides in a state of Eternal Realisation; this being the case, what is the need of effort on my part? Let me go on thinking my usual thoughts...'. Rare is the soul who will not budge an inch from his constant effort until he has ruined his mind once and for all.

Q.: The whole thing seems to me to be impossibly absurd; it seems to be like endeavouring to empty the oceans of the earth using a tea-spoon. There must be something more feasible, an approach more pragmatic- something akin to a shortcut.

B.: Yes; that is where the Guru comes into involvement.

Q.: Is Sri Bhagawan the Guru that he talks about?

B.: [no response]

E.Z.: Why are you asking for confirmation, sir? Of course he is the Guru.

Q.: Not everybody in the world can come to Tiruvannamalai.

B.: Never mind everybody. You have come to Tiruvannamalai. That is enough.

Q.: Why does not Sri Bhagawan take his teachings to a larger audience? Why not, for instance, arrange a lecture-tour throughout the sacred-cities of India, such as Benares, Haridwar, etc.? JK is travelling throughout the world explaining his teachings. Why should not Sri Bhagawan also do likewise?

B.: Does water ever feel thirsty? Does water ever care if it quenches thirst or not? Water simply makes itself perennially available. Whether anybody drinks or chooses not to or would like to remain parched is left entirely upto him. Water cannot possibly ensure that it is drunk- also, that is not its role or function; water has only 1 role to play or duty to abide by, and that is to make itself available all the time.

Q.: Water is available at all places; Sri Bhagawan is available in Tiruvannamalai only.

B.: Sri Bhagawan shines in the interior of the Heart-cave as 'I-I'. Abandoning this most intimate and ever-shining Bhagawan, which lunatic would go in search of other Bhagawans, who are ephemeral, transitory and fleeting?

Q.: People are able to better relate to what they can see as being pratyaksha.

B.: Can anything be more pratyaksha than the self-evident Self? To see objects which are outside, physical sight is needed; thus, eyes, light and object are all necessary in order so as for physical sight to possibly be capable of being accomplished. On the other hand, to see the Self, all these ridiculous items of paraphernalia are not at all necessary.

Q.: How then shall I see the Self?

B.: Simply BE as you ARE. To be and to see are the same.

Q.: Yet ignorance must be vanquished before the Self is Revealed. Is that not correct?

B.: Ignorance is nothing but forgetfulness of the fullness of one's own being-consciousness and spilling over of one's mental-attention into the intractably perfidious realm of thought. So, if you remain as you are, no ignorance can blind you. All effort is only directed toward attainment of the pre-existing state of effortless effortlessness.

Q.: They say that Bhagawan teaches that if everything is surrendered to God, the Self is Realised automatically.

B.: What is yours now to surrender at a later point in time? Everything is verily His already, and it was and will be so always. To surrender only means removal of the foolish notion that any such thing is possible. To surrender is to resign oneself unconditionally to the beingness of the Self. So, surrender also means only this: to remain as you ARE.

S>M>

Q.: How shall I achieve inaktivierung of mind? Is 'Who am I?' only a device to keep thoughts at bay, or should I actively analyse the question 'Who am I?' with my mind or its faculty of intellect?

B.: It is like the mongoose indefinitely waiting for the snake to emerge from its burrow-mound. The mongoose becomes active ONLY when the snake emerges, and not otherwise. Ask 'Who am I?' only when thoughts disturb the natural state of peaceful mental silence, and not otherwise. Analysing the question 'Who am I?' with one's mind or intellect is not of any great use. 'Who am I?' is a weapon aimed at obliterating thought. A weapon should not multiply those very enemies our aim it is to vanquish therewith.

S>M>

Q.: Some weeks prior, I have read in the papers that Sri Bhagawan has restored life back into a cadaver. What merit has that particular soul earned to have had such especial Grace poured upon him by Sri Bhagawan?

B.: That article in Dhinamani was written by Sri Kuzhumani Narayana Sastrigazl. The details mentioned are not fully accurate. The next day after the news was received by us that Nayana had passed away, a pandit arrived from Nayana's ashram in Nimpura, Kharagpur. He himself had not the slightest inkling that Nayana was no more. When he had departed from the ashram everything had been alright. He carried a big framed portrait, an oil-painting of Nayana, and asked me to bless the same. I took it in my hands, looked at it for some time and then handed it over. Since tears were trickling down my eyes, the pandit inferred unto himself that Nayana was being sorely missed by me and everybody else in the ashram; he said: 'Let me write to him saying how much Sri Bhagawan misses him and he will come rushing at once the moment he hears that the Maharshi sheds tears at a mere glimpse of his portrait.' Surprised, we wondered how it was that he had not heard the news of Nayana's passing away. He had been travelling in the train and was not in the habit of reading newspapers. He was presently shown the telegram the ashram had received the previous day. The moment he read what it contained, he shouted a lament and sank to the floor. He had apparently sunk into a coma upon hearing the news and could not be revived. He was made to lie down near the big cow shed. Some gomoothram was sprinkled upon him and some quantity was poured into his throat; but it all had no effect; breathing and pulse had subsided, it was reported. It was determined that he had passed away and they were about to send a telegram to that effect to Nimpura; some suggested that a doctor should be called for from town so that confirmation could be obtained before making such communication. While the matter was being discussed, I happened to go that way and felt for a pulse. It was my impression that a faint pulse was there. So I undulatingly pressed

hard with my hand the region of his chest and he woke up. That is all. However, the Sastrigazl, who has in all likelihood heard some exaggerated second-hand account of the happening, has written like this. What can we do?

Q.: So in fact the Gandharvas who spectated the event from above did not drop down flower-garlands from the sky in appreciation of the deed, on Sri Bhagawan's neck? Were there also not other Gandharvas playing various musical instruments?

B.: [laughing] No.

Q.: Can it not be true that in fact it might have been Sri Bhagawan's sacred and divine touch that brought back life in the man?

B.: [no response]

Q.: I would like to believe so. Shall I not?

B.: You may certainly believe whatever gives you the most peace. There is nothing wrong in it.

S>M>

Sri Venkatramayya, the gentleman who punctually arrives every morning in the ashram so as to act as Bhagawan's interpreter[to the Caucasians] during the mornings[in the afternoons and in the evenings Mr. TKS, or occasionally Mr. Subbaramayya, depending upon availability of the respective gentlemen, played the role], today, owing to some pressing commitment, had to leave earlier than his usual time, which would usually be around the ashram's noon-meal time. So I had to play the role, although I have no idea how to pronounce English words. Strangely, after some time, the master asked me to use only 1 word per every word that he himself used, in conveying to the Caucasian concerned the meaning of what he was saying. All smiled to hear me talk, and I felt abashed and disconcerted; yet, I could not bear to even think of disobeying Bhagawan and therefore continued. When Mr. TKS arrived I jumped off the floor in relief; the master laughed at this.

S>M>

Q.: Diogenes the cynic is said to have been of the opinion that poverty is the supreme virtue. Sri Bhagawan also adopts a simple life-style, wearing nothing further than a koupeenam. My question is, is leading a life of voluntary poverty necessary in order so as to make spiritual progress? If I opt to reside inside a hut instead of a palace, will I stand a significantly higher chance of Realising the Self in my incumbent lifetime?

B.: Whether you live inside a hut or palace, you carry your mind with you. Aspire neither to be an emperor nor a beggar: the question appurtenant to the fact of whether one possesses material wealth or not is left entirely to one's prarabdha, in which one cannot possibly have any say and which lies entirely outside the possible scope of one's control. Whatever might be your external



circumstances, keep your attention always fixed in the beingness of the Self. Your efforts should be directed not at changing the circumstances of outwardly life, which are wholly predestined and therefore altogether inevitable, but at keeping the mind permanently submerged in the Heart. The only thing you can help about yourself is your mind. Why? Because excepting only introversion of mind, everything is perfectly preordained. Be it an emperor or beggar, the practice of reining in the mind in the Heart is equally difficult for all; it becomes easy only with continuous and incessant practice.

Q.: An ascetic in the forest would find no distraction to disturb the peace of his meditation; but in the household there are many distractions.

B.: All distractions have their origin in the mind only. It is pointless to blame the external environment. Why? Because there is no [such thing as an] objectively real external environment. The cosmos is sustained by and in your mind only- i.e., it is an intra-mental phenomenon. Knowing this, how can anybody [meaningfully hope to] say, 'I find these circumstances to be disquieting.' or 'I find this environment to be distracting.'? Neither the circumstance nor the environment has the power to manufacture disquietude or discomposure or distraction; these feelings are solely the work of the mischievous mind. Merge the mind in its source and there will be no more trouble.

S>M>

Mr. Abdul Wahab, a former class-mate of Sri Bhagawan's at the American Mission High School, Madurai, has paid a visit to the ashram. The master is beaming with delight to see him.

B.: In those days I would be exceedingly fond of playing football. Sahib [for that was how Sri Bhagawan addressed the Moslem gentleman] would take particular care that he always played on the same side as myself. Once whilst playing I happened to injure my right leg, which then became inflamed and swollen. Sahib took me to a nearby hospital and ensured that some medicine was applied over the affected area. Only after the swelling had subsided somewhat could I return home; otherwise I would be upbraided by my elders, who did not approve in the slightest of me participating in games of any sort.

A.W.: I feel disturbed to ponder over the fact that I used to call Bhagawan familiarly by name for so many years, not recognising or realising his greatness. Venkateswaram Aiyer was the name given to Sri Bhagawan at birth, since the kuladheivam of their family was Thirupathi-Venkatachalapathy; however, at the time of enrolling him in school it was, for some reason, changed to Venkatraman. Sri Bhagawan used to take me to the Thirupparangundram Murugar-kovil often on Saturdays; he would insist that together with himself I also should visit the shrines of the various gods and

come about in circumambulation around the temple. I would protest saying that I belonged to the Islamic faith, where idol-worship would be considered apostasy and heresy; but he would always overrule my objections, saying that these differences were not inherent in God but had merely been created by man. Bhagawan would also occasionally take me to Thirucchuzhi; he went there periodically to see his family. Bhagawan's mother was an orthodox brahmin, but still she would serve me food whenever she saw me. On occasions when I declined to accompany him, he would meet me the next day and hand over a tiffin-box, saying, 'Mother has asked me to give you these comestibles...'. Such was the kindness of Bhagawan's mother...!

Both the Moslem and Sri Bhagawan had moist eyes at this point, and the master suddenly looked away from the Hall and at the window, remaining so for sometime. At the time of taking leave the Moslem presented the master with a small quantity of thangabhasmam, saying, 'I have procured it especially for Sri Bhagawan since I know that he is an asthmatic.'

B.: This cannot be accepted. There are so many asthmatics around the world. If all of them start clamouring for thangabhasmam, will the quantity of gold left on the earth suffice? Moreover, why all these fancy things for me? Can I afford such things? I am a daridranarayanan who must make do with whatever is available. Such exotic items are for those who have a taste for them and are able to afford them. What can I afford? Nothing. Even the koupeenam I am wearing is given by somebody else, and not earned by me. What right have I got to partake of these fanciful indulgences? Some பழையது with a small quantity of buttermilk to go along with it will do for me.

A.W.: [piteously] Still, for my sake will Bhagawan not change his mind and accept my presentation?

A voice near the Sofa said- It is given as a token of the gentleman's love and affection for Bhagawan; Bhagawan must kindly accept it for our sake if not for his own.

Yet the master would not be persuaded.

B.: Why all these fancy items? You yourself have family members who are suffering from asthma: is that not so? Is this body more important than or in any way superior to those bodies? How is it that ignoring them you have brought this medicine over to me? If you give this to those who truly need it, they will feel happy. I have no use for such things. I cannot think 'Oh! we are taking medicine for our good health.' and feel elated. [smiling, in demure fashion saying-] I hope you are not angry with me...!

The old school-friends both laughed heartily. Presently the Moslem gentleman prostrated in front of the master and departed from the Hall.

S>M>

Q.: Is this the first time this Moslem gentleman is coming to see Bhagawan?

B.: Oh! no. He used to come about once a year whilst we were staying in the Virupaksha cave. Once at the request of Palanisamy he brought some karikadakanji-powder with him; it was a fore-prepared mixture: one only had to dissolve the powder in water and bring the contents to boil. Just when Palanisamy was getting ready to light a fire so that the kanji could be prepared, keeraipatti arrived there with a bundle of dried சிறுகாஞ்சொறி leaves and some unripe மிதிபாகற்க்காய் fruits; these were then respectively crushed and sliced and added to the kanji; the hot preparation was shared by all of us and tasted delicious...

Q.: Was it not bitter?

B.: [smiling] Is bitterness something to be avoided?

S>M>

Q.: Is Arunachala the same as the legendary mountain Sumeru?

B.: We may assume so.

Q.: In the island of Jawa there is a mountain known as Sumeru; this is a volcanic-mountain. Arunachala also is a volcanic-mountain, although it is now an extinct volcano, some say. Is it true?

B.: [smiling] It might be true; but can Arunachala's fire [of Grace] ever really cool down? This Hill might appear to be mere inert rock, but is in fact the blazing fire of Jnanagni.

S>M>

Q.: Have you ever ejaculated semen in your life? Was it on account of masturbation or nocturnal discharge?

For a moment there prevailed a shocked, pin-drop silence in the Hall. Everybody looked aghast, but a serene smile was playing upon the master's lips. Then-

Chadwick: Excuse me, sir- what did you just say?

B.: The latter; it used to happen to me in Madurai sometimes when I ate spicy items of food during the day.

Chadwick: Sir, have you not the slightest semblance of decency? Have you- At this point in time, the master directed a swift glance at him and he fell silent abruptly.

Q.: How then can we call you a brahmachari or brahmanishta? They say that if seminal fluid is expended or lost even once, the person becomes permanently disqualified to be a brahmanishta in his present lifetime- is that not so?

B.: That is your opinion. Your investigation is based on the incorrect supposition that I am this body you see in front of you. It occurs to me as a

sudden idea that I could at any given point in time be living simultaneously in the 14 different worlds with as many diverse bodies. Who is to keep track of everything that is happening to all these body-parts by way of biological or physiological change? Are we limited to the body or by it? One who is a brahmachari or brahmanishta will never forsake the state of Self; he will not be bothered about any bodily changes. Know that the body is only an appearance in the Jnani; its mutation loss or destruction is powerless to affect him or bother him in any way. He is and remains ever changeless.

S>M>

Q.: Why does God ordain the karma of certain persons in such a way that they are punished for crimes they have never committed, whereas the actual perpetrators go completely unsuspected and undetected?

B.: Listen to the following story-

Once upon a time, a sage named Pakanar was weaving a basket in front of his house early in the morning. Hearing a loud voice chanting 'Hare Ram', he asked his sister who it was that was chanting the Lord's name at such an early hour, since he could not, without ruining the basket which was being painstakingly made, lift his eyes off the work he was carrying out and see who was walking on the road in front of the house. His sister replied that it was a brahmin who was keeping his own daughter as a concubine. Pakanar replied, 'You are the hundredth person to repeat the scandal'. Meanwhile, the brahmin entered the house and prostrated in front of the sage. The sage told the brahmin that his curse was lifted and that he could return home with a happy heart. After the brahmin took leave, the sage explained to his sister thus: 'This brahmin was living with his widowed daughter. They were generous and kind-hearted. They would invite sadhus and feed them with great respect and affection. On hearing of their generosity a certain sadhu from Benares came to visit them. He was well received and fed. The sadhu was immensely pleased with their devotion and decided to bless them. Standing where he was, he merely glanced once at Chitraguptan's notebook and knew what was in store for them when they died. He called the brahmin and told him that after his death he would be tortured by a mountain of leeches in hell. On hearing this, the brahmin fell at his feet in terror and implored him to divulge some means of escape. The sadhu told him, 'Once whilst you were cooking food, it so happened inadvertantly that a leech fell from the roof into the cooking pot and died there unobserved by anybody. You offered that food to a Realised sage, and he quietly ate it without complaining. Since whatever is given to a Jnani will be received back a thousand-fold, a mountain of leeches are waiting for you in hell.'. The sadhu then advised the brahmin that in order to escape this fate he should conduct himself towards his widowed daughter in such a

way as to provoke a scandal that he was enjoying illicit intimacy with her every night. He assured him that when a 100 persons had uttered the scandal the sin would leave him completely, having been distributed among the scandal-mongers. The brahmin did accordingly and you are the hundredth person to speak of the scandal. So I say that the brahmin's curse now stands removed.'

Q.: What is the moral of the story?

B.: Have the best of intentions, but deliberately act in such a way as not to win praise, but to incur blame; resist the temptation to justify yourself even when you have always been just and blemishless.

At that moment Mr. Knowles excitedly exclaimed, 'There is a similar story available in this book!'. The book he was holding in hand was 'The Little Flowers of Saint Francis- Being a translation by Thomas Okey of 'I Fioretti Di San Francesco' '; he now proceeded to read out from the same for the benefit of the Hall-

**How at the instigation of the devil Friar Juniper was condemned to the gallows-** On a time, the devil, desiring to affright Friar Juniper and to vex and trouble him, went to a most cruel tyrant named Nicholas that was then at war with the city of Viterbo, and said, " My lord, guard this your castle well, for anon a false traitor is to come hither, sent by the men of Viterbo, that he may slay you and set fire to your castle. And, in token of the truth of this, I give you these signs. He goeth about after the fashion of a poor wight, with garments all tattered and patched, and with a ragged cowl falling on his shoulders ; and with him he beareth an awl wherewith he is to kill you, and he hath a flint and steel with him to set fire to this castle. And if you find I speak not sooth, deal with me as you will." At these words Nicholas was filled with amaze and grew sore afraid, because he that spake these words seemed an honest fellow. And he commanded diligent watch and ward to be kept, and that if this man, with the aforesaid tokens came, he should be straightway brought into his presence. Meanwhile Friar Juniper comes alone, for because of his perfection he had licence to go forth and stay alone, even as it pleased him. Now Friar Juniper happened on certain evil youths that began to mock and abuse him shamefully ; and at all these things he was not troubled, but rather led them to deride him the more. And when he came up to the door of the castle, the guards seeing him thus ill favoured and in a scant habit all in rags (for he had given part thereof to the poor by the way), and seeing he had no semblance of a friar minor, and that the tokens given them were manifestly apparent, dragged him, with great fury, before this tyrant Nicholas. And being searched by his

servants for hidden weapons, they found an awl in his sleeve wherewith he was wont to mend his sandals ; likewise they found a flint and steel, which he carried with him to kindle fire ; for his time was his own, and oft he abode in woods and desert places. Nicholas, beholding these signs on him, in accord with the testimony of the accusing devil, commanded his servants to bind a rope about his neck, and this they did, with such great cruelty that the rope entered into his flesh ; and then they put him on the rack and stretched his arms and racked his whole body without any mercy. And being asked who he was, he answered, " I am the greatest of sinners." And when asked if he had purposed to betray the castle and give it over to the men of Viterbo, he answered, " I am the greatest of traitors, and unworthy of any good thing." And asked if he purposed to kill Nicholas the tyrant with that awl and set fire to the castle, he answered that he would do even worse things and more monstrous, if God permitted. This Nicholas, maddened with rage, would suffer no more questioning of him, but, without any term or delay, condemned Friar Juniper, in his fury, as a traitor and manslayer, to be tied to the tail of a horse and dragged along the ground to the gallows and there straightway hanged by the neck. And Friar Juniper made no defence, but, as one that was content to suffer tribulation for love of God, was all joyous and glad. And the sentence of the tyrant being put in execution, Friar Juniper was bound by his feet to the tail of a horse and dragged along the ground ; and he complained not, nor lamented, but as a gentle lamb led to the slaughter, went with all humility. At this spectacle and swift justice all the people ran to behold him executed thus hastily and thus cruelly : and they knew him not. But, as God willed, a good man that had seen Friar Juniper taken and thus quickly dragged to execution, runs to the house of the friars minor, and saith, " For love of God, I pray you, come quickly, for a poor wretch hath been taken and straightway condemned and led forth to die : come, that at least he may give his soul into your hands ; for he seemeth to me an honest fellow, and hath had no time wherein he may confess ; lo, he is led forth to the gallows and seemeth to have no care for death, nor for the salvation of his soul : ah ! I beseech you, deign to come quickly." The warden, who was a compassionate man, goes forthwith to provide for the salvation of his soul, and coming up to the place of execution, finds that the multitudes who had come to see were so increased that he could not pass through : and he stood and watched for an opening. And as he waited, he heard a voice in the midst of the crowd that cried, " Don't, don't, ye bad men ; ye hurt my legs." At this voice a suspicion

took the warden that this might be Friar Juniper, and in fervour of spirit he flung himself among them and tore aside the wrappings from the face of him ; and there truly was Friar Juniper. Wherefore the compassionate warden was minded to take off his cloak to clothe Friar Juniper withal ; but he, with joyous countenance and half laughing, said, " O warden, thou art fat, and it were an ill sight to see thy nakedness. I will not have it." Then the warden, with many tears, besought the hangmen and all the people for pity's sake to wait a while until he should go and entreat the tyrant for Friar Juniper, that he might grant him pardon. The hangmen and certain bystanders consenting thereto (for they truly believed he was a kinsman), the devout and compassionate warden goes to Nicholas the tyrant, and with bitter tears saith, " My lord, I am in such great bitterness and wonderment of soul that tongue cannot tell thereof, for meseems that the greatest sin and the greatest wickedness ever wrought in the days of our forefathers is this day being done in this city : and I believe it is done in ignorance." Nicholas hears the warden patiently, and asks of him, " What is the great wrong and evil deed committed this day in our city ? " The warden answers, " My lord, you have condemned one of the holiest friars in the Order of St. Francis, for whom you have singular devotion, to a cruel death, and, as I verily believe, without cause." Saith Nicholas, " Now tell me, warden, who is this ? for perchance knowing him not I have committed a great wrong." Saith the warden, " He that you have doomed to death is Friar Juniper, the companion of St. Francis." Nicholas the tyrant, stupefied, for he had heard of the fame and of the holy life of Friar Juniper, runs, astounded and all pale, together with the warden, and coming up to Friar Juniper looseth him from the tail of the horse and sets him free ; then, in the presence of all the people, flings himself prostrate on the ground before Friar Juniper, and with many tears confesses his guilt, and bewails the wrong and the villainy he had done to this holy Friar, and cried, " Verily I believe that the days of my evil life are numbered, since I have thus tortured the holiest of men without cause. God will appoint an end to my wicked life, and in brief time I shall die an evil death, albeit I have done this thing in ignorance." Friar Juniper freely forgave Nicholas the tyrant ; but God suffered, ere a few days were passed, that this Nicholas the tyrant should end his life and die a very cruel death. And Friar Juniper departed, leaving all the people edified.

B. seemed to relish the story.

S>M>

A young man named Natesan, who is working as an assistant-engineer to Mr. Nambiar, requested that Sri Bhagawan formulate in English a definition for Self-Realisation. In response, the master mentioned that a few weeks ago Chadwick had shown him a certain definition, and that he had found it worthy of appreciation; this definition was now read out in the Hall for the benefit of all- 'Self-Realisation is the death while yet alive of that which lives on after death.'

S>M>

Q.: How shall I obtain Supreme-bliss?

B.: There is no question of obtaining bliss, because you are yourself Perfect-bliss.

Q.: But my experience is contrariwise. I feel miserable all the time.

B.: Is there any misery felt in deep sleep?

Q.: In sleep we have no awareness- how then is it possible to feel anything?

B.: Is it the sleeping 'I' which is now saying that there was no awareness in sleep?

Q.: No, the waking 'I' is now active; the sleeping 'I' comes into play only after the waking 'I' has subsided for the time being out of exhaustion.

B.: Can there be 2 'I's in the same person?

Q.: It certainly appears so. The 'I' which experiences jagrat does not know the 'I' which experiences swapna and vice versa; further, neither of them are able to know the 'I' which experiences sushupti. For instance, inside a dream I might have some other body, perhaps that of an animal or an insect; then it would not be possible for me to remember, in my condition of remaining within that state, what my name is in this state or what my status in this society is.

B.: The 'I' you are referring to here is the faculty of memory. Even within this single state people sometimes forget who they are on account of reasons such as old age, being presented with a stunning blow to the back of the head, receiving a shocking piece of news, etc.; this phenomenon carries the name 'amnesia' in English. Memory is a volatile faculty of the mind, which is in itself precarious and unstable, being merely a phenomenon of reflection.

Neither alterations in memory nor alternations amidst the 3 states can validly prove that 'I' is multiple. There is only 1 'I'. The sleeping 'I' is the Real 'I'. The ego-'I' is a later, impermanent, spurious out-growth which appears and disappears in the Real 'I'; it is not Real; also, it is not itself apart from Reality. We speak of there being bubbles in the ocean; but really there is just the ocean: bubbles are only an appearance in the ocean.

Q.: If I am the bubble who is the ocean?

B.: Break the bubble and you are the ocean.

Q.: But how?



B.: 'Who am I?' is the way.

Q.: There will always be other bubbles.

B.: The ocean is aware of itself as the ocean only; it knows no bubble.

Q.: Nevertheless, bubbles continue to float about on its surface.

B.: No: not from the ocean's point of view. The ego is merely its own creation; it is fictitious fiction.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that all our efforts should be directed only at becoming effortless.

B.: Yes.

Q.: What does it mean?

B.: Remain naturally without thinking. So long as you imagine yourself to be this or that, thoughts will keep on coming. Give up all imagination and simply remain as you are. People say that effort is needed to sustain pure consciousness. What is the reason? It is because vasanas pull the mind outwards. So long as vasanas lie latent in the heart, Realisation cannot be achieved. Continuous and uninterrupted inherence in the beingness of the Self is the only way to get rid of one's vasanas. Prolonged practice is necessary before one can remain steadfastly established in the Self. You cannot both hold on to your personality and yet succeed in Realising. Decide whether you want to shave off your moustaches or go hungry without drinking any porridge.

S>M>

Q.: There is a prohibition in effect in Sri Aurobindo's ashram that the followers of Sri Aurobindo should not visit or even think about Sri Bhagawan; they seem to believe that Sri Bhagawan transmits some sort of Satanic-energy from his person to all who appear before him or even think of him. What does Sri Bhagawan have to say about this?

B.: [laughing] Yes; they seem to be greatly frightened of me there.

S>M>

Q.: The idea of killing the mind seems to be frightening.

B.: Are you afraid to go to sleep?

Q.: No. Sleep is relaxing and refreshing; I look forward to sleep.

B.: So, there you have it. Loss of mind is something to be looked forward to. Why dread it? It is highly pleasant to remain without mind. No-mind is the highest bliss.

Q.: But without mind one would become a mere skeleton or vegetable.

B.: A Jnani can function in the world just like any other person.

Q.: When there is no mind, what directs the body to act, move about and speak?

B.: One may say that it is the work of the Higher-power, or owing to prarabdha or Randomness. But these explanations are not for the Jnani. From his point of view such questions cannot arise at all. As far as he is concerned, nothing ever happened. Whilst watching a cinema-show, we see those events unfolding on screen with the understanding that what is being seen is mere fiction. Why should you apply a different logic whilst spectating the world?

Q.: Who is directing this world-cinema? He seems to be a sadist. Is it Ishwara?

B.: Ishwara's function is only to see to it that karma is properly carried forward and set off. Why blame Him? The cosmos you see around you is created exclusively by your own mind. YOU are the director. What kind of cosmos is spectated depends upon the perceiving jiva's pent-up store-house of vasanas.

Q.: Solipsism has always puzzled me. Take, for instance, this menorah-candelabrum that Sri Bhagawan uses to light incense-sticks in. All people in this room, including Bhagawan, see it just the same as I do. How then can we say that it is exclusively in my imagination?

B.: Who sees those other people?

Q.: But they also see me! [turning to Chadwick] Excuse me, sir, you do see me, don't you?

Chadwick: [grinning] Oh! yes, sir, clear as the sunshine!

Q.: [turning back triumphantly to the master as though he had proven his point conclusively] There, sir!

B.: [smiling] The so-called fact of their seeing you is also seen or inferred only by you. YOU are inescapable. This objective outlook that is residing in your mind is what is known as maya; it must go before good results can follow. EVERYTHING is an illusion. Reality alone IS.

S>M>

Q.: The Jnani is like a new-born infant, they say. Why is it so?

B.: In both there is no recognition of objects; further, there is no thought of events or circumstances that have faded away or passed away from appearance. Simply put, the aham-vritti does not function at all.

Q.: Is it possible for Sri Bhagawan to think thoughts?

B.: Yes, but it is exceedingly difficult- as difficult as it is for the man on the Clapham omnibus to remain without thinking thoughts. The Jnani's thoughts cannot be used to infer that he has a mind. For instance, in the clear night sky one sees many stars; in fact, some of those stars may at the present point in time be not at all in existence; light emitted by the star has reached here only now; the star itself might have collapsed and died long ago; so, what we are seeing is something that was once there but is now not there. Likewise, when

we see a Jnani acting in the world, it should not be understood that it is his experience also that he is active. He never does anything; he died long ago.

Q.: What is the technique to always hold the Self in remembrance?

B.: Sri Krishna-paramathmaji has explained it thus: Abhyasayogayuktena chetasananyagamina paramampurushamdivyam yathi parthanuchintayan.

S>M>

Q.: The world is filled with all kinds of evils. What is the remedy?

B.: If we find the ground to be filled with prickly stones and thorns, we do not try to cover the whole of the earth with leather; we wear leather on our feet and the job is finished.

Q.: So the message is that the remedy for the world's ills is to insulate the mind against them- is that correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: If all follow this advice and turn a blind eye to the world, what will become of the world? Will we not all be then moving back into the jungles? What is to become of civilisation?

B.: First let us perfect ourselves and then bother about civilisation, society, etc.; one blind man cannot lead another.

Q.: But Mahatmas like yourself doubtless have the power to make the world a better place; why don't you do so?

B.: How do you know that I am not doing it?

Q.: You have never left Tiruvannamalai since coming here in 1896. You evince no interest whatever in political or social developments. How could anybody conclude otherwise?

B.: The Jnani's presence sets into operation a silent force that effortlessly acts upon the minds of those who are attracted to him.

Q.: I have no doubt that this is so; but what larger impact does the Jnani create amidst ordinary members of society- I mean, outside the circle of his immediate followers and close devotees?

B.: [smiling] He draws them into that circle! [laughter in the Hall]

Q.: What is God?

B.: What IS, is God.

Q.: What is prayer?

There was no response from the master, but just at that moment a familiar voice had something to say-

Mr. Knowles: Not to worry, dear sir! I have here a book in hand that will reveal unto your goodself just the answer presently sought by your goodself with such profundity of earnestness!

Now he proceeded to read out as follows from the book, 'A Book of Contemplation the which is called the Cloud Of Unknowing, in the which a

soul is oned with God, Edited from the British Museum MS. Harl. 674, With an Introduction by Evelyn Underhill'-

**Prayer in itself properly is not else but a devout intent direct unto God, for getting of good and removing of evil. And then, since it so is that all evil be comprehended in sin, either by cause or by being, let us therefore when we will intently pray for removing of evil either say, or think, or mean, nought else nor no more words, but this little word “ sin.” And if we will intently pray for getting of good, let us cry, either with word or with thought or with desire, nought else nor no more words, but this word “ God.” For why, in God be all good, both by cause and by being. Have no marvel why I set these words forby all other. For if I could find any shorter words, so fully comprehending in them all good and all evil, as these two words do, or if I had been learned of God to take any other words either, I would then have taken them and left these ; and so I counsel that thou do. Study thou not for no words, for so shouldest thou never come to thy purpose nor to this work, for it is never got by study, but all only by grace. And therefore take thou none other words to pray in, although I set these here, but such as thou art stirred of God for to take. Nevertheless, if God stir thee to take these, I counsel not that thou leave them ; I mean if thou shalt pray in words, and else not. For why, they be full short words. But although the shortness of prayer be greatly commended here, nevertheless the oftness of prayer is never the rather refrained. For as it is said before, it is prayed in the length of the spirit; so that it should never cease, till the time were that it had fully gotten that that it longed after.**

S>M>

A certain man who, I learn, puts on jugglery performances every year during the Karthigai-deepam festival, has come to the Hall; he has questions to ask of the master-

Q.: Does Sri Maharshi possess the power to turn his body invisible at will? Does Sri Maharshi possess the power to materialise objects out of nothing or thin air?

B.: Sri Maharshi does not even possess a will.

Q.: [somewhat smugly] Now I would please like Sri Maharshi to witness my spectacular abilities.

The man then proceeded to extract from his baggage a long rapier of the sort used in fencing-games, and attempted to entertain the master and the Hall by endeavouring to swallow whole the same. Just before he could carry out any such feat of his, however, the sarvadhikari, who had evidently heard of what was going on here, rushed into the Hall and ushered- in fact, threw- him out.

After coming back inside, he commented, 'If that trickster ever tries to make his way back inside again, those in the Hall- any one of you- please come and alert me at once...'

B.: He is not a trickster. That spatha which was shown by him did not have any folding or retraction mechanism. It is necessary to practice for years together so that the body's inherent and natural reflexes can be overcome and defeated, in order that the instrument may be thrust all the way inside the alimentary-canal; it is certainly not an easy feat to accomplish. People slog for years together like this in order to gain the appreciation of others in society. What is the use? One day somebody else will come along and steal our throne within a few minutes, and then we will lie forgotten and abandoned on the road-side. Instead of expending one's energies uselessly outwards like this and then suffering needlessly later on, one must deploy this given life-time towards the cause of Realising the Self.

Q.: Not all can understand the technical nuances of Ajata-advaita; it requires a highly evolved intellect so to do.

B.: It is enough if the belief that the world is real be given up.

Q.: Is it necessary to believe the world to be a projection of one's own mind?

B.: We look for beliefs to harbour only after we have lost hold of that which is actually Real. If the Real be held on to all the time, the question of what to believe and what not to believe will never arise. The believer himself being altogether fictitious, can anything believed by him be true or correct? Hold on continuously and incessantly to the beingness of the Self without anticipating or expecting anything in return or by way of reward until the Self Reveals Himself; then there will be no requirement to go on asking questions like 'Shall we believe in this?' or 'Shall we believe in that?'.

S>M>

Q.: Bhagawan says, 'Thooymanamozhiyar thoyumunmeiyyagamdhoyave arulyen, Arunachala!' The statement gives the impression that even if and when the mind has been made completely pure or devoid of vasanas by the dint of arduous, continuous practice, God's permission is still needed to Realise Him, and that Realisation is made possible only after such permission has been received. Many other lines in the same poem also seem to convey the same theme; for instance- 'Enai azhitthippodhenaikkalavidil... etc.'.

B.: Realisation is not your birth-right; the same can be had only by the Grace of the Almighty. No amount of effort could ever endow upon anybody the right to Realise Him. Swallow your silly pride, bow before Him and beg Him: and do so with the knowledge that you might well be refused without any assignment of reason and there would be no possibility of appeal.

Q.: This sounds somewhat harsh.

B.: Killing the ego is not an easy thing. It is only when God Himself by His loving Grace draws the mind fully inwards that Emancipation can be achieved. Sri Muruganar: We must beg the Lord that he take pity on us. It is not a barter-transaction, where a bag of tamarind-fruits are exchanged for 2 bags of jaggery. For could anything done by our lowly selves ever truly make us eligible to be worthy of Him, the peerless One? Is not such a proposition horrendously, monstrously unthinkable, sir? He is- HIM, sir! He is the PURUSHAR!

With a barely concealed sob the great poet leant back and resumed his usual contemplative silence. Cycle-Pillai, entering the Hall at that very moment, remarked casually: 'Oh! but who is the ponjadhi?'. The Hall erupted in laughter; the master laughed heartily, too; as for Sri Muruganar, he was laughing and crying at the same time.

S>M>

Q.: For taking up and practising vichara, who is fit and who is unfit and who is eligible and who is ineligible?

B.: There are no restrictions; anybody may. However, one's chance of success may be unlikely to be sufficiently high unless there is any one or both of the following present in the aspirant- a] an all consuming desire for Emancipation, and b] an all consuming vairagya or aversion towards samsara. It may be noted that these feelings must themselves disappear before Realisation can be achieved. Determination to get Emancipated must be so strong that it allows no scope for any other thought to arise in the mind; ultimately this 1 thought also disappears and the Self Reveals Himself.

Q.: How is 1 to cultivate the desire to obtain Emancipation?

B.: Your question sounds strange. A man is standing in the middle of a desert. On all directions around him he is able to see only miles and miles of sand stretching away before him. He is exceedingly thirsty and it is a few days since his lips have touched water. He suddenly chances to meet a fellow traveller. Instead of asking for water, imagine this is what he is saying- 'Brother, how can I or how am I to cultivate the desire to drink water?'. What would you make of such a man?

Q.: I would instantly surmise that he suffers from serious mental illness.

B.: Exactly.

Q.: The desert stands for samsara and water for vichara. Thirst is vairagya. Is that right?

B.: Yes. That is it.

Q.: Some fools do not even realise that they are wandering about parched, hot and thirsty in a desert; they go on wandering. What shall we do to help these poor, lost souls?

B.: First you exit the desert and then let us think of others. One blind man cannot lead another.

Q.: Some find samsara acceptable and tolerable; they even enjoy roaming around in this desert.

B.: They are merely on the outskirts, where they can find plenty of shrubbery and large oases. Eventually they will wander deeper and deeper; it is then that the value of this teaching will really become readily apparent. When you are having a pleasant dream and at that time somebody tells you how to wake up you feel like throttling him to death out of annoyance; but when you are undergoing a horrible nightmare and at that time somebody tells you how to wake up you feel like falling at his feet and worshipping him as a saviour.

Q.: So going through a terrible life is really good?

B.: Yes. You will feel, 'Enough of this nonsense; let me wake up once and for all and be done with it.'

Q.: But mere determination to Realise is said to be insufficient; God's Grace must be obtained: is that not so?

B.: Take 1 step towards Him; He will take 10 steps towards you. But the first step must be from your side. To begin with the ball is always in your side of the court.

S>M>

Q.: When I investigate 'Who am I?' I feel an intense, throbbing sensation in the heart-center which Sri Bhagawan talks about, on the right-hand side of the chest. It is like a sensation that a person would have who is overwhelmed with emotion; it brings tears to my eyes. Every time I investigate 'Who am I?' I am drawn to this center. Is it enough to hold on to this sensation? I ask this question because I have heard that Bhagawan opines that although concentration on this heart-center is a beneficial spiritual exercise, it is not the same as vichara; and I do not want to get side-tracked into doing anything that is not explicitly vichara. I am particularly anxious to get Emancipated in this janmam.

B.: Instead of endeavouring to hold on to such sensation, remain thereas. Why invent a spurious 'I' and then ask him to decide whether he wants to hold on to the sensation or not? If you try to hold on to such sensation, it will vanish. Do not try to 'do' anything with the sphurana. If you try to 'do' anything with it or catch hold of it, it will vanish and you will be left wondering where you went wrong and why the sensation has vanished. The sphurana must be continuous. It will remain that way only if you leave it alone- i.e., remain as you naturally ARE. Perfect absence of effort is what is needed to sustain the sphurana continuously. Why? Because effort implies the existence of the ego making it, and if the ego resumes its activities the sphurana will have to

subside. Make every effort to remain totally without any effort. Who is that one who wants to hold on to the sphurana? He is the mischievous imp known as the ego. So, do not permit the ego to disturb the sphurana; let it go on indefinitely by means exclusively of remaining solely as it perpetually. This sphurana is a partial experience of the Self. It is an indication of the coming Glory. But if it is to apotheosise into the Self it must be left undisturbed; it must be permitted to go on indefinitely; for that the ego must be kept in check; in turn for this vichara is the means. So, whenever you find the sphurana subsiding, ask yourself 'Who am I?'. It will come aright in the end.

S>M>

Q.: Can vichara be combined with other practices, such as japam, bhajans, etc.?

B.: Yes. Certainly.

Q.: How can I tell whether I am doing vichara properly or not?

B.: Cessation of thought in which there is [-i.e., which is a result of] neither layam nor sushupti indicates that one is along the right track.

Q.: Is dikshai necessary for vichara?

B.: Vichara's commencement in itself serves as the necessary dikshai.

Q.: Will Bhagawan not give me hasta-dikshai?

B.: I am not in the habit of so doing.

Q.: If Bhagawan gives me hasta-dikshai now I promise I will arrange tomorrow for 5000 rupees donation to be paid to the ashram.

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: Is pure subjective awareness or consciousness of being held on to volitionlessly and effortlessly, the Self?

B.: No; it is only the reflected light of the Self. It is known by the names 'mahat' and 'cosmic consciousness'. When the ego continuously and uninterruptedly holds on to this reflected light without getting distracted, it experiences what is known as aham-sphurana. Incessantly inhering in aham-sphurana leads to Realisation of the Self.

Q.: For ultimate Realisation, this reflected light should also be destroyed. Am I correct?

B.: Yes. When the aham-vritti has subsided there is nothing for the reflected chit to fall upon and it disappears automatically. The thing to do is to somehow shake off the ego.

Q.: I have no faith in existence of God or any Higher Power. My outlook is not skeptical, but rather rational in character. Can I also practice vichara? I am burning with curiosity to know who I really am. Is there any use in me practising vichara or are only theists meant to take it up?



B.: Certainly you may. [smiling] In fact, you will find it easier than many others sitting in this place.

S>M>

Q.: How shall I keep at bay the urge to masturbate and indulge in sexual activities, involving penile penetration or otherwise?

B.: The more one becomes steadfastly established in the blissful beingness of the Self, the more such tendencies drop off of their own accord.

Q.: But when the urge overtakes me it is quite violent and irresistible.

B.: Do not keep dwelling on events which have passed away. Thinking about it always is worse than doing it occasionally. The thing to do is to remain as one with the beingness of the Self; as practice in this develops more and more such tendencies will vanish of their own accord.

S>M>

Q.: What is the purpose of everyday chanting the Krishnayajurveda in this place? I mean, how does it help one to Realise the Self?

B.: The sound turns the mind inward, provided the chanting is done not by laymen but by trained persons.

Q.: If a non-brahmin person chants the vedas here, will you tolerate it? If a harijan-child comes here to learn to chant the vedas, will you consent to it?

B.: They may not be interested; but if they are, why not? Why would I stop them? Sri Ramanujacharya converted many harijan-children into brahmins; they wore the sacred thread and chanted the vedas. What was the result? People were angered by his act and tried to arrange for his assassination. Even so he would not give up his efforts. Can we say that he was in the wrong? No. But this act will cause significant controversy; for some argue, 'But would not the harijans consider it to be degrading to be 'promoted' in this manner? Is the brahmin patrician and the harijan baseborn?'. So, it is best to leave such matters as they are.

S>M>

Q.: Sri Ramanujacharya seems to have maintained that there always will be an irreconcilable difference between Atman and Brahman. He seems to have argued that they always will be separate entities. What does Sri Bhagawan have to say about this?

B.: All are agreed that 'I' exists. So, first let us Realise this 'I' and see what it is. Then we can discuss further if need be.

S>M>

Q.: How does Sri Bhagawan define mind or ego?

B.: There is really no such thing; however, since we are continually perturbed by thoughts, we force ourselves to concede that there must exist some such thing, because we asininely believe that it being a fact that thoughts spring

forth, they must do so from a common starting point. This assumption must not be implicitly believed, but should be investigated to see if it is correct. Mind or ego is simply a wrong notion that we have been cherishing for a long time. Seek the mind. It will disappear. Continuous search for what mind is results in its disappearance.

Q.: A certain Greek philosopher whose works I have chanced upon has suggested that every human-being comes into the earth with a unique identification-number that is known only to a certain register-keeper in Heaven, similar to how every typewriter or engine ever manufactured in a factory comes with a unique serial-number or chassis-number by which it may be definitively identified. If this idea were to be correct, it would mean that rebirth would be impossible.

B.: All investigation into the question of rebirth is really futile. Whose rebirth is it that we are concerning ourselves about? Rebirth must be for that which was born. What is it that was born? Who was born? Who is that 'I' who says that he was born?

Q.: Are visions of God good? Or should they be discouraged as being mere distracting hallucinations that lead one astray?

B.: There is no harm in experiencing such things. But a craving or addiction should not develop in the mind for repeated experiences of the sort. One must not stop with visions, but ask oneself who has them. Visions are only mental creations. One must make the attempt to go beyond them. Visions should not leave behind the impression in the mind that what was seen was objectively real; if they do so further spiritual progress stands impeded.

Q.: It is said that where there is no humility, Realisation is impossible.

B.: Yes. But what is genuine humility?

Q.: I have no idea. Pray enlighten me.

B.: What is the true meaning of humility? Humility is not the idea or feeling 'I must be humble.' or 'I am being humble.'. Complete egolessness alone can deserve to be called humility. Only those who have exterminated every last trace of the treacherous, venomous foe known as the ego are truly great. Know that straw, being hollow and flimsy, floats high on the surface of the sea, while the heavy pearl, being possessed of immense lustre and pulchritude, lies low at the bottom of the sea; likewise, though the worthless one is positioned above, he is never high, and though the great one is positioned below, he is never low.

Sri Muruganar: Has not Valluvar correctly observed thus- 'மேலிருந்தும் மேலல்லார் மேலல்லர் கீழிருந்தும் கீழல்லார் கீழ் லவரர்.'?

Q.: What must I do so that I can become humble?

B.: The virtue of humility, which bestows Immortality, is the foremost among virtues that are onerous to obtain. Genuine humility does not lie in trying to be humble; it lies in actually being humble. Effort made to be humble results in pretended humility, which strengthens the ego. Only actual humility has the power to destroy the ego. Humility comes only with self-surrender. Humility alone will be enough to bring about attainment of Realization. Humility is the supreme virtue among virtues. But how to get it? Unconditional surrender; absolute surrender: this is the means. Manikkavasagar has written, 'Is it not owing to his remaining perpetually as the illimitably profound vastness that is the silent expanse of perfect humility known as Sivam, and as one ever in service of every creature, that the Supreme Lord stands worthy of all the devout worships ever performed in all the 14 worlds? The reason why God is supreme to such an extent as to have the entirety of the cosmos bow down in reverence before him, is his state of perfect humility, in which even the least trace of ego can never be glimpsed; by seeing himself in all, by being humble even to the tiniest of insects which are trampled upon by everyone, and by naturally remaining at such a high-most pinnacle of humility that nothing can be humbler than himself, the state of being supreme has come to the Lord. The Supreme Lord, who is the most glorious amidst the glorious, the mightiest amidst the mighty, the greatest amidst the great, and the most exalted amidst the exalted, Shines unchallenged, all alone, and altogether without [any] second for all of Eternity as the sole Lord of the Heart, unrivalled and unsurpassed, only because he remains the humblest of the humble; when the virtue of humility is thus necessary even for the Supreme Lord, who, being without knowledge of beginning or end, without knowledge of time or space and without knowledge of birth or death, abides as his own sovereign Self forever and forever, is it necessary to emphasize that it is absolutely indispensable for mumukshus who are after all mere mortals?'. The ego keeps us far away from God. Only when the ego has gone once and for all will the meaning of the word 'humility' dawn into comprehension. The door to God is always open, but the lintel is exceedingly low. If you want to enter, if you want admission, if you want to pass through, learn to bend, bow, and crawl. In a massive storm those proud trees which stand upright and refuse to budge are swept away easily; but nothing happens to grass which knows how to bend and bow. So, those who hanker after Realisation should abandon their pride and burn their self-respect to ashes before embarking on this path; otherwise they are wasting their time.

Q.: So that is the meaning of 'Manangondurubavar manatthaiyazhitthu... etc.!'

B.: Yes. Even if the slightest trace of the egoistic conceit or arrogance 'I' is left behind in the mind, it will rapidly increase as soon as conducive opportunity

and circumstance present themselves, and unequivocally bring about your wholesome spiritual ruin. The seed of 'I' must never germinate again; that is Emancipation. Constant remembrance of Arunachala in the mind scorches or fries this seed so thoroughly that it can never sprout again. The Sun that is Arunachala must Shine mercilessly [abhimanamilladhilir] so that this seed is never able to come to life.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that the last 300 verses of Sri Kavyakantha Ganapaty Sastry's Uma Sahasram were in fact composed by Sri Bhagawan. Is it so?

B.: Why should you make a distinction between what was composed by him and what was composed by me? Whatever was composed by him was composed by me; whatever was composed by me was composed by everybody. All are verily Ramana.

S>M>

Q.: When Mr. George Fox was a child, he is said to have heard God's voice say to him, "Thou seest how young people go together into vanity, and old people into the earth; thou must forsake all, young and old, keep out of all, and be as a stranger unto all.". Is this the attitude a mumukshu must follow?

B.: Yes. But there is no need to renounce outwardly communication with other persons; renounce everything at the level of the mind; that will do admirably. It is silence of mind that matters. The given statement, however, is correct. He who is intimate with the Self sees all as only strangers, because, like an infant, everytime he sets his eye upon anybody he sees them verily for the first time. Yet he regards all with love. Why? Because he sees only the Self in all he sees.

Q.: Whitman wrote-

The sense of what is real... the thought if after all it should prove unreal,

The doubts of daytime and the doubts of night-time... the curious whether and how,

Whether that which appears so is so... Or is it all flashes and specks?

Some persons are born with the doubt as to whether the world is real; whereas others take it to be real; while a few are convinced at a tender age that it is all totally unreal. How is it so?

B.: It may be on account of sadhana done in previous births. Everything depends upon the pakkuvam of the aspirant. If the aspirant is fully ripe, he

Realises the Self automatically, like how a ripe fruit falls down from a tree of its own accord.

Q.: Who do you call Parabrahman the 'Self'? I mean, whose self is it? How can it be anybody's self, since it is a non-dual entity?

B.: It is the aspirant who is asked what his self is. The Self is not asked any questions, nor does it ask anything. On investigation as to what or who it is, the mumukshu finds that his self does not exist at all; in that very discovery he loses himself once and for all. Then only the Real Self is left behind. This is the process of Jnana-vichara. There is no question of attaining Jnana. All that is necessary is to lose 'I' or the ego.

Q.: How much time will it take to kill the ego?

B.: It depends upon the steadfastness with which vichara is pursued.

Q.: Can I finish it off today?

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: May I touch the right-hand side of Sri Bhagawan's chest to see if I am able to discern there any vibration or pulsation?

B.: The sensation mentioned by you was continuously present prior to the time of leaving Madurai; after arriving here it vanished. The sphurana may be termed as an [in English] 'intermediate-stage' betwixt mind and Self; this sphurana is not active in the Jnani.

S>M>

Q.: Does this sphurana lead to the final state of Jnana of its own accord?

B.: Provided it is left to continue indefinitely and uninterruptedly; this in turn is possible only after the ego has largely ceased to function. Practice makes further practice possible. The more you practice, the more efficacious you will become at practising. 'The secret of success is constancy of purpose.' is what your former Prime Minister has said; follow the excellent advice and it will lead you to the goal.

S>M>

Q.: Is it advisable to undergo a vow to remain in voluntary poverty? Is living in poverty required for Realisation?

B.: Yes- mental poverty.

Q.: What about the physical aspect?

B.: If you take care of the mental aspect properly, no question as regards the physical aspect could ever possibly arise.

Q.: But adopting a simple life-style is said to be a great help to those who aspire for Realisation.

B.: Such things are left to prarabdha; they are not in our control. Let us endeavour to attenuate our mind and be done with it, instead of fruitlessly

expending effort in raising all sorts of theoretical speculations.

S>M>

Q.: There are those who have caused me grievous injury; my heart yearns to wreck revenge upon them; how shall I dissuade myself?

B.: The Bible offers us the following advice: '...let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.' Should we not follow the same? God says, 'To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence...'. It is further said, 'Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.'. So, let us leave everything entirely in God's hands. He knows what to do and when and how. Surrender to Him completely and let Him take care of you hereafter. God never forsakes one who has surrendered unto Him without reserve. Trust God and you will be well.

Q.: But I have heard that the school of philosophy taught by the Maharshi denies God's existence.

E.Z.: Only the personal god is denied by the Maharshi.

Q.: But if He is impersonal, how can He hear what I am saying?

B.: These theological disputations are not for you and me; only academicians are interested in them. You unconditionally surrender to God and He will look after you.

S>M>

Q.: What is Sri Bhagawan's opinion on the advisability of taking a vow of celibacy- i.e., abstinence from sexual activities, including masturbation?

B.: It is better only to exercise restraint, and not to take up any such vow. Why? Because if you perchance happen to break such a vow, you will not know what to do afterwards, and will end up with a life-long guilt-complex. So, go on with whatever sadhana you are now doing, and let the baser tendencies in you subside slowly and of their own accord. Suddenly and violently giving up a long-cherished habit will lead to dangerous consequences. Such things may be depicted in novels, but it is seldom that vairagyam comes overnight. Normally vairagyam is like an avalanche: it gains momentum only as time progresses. One's vasanas cannot be thrown to the winds overnight; it takes time, patience and above all steady, continuous practice. Otherwise it will become like smashanavairagyam or prasavavairagyam! [laughter in the Hall]

Q.: Does Sri Bhagawan favour alcohol prohibition?

B.: Let governments decide the matter. Why are you asking me?

Q.: Should one on the spiritual path shun alcohol-consumption?

B.: It is better to avoid it; such things irritate the mind and make it further restless.

Q.: What about hashish?

B.: The same opinion may be repeated.

Q.: Will India eventually gain independence from England or not?

B.: We need not worry about these things. There is a Higher-power which takes care of everything. He bears the whole burden, not you. All you need to do is to surrender to Him and thereafter go in the direction indicated by Him.

Q.: How to know which direction is being indicated by Him?

B.: Perfect surrender brings about or re-awakens a certain dormant intuition within the mind. Follow this intuition carefully and it will not only tell you what to do next with reference to the immediate present but also in due course of time lead you to Realisation.

Q.: Sri Krishna says, 'Karmanyevadhikaraste... etc.'. Is this only an attitude of partial surrender?

B.: Yes. One who has totally surrendered would not hold on to concepts such as, 'I have a right to carry out my duties... etc.'. Complete surrender is total relinquishment of individuality; it does not have an 'afterwards'. Such a one would not have any characteristics. He would merely BE.

Q.: How does such a one manage to lead a normal worldly life?

B.: Have you observed women walking the way downhill from mullaippaltheertham? They are highly talkative. Yet, does the pitcher of water balanced atop their heads spill the tiniest drop of water?

S>M>

Q.: It is said that even after a Jnani sheds the mortal coil, he remains behind in the form of a subtle body made of light for the purpose of ensuring that Emancipation of all of humanity is brought about; is this true?

B.: This is like pondering, 'Last night in my dream, I saw some people who were fast asleep; I wonder if they have woken up by this time...'. Is there any meaning in it?

Q.: This is the Jnani's perspective as regards the world. What about the man on the Clapham omnibus?

B.: From the Jnani's point of view all are verily Jnanis. The Jnani does not regard anyone to be ajnani. So, really there is nobody who is in a state of not-Liberation, so that they may yet get Liberated. Jnana is fact; ajnana is myth.

Q.: Are there grades or stages in Liberation?

B.: There are many states of mind but the state of destroyed-mind or no-mind is only one.

S>M>

Q.: It seems exceedingly difficult to abandon the common-sense objective outlook which makes one think that people come and go whilst the cosmos endures or remains forever; we are also acclimatised to believing that this

world is inhabited by multiple people, whilst the teaching of the Maharshi asserts boldly that these others are only my own mental creations.

B.: Can there be a cosmos in the absence of availability of a perceiver thereof? The cosmos is simply the perceiver himself or a gross manifestation of his thoughts or ideas. The dream manufactured by the mind is so persuasively convincing that even when the fact that it is a dream is highlighted, one is not ready to believe such to be the case. Why is this so? It is owing to maya-shakti.

Q.: How shall maya-shakti be defeated?

B.: The example generally given in the sacred-books is that of an elephant which is dreaming; in order so as to awaken the elephant, the Guru, who is none other than the true Self of the elephant, appears in its dream as a lion; the shock of seeing the lion is so enormously tremendous that the elephant wakes up from its dream.

Q.: Since the lion is part of the dream, it must therefore be said that the lion is also a mere mental creation of the elephant's.

B.: This is a remarkable feature of the scheme of maya; it always carries with it its own exit-door. By yearning intensely for Emancipation, this exit-door or Guru is made manifest, and He will point the way to Emancipation. This exit-door is known as the 'Keystone of Liberation' [the actual word used by the master being முக்தித்தல்மதகுவிசை]. Although it, too, is part of the dreamer's dream, it somehow strangely possesses the ability to bring about an end to the whole of the dream itself, including the dreamer himself. It has to be remembered that the dreamer is part of his dream. An illusory being watches an illusory world. Only where there is enormous longing for Emancipation, to the absolute exclusion of any other desire, will the Guru manifest. The Guru is the door leading into the Infinite. The door is unreal, but what lies beyond it is the one and only thing that is Real.

S>M>

Q.: Can concentrating on the 7 chakras bring about Emancipation?

B.: Concentration of mind is only an activity undertaken by mind. Can it take you beyond mind? On the other hand, vichara begins with mind but plunges you in the Self when ripeness [pakkuvam] has dawned. One who is sincerely practising vichara need not go in search of any external Guru; the Self within acts as his Guru and guides him.

Q.: Some people report blissful experiences and grandiose visions whilst in Sri Bhagawan's presence; but in my case it seems that I am not fortunate enough to experience any such things. Why? What offence have I committed? What is the remedy?



B.: The expectation to see or hear something new is the obstacle. What is our ultimate aim? Is it to hear and see newer and newer phantasmagoria? No. Peace is our aim: Peace from which there is no return possible, immutable peace. That Peace is here and now within you. You are spoiling it by your expectation to have more and more of visual and auditory hallucinations. Visions, etc. are worthless. In fact they are dangerous because they leave behind in the mind craving for more; this craving distracts one from the quest of the Self. So, do not expect anything new. You ARE and that is a fact: so, BE. That is all there is to Realisation. Discarding useless accretions is the goal, not acquiring anything new.

S>M>

Q.: [seeming crestfallen] Are visions only mental hallucinations then? I mean- is there no godliness in them?

B.: [laughing] We desire that some self-worth should attach to ourselves. The ego wants to be 'somebody', to have accomplished 'something' and to have reached 'somewhere'. Anything seen cannot be real. As far as this Advaita-marga is concerned, there is no question of anybody making any progress. Either mind is dead or it is not. So, give up this silly feeling of having accomplished a great deal in relation to the field of spirituality, or having travelled a great distance in relation to the path leading to the goal. There is no path, there is no goal and there are no travellers. Learn to remain content with the beingness of the Self and that will do.

S>M>

Q.: If I am not the doer of actions performed by the body, can I then commit all sorts of crimes?

B.: There are consequences for each and every act. It is like Sir Newton's law: 'Actioni contrariam semper et aequalem esse reactionem...'.  
Q.: The Jnani also performs actions.

B.: His actions cannot result in manufacture of fresh karma.

Q.: May I know why that is so?

B.: Because really I am not at all doing anything.

Q.: Just now you are talking to me.

B.: This comment has arisen because the body is taken to be myself.

Q.: Who is Bhagawan? Who is the body that is now observed to be talking to me? Are they not linked-up in some way?

B.: You will know only when you yourself Realise.

S>M>

Q.: Sri Bhagawan says that 'Who am I?' is the direct method to Realise. This being the case, why is chanting of the vedas, worship of Bhagawan's mother's

sarcophagus, etc. going on in this ashram? Where is the need for all these ritualistic practices if vichara is sufficient?

B.: Not all minds relish taking up vichara to begin with. Over a period of time, these other practices make the mind relatively calm; thereafter it might come to relish practising vichara.

Q.: Vichara is used to kill the mind. How then could the mind ever relish practising vichara?

B.: All minds do long for peace and happiness. The practice of vichara, which submerges the mind in fathomless peace, will be accepted by the mind as being relishable only after it has once had a taste of what it is to be like sans 'I'.

Q.: How do we get this first taste of or first glimpse into the peace of the Self?

B.: Constantly practising vichara is the means.

Q.: We seem to be moving around in circles.

B.: Our problem is that we always crave conceptualisation, ratiocination and intellection of everything we come across. Vichara cannot be tackled that way. Start the practice, stick with it constantly and the rest will follow.

Q.: How can I gain steadiness in practice?

B.: Only by means of more practice.

Q.: Which is the most potent mantra? Is it the Gayathri-mantra?

B.: The most potent mantra is the silence of the Self. This mantra is always automatically going on in us. Only we interrupt it with other mantras.

Q.: It is said that the purpose of all efforts is to give up all efforts. What does it mean?

B.: Does remaining without thinking involve effort in your case?

Q.: Yes.

B.: Then make effort to remain without thinking until you are able to remain effortlessly without thinking. This cannot be accomplished overnight. It requires patient, perseverant toil.

S>M>

Q.: Morris wrote-

There are the men and the maids, and the wives  
and the gaffers grey

Of the fields I know so well, and but little changed  
are they

Since I was a lad amongst them; and yet how great  
is the change!

Strange are they grown unto me; yea I to myself am  
strange.

Their talk and their laughter mingling with the music  
of the meads

Has now no meaning to me to help or to hinder my  
needs,

So far from them have I drifted.

Why is it that the joys we enjoyed during childhood are now to us not very  
appealing? I miss my childhood greatly and wish I could become a child once  
again.

Chadwick: In that case you should make every endeavour to attain Jnana,  
because Jnana is eternal childhood- am I correct, Bhagawan?

B.: [smiling] What is the doubt in it?

S>M>

Q.: Hopkins wrote-

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend

With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.

Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must

Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,

How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost

Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust

Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,

Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes

Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again

With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes

Them; birds build— but not I build; no, but strain,

Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.

Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

My feelings toward God are similar. I have always been unlucky at all my endeavours. My hard labour in various directions and towards various ends have not borne any fruit at all. I started various businesses at various places; all of them have failed and resulted in capital-loss for me. I am also afflicted with numerous physical ailments, which cause me pain every now and then. I am also childless. What have I done to deserve such bad luck? I am a law-abiding man. I hurt not the tiniest ant. Sinners prosper, whereas I, a God-fearing creature, am left to suffer like this. Is it fair?

The poor Caucasian in his agony was shedding copious tears before the master, who appeared moved also.

B.: What to do? Has not Jesus forewarned us with these words- 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'? So, let us take courage in the fact that our Lord will never forsake, abandon or neglect us; only let us surrender to Him without reserve. It is also said, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.'

The man seemed to significantly improve after hearing these words. All felt elated in the Hall after beholding his betterment.

S>M>

Q.: How can I best make use of my time sitting in Sri Bhagawan's physical proximity?

B.: Keep your mind still.

Q.: How?

B.: Do not try to do anything. Remain as you are.

S>M>

GL.: It is said that only God is male whereas we are all females. What does it mean?

B.: This is a certain bhava which some devotees of God have towards their Beloved. Not all enjoy taking up such extreme forms of devotion. Everything depends upon the mental make-up of the jiva concerned. When bheda-bhava ceases, such devotional practices and shrungara-bhavas come to an end automatically. In Dhivyaprabandham many examples of this kind of devotion can be found; particularly in the verses composed by Andal.

GL.: Too much of rasa is said to cause insanity.

B.: What is sanity? Is it to keep the mind idle like a stone? The mind must melt with Love for the Lord; only then will it humbly subside and subsume itself into

the Self.

GL.: I am surprised to hear Sri Bhagawan talk like this. I have heard that usually he says, 'Be still.'

B.: No doubt ultimately everybody must return to stillness, but consider what happens in a mind that has no bhakti: it endeavours to stay still and falls prey to the nefarious, stuporous state of layam, mistaking layam to be the desirable state of stillness; to avoid possibility for such mischief, bhakti is advised. Stillness is alert silence in which there is full awareness unimpinged by the slightest ripple of thought; layam is a pleasant, sleep-like condition that makes the ego wax more and more, as the idea 'I am enjoying ananda.' becomes more and more firmly entrenched within the mind. Many people come here and practice what they believe to be meditation: they are doing only this- i.e., slipping into layam. To sink the mind in layam results in a highly pleasing condition resembling sopor; only a faint trickle of awareness is maintained. Many people fall prey to this trap, thinking they are 'making good progress' along the road leading to Realisation. But what is the actual fact of the matter? If you journey in the wrong direction for a long time, you will have to spend a larger quantum of time retracing your steps in order so as to arrive back at the place where you first started out from. To avoid this mishap, which confuses manolayam and manonivritti, and mistaking the former to be the latter, sinks into a self-created pit of doom, bhakti is advised.

GL.: What is the acid-test for determining whether I am in manonivritti or manolayam?

B.: Awareness. Unmitigated, unmediated awareness of being must be there. Also, manonivritti does not cause any sensation of pleasure; rather, it is a state of peace and stillness.

GL.: Everyday dozens of people come here to meditate before Sri Bhagawan's presence. Those who slip into layam- ought not Sri Bhagawan to warn them that they are taking the wrong fork down the road?

B.: If the person is of a temperament that will listen to what is being said, he is certainly told. But water is not passed into arid lands.

25th September, 1936

A certain devotee of the master by name M. S. Kamath has for some months apparently been gathering reports of conversations taking place in the Hall betwixt the master and devotees, and publishing them in The Sunday Times, of which the said gentleman was said to be the Supervisory Editor. When he had arrived to participate in Bhagawan's anniversary-event at the beginning of this month, he had brought with him a collection of clippings from past issues of The Sunday Times; each such clipping contained a conversation the

master had had with some devotee or visitor over the course of the past year. Today somebody asked the master some doubt concerning the question of whether the Jnani experiences karma or not, and Bhagawan asked Mr. TKS to read out aloud in the Hall an extract from the following piece from an old issue of The Sunday Times in response to the man's question; the following piece is the entirety of a conversation the master had entertained with Mr. Paul Brunton sometime during the March month of this year; since the whole of the conversation is fascinating to me I am including here in full the same:

Q.: Narada Bhakti Sutras say that the path of devotion is best, as all paths lead to devotion. Cannot the same be said of Jnana or Yoga or Nishkama Karma?

B.: Why this differentiation? Jnana is Bhakti; Vairagya is Jnana.

Q.: To know is to love; if we love, we know more, and vice versa. Is that right?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Ashtavakra Gita, Chapter IX verse 4 says: "Things come by themselves." Does anything come of itself without the operation of some cause behind it?

B.: That which comes to a man without present effort or desire is the result of past efforts or desires; the same is otherwise known as Prarabdha Karma. Even a Jnani who has no desires has to meet such events, as they are the result of his Prarabdha Karma.

Q.: "Jnana burns away all Karma." says Bhagavad Gita; even so, the Jnani's Jnana could not leave Prarabdha unburnt. Is that right?

B.: In the Jnani's view all Karma has gone; but in the world's view, the Jnani's body is seen to be subject to Karma and the same is attributed to Prarabdha.

Q.: Ashtavakra Gita says, "The Jnani does not remember what he has done or not done." How to understand this statement?

B.: He is in Brahman. So he does not feel that he is the Agent who has acted or not acted.

Q.: If the Jnani is subject to Prarabdha, he may have to face desires, which are also a part of Prarabdha Karma. Desires cloud Jnana.

How can he then be a Jnani?

B.: The desires that float before the Jnani do not affect his Jnana.

Q.: Puranas say that Jnanis warred against Jnanis. That must be due to Prarabdha then?

B.: Yes. Krishna fought against Bhishma.

Q.: But should not the Jnani have Vairagya, while it is desire that leads to conflict?

B.: Perfect Vairagya is the same as Jnana.

Q.: How can we judge from outside, if a man's Vairagya or surrender is perfect and complete or not?

B.: Of perfect Vairagya and Jnana, who is there outside to judge?

Q.: Instead of constantly pursuing the inquiry "Who am I?", why not constantly ask "Who are You?"

B.: Any investigation that tends to still the mind is good. But "Who am I?" is the shortest and most direct method. Other methods lead up to it.

Q.: Is the Hill hollow?

B.: The Puranas say so. Whereas it is said that the Heart is a cavity, penetration into it proves it to be an expanse of light. Similarly the Hill is made of light; the caves thereof are covered up by such light.

Q.: Are these caves inside the Hill or underneath it?

B.: In visions, I have seen caves, cities with streets, etc. within the Hill; in fact, a whole world appeared to be inside the Hill.

Q.: Are there Siddhas living inside the Hill?

B.: All the Siddhas of the world are reported to be there.

Q.: But Siddhas are reported to be in the Himalayas.

B.: Kailas is in the Himalayas. It is the abode of Siva, whereas this Hill is Siva himself. All the paraphernalia present in His abode must be where He Himself is.

Q.: Does Maharshi believe the view-point that this Hill is hollow?

B.: Everything depends upon the viewpoint of the individual. You yourself had seen hermitages, etc. on this Hill in the vision you have described in your book.

Q.: Yes. The hermitages mentioned by Maharshi were seen by me to be on the surface of the Hill; but the vision was within me.

B.: That is exactly so. Everything is within oneself. To see the world there must be a spectator. There could be no world without the Self. The Self is all-encompassing. In fact all is Self. There is nothing besides the Self.

Q.: What is the mystery of this Hill?

B.: Just as you have said in 'A Search in Secret Egypt' that "the mystery of the Pyramids is the mystery of the Self", so also the mystery of this Hill is the mystery of the Self.

Q.: Are you conscious of a brotherhood of invisible Rishis?

B.: If invisible, how to see them ?

Q.: In consciousness.

B.: In consciousness there is nothing external.

Q.: Is there not individuality in the experience of pure subjective consciousness? I fear to lose my individual personality.

B.: Why fear to lose your individuality? What is your state in dreamless sleep? Are you conscious of your individuality then?

Q.: It might be possible; I am not sure.

B.: But what is your experience? If any individuality be there would it be deep sleep?

Q.: I am unable to agree. If the psychological-personality be destroyed in sleep, how is it that I wake up as the same person?

B.: Sleep drowns the mind in nescience but does not destroy it.

Q.: That means that even in sleep, the mind and its mental tendencies are still present, preserved in latent form. Am I correct? What does Maharshi say?

B.: Maharshi does not speak for your experience. He does not force anything down your throat.

Q.: I know. That is the aspect I like so much about his teachings.

B.: Do you not really take great care to get sound sleep? Do you not prepare your bed carefully? And are you not anxious to lose your individuality in deep sleep? Then why fear it?

Q.: How can one root out the idea of sexual lust?

B.: By rooting out the false idea of the body being the Self. There is no sex in the Self. Because you falsely imagine yourself to be the body, you see another as the body. Thus difference in sex arises. But you are not the body. Be the real Self; then there is no sex.

26th September, 1936

A huge parcel has arrived in the ashram from Sri B. V. Narasimha-swamiji, Sri Bhagawan's English-biographer, known as 'Bhagawan's Boswell' by the master's Caucasian devotees. The parcel contained a covering letter; the same was read out to the master by Mr. TKS in the Hall. The swami had accidentally met Meher Baba's guru. This encounter had wrecked a profound transformation in his life and he became more quiet mentally. He was advised by the same guru that he must visit Shirdi and pay respects to the tomb of Sai Baba. He was not very eager to undertake the trip, but reluctantly obeyed since he did not want to run the risk of estrangement from the person whom he now considered to be his guru. Accordingly he went to Shirdi. On the 29th of August, he had entered the presence of Sai Baba's mortal remains for the first time in his life. Lo! behold; Sai Baba came to life right before his eyes, and spoke to him for over an hour. The swami was to become a vehicle for spreading Sai Baba's teachings throughout Southern India, and also the East



Indies. The swami was to write two books about Sai Baba: his biography and also a collection of his sayings and teachings. The swami was to settle down in Shirdi for a period of three years commencing from the present, and the purpose of his stay would be to gather eyewitness-accounts of the various miracles and other glorious deeds performed by Sai Baba during his tenure of avatar upon this earth; this information was to be shared by the swami with the public in the books to be written and lectures to be given by him in the forthcoming span of his lifetime; accordingly, the swami had already started interviewing the denizens of the village of Shirdi, as also the handful of Sai Baba's direct disciples who were still alive. He had already finished interviewing the following persons, who had moved closely with Sai Baba during the saint's lifetime: Shama, Taty, Abdul Baba, Laxmibai Shinde, Marthand Maharaj, and Kaka Mahajani. He had already written to Mr. M. B. Rege, a judge who was a devotee of the late saint, requesting details regarding the manner in which the former's life had been impacted on account of being in receipt of the late saint's grace and had received the following moving reply: "I look upon Sri Sai Baba as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the Cosmos. I did so before His Mahasamadhi in 1918 and I do so now. To me, He is not gone. He is, even now. To me, he had no limitations. Of course, when he was with us, there was the fleshy tabernacle. That was prominently brought to our notice at times. However, mostly the infinite aspect of His was what remained before me. I thought of him as a mental or spiritual image, in which the finite blended very perfectly- yet allowing the finite to appear before us at times. Now that the body has been cast off, the infinite alone remains, as the Real 'Sai Baba'." The swami was now writing to Sri Bhagawan to request the latter's blessings on the mission undertaken by him of spreading Sai Baba's name and fame far and wide. He was enclosing for Bhagawan's perusal transcripts of the interviews he had obtained from Sai Baba's devotees in the village of Shirdi, as also from the late saint's living disciples. He was also enclosing a certain book written in the Marati language, entitled 'Sri Sai Satcharitra', written by a disciple of the late saint by name Govind Raghunath Dabholkar. Bhagawan was smiling silently as Mr. TKS finished reading the letter; the master remarked placidly, ' உருப்படி உறுப்படுவானோ என்று எண்ணினேன் ; பரவாயில்லை !'. The interview-transcripts in English found in the parcel were voluminous and elaborate; the book extracted from the parcel was also quite large; a cursory examination revealed that it contained close to 10000 verses in Marati. The master went through the bulk of the transcripts and the book patiently for the whole day. The work could not be read by anybody other than the master, Marati obviously being an unknown language hereabouts.

S>M>

Q.: It has been my observation that whenever Bhagawan opens a book, the same automatically opens at the relevant page that Bhagawan is searching for. When he opened this book, what was the first thing that was read by him in it?

B.: This verse- 'Milavoomsvarajyasimhasana hovoom svapadheem virajamana bhogoom svanandha nirabhimana sukhayamana nijamthareem.'

Q.: What is the meaning?

B.: Let the throne of Self-Realisation be attained by means of adorning the same with the blissful state of self-absorption; without a trace of ego in our hearts, let us enjoy the bliss of the Self without having to share the same with anybody.

S>M>

E.Z.: Why did that swami go in search of another guru, when Bhagawan is here to provide all the guidance under the sun? Was it not preposterously heartless of him to have so done? Why did he become disillusioned with Bhagawan, and go away from this place? Initially, I gather, he was so interested in Bhagawan that he interviewed close to a 1000 people before writing his biography; all of a sudden, what seems to have happened to him?

B.: Keep quiet. Why do you involve yourself in the affairs of others? Attend to what you came here for. [after sometime, softly] Do you know who it was that suggested unto him to leave?

The Shylock became rather subdued and made no further attempt to talk to the master that day.

27th September, 1936

To no small discountenanced discomfiture of mine, I learnt first-hand today that Sri Bhagawan has many enemies in Tiruvannamalai. The master's complaisant and docile nature would upon juxtaposition make the most bashful amongst lambs seem unduly pugnacious; to think that there are people in the world who would bear for him in their hearts anything but limitless Love befuddles me; to have to accommodate myself to the fact that of all places here in Tiruvannamalai there are people who loathe and malign him breaks my heart into smithereens. Yet I shall not hesitate to gather stoutness of fortitude and place on record what transpired today. During the wee hours of the morning today, I was as usual proceeding to the ashram; when I was passing near the Pai Gopuram a gang of rougish sadhus descended on me like the plague. They were about 2-dozen in number; they started by talking politely to me but went on to vituperate and calumniate Sri Bhagawan in the vilest language imaginable. The apparent leader of the band

was an elderly ochre-robed personage with matted beard and bald head; countless garlands of rudraksha-beads bounced off his chest as he walked. Ostensibly he looked highly respectable; but when he opened his mouth it was as if one was hit by the scent that wafts out of a skunk's rear-end. He started by saying, "Considering you as my own younger-brother, I am now going to tell you something. I watch you going to that man Ramana everyday; seeing it I feel enormous pity for you, because you have unwittingly placed yourself in profound danger. Many young men like yourself have been trapped by that devil, and have gone completely astray. I want to save you before you fall into that facinorous demon Ramana's trap irrevocably. I have no selfish interest in talking to you; I am expending all my energy now entirely for your benefit only. Please listen to me whilst I divulge to you a few truths about Ramana-". At this point I tried to slip away; but they surrounded me and would not let me break free; I was forced to walk along with them. I tried to shut my ears, but this they would not permit; my hands were held on to tightly either side. The monstrous sadhu presently went on with his rant- "Please don't be afraid, child. You are like a son to us. We will never hurt you; we are only trying to help you. You must be saved from the fiendish clutches of that unholy plenipotentiary of Satan, Ramana; this is our only objective... Is that not so, an bargazle?" he added, throwing enquiring glances about him. Everybody energetically averred loudly that such was the case. "Ramana was thrown out of his family in Madurai because he exhibited perverse behaviour even at that age. In fact, when he was a small boy, his father discovered his paedicatorous longings and urges when he tried to inflict himself upon his brothers; he took him to a local exorcist, where it was ascertained that the boy was possessed by a Satanic spirit. The exorcist asseverated that the only way to cure the boy would be to circumcise him; but on the day fixed for the clandestine procedure, the boy escaped from home and hid himself somewhere. Shortly thereafter, to ensure that the fact that his body was playing host to a malefic spirit remain unbeknownst to the world at large, the young Ramana mixed poison in his father's food and killed him; this was done when his father was already lying seriously ill with pneumonia, so that no suspicion should arise as to the cause of death. The unholy spirit that had taken up residence in the boy's body briefly entered the exorcist's body and paralysed it from head to foot, so that he would not be able to move his tongue to speak the secret that he had somehow found out as to who Ramana really was; even today the poor man lies confined to his bed, unable to release himself from Ramana's cruel curse. Confident that his brothers would not pick up the courage to speak out, Ramana resumed his ungodly nocturnal activities with them. Unfortunately for Ramana, his atthimbaer whom he was staying with after his

father's demise, found out about his Satanic nature, and frightened for his family's welfare, threw him out of the house. Not knowing what to do, Ramana came to Tiruvannamalai, because during the impending karthigaideepam season then, many little boys could be found here whose succulent flesh to prey upon. To avoid detection, Ramana stayed in the cellar containing the patala-lingam shrine. As soon as the saintly Seshadri-swamigazl saw him, he recognised Ramana to be the demon he was. Accordingly he stood guard over the patala-lingam shrine in an attempt to ensure that the evil demon did not emerge therefrom to torment people again; but his efforts failed because Ramana sent an army of demons in the guise of children to throw stones at him and frighten him away. Then Ramana hit upon the plan of posing as a Brahmajnani to deceive the world and obtain fresh victims for himself. He pretended that insects had tormented him inside the patala-lingam cellar; by means of his thaumaturgic powers he gave himself spurious wounds on his body and made everyone believe in his lies. Soon he became a famous swami in this town. Many, including Jadaipadmanabhasamy, Balanandasamy, and others tried to mend his ways, but he terrorised them by means of employment of black-magic, in which he is an expert, and chased them away. He collaborated telepathically with Aurobindo to invent a new type of counterfeit currency-note printing-machine. Why do you think Aurobindo came to Pondicherry? The police who are looking for him have no jurisdiction there- that is why. Don't think Aurobindo was imprisoned for patriotic reasons; he is a cold-blooded killer, on an equal-footing with Ramana. Ramana's prototype for the new counterfeit currency-note printing-machine is still running in Pondicherry till this day; its produce is altogether indistinguishable from the notes printed by the Sarkar. Every year a bullock cart arrives from Pondicherry for Ramana. Do you know what it is? As per the agreement between them, every year Aurobindo sends 10 lakh rupees to Ramana. Ramana wants to pretend that he is utterly impoverished, so that people are attracted to him, thinking, 'Oh! This man is so modest and simple; certainly he must be a genuine Brahmajnani...'; this is the reason he wears no clothes. Ramana has paid lakhs of rupees to Narasimha Aiyer and Paul Brunton to write good reports about him. Whomsoever goes to Ramana is doomed- do you understand? It is out of concern for your safety that we are warning you in a timely manner. Please- for your own good- pay attention to our words. Ramana initially pretends to be a jovial friend- but do you know how he tortures his victims? I will let an actual victim do the talking, instead of me... Perumal!" Now another, younger sadhu took over the blasphemous monologue- "Brother, please believe me. I was serving as the so-called Maharshi's attendant when he was staying in Virupaksha-cave. I did all

manners of service unto him- but as reward, he sodomised me everyday, sometimes even during daytime. Thinking it was a divine privilege to have bodily contact with a Brahmajnani's body, I also meekly assented to the painful humiliation. One day I asked him what was the way to God. He spat in my face and said wrathfully, 'Haven't you realised it? I am penetrating that same way everyday!'. Then he laughed at me and forced me to consume his egesta. Then he showed me a small doll made with old, stuffed cotton-rags, on which my name had been written in pencil. He thereupon said, 'If you tell anybody the truth about what I am doing here, do you know what will be your fate?'. I trembled in fear and said that I did not know. He twisted the arm of the doll and I felt a piercing pain in my own arm, as if somebody was twisting it. He laughed spitefully and asked, 'Now do you see my power?'. I fell at his feet, kissed them and begged him to stop the pain. He did so only after extracting a promise from me that I would not run away from him under any circumstances whatsoever; he further told me that if I broke the promise I would die immediately. I remained for a few more weeks. When the devil Ramana's torture became unbearable, I went to the top of the mountain, frustrated and wanting to end my life; I had decided that death would be a better fate than what I was then undergoing. At the mountain-top I was met by Seshadri-swamigazl, who placed his palms atop my head and blessed me; that very instant Ramana's evil curse over me became eviscerated. I thanked God for the mercy shown to me and since then have been avoiding Ramana with meticulous ardour. Like you are doing now, I once went to him thinking that he is God in human form. What is the result? He has tortured me so much that now even the name Ramana makes me tremble with terror. Brother, I have escaped from him, but many are those who still lie trapped by his evil snares. Save yourself before it is too late- this is all I will say!".

Another sadhu now spoke: "Ramana is a ruthless extortionist. He is mad after accumulation of worldly wealth. I ask you, brother- how is it that so much property has cropped up around a man who came from Madurai with only half-an-anna in his pocket? The fact is, Ramana covertly threatens many wealthy persons who come to the ashram, naively believing him to be some sort of divine personality; he tells them with brutal candour that unless they register a gift-deed of all their movable and immovable properties in his name, he will make all their children vomit blood and die in a matter of a single week. Those who leave the ashram ignoring Ramana's explicit ultimatums invariably lose their children or other family members: Ramana uses his Satanic powers to carry out with pitiless vengeance and merciless diligence his violent, murderous threats, perfectly suiting the action to the word everytime his victims fail to pay heed to his unconscionable demands. God alone knows

how many families have become orphaned on account of this egregious devil. First Ramana refused to allow his mother to stay with him; but subsequently he assented- why? What use would a Brahmajnani have for family-members staying along with him? The fact is, ordure from the intestines of a widowed-lady of brahmin birth, who is given to adhering with an immense degree of scrupulousness to the various religious observances mandated by the smruthis, is of profound utility in various black-magic rituals and rites; this is the reason why he permitted his mother to stay with him... Why did his older brother die at such an unusually young age? He made up his mind to publicly announce what his brother really was, to save people at large from falling into this devil's iniquitous trap; he wanted the man on the Clapham omnibus to stay out of harm's way. The result? The very next hour, he died under mysterious circumstances. Do you think it was a coincidence? Why did the devil Ramana ask his younger brother to stay with him? He wanted to keep him under his thumb always; otherwise Ramana's dark secrets might spill out-into the ears of the outside world...". Then another: "Real Brahmajnanis have a phosphorescent glow coming off their body. Have you seen any such thing in Ramana? Can a Jnani's body show symptoms of age or disease? Am I correct in saying that some of Ramana's hairs are white, and that his manner of walking divulges an obvious lameness? 6 years ago- even before Brunton's book on Ramana reached the shores of other continents- Ramana constructed an enormous cow-shed in his ashram. Where did the money come from? He was not as well known then. Who would give money to construct a cow-shed in the middle of a forest? Did you ever ask him? The money has come on a bullock-cart from Aurobindo's ashram. Even Aurobindo, who is a murderer and a habitual rapist, is afraid of this devil Ramana; see for yourself, then, how massive this devil's evil prowess must be!". The one who had introduced himself as a former attendant said: "Will anybody construct a building of such gargantuan proportions simply to house a few cows? Nowadays leopards are not so frequent. Anyway, is every house in Tiruvannamalai which has cows equipped with such a gigantic building- are not those cows also safe and healthy? Did you ever ask him what is his true motive in having built that cow-shed? Only sannyasis are buried according to Hindu-tradition; was not Ramana who professes to being an omniscient entity aware of this fact? Can a widowed lady ever obtain sannyasa? Why was he adamant that she should be buried and not cremated? Do you know what that place was formerly, where he insisted that his mother be buried? A graveyard! Is it altogether impossible to find a small strip of land at some other place in Tiruvannamalai? Why did he particularly choose that place?". "To practise black-magic rituals!" came a chorus of 2 or 3 voices. Continued the self-

proclaimed ex-attendant, "Why did that devil stop going around the Hill a decade ago? Because Lord Arunachalaeshwara Himself warned him in a dream that if he did it one more time, he would avenge the insult by killing Ramana on the spot- then and there. Such evil demons must not even stay at this sacred place, let alone circumambulate it...". The leader of the gang said- "See how poor Perumal-swami has suffered at the hands of Ramana! Do you want a similar fate to befall you also? Ramana is definitely a practitioner of black-magic. People who pay a visit his ashram soon lose a son, a wife, a mother or some other person most beloved to them. Have you not noticed the fact? Some evil energy is always lurking around Ramana. Escape from him before it is too late. We are talking to you with such great travail only to save you!". All of their menacing looks were directed at me. If I had said anything else, they would have throttled me on the spot, I am sure; so I said as calmly as I could, 'Yes, yes; thank you for warning me in a timely manner...'. The leader seemed relieved and reassured. How could he know that inwardly I felt a crazy, savage urge to break his neck- by means of biting it off? He said: "Good. You see, we have averted you from a great danger. In return you must do us a favour. Will you do it? Do you not feel grateful to us for having alerted you as to the real nature of the devil known as Ramana?"

G.: [having to pretend to play along] What do you want me to do?

The gang-leader of the menacing sadhus: On a certain date, we will take you to the district-munsiff's court here. You must answer as we prepare you before-hand. Is that agreed?

The Ex-attendant who claims to have suffered at Sri Bhagawan's hands: There are many more atrocities and acrimonies which have been committed by that devil Ramana. It is more fully described in this book. Here, peruse this at your leisure- [thrusts a book entitled, 'Ramana Magarishigalin nijasowroopam' into my hands]

Ga.Le.: [sounding impatient all of a sudden] Tell me, boy; if you are going to prove useless I must look for-

Now we were walking near agni-theertham; at that precise moment I spotted walking on the opposite side of the road a familiar face- it was Yogi Ramaiah! Although I was not on terms of personal acquaintance, I had seen the yogi in the ashram more than once before; I had had no difficulty in recognising him to be the gentleman described [-with all of that respected author's usual, characteristic, unique, pleonastic, verbose, circumlocutory elegance, if I am successfully making my point!-] in Mr. Brunton's Secret India; now his chance presence at this spot had turned out to be a godsend for me; I forthwith called out 'Ramaiah-garu...!' repeatedly to him in a screeching, beseeching voice and he came rushing to this bandit-like group of kabada-sannyasis[-for in my

opinion that is what they are]; I immediately jumped to his side and firmly clasped hold of his comforting hand. The irate gang-leader glared at me like he would like to decapitate me. In a few words quickly uttered, I explained to Yogi Ramaiah what had happened; he vaguely seemed to comprehend; then catching sight of the ex-attendant lurking at the back of the group, he suddenly burst out in a furious explosion packed with Telengu vocabulary, out of which I could not make head or tail. His words were shouting; yet he was not talking loudly. There was some intrinsic power of stern righteousness stitched into the very fabric of his being that seemed to make any injustice encountered by it spontaneously ashamed of itself. I spectated now in awe that power which had impressed Mr. Brunton a long time ago. The gang seemed somewhat cowed for the time being; we made our way to the ashram. The yogi was asking me something, but I could not understand a single word of what he was saying. He tapped his cheek with his palm several times and gesticulated unto me a furrow of the brow together with a questioning jerk of the head. I shook my head to indicate that I had not been physically harmed. As soon as we reached the ashram, I tried to make my way to Bhagawan as usual; but the yogi stationed me outside the sarvadhikari's office and gestured to me by means of demonstrating forth his palm twice that I was to wait there until newer instructions evinced themselves. Minutes later the sarvadhikari came out- manifestly in great fury- and showed me a close-range group-photograph of Bhagawan and a few of his devotees; in the image, he agitatedly pressed the tip of his index finger upon a man standing nearby Bhagawan holding a pair of leather-sandals in his hands; 'He wanted you to testify against Bhagawan, by way of asseverating in Court that he is a wicked person- is that not so? Ivanthane; nanraga partthu sol!' said he. Peering closer, I saw that it was indeed the man, belonging to the gang of kabada-sannyasis that had hijacked me, who had claimed to be an ex-attendant of the master; to discover that the master had permitted such a heinous wretch to associate itself with him in any manner at all disturbed my emotional equilibrium not insignificantly- if hearing such flagitiously odious words being spoken about the beloved master was the first shock awaiting me this morning, this was the second. 'Yes- yes.' I replied to the sarvadhikari dolorously. So the man actually had served as an attendant to Bhagawan once upon a time- his motive in coming to the master, then, must have been to pretend to be a loyal aficionado of the Maharshi for a few months or years, to withdraw himself subsequently, and to then make all sorts of obscenely horrendous claims about him based on the strength of the fact of actually having served him for sometime, albeit only with this execrable purpose in mind- but why had Bhagawan not thwarted this sinister design of



his? The master, I am aware, sees through people: surely the motives of this despicable, diabolical villain in coming forward to serve him must have been clear to him- why then had he permitted it? My head was swimming with questions. We all marched into the Hall. One look at our faces, and Bhagawan asked smilingly, 'Ennayittru?'. The yogi spoke to the master first and then the sarvadhikari; I said nothing, but was looking downcast at the floor. Lamented the sarvadhikari- 'Last week he has intimidated Raja besides snatching away from him all the ashram's mail that day; now it is Gajapathi- the malfeasances of these fiends seem to go on never-endingly...' Even as his ears were processing their exasperated jeremiads, B. quietly held out his hand in my direction. I instinctively reached out to him, and only then noticed the small book handed over to me by the dastardly ex-attendant still clutched in my hand. I tried to seize my hand back, because I was sure that the material constituting the book would contain nothing good, and I did not want B. to undergo what I felt would be an ignominy in perusing it; but it was too late; the depraved volume- I felt sure that that was just what it warranted being called- was in the master's deft hands already. Presently the yogi prostrated and left. The sarvadhikari began a fresh tirade against the enemies who were raining down incessant troubles upon the ashram.

B.: [placidly] Why do you begrudge them their little joys? They are doing their job properly; likewise let us do ours.

With that he gave the sarvadhikari to understand that the matter stood dismissed; the latter reluctantly trudged out of the Hall after prostrating in front of the Sofa. Now the master patiently perused the villain's book; after sometime he laid it aside, laughing, saying- 'Why is he complaining that if he had had more money he would have printed a bigger book with more content? If he had come here, we could have gladly given him all the money he needed! Possibly he thinks I am angry with him, poor fellow...'

TKS.: [sadly] It is Perumal again, is that not so?

B.: Yes, yes...

TKS.: B. is not allowing the ashram to prosecute him; we ought to file a suit alleging criminal defamation... Justice is on our side; why should we not approach the courts? If we leave him like this, there will be no end to his atrocities...

B.: Why is everybody perturbed? He is only doing good. You may take it that I have myself authorised him to write and publish these things; I have permitted him long ago. Let more such books be published. Let many others bring out such works. If on account of such publications no one comes to me, I shall consider it a great favour shown to me. In fact, books containing scandals sell better than others. It is really an excellent, novel method to make money. I

wish everybody in the ashram would start bringing out such books about me...  
[laughs]

After sometime B. addressed me thus of his own accord: Why are you so dejected?

G.: Why does the omnipotent B. allow such negativistic occurrences to take place?

The master did not make a response but gazed at me steadily, and eyes streaming with uncontrollable tears, I repeated word-for-word everything that those horrid kabada-sannyasis had ranted into my ears. I could not help it. If I kept it to myself I would likely burst with indignation; on the other hand, I could not even imagine telling anybody- apart from the master- for fear of arousing in profuse abundance their horror needlessly. So, what else to do? Standing close to the Sofa, I repeated in a whisper all of those disgraceful words that had burnt themselves into my ears only 2 hours ago. The master listened with a steadily widening smile. At the end he said: 'They have spoken and you have listened; it is finished. Why do you go on dwelling upon the matter?'

G.: Their vitriolic words have left a strong impression in my mind; how am I to erase it?

B.: This is where people go wrong. Listen to the following story-

Once upon a time 2 disciples of Sage Romaharshana were travelling together. At one point in their journey, they came to a huge river that was flowing with a terrifically strong current. As the disciples readied themselves to cross the river, they beheld a young and beautiful apsara also attempting to cross it. The apsara pleadingly asked if they could help her cross the river. The disciples were confused as to what to do because they had taken both these vows under the instructions of their master- to help all living beings out of distress, and also to never touch the flesh of a woman. Suddenly the older disciple tore off a part of his dhoti and made a hammock out of the torn piece. He asked the apsara to get into the hammock and deposited her gently and safely on the opposite bank of the river; he lifted her not bodily but by means only of holding on to the cloth of the hammock he had fashioned for the purpose. Then the 2 disciples continued on their trip. The younger disciple was burning with indignation. He felt that the older disciple had violated a direct commandment of their Guru. In helping the apsara, he felt that the other disciple had obeyed the letter of their Guru's covenant but not the spirit. For sometime he kept quiet; but after many hours had passed in silence, the poor man could contain himself no longer; he burst out, addressing the older disciple, "Brother, what a fell deed hath thou committed in carrying that apsara across the river!". The elder disciple replied with a smile, "Brother, a long

while ago I didst set her down upon a bank of the river; but why arte thou still carrying her?"

TKS.: What is the moral of the story?

B.: Do what is right at a given moment and leave it behind. Anything which carries you away from the present is harmful divergence. Live in the present- in the HERE and NOW.

TKS.: Bhagawan does not prevent ill occurrences from happening. Are we then to give ourselves to understand that everything happens for the greater good?

B.: You may do so. But try to abide in that state wherein worldly appearances have no power to perturb your inner tranquility.

G.: This former attendant of Bhagawan's, Perumal, seems to have become a complete enemy of the ashram and Bhagawan. If, atleast in cases appurtenant to such depraved persons, Bhagawan will slightly deviate from his routine policy of not showing any display of siddhis, such persons will come to cultivate fear of Bhagawan. Thereafter they will not do any mischief. If I have said something wrong, I crave B.'s pardon...

TKS.: I also agree with this...

B.: [smiling] Summa-irutthal is the greatest siddhi. One who has mastered this siddhi need not know any other.

TKS.: But believing Perumal's rumours people may stop coming to our ashram.

B.: Exactly. Let us finance the poor chap; if we do not come to his aid- who will? If you meet him, ask him to come here if he has run out of money for printing additional copies of the book. One feels sorry to see such a thin book. Already many splendid ideas for [incorporation in] the next edition he has communicated to Gaja here; I also have many good ideas; let us also invite suggestions from everybody in the ashram; in the 2nd edition a lot more scandals can be added.

Mr. TKS looked horrified by the joke.

P>S> I never saw the Perumal character again, nor the band of goons he came with that day. But the deranged wretch did cause further troubles for the ashram. Sometime after the above incident took place, a subpoena arrived at the ashram from the district-munsiff's court of Tiruvannamalai- summoning none other than Bhagawan himself to Court! By virtue of his contacts with Caucasians in eminent official positions in what was then His Majesty's Government, it was Mr. Nambiar, I think, who managed to obtain exemption for Bhagawan from appearance in Court, subject to the condition that the Maharshi agree to be examined on Commission at the ashram premises; to this effect a suitable piece of publication was made in the Gazette

Extraordinary at the time. I am stating all this here to highlight one thing only: even after all this, the master's attitude towards Perumal remained stoically empathetic; I heard he even solicitously arranged for the rascal to be provided with medicines at a time when he himself was critically ill during the months of adverse health that led to his death. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

S>M>

Q.: I carry out vichara in the following manner; that is to say I investigate thus- 'Consciousness does not by itself think any thoughts. Yet thoughts are made up of consciousness in fact. Again, thoughts must have their common origin in a thinker. This thinker cannot be consciousness itself. Yet he manufactures thoughts all the time. Where does he come from? Who is he? Why does he come up with thoughts? It all seems to be most puzzling.' Is that right?

B.: This is not vichara in the sense that is useful towards the purpose of Realising the Self. The thief cannot apprehend the thief. You can never find or catch hold of mind with mind. It is like a dog chasing its own tail, or like a man chasing his own shadow. Transcend the mind and find it non-existent. But how to do this? It cannot be done by doing at all. No mental activity can ever discover the Self. 'Be still.': this is the direct technique for Realising the Self. 'Who am I?' is for those who are, for some reason or another, unable to keep themselves [mentally] still.

Q.: It is said that owing to vasanas we are unable to keep the mind still.

B.: Quite so.

Q.: How to eradicate these vasanas?

B.: By eradicating that one called 'I' who possesses them.

Q.: Now we are back at square-one.

B.: Commence the practice, get on with it and thenceforward do not worry about anything. You need not see all the way to the goal and mark out your route before commencing the journey. Take the first step- and then the next one, and so on and so forth, until one day you find that you have reached. Realisation cannot be intellectually planned. There is no need for any plan. Planning is just another excuse to deliberately procrastinate the journey. Have you not heard the lines-

Lead, Kindly Light, amidst the encircling gloom, lead Thou me on!

The night is dark, and I am far from home, lead Thou me on!

Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see the distant scene;

One step enough for me.

So, start NOW.

S>M>

Q.: Please instruct me on how to obtain peace of mind.

B.: Peace is our real nature. It need not be attained. Thoughts must be obliterated. Then there will be peace and nothing but peace.

Q.: I have been trying to obliterate them but I am not successful.

B.: Yathoyathonischarati manashchanchalamasthiram thasthatho niyamyathadhathmanyevavasham nayet. That is the only way.

Q.: I cannot bring my mind to meditate.

Mr. Knowles: An elephant when free puts its trunk here and there and feels restless. If a length of chain is given to it, the trunk holds it and is no longer restless. Similarly, mind without an aim is restless; with an aim it remains at peace.

Q.: All this is merely theory. I have read many books on Advaita-vedanta. Many of them say the same thing which you have said just now. But it is of no use. It is practically impossible to make the mind concentrate.

B.: Concentration is impossible so long as there are poorvasamskaras; these obstruct bhakti also.

Q.: I have read Bhagawan's brief works. I have tried to follow the instructions therein contained. I still cannot make my mind concentrate. What shall I do?

B.: Abhyasa and vairagya are the essential ingredients of success.

Q.: What is the difference between them?

B.: Abhyasa and vairagya are both necessary. Vairagya means absence of diffused thoughts; abhyasa means concentration on one thought only. The one is the positive and the other the negative aspect of meditation.

Q.: I am not able to concentrate by myself. I am in search of a force to help me.

B.: Yes, that is what is called Grace. Individually we are incapable of Realising because the mind is weak. Grace is necessary. Satsangam is meant only for gaining introversion of mind. There is however nothing new to get. Just as a weak man comes under the control of a stronger one, the weak mind of the mumukshu surrenders to the Heart easily in the presence of the strong-minded sage.

Q.: How to obtain Grace?

B.: That which is, is only Grace; there is nothing else.

S>M>

Q.: Some years ago, the psychoanalytic theoretician Herr P. E. Bleuler discovered a new variety of dementia-praecox that is referred to by him as 'schizophrenie'. I read of the symptoms mentioned by him. They are remarkably similar to the behaviour of the crazy so-called 'Enlightened-men' in this part of the world. I don't mean any offence to the Maharshi, of course. But how shall we explain the fact that in India, many of those whom the public believe to be spiritually enlightened behave just as if they were wholly insane?

Is this apparent insanity brought about as a result of what Sri Maharshi refers to as Self-Realisation? Or are these people actually insane, and therefore mistaken to be Enlightened-souls by the credulous public? I hear that even in this town there was such a man a few years ago, named Seshadri.

B.: [somewhat severely] We set too much store by our intellects. We want the entirety of the cosmos to be capable of being vivisected by and with the light of our intellects. We refuse to admit that there are matters which certainly are forever beyond the grasp of man's intellect. The intellect without doubt is useful for carrying out day-to-day activities. But can it tell you why are you now bound up in this anthropomorphic body? The body does not claim to be 'I'. You say 'I'. Yet you also say that you are the body. Is there any meaning in it? First tackle and solve this puzzle. Thereafterwards we can discuss the distinction between enlightenment and insanity. [after a pause] All our ideas concerning Emancipated-souls are merely and exclusively our own fanciful conjectures. From our point of view, the Jivanmukta might remain with his body positioned in such fashion as to not betray the slightest hint of movement, as still as a sculptured-rock; or again he might move about haphazardly, talk unintelligibly, be dressed in torn and feculent clothing, and throw stones on people who come to see him; but either way, all this is only from our point of view. The Jnani has no volition which can be used to direct any activity. He is already one with Parabrahman. From his point of view, nothing is happening, nothing ever happened and nothing ever could happen. We see the Jnani talking and laughing. So, we think that the Jnani experiences himself talking and laughing. It is not so. Whatever it is that is seen by you: that is not the Jnani. The Jnani is simply Jnana, and Jnana cannot be glimpsed by or with mind or mental faculty[-that is to say, the faculty of intellection or ratiocination]. We think that our existence is the same as bodily sustenance. The same mistake is extended to the Jnani also: consequently, you think that the Jnani is the body you see before you. So, when that body performs actions, you assume that the Jnani is acting; but it is sheer absurdity to suppose that this might be possible. Action is alien to Jnana. The Jnani's perpetual experience is that he is not doing anything. The Jnani's bodily actions have nothing to do with him. They exist from the point of view of the onlooker only. As for people suffering from dementia-praecox being mistaken for Emancipated-souls, let it be so if it be so. It is no loss to you.

S>M>

Q.: The Charaka-samhita asserts that the human body is a miniature replica of the cosmos in its entirety. Many other ancient sacred-books of Hinduism seem to convey the same thing. If this idea were to be carried forward to its

logical conclusion, it would mean that the cosmos as a whole is somehow alive as an individual, and that we are infinitesimally tiny, microcosmic living parts of that supreme, macrocosmic living individual. Does Sri Bhagawan support this bizarre view?

B.: [smiling] The gastrointestinal-microbiota living in your body might be pondering over this same question at this very moment!

Q.: But the cosmos is made of inert matter: except life-forms inhabiting this planet, of course.

B.: What is your idea of life? In fact, everything is alive. There can never be anything apart from Life. That is my experience.

S>M>

Q.: I have often heard Sri Bhagawan saying, 'Call the tree a standing man and call the man a walking tree.'. I fail to understand the meaning of this cryptic statement; I request Sri Bhagawan to tell me the meaning.

B.: [no response]

Q.: Does it mean 'Everything is alive.' as Sri Bhagawan just now indicated?

B.: What else prompted you to ask this question at the present point in time?

S>M>

Q.: I wonder if it will be denied by him that Sri Bhagawan's teachings do seem to harbour an anti-civilisation sentiment. If everybody is to shut their eyes to all the lacunae, defects and deficiencies in this world and abandon themselves exclusively to pursuit of spiritual perfection, what will happen to the world? All townships and cities will disappear, because man would have moved back into the jungles, preferring now to share space of habitation with his furry friends. The idea that everything is an illusion, that free-will is only a myth taught to simpletons, and that the world is naught but a mere dream seems to me to possess the potential to make man move backwards, and transform into beast again. Am I right? Please do not feel offended by the question.

B.: Ajata-advaita is not meant to be used in conjunction with other philosophies. Your thinking is as follows: 'If everything is a dream, why should I make any effort to do anything? Once I wake up, nothing of all my effort will remain; so why should I do any work? Since everything is an illusion, why should I do anything at all?'. This is flagrant misuse of Ajata-advaita. Ajata-advaita does not recommend, suggest or put up with inactivity, slovenliness, indolence, voluptuousness or sybaritism. The dreamer is part of his dream. An illusory being works inside an illusory world so that his illusory needs may be satisfied: of course there is nothing wrong in it. Ajata-advaita does not condemn work, labour or effort at all. It is identification with the doer that is condemned. Knowing that everything is illusion, still one so destined has to

perform work in the world, for if his prarabdha be that way, it cannot be avoided. It is not that only work is illusory and therefore subject to total futility; the same applies to the worker also. So, an illusory worker performs illusory work in an illusory world: how could there be anything inappropriate about this? If Ajata-advaita is used as an excuse by somebody to shirk action which is of such nature as for it to be their duty to carry out the same, who is to blame? Any resource is a double-edged weapon: it can be put to use for good as well as for bad. A knife can be used to chop vegetables; but if the same knife is used to stab somebody, the knife cannot be blamed for the murder, nor can we ban knives for the reason that they might be used so as for the purpose of serving such perverse utilities and ends.

Q.: If the ego does not exist at all, how can it have duties to perform?

B.: You are mixing up the state of Ajata-advaita with the 'common-sense' world that you experience on a day-to-day basis; they are immiscible. An illusory ego can have illusory duties. In a dream you might be an emperor running a vast kingdom; you would have many responsibilities, duties and functions to discharge. After you wake up in your little hut, you merrily laugh at it all; but while the dream lasted the world you experienced then was quite real to you, and thus you had to act accordingly. Do not mistake the theoretical knowledge that the cosmos is unreal to be a license to do whatever you want.

Q.: But why not? It is my dream after all! So what if I stab somebody? He is merely an imaginary projection created by my own mind. Even his birth never took place, and neither did mine. So why should I not do whatever I like, everything being fiction?

B.: If those around you start thinking this way, imagine what your plight will be! [laughter in the Hall] The emperor inside the dream would be committing a grave moral error if he were to be slipping from his duties as head-of-state, considering the cosmos around him to be unreal. Yet in actual fact there never was any emperor nor any kingdom: only an impoverished rag-picker dreaming inside his little hut.

Q.: So, Sri Bhagawan suggests that dreams carry with them an inherent moral obligation to behave in acceptable fashion- i.e., according to prevalent societal norms.

B.: If you are actually in the state of no-mind, then you can do whatever you like, but as long as you perceive a world, it is better to respect it as being God's creation. Being a mortal, one ought not to pretentiously elevate himself to the state of Immortality. There is a difference between a cat which has stripes painted on its back and a tiger.



Q.: But usually Sri Bhagawan says, 'All are verily Immortal; the Self alone exists.'; whereas today he is admitting that mortality and illusion do exist.

B.: I am talking from my point of view. Likewise, you talk from yours.

S>M>

Q.: Some fake holy-men are commanding those who come to them in the following manner- 'God appeared in my dream yesterday night. He wants you to hand over all your wealth to me, who am your Guru appointed by Him in order as as to facilitate your Emancipation. You should hand over to me all your movable and immovable properties and work as a servant for me hereafter, doing all sorts of menial jobs for me; remember, only if I am pleased with you will Emancipation be possible for you. You have taken birth only so that you can have the privilege of being my slave. Immediately arrange for all your wealth to be transferred to me, and at an auspicious hour you may join here as my servant. Follow my instructions at once; otherwise God shall be frightfully displeased with you. Do not incur his wrath... Simply obey whatever I am saying. Do not try and judge me with your puny mind, for I am Brahman; whereas you are only a mere mortal. Could it ever be possible for you to judge Me, who verily am the Beyond? So, obey my words; otherwise you will never attain Emancipation.'. These counterfeit holy-men siphon off wealth from many naive people in this manner, conning them thoroughly; they also use their disciples as a means for gaining illicit sexual gratification. They justify their perverse behaviour by saying, 'Whatever is being done is being done by Brahman. I am in the Transcendental-state and therefore have no free-will. As a result, I cannot be held responsible for the behaviour of this body. I have nothing to do with this body or its actions. I am one with Parabrahman.'. If somebody tries to expose them in the press, he suddenly dies a mysterious death. So, Ajata-advaita is being severely misused by these fraudulent holy-men. What shall we do about it?

B.: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Labour refers to thought; we find ourselves heavy laden with worries and anxieties. The remedy? Let us go to Him, the Lord of the Heart. He shall give us rest: freedom from thought. We need not get affrightened having beheld the iniquities of the world. Let us throw all our burdens upon Him completely. Let us surrender to Him without reserve and He shall take care of us. Your job in life is not to make remedies for perceived defects and deficiencies in His creation. Your job in life is to find Him, to unite with Him. If, after you have attained the union aforesaid, He wishes to make you His vassal for the purpose of bringing about changes in the world, that is another matter. Know your priorities in life and act accordingly; do not get side-tracked.

S>M>

Q.: Does devotion lead to Emancipation?

B.: Yes, but it has to be uncompromisingly unwavering to the point of perfect self-surrender. Listen to the following story-

Once upon a time, a certain doubt arose in the mind of the goddess Parvati. She wanted to know from her husband who was her Lord's most favourite devotee. She did not think that he would name her in response, but had assumed that the reply would either be Nandi or Bhrungi. To her shock, he said: 'It is Paranjothi-muni.'. The name was not familiar with the goddess and she wanted to know who it was. Her curiosity was aroused. 'Who is this obscure man who has managed to win the affection of my Lord?', she thought bemusedly. She then spoke: 'What justification can you offer, my Lord, for having named him in response to this question on my part?'. The Lord did not offer her a verbal explanation. Instead he removed all his paraphernalia and accoutrements, and wore a simple garland strung together with rudraksha beads. To hid the terrific glow on his body, which exuded divine radiance from every pore, he smeared holy ash on his body. Then he bade her to follow him. They held hands and lo! behold, the next moment, both of them had arrived in front of Paranjothi-muni's house. The goddess had turned herself invisible, whereas Siva looked like an ordinary ascetic. The ascetic called out for some food from the house. The servant of the household invited the ascetic to come inside, but he would enter only if the master of the house personally invited him to come in. The muni's wife appeared on the scene even whilst the servant was talking to the ascetic; she begged the ascetic to wait for a few minutes. 'My husband, who has taken a vow for perpetuity that he would not eat his first meal of the day until and unless he has beforehand managed to succeed in feeding atleast 100 devotees of the Lord, has as usual gone to the town nearby to feed devotees of the Lord he would be able to find there; please be patient until his arrival, since you say that you will come inside only upon his invitation.', she begged the ascetic. The ascetic replied that he would wait in the nearby temple, and that word might be sent to him when the master of the house had arrived.

And so on the familiar story went. When the part was reached where Siva asks the parents to call forth their child to partake of the food together with them, and the father regretfully answers that it would not be possible, Sri Bhagawan's eyes had welled up with tears. Next, Siva adamantly wants the parents to call forth their child, not heeding their pleas endeavouring to tacitly communicate that for him to join them would now, and indeed hereafter, be impossible; then, finding themselves able no more to defy the ascetic's authoritative injunction that the son be called forth to the spot at once, the

mother reluctantly tries to pronounce his name, but her voice becomes choked and tears stream down her cheeks in torrents. At this point, Sri Bhagawan abruptly discontinued talking; some violent, convulsive emotion seemed to have swallowed him up entirely; it was almost frightening to see. His chest had taken on a mild crimson tint and it was heaving up and down; his breathing sounded strained; his usually calm and passive face was beautifully disfigured by fervour of feeling and it was twitching spasmodically. An almost inaudible, choked sob or groan escaped his lips. His tear-soaked face was sharply illumined from the side by the bright ferocity of the mid-day sun; a drop caught on his beard was dangling therefrom precariously; by its pulchritudinous iridescence, filled with all manners of lovely, exotic colour, it made itself strikingly prominent to the tiny mortals seated in the Hall; now it caught the light and shone and sparkled like some rare celestial gem lit by the effulgence of the gods; and then, lo! behold, it fell down and was seen nevermore. The master suddenly turned his face away from the Hall and directed his gaze outwards through the window. An entire hour elapsed before anybody dared to demand his attention.

S>M>

Q.: A similar story is found in the Bible, where God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac. In an analogous manner, there also the son is ultimately not killed but saved. But what is the moral of these stories? Should one be prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of God?

B.: Yes. But the first and foremost sacrifice that is needed is that of oneself. It suffices that the ego be sacrificed; this sacrifice is known as ananyasharanagati.

Q.: Another story concerning bhakti now comes to my mind. This is a story in which Lord Vishnu gives Narada-muni a bowl filled with sesame-oil to the brim and asks him to go around the world thrice holding the same, at the same time ensuring that not a drop got spilt. Narada-muni fulfills this task successfully but fails to remember God's name whilst carrying out the job. Does it mean that we have to remember God's name always?

B.: The best way to contemplate upon or remember Him always is to hold on to Him in the Heart.

Q.: I find Him to be highly elusive.

B.: What you are saying is ridiculous. It is like deliberately closing your eyes and turning away, and then complaining that you cannot see the sun. Can that be the sun's fault? God is wholly impartial and He is always the same Self; He does not move at all. It is your attention that is wavering. Give up your attachment to other things once and for all. Then you will find that He and He alone exists.

S>M>

Q.: What prevents me from being Enlightened at this very moment?

B.: 'I'.

Q.: But sometimes Sri Bhagawan says that it is one's vasanas that obscure the Self.

B.: The aham-vritti connects all the vasanas of the individual into a cohesive personality which says 'I'. With vasanas the aham-vritti is perversive and obstreperous; without them it subsists in a state of relative calmness; when it is in the latter condition it can be made to dissolve more easily; that is why eradication of vasanas is suggested. However, the following also is possible, although exceedingly rare: if the aspirant is humongously thirsty for Realisation, he can bypass all of his vasanas and straightaway facilitate dissolution of the aham-vritti. When this happens, the vasanas remain, but are powerless to cause bondage or attachment; it is like facing a snake whose poisonous glands and fangs have been removed: all it can do is hiss. Jnanis may seem to have some trace of personal preferences and tastes left only for this reason: vasanas impregnated in the memory. The Jnani's vasanas cannot cause attachment; nor can they cause rebirth. His vasanas are known as bhoga-vasanas or bhokruthva-vasanas. The thing that prevents Realisation is 'I' and nothing but 'I'. But to get rid of this 'I' or aham-vritti, eradication of as many vasanas as can be found is certainly a sine qua non as far as the man on the Clapham omnibus is concerned. If you are playing a game of chess, only if you happen to be an expert among experts can you straightaway check-mate the king in a few moves; otherwise you will have to vanquish the entirety of his army before you can get anywhere near him.

Q.: What if the opposing player is a dunce?

B.: Do you think that is likely? Here, the player is playing to keep his life. The ego or aham-vritti will make every attempt to escape or avoid destruction. Breaking it is certainly not easy. Killing the ego is no joke. Are you aware of a certain expression which is used in English [speaking in that language]- 'THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS'? The experience of getting rid of the ego is like that: it is akin to an exorcism. Do you think that the ego will go away if you nicely ask him to go away, in polite and polished language, with all due courtesy of manner? A vernichtungskrieg must be launched against the ego so that he is ultimately uprooted and annihilated.

Q.: Who is the other belligerent?

B.: Grace.

S>M>

Q.: What is the ideal number of hours of sleep per day for the mumukshu? What time should we go to sleep and when should we awaken everyday so

that our sadhana is rendered most efficacious?

B.: 9 or 10 PM to 2 AM. But another, better method that is prescribed is not to bother about sleep at all. Whenever sleep overtakes you, you can do nothing about it, so simply go to sleep at such times; but vigilantly remain fixed in the Self every moment of your waking life and take up such Self-abidance again the moment you wake, and that ought to be enough. Thus, even during sleep, the same current Self-abidance will be working; this much is evident because if a man goes to sleep with any strong thought working in his mind, he finds the same thought to be operative the moment he wakes up.

S>M>

Q.: When the acharyazl of Kanchi came here to perform giri-pradakshina about 7 years ago, it seems that somebody forming part of his entourage suggested to him that he might visit Sri Bhagawan's ashram. Having heard this suggestion, the acharya seems to have become so scandalised and outraged thereby that he forthwith expelled the man who made it from his entourage, and refused thereafter to ever again see his face even. The reason he seems to be upset with Bhagawan is that Bhagawan gave sannyasa to his mother, who was a widow, and what is more, buried her as though she had been a genuine sannyasi. Bhagawan was born in a brahmin family. Why then did he flout brahmin custom so blatantly? Bhagawan himself did not accept sannyasa from any monastic-order. How then could he initiate others into it? Further, how could a widow be initiated into sannyasa? Bhagawan has also buried his mother in this place. Since his mother was not at all a genuine sannyasi, this place is a graveyard; that being the case, how can orthodox brahmins enter here? Will they not be defiled with theetu? Moreover, Bhagawan has committed a grave injustice to his mother by burying her, because no proper funeral rites have been performed for her. How will she now get the offerings of rice-ball and sesame seeds? I suggest that Bhagawan should compensate for his error of judgement by means of arranging for the exhumation of his mother's body, so that we can cremate the same in the traditional manner. Otherwise Bhagawan's mother will be starving in the pithru-lokam without being able to receive offerings of rice-ball and sesame seeds. Following this my suggestion is the only way for Bhagawan to repair the bad-name he has earned internationally for flouting Hindu customs so flagrantly, first by falsely bestowing sannyasa on a widow and then by burying her as though she were a genuine sannyasi. What does Bhagawan say? I can arrange for workers to excavate the sarcophagus by tomorrow evening; if Bhagawan is not interested in so doing, his brother can perform the final rites for his mother. I am sure everyone here will be willing to bear the expenses collectively. Does Bhagawan agree?

B.: No, Bhagawan does not agree.

Q.: But the bad-name that Bhagawan has earned for-

B.: Let it be. You stay away from such places as these. Why have you come here? Is it not theetu?

Q.: But-

B.: Be gone, man!

S>M>

Q.: Will engaging in spiritual practice impair my ability to function normally in the world?

B.: Vichara carries no such risk.

Q.: Can I engage myself in vichara and attend to office-duties at the same time? Is it possible? Is it feasible? Is it advisable?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Will not vichara make the mind go into a blank and make worldly activity impossible?

B.: No.

Q.: But suppose I do it incorrectly or improperly- then my mind might go into a blank and make my normal functioning in the world impossible. Is that right? I am terrified of becoming like a statue. I have a family to support.

B.: Vichara does not carry any such risks. It is wholly a risk-free practice.

S>M>

Q.: I have surrendered to God completely. Atleast I believe so. How to test whether my surrender has been effective or not: I mean, what is the acid test?

B.: Total absence of mental perturbation.

S>M>

Q.: What does surrender actually mean?

B.: You no longer have any cares. All your cares are His. This is sharanagati, this is bhakti and this is prapatti. Surrender, provided it is unconditional, sets up a current that makes the body automatically do the things that it is destined to do [according to its prarabdha]. Giving up cares is called surrender; conversely, perfect surrender obviates need for any cares. Leave the body to its inevitable prarabdha and you remain as you are.

S>M>

Q.: What about the 4 purusharthas? Does Bhagawan disagree with them?

B.: It is a mistake to think that those 4 are mutually accommodative.

Q.: Meaning only 1 of those can be followed at any given point in time?

B.: Yes.

Q.: That is not the opinion of the Hindu sacred-books.

B.: You may cherish whichever opinion you like. Moksha is not something to be aspired for after taking retirement from profitable employment. Effort made

for Moksha has to be interwoven thoroughly with one's day-to-day routine. There is no need to wait until one turns 65 and then go out in search of an uninhabited cave or a deserted forest; there is no point in doing so.

Q.: The sacred-books also say that the 4 purusharthas have to be balanced equally.

B.: But that is not what I am saying. Moksha is the one and only priority; everything else is subordinate to it and everything else accomodates itself into it. Remain in the life of the world but yet be a sincere mumukshu.

Q.: But such a view finds no support in the Hindu sacred-books.

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: Does Sri Bhagawan agree with the following quote of Martin Luther's: 'Sufficit igitur nobis haec cognitio, non egredi animas ex corporibus in periculum cruciatum et paenarum inferni, sed esse eis paratum cubiculum, in quo dormiant in pace.'?

B.: As far as the Ajata-advaita school is concerned, the individual soul does not exist at all. So, how can the question of what happens to it after death be taken seriously?

Q.: What of the experience of individuality?

B.: There is no such experience. If you try to trace the root of this so-called experience of individuality, it will lead you to the Self only.

S>M>

A severely physically deformed and mentally retarded man has been brought to the ashram. All his 4 limbs seem paralysed and appear as though somebody with a poor knowledge of the functional anatomy of man has skewered them impatiently onto a torso. His face carries a vacant, lost look. Saliva is drooling continuously off his perennially open mouth, a side of which is twisted and contorted, leaving open to revelation the rotting gums inside. He does not make eye-contact with anybody; the eyes are whitish, glazed, and wholly lifeless. Bedsores are visible all along the back of his body, and his bodily frame is definitely emitting a foul odour from its person. Occasionally he makes some gurgling noises with his throat. His parents have brought him here with the fond hope that Sri Bhagawan would cure him. They showed the master a cabinet-sized photograph of the man, taken when he was a youth; in this he seems quite dapper.

Q.: My name is Sooryaprakasam Chettiar. We are coming from Neyveli. My son is now 40 years old. When called by name, he does not even know that he ought to respond. What we have done to deserve this sin we do not know. He can consume only liquid food, and this has to be poured into his mouth. He does not know to tell us that he wants to pass bowel movements or urine;

we notice after the act has taken place and clean him. He was fine until we got him married to a girl from Karoor. Then the trouble started. Within a few months after the wedding, the girl wanted him to come to Karoor so that both of them could stay with her parents. Naturally, my son is immensely attached to us, and consequently he refused. She refused to go to bed with him. They had frequent quarrels. One day she slapped him and stormed out of the house, saying, 'Tomorrow by this time you shall have forgotten your own name, and also the faces of your parents who are now so beloved to you.'. My son merely laughed in response. Sadly, that was to be the penultimate occasion for us to hear him laugh. The next day morning, we found a slain rooster in front of our house; its neck was slashed and the blood was strewn all around the house; at certain spots along the perimeter surrounding the building, strange symbols were inscribed with charcoal; we also found a goat's tongue outside the window of my son's bedroom; the tongue was smeared with black-kolleryon and pierced with a slender fish-bone. My wife was terrified at beholding all this but I and my son simply mentally brushed aside the incident with nonchalance; my son treated the whole thing as some sort of grand joke, and even said with optimistic jocularly, 'Maybe she has given this dead cock to us as a pourboire by which to remember her; for, just like her, this bird is a highly quarrelsome creature...'; having said so he laughed; this was his last and final laughter. That very evening, my dear son suffered a sudden paralytic attack, and ever since then he has been like this. Till now we would have tried close to a 100 different doctors belonging to different schools of medicine. All of them stand baffled by this case. Despite their best efforts they are not able to do anything for my dear son. I travelled to the house of my daughter-in-law at Karoor begging them to take back the curse; I was prepared to pay them any sum as ransom. But they jeered at me the moment I set foot on their doorstep and had me thrown out of the house summarily; I further tried pleading for mercy, standing outside the house and shouting out my angst, but they laughed at me and then set their dog on me; it bit me 3 times, causing me to be hospitalised for 4 weeks; the vicious dog mauled me in the region of the groin, ripping and injuring my scrotum and testicles. After this incident my wife said that we should not approach them anymore, since they seemed to be inhuman fiends; therefore I thenceforward ceased to endeavour to contact them. For the past 10 years my darling son has been like this. I despaired and despaired. Finally I heard of Sri Bhagawan's name through Mr. Sundaram Chettiar, the former District Munsiff of Tiruvannamalai, who happens to be my wife's mother's elder-sister's son's wife's brother's father-in-law's younger-brother. I rushed here as soon as I saw Bhagawan's picture, for his divine eyes and beatifical face gave me hope



and confidence. Please cure my son. Anything is possible for you, for I consider that you are God Himself. I will lay down my life at your feet, although I am not of much worth. I beg you to somehow cure my son. I will do whatever you ask. Please restore my child back to me. We have come here with great hope and immense expectation. Even if my son had died, I would console myself thinking that he is happy in his next birth and born in a good family. But to see him like this is living torture. I cannot bear it. We are begging you, who are the Lord incarnate...

Both parents were crying earnestly before the master. Now they fell on the floor in prostration. There was a pin-drop silence in the Hall. Bhagawan's face gazed compassionately on the couple without saying anything.

S>M>

Q.: There are many untenable prophecies made in the Bible; how shall we reconcile them with reason?

B.: What is the use of Faith if it is to be scrutinised all the time with a lens in hand?

Mr. Knowles: Don't worry, sir; I shall, at this very moment in time, help you by reading out something an expert has had to say about this topic-

Q.: No, thank-

But he had already commenced reading; it was from a short pamphlet entitled, ' **'Occupy till I come.'** by the Reverend J. C. Ryle, B. A., **Christ's Church, Oxford.** ' ; thus the Hall had to endure the following for the next half-hour:

I believe that we have cherished an arbitrary, reckless habit of interpreting first advent texts literally and second advent texts spiritually. I believe we have not rightly understood "all that the prophets have spoken" about the second personal advent of Christ any more than the Jews did about the first. And because we have done this, I say that we should speak of such mistakes as that referred to in our text with much tenderness and compassion. Reader, I earnestly invite your special attention to the point on which I am now dwelling. I know not what your opinions may be about the fulfilment of the prophetic parts of Scripture. I approach the subject with fear and trembling, lest I should hurt the feelings of any dear brother in the Lord. But I ask you in all affection to examine your own views about prophecy. I entreat you to consider calmly whether your opinions about Christ's second advent and kingdom are as sound and Scriptural as those of His first disciples. I entreat you to take heed, lest insensibly you commit as great errors about Christ's second coming and glory, as they did about Christ's first coming and cross. I beseech you not to dismiss the subject which I now press upon your attention, as a matter of curious speculation, and one of no practical importance. Believe me, it affects the whole question between yourself and the unconverted Jew. I warn you,

that unless you interpret the prophetic portion of the Old Testament in the simple literal meaning of its words, you will find it no easy matter to carry on an argument with an unconverted Jew. You would probably tell the Jew that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. To those Scriptures you would refer him for proof. You would show him Psalm xxii., Daniel ix. 26, Micah v. 2, Zechariah ix. 9, and so on and so forth. You would tell him that in Jesus of Nazareth those Scriptures were literally fulfilled. You would urge upon him that he ought to believe these Scriptures, and receive Christ as the Messiah. All this is very good. So far you would do well. But suppose the Jew asks you if you take all the prophecies of the Old Testament in their simple literal meaning. Suppose he asks you if you believe in a literal personal advent of Messiah to reign over the earth in glory, a literal restoration of Judah and Israel to Palestine, literal re-building and restoration of Zion and Jerusalem. Suppose the unconverted Jew puts these questions to you: what answer are you prepared to make? Will you dare to tell him that Old Testament prophecies of this kind are not to be taken in their plain literal sense? Will you dare to tell him that the words Zion, Jerusalem, Jacob, Judah, Ephraim, Israel, do not mean what they seem to mean, but mean the Church of Christ? Will you dare to tell him that the glorious kingdom and future blessedness of Zion, so often dwelt upon in prophecy, mean nothing more than the gradual Christianizing of the world by missionaries and Gospel preaching? Will you dare to tell him that you think it "carnal" to take such Scriptures literally, "carnal" to expect a literal rebuilding of Jerusalem, "carnal" to expect a literal coming of Messiah to reign, "carnal" to look for a literal gathering and restoration of Israel? Oh! reader, if you are a man of this mind, take care what you are doing. I say again, take care. Do you not see that you are putting a weapon in the hand of the unconverted Jew, which he will probably use with irresistible power? Do you not see that you are cutting the ground from under your own feet, and supplying the Jew with a strong argument for not believing your own interpretation of Scripture? Do you not see that the Jew will reply, that it is "carnal" to tell him that Messiah has come literally to suffer, if you tell him that it is "carnal" to expect Messiah to come literally to reign? Do you not see that the Jew will tell you, that it is far more "carnal" in you to believe that Messiah could come into the world as a despised, crucified man of sorrows, than it is in him to believe that He will come into the world as a glorious King? Beyond doubt he will do so, and you will find no answer to give. Header, I commend these things to your serious attention. I entreat you to throw aside all prejudice, and view the subject I am dwelling upon with calm and dispassionate thought. I beseech you to take up anew the prophetic Scriptures, and pray that you may not err in interpreting

their meaning. Bind them in the light of those two great pole-stars, the first and second advents of Jesus Christ. Bind up with the first advent the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, the preaching of the Gospel as a witness to the world, and the gathering out of the election of grace. Bind up with the second advent the restoration of the Jews, the pouring out of judgments on unbelieving Christians, the conversion of the world, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom upon earth. Do this, and you will see a meaning and fulness in prophecy which perhaps you never yet discovered. I am quite aware that many good men do not see the prophetic subject as I do. I am painfully sensible that I seem presumptuous in differing from them. But I dare not refuse any thing which appears to me plainly written in Scripture. I consider the best of men are not infallible. I think we should dread Protestant traditions not according to the Bible, as much as the traditions of the Church of Rome. I believe it is high time for the Church of Christ to awake out of its sleep about Old Testament prophecy. From the time of the old Father, Jerome, down to the present day, men have gone on in a pernicious habit of "spiritualizing" the words of the Prophets, until their true meaning has been well-nigh buried. It is high time to lay aside traditional methods of interpretation, and to give up our blind obedience to the opinions of such writers as Poole, Henry, Scott, and Clarke, upon unfulfilled prophecy. It is high time to fall back on the good old principle that Scripture generally means what it seems to mean, and to beware of that semi-sceptical argument, "such and such an interpretation cannot be correct, because it seems to us carnal!" It is high time for Christians to interpret unfulfilled prophecy by the light of prophecies already fulfilled. The curses on the Jews were brought to pass literally; so also will be the blessings. The scattering was literal; so also will be the gathering. The pulling down of Zion was literal; so also will be the building up. The rejection of Israel was literal; so also will be the restoration. It is high time to interpret the events that shall accompany Christ's second advent by the light of those accompanying His first advent. The first advent was literal, visible, personal; so also will be his second. His first advent was with a literal body; so also will be His second. At His first advent the least predictions were fulfilled to the very letter; so also will they be at His second. The shame was literal and visible; so also will be the glory. It is high time to cease from explaining Old Testament prophecies in a way not warranted by the New Testament. What right have we to say that Judah, Zion, Israel, and Jerusalem, ever mean any thing but literal Judah, literal Zion, literal Israel, and literal Jerusalem? What precedent shall we find in the New Testament? Hardly any, if indeed any at all. Well says an admirable writer on this subject: "There are really two or three places in the whole New Testament- Gospels, Epistles, and

Revelation-where such names are used decidedly in what may be called a spiritual or figurative state.” The word “Jerusalem” occurs eighty times, and all of them unquestionably literal, save when the opposite is expressly pointed out by the epithets “heavenly,” or “new,” or “holy.” “Jew” occurs an hundred times, and only four are even ambiguous, as Romans ii. 28. “Israel” and “Israelite” occur forty times, and all literal. “Judah” and “Judea” above twenty times, and all literal.- Bonar’s Prophetical Landmarks, p. 300. It is no answer to all this to tell us, that it is impossible to carry out the principle of a literal interpretation, and that Christ was not a literal “door,” nor a literal “branch,” nor the bread in the sacrament His literal “body.” I reply, that when I speak of literal interpretation, I require no man to deny the use of figurative language. I fully admit that emblems, figures, and symbols are used in foretelling Messiah’s glory, as well as in foretelling Messiah’s sufferings. I do not believe that Jesus was a literal “root out of dry ground,” or a literal “lamb.” All I maintain is, that prophecies about Christ’s coming and kingdom, do foretell literal facts as truly as the prophecy about Christ being numbered with the transgressors. All I say is, that prophecies about the Jews being gathered, will be as really and literally made good as those about the Jews being scattered. It is no good argument to tell us that the principle of literal interpretation deprives the church of the use and benefit of many parts of the Old Testament. I deny the justice of the charge altogether. I consider that all things written in the Prophets concerning the salvation of individual souls, may be used by Gentiles as freely as by Jews. The hearts of Jews and Gentiles are naturally just the same. The way to heaven is but one. Both Jews and Gentiles need justification, regeneration, sanctification. Whatever is written concerning such subjects, is just as much the property of the Gentile as the Jew. Moreover, I hold Israel to be a people specially typical of the whole body of believers in Christ. (Hosea xii. 10.) I consider that believers now, may take the comfort of every promise of pardon, comfort, and grace which is addressed to Israel. Such words I regard as the common portion of all believers. All I maintain is, that whenever God says He shall do or give certain things to Israel and Jerusalem in this world, we ought entirely to believe that to literal Israel and Jerusalem those things will be given and done. It is no valid argument, to say that many who think as I do about prophecy, have said and written -very foolish things, and have often contradicted one another. All this may be very true, and yet the principles for which we contend may be scriptural, sound, and correct. The infidel does not overturn the truth of Christianity, when he points to the existence of Antinomians, Jumpers, and Shakers. The worldly man does not overturn the truth of real evangelical religion, when he sneers at the differences of Calvinists and Arminians. Just in

the same way one writer on prophecy may interpret Revelation or Daniel in one way, and another in another. One man may take on him to fix dates, and prove at last to be quite wrong. Another may apply prophecies to living individuals, and prove utterly mistaken. But all these things do not affect the main question. They do not in the least prove that the advent of Christ before the millennium, is not a Scriptural truth, and that the principle of interpreting Old Testament prophecy literally is not a sound principle. Reader, I say once more, we ought to regard the mistakes of our Lord's disciples with great tenderness and consideration. We Christians are the last who ought to condemn them strongly. Great as their mistakes were, our own have been almost as bad. We have been very quick in discovering the beam in our Jewish brother's eyes, and have forgotten a large mote in our own. We have been long putting a great stumbling-block in his way, by our arbitrary and inconsistent explanations of Old Testament prophecy. Reader, let us do our part to remove that great stumbling-block. If we would help to remove the veil which prevents the Jews seeing the cross, let us also strip off the veil from our own eyes and look steadily and unflinchingly at the second advent and the crown.

P>S>

The reader might wonder whether I spontaneously memorised these long sessions of reading from books so that I could later jot them down in my diary. No! In advance, I requested Chadwick to, where book-readings were to upon any particular day take place in the Hall, ask the person doing the reading to lend the book in question for a while to him; then, when any book-readings transpired on any day, sitting in Chadwick's tenement, on that night before heading back to my lodgings, I would swiftly jot down whatever was read out that day. The idea was to recreate the atmosphere of the Hall as accurately and authentically as possible, just the way everything happened on that particular day.

S>M>

Q.: By surrendering, possibility for further spiritual effort or endeavour stands annulled; is that not right?

B.: When the state of perfect surrender has been reached there will be no possibility for further effort and neither would there be requirement. Until you reach that state keep on trying to surrender. Repeated attempts made to surrender will in due course of time lead to perfect surrender. Although our intention might be to surrender wholeheartedly, even after the attempted act of surrendering the mind does not like to stay in the surrendered state and resumes its former manner of rambunctiousness or ebullience after a while, for such is its nature or design. What to do? It is like the story of the king

Vikramaditya who is mentioned in Vethalapanchavimshati. Each and every time we find that our attempt to surrender stands having been thwarted by the mind, we must move on to making the next attempt; let it[one's endeavour to surrender absolutely] take as many attempts as is required to get the job done. Do not start wondering why the previous attempt was a failure, but move on to make the subsequent attempt; never waste time dwelling on the past. Some hand over their cares and concerns one by one to the Almighty. This is said to be the approach of partial surrender; it is a good preliminary exercise to undertake prior to endeavouring to absolutely surrender oneself.

S>M>

Q.: Can the idea that the world is a dream stand upto logical scrutiny?

B.: What is the faculty of logic? It is an arm of the mind. Mind can never discover its own falsity. Making the attempt is like chasing one's own shadow [when the sun is behind one], or a dog trying to grasp [with its mouth] its own tail. Mind and its faculties of intellection and ratiocination are derivative entities; they are mere effervescences which shine by the reflected light of the Self; how can they be competent to even reach the Self Itself, leave alone measure or analyse It? You can never find out the falsity of the world with the mind- because the entity which has created the world is precisely that same mind. You ask for logical proof that the cosmos is mythical or false or unreal or illusory. You will never find genuine proof that the cosmos is real and you will never find genuine proof that it is unreal. If the proof should be genuine, it must be independent of the one that makes the measurement as to whether it is real or unreal: but here the measurer is measuring himself.

Q.: Besides me many other individuals perceive this same world day in and day out. Why should it be particularly regarded as being my dream exclusively?

B.: Those others you mention are simply and merely your own mental creations- i.e., mind-generated delusions or hallucinations.

Q.: Again I can only ask: what is the proof that it is so?

B.: There can be none; but what is the proof that it is not so?

Q.: But you said that this other proof also cannot be found. What then is the actual situation of the matter? Is there a world out there or not?

B.: No. There is no such thing as 'world'. Thus, scope for discussing whether it is real or unreal does not arise at all.

Q.: But I see a world in front of me.

B.: I have just said that it is all mind-manufactured sensory-input.

Q.: So this present conversation between myself and Sri Maharshi is now not taking place at all?

B.: That is right. Nothing is happening, nothing could ever happen and nothing ever happened.

S>M>

Q.: Why do multiple minds or jivas project the same world in front of themselves?

B.: There are no multiple minds and there are no multiple jivas. There appears to exist only 1 jiva: and that is you. Further, even this one jiva, on scrutiny, is not found at all; so even he is non-existent.

Q.: So Bhagawan does not agree with the ekajivavadham?

B.: The ekajivavadham is incorrect. Why? Because even that one jiva is non-existent.

Q.: But I am very much present and alive!

B.: And who are you?

S>M>

Q.: Scholars are divided in their opinion as to whether the Bhagawad Gita asks us to fix our attention upon the tip of the nose or upon the anterior end of the nose- i.e., upon the eyebrow-centre. What does Sri Bhagawan say? Which is the more advisable practice?

B.: The only advisable practice is for you to fix your attention upon yourself.

Q.: Sometimes the overwhelming might of God frightens me to the core. I am only a puny human-being swimming about in this putrid, noxious ocean known as samsara; He is the Almighty. What can I do without his support and succour? How shall I win His favour?

B.: By surrendering to Him without reserve.

S>M>

Q.: Thirumoolar has sung, 'In themselves, the activities of seeing the Guru's form, chanting his name, and contemplating upon his words are together sufficient to win Jnana.' Is that right?

B.: There can be no Jnana unless the objective-outlook has been given up. The jiva cannot so easily be persuaded into giving up the objective-outlook, which it has been cherishing for a long time. The appearance of the Guru jolts the mind with an enormous shock, so that it is forcibly pushed towards abandoning its objective-outlook. The jiva is step-by-step coaxed into giving up its jivabodha: first, the sensory perceptions are deployed perpetually in absorbing the physical form of the Guru- i.e., repeatedly the mumukshu goes on hearing the words of the Guru and goes on beholding the sight of his gross-form [sravana]; next, continuously the mind goes on contemplating the Guru's words and goes on visualising his physical form [manana]; and then the third stage arrives, where the mind accepts its own unreality and manages to successfully abandon the objective-outlook [nidhidhyasana]. Once the

objective-outlook has been relinquished, Jnana is inevitable. So, the importance of the Guru is brought out by the fact that in providing the mumukshu with himself to become fascinated with, the former awakens the latter out of the stupor that is the mind's objective-outlook. If a mumukshu feels no attachment or fascination towards the person of the Guru, then we might say that it is questionable whether the mumukshu has come to the Guru who would be appropriate for him.

Q.: What is this 'objective-outlook'?

B.: The false idea that there is a world and that you are in it.

Q.: Is it not a fact that there is a world and that I am in it?

B.: What is your condition in the state of deep slumber?

Q.: I am not aware of the same.

B.: Exactly. That which subsists during the state of deep sleep is the only real thing.

Q.: Can it be known in the waking state?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How?

B.: Consciously dive into the Self or Heart.

Q.: But how to do this?

B.: 'Who am I?' is the way.

Q.: 'Who am I?' is only a question. What do I do after putting the question to myself?

B.: The aim of the practice is to achieve permanent submergence of mind in the Heart. The question 'Who am I?' is meant to ward off thought and sleep. In the absence of both thought and sleep, the mind reposes in its natural essence, which is the pure beingness of the Self.

Q.: Still it is not clear. Should I go on repeating 'Who am I?', 'Who am I?' like a parrot so that no other thought can possibly arise?

B.: As and when thoughts arise, ask yourself 'Who am I?' so that such thoughts stand extirpated then and there; after such thought subsides, return the mind to its natural state of beingness.

Q.: And if thought arises again?

B.: Repeat the same procedure.

Q.: How long should this repetitive process be carried out?

B.: Endlessly until the Self is Realised.

S>M>

Q.: What effect do mood-altering drugs, such as hashish for instance, have upon the mind? Do they permit one to reach the state of cosmic consciousness?



B.: No. [The blissful light of] cosmic consciousness becomes available for experience only if and when the mind is illumined by the awareness 'I-I'. Drugs offer or make available only a simulated, and not genuine, experience of cosmic consciousness.

Q.: What is the difference between 'I' and 'I-I'?

B.: 'I' is the aham-vritti. 'I-I' is an indication that the ego is beginning to dissolve away [into nothingness] in the light of pure self-awareness. 'I-I' is not the same as Realisation; it is the stage immediately preceding Realisation.

Q.: What is Realisation?

B.: Total destruction of 'I' or individuality.

S>M>

Q.: Is it really possible to Realise without abandoning one's family, home and possessions?

B.: It is not really your choice whether you live in a forest or underneath a roof; all that is left to prarabdha. Free will does not exist except for the freedom to turn inwards and plunge the mind in the Heart, leaving it there to be ruined once and for all.

Q.: If I surrender unconditionally to God, [it means that] thereafter I cannot even ask for Self-Realisation. That seems to me to be a problem.

B.: If you surrender, you must be prepared to accept God's will.

Q.: Well, suppose God wills that I must not Realise the Self- what then?

B.: If He wills so, let it be. Your task ends with surrendering. What happens afterwards or what does not happen afterwards cannot be your concern because you have already surrendered. The problem with us is that we are imagining surrender to be a form of sadhana. It is not so. Surrender is not a means to an end. Absolute surrender is the goal itself. Complete surrender is simply another name for Jnana or Emancipation. The state of Jnana is nothing but the state of total surrender. Emancipation and surrender are merely 2 different names for the state of Self.

Q.: The Ashtavakra-gita mentions how the sage Ashtavakra brought about the Emancipation of King Janaka by asking him to surrender everything.

B.: Yes. That is an apt example. For mature or ripened souls, perfect surrender does only take as much time as one would take to put one's other leg over the horse. Ripeness of mind in introversion automatically bestows Emancipation.

Q.: Cannot Grace hasten ripeness in the seeker?

B.: Surrender to Him and let Him take care of everything.

Q.: Meaning that if I surrender to Him wholly, the responsibility to Realise will no longer be mine?

B.: That is correct.

Q.: Ajata-advaita teaches that the cosmos, including myself, was never created and that God is a myth. How to stomach this strange idea?

B.: Leave Ajata-advaita to itself. You remain as you are.

Q.: But in the phenomenal world duality is seen.

B.: Who is the seer?

S>M>

Q.: If the Self will reveal Itself only to those whom It chooses, what then is the use of our effort?

B.: The Self will draw unto Itself an aspirant only when he becomes totally introverted. So long as he is extroverted in the slightest, Realisation would remain altogether impossible.

Q.: So to make myself eligible for Realisation, I have to introvert the mind?

B.: Yes; total introversion is needed so as to bring about Realisation; the same can be achieved only gradually.

Q.: Please mention any 5 unique characteristics, features or attributes of the Self.

B.: [no response]

Q.: So silence is Its only quality?

B.: Yes. The silence of the Self is not inertness; it alone is Life.

Q.: 'Giving to others is giving to oneself.' What is the meaning of this statement?

B.: There is no multiplicity of selves. There is no myself, yourself and himself. All there is, is only One Impersonal Absolute Self.

Q.: How to become aware of this Absolute Self?

B.: There are no 2 selves, so that they may take it in turns to be aware of each other. What IS, is only that One. There can be no reaching Him. All attempts to reach Him will end only in futility. The thing to do is to surrender to Him without reserve.

Q.: If there be no multiplicity in truth, why do we observe that in actual practice there are many persons in the world?

B.: They appear to be there only when you appear to be there to observe them.

Q.: So this vast cosmos is only my own mental creation or projection?

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: How then does the mindless Sri Bhagawan see the world?

B.: Why not Realise the Self and find out for yourself?

S>M>

Q.: Once the source of 'I' has been reached, what shall the aspirant thereafter do?

B.: Remain there once and for all.

Q.: I wish to know how the Jnani sees the world.

B.: There is no world for him to see; how can there be? All there is, is himself.

Q.: Is this state open for all to attain?

B.: Yes.

Q.: But Grace is said to be a sine qua non for Realisation.

B.: Grace need not descend down from the sky; It is always and ever in operation. Is it not Grace that the Self never abandons you? Wherever you might imagine yourself to be and whatever you might imagine yourself to be doing, you are always within the Self only and never without. Thus, Grace is always operating upon you. Even if you want It to go away, It will not and cannot. Grace is synonymous with the Self. So, really there is no question of parting from Grace.

Q.: Yet I do not feel God's Grace.

B.: Surrender and you will find It.

Q.: It is said that Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa put his palm on the head of Swami Vivekananda and that the latter instantaneously Realised the Self. Please do the same thing for me.

B.: Why do you need me as a mediator? Are you not aware [of] yourself? When a mighty river of nectarous ambrosia furiously flows, overflowing its banks, why divert it into a particular channel? Let all those who are thirsty drink to their heart's content and capacity.

Q.: But the Guru's help is needed to Realise.

B.: The Guru is the Self within.

Q.: I want a visible Guru.

B.: Turn within and SEE. The only way to see is to BE. You are; therefore BE. That is all there is to the technique of achieving Realisation.

Q.: Is the understanding that one is mere consciousness enough to bring about Realisation?

B.: Is it 'mere consciousness' that harbours such understanding? Who is that one who understands himself to be 'mere consciousness'? Is he not a spurious entity?

S>M>

Q.: Often we observe that for no discernible reason at all Sri Bhagawan is intently staring out through the window, in the direction of the Hill. What is he looking at?

B.: I am looking at Myself.

S>M>

Q.: In Mahabhaktavijayam, it is mentioned that one should remain in the world like the eye of a dead sheep. What does it mean?

B.: The eye of a dead person appears to see, but in fact it is not seeing. Likewise the Jnani appears to act in the world, but in actual fact he is not doing anything. Why? Because he is already dead. He is alive only as the unmanifest Self. The Self does not need a body to survive. The Jnani's experience is that he is always bodiless. If others posit a body on him, that cannot affect him, it is not his business and he does not bother about it. It is asked, what then is to account for the actions of the body in the Jnani's case? If we make a top to spin, the top continues to spin for sometime even after it has ceased to make contact with the rope. Likewise the body continues only owing to its prarabdha. Prarabdha cannot bind the Jnani, but the body is bound by it. He does not think it to be his body. So, the Jnani has truly transcended the triple-karmas.

Q.: The Self is said to be the primum movens of the cosmos.

B.: There is no such thing as any cosmos and the Self cannot cause anything.

Q.: How then to explain manifestation?

B.: Manifestation as seen by whom?

S>M>

Q.: If it be God's desire that all jivas should ultimately unite with Him and become one with Him, why then did He permit them to part from Him at all?

B.: Did God come and complain to you that his heart is aching with unfulfilled desire?

Q.: Do not all jivas emerge out of God, and is not God their ultimate, eventual and inevitable destination?

B.: The question presupposes the existence of something known as 'jiva'. Find out what this thing known as 'jiva' is.

Q.: We may say that individual persons are referred to as jivas... but then again, Sri Bhagawan will ask me 'Who are those individual persons?' and I shall not know what to say in response!

B.: [smiles]

Q.: It is hard to accept that I do not exist at all.

B.: You say so because you are still identifying yourself with body and mind. Abandon all such spurious identification and simply remain as you truly are. Mind cannot be transformed or metamorphosed into Self, because not-Self can never be competent to apprehend Self. Our mistake is that we seek to Realise the Self with our intellect; this approach does not lead one anywhere. Mind, together with the faculty of intellection or ratiocination which forms part thereof, must be abandoned so that Self can be Realised. Mind cannot discover Self. Mind must quit if Self is to Shine forth and in order so that Self may Shine forth. Mind can be understood as a shroud of obnubilation or obscuriation hovering over Self, while being itself not apart from Self; people

ask in what position this veil should be held so that Light may Shine forth without obstruction; what can we say to them? If Light must Shine forth without obstruction, the veil must be discarded altogether. So, no amount of mental activity can ever be of any use in facilitating or bringing about Realisation. There is only one way to do it- keeping still[summa irutthal]. People ask for a formula by aid of which they may keep still. Keeping still cannot be achieved as a result of any procedure or process. The totality of the phenomenon known as 'mind' must itself become wholly unwilling to move away from its own source; only then can stillness truly be achieved. Whilst the mind is extroverted it is not anxious to seek its source; for such a mind therefore Realisation is impossible. So, some form of abhyasa seems to be necessary to turn the mind inwards and plunge it into the Heart, which is its origin. For this reason vichara is suggested. Perpetual abidance in and as effortless and volitionless stillness is the purpose of vichara.

S>M>

Q.: For quite some span of time, I have been keenly monitoring Sri Bhagawan. It is my observation that he does not blink his eyes at all. Also, he never yawns: not even when he has just ingested food. Except that the lips move when he happens to be talking, Bhagawan's body on the Sofa is totally still and motionless. I hear that this phenomenon of nearly total absence of body-consciousness was all the more pronounced when Sri Bhagawan was living on the Hill. The Jnani's body seems to be fast asleep on the inside, and yet it seems to be functioning normally to all outward appearances. How is this possible?

B.: These questions are arising because Bhagawan is considered to be [limited or restricted to] the body resting on the Sofa. The body reclining on the Sofa is also Bhagawan, but so is any and every other body. Is it possible to find something that is not Bhagawan or anything that is apart from Him?

Q.: I understand that no particular form can be asserverated as being Bhagawan's own; but what about Bhagawan's self-identity? Who is He?

B.: He is That-which-IS; He is That which alone IS.

Q.: What is the nexus which is in prevalence between Bhagawan the Absolute and the body observed to be reposed upon the Sofa that is commonly addressed or referred to as 'Bhagawan'?

B.: There is no any such nexus.

Q.: Then who or what is living inside the body on the Sofa, and speaking these words to me now?

B.: That is the great mystery of jivanmukti; however, observe that the question cannot possibly arise from Bhagawan's point of view; the question arises only to him who sees the body that is mentioned by you.

Q.: Does not Sri Bhagawan see his own body?

B.: No. Neither does Bhagawan have a body nor is it possible for him to see anything. He simply and merely IS. Doubts of the sort broached by you go on arising because you are long acclimatised to identifying the self of a person with his body. Conditioned awareness or consciousness associates or identifies itself with some specifically recognisable imaginary form and believes itself to be identical with that particular form; this faculty of association or identification or grasping and feeding upon forms is known as avidya-maya or ignorance; the Jnani's mind stands long ago having wholly relinquished this evil habit of perceiving name, form and other imaginary patterns in what is One Whole Measureless Plenum; his awareness therefore is altogether bereft of any such fictitious content: it is unconditioned, empty and therefore perfection itself. The Jnani does not see anything at all. There cannot possibly be there anything for him to see. Suppose a pot is smashed into bits and pieces: after the pot stands broken, is there any meaning in endeavouring to trace what happened to the space that was formerly occupying the body of the pot, whilst the pot was still whole? Would it not be a pointless, futile exercise? Likewise here. There is no point in asking who the Jnani is. He IS; that is all.

S>M>

Q.: Must we sacrifice everything upto God if we should justly want to Realise Him?

B.: Everything is verily already His; what are you going to sacrifice unto Him? To Realise God, sacrifice yourself by giving up the erroneous notion that you [ever could possibly remain or] exist apart from Him. In other words, if you want to Realise the Self, perpetually remain without yourself by means of having relinquished yourself unconditionally unto the Higher-power.

Q.: What about one's worldly possessions, such as, for instance, land and buildings, jewellery, etc.? Should they not be given up or abjured from?

B.: If the possessor is given up, all possessions are automatically lost.

Q.: But will not giving up one's prized possessions lead to attenuation of the ego's adamant tenacity?

B.: It is not objects themselves that are an obstacle, but only the mental attachment we bear towards them. Abraham is asked to sacrifice Isaac. If Isaac were himself the reason for the proposed sacrifice, God would not have intervened at the last moment. The proposed sacrifice was meant to make Abraham lose all attachment towards worldly objects, including the paternal bond of love and affection he harboured towards his child. Once he raised his knife high up in the air to strike and cleave the flesh of his son, that was enough; he had sundered the last and final bond which kept him away[-i.e.,

separate] from God. God knows when the devotee's mind has finally surrendered itself to the point of perfect surrender to the will of the Almighty; it is only at this point that Realisation is bestowed.

Mr. Knowles: Listen, sirs, to what this book has to tell us apropos of this topic: [holding in hand the book, Selections from the writings of Kierkegaard, translated by L. M. Hollander, Adjunct Professor of Germanic Languages, The University of Texas]

Through the urging of his faith Abraham left the land of his forefathers and became a stranger in the land of promise. He left one thing behind and took one thing along: he left his worldly wisdom behind and took with him faith. For else he would not have left the land of his fathers, but would have thought it an unreasonable demand. Through his faith he came to be a stranger in the land of promise, where there was nothing to remind him of all that had been dear to him, but where everything by its newness tempted his soul to longing. And yet was he God's chosen, he in whom the Lord was well pleased !

Indeed, had he been one cast off, one thrust out of God's mercy, then might he have comprehended it ; but now it seemed like a mockery of him and of his faith. There have been others who lived in exile from the fatherland which they loved. They are not forgotten, nor is the song of lament forgotten in which they mournfully sought and found what they had lost. Of Abraham there exists no song of lamentation. It is human to complain, it is human to weep with the weeping; but it is greater to believe, and more blessed to consider him who has faith. Through his faith Abraham received the promise that in his seed were to be blessed all races of mankind. Time passed, there was still the possibility of it, and Abraham had faith. Another man there was who also lived in hopes. Time passed, the evening of his life was approaching; neither was he paltry enough to have forgotten his hopes: neither shall he be forgotten by us ! Then he sorrowed, and his sorrow did not deceive him, as life had done, but gave him all it could; for in the sweetness of sorrow he became possessed of his disappointed hopes. It is human to sorrow, it is human to sorrow with the sorrowing; but it is greater to have faith, and more blessed to consider him who has faith. No song of lamentation has come down to us from Abraham. He did not sadly count the days as time passed ; he did not look at Sarah with suspicious eyes, whether she was becoming old ; he did not stop the sun's course lest Sarah should grow old and his hope with her; he did not lull her with his songs of lamentation. Abraham grew old, and Sarah became a laughing-stock to the people; and yet was he God's chosen, and heir to the promise that in his seed were to be blessed all races of mankind. Were it, then, not better if he had not been God's chosen? For what is it to be God's chosen? Is it to have denied to one in one's youth all the wishes of youth in

order to have them fulfilled after great labor in old age ? But Abraham had faith and steadfastly lived in hope. Had Abraham been less firm in his trust, then would he have given up that hope. He would have said to God : "So it is, perchance, not Thy will, after all, that this shall come to pass. I shall surrender my hope. It was my only one, it was my bliss. I am sincere, I conceal no secret grudge for that Thou didst deny it to me." He would not have remained forgotten, his example would have saved many a one; but he would not have become the Father of Faith. For it is great to surrender one's hope, but greater still to abide by it steadfastly after having surrendered it ; for it is great to seize hold of the eternal hope, but greater still to abide steadfastly by one's worldly hopes after having surrendered them. Then came the fulness of time. If Abraham had not had faith, then Sarah would probably have died of sorrow, and Abraham, dulled by his grief, would not have understood the fulfilment, but would have smiled about it as a dream of his youth. But Abraham had faith, and therefore he remained young; for he who always hopes for the best, his life will deceive, and he will grow old ; and he who is always prepared for the worst, he will soon age; but he who has faith, he will preserve eternal youth. Praise, therefore, be to this story! For Sarah, though advanced in age, was young enough to wish for the pleasures of a mother, and Abraham, though grey of hair, was young enough to wish to become a father. In a superficial sense it may be considered miraculous that what they wished for came to pass, but in a deeper sense the miracle of faith is to be seen in Abraham's and Sarah's being young enough to wish, and their faith having preserved their wish and therewith their youth. The promise he had received was fulfilled, and he accepted it in faith, and it came to pass according to the promise and his faith ; whereas Moses smote the rock with his staff but believed not. There was joy in Abraham's house when Sarah celebrated the day of her Golden Wedding. But it was not to remain thus ; for once more was Abraham to be tempted. He had struggled with that cunning power to which nothing is impossible, with that ever watchful enemy who never sleeps, with that old man who outlives all- he had struggled with Time and had preserved his faith. And now all the terror of that fight was concentrated in one moment. "And God tempted Abraham, saying to him : take now thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah ; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." All was lost, then, and more terribly than if a son had never been given him! The Lord had only mocked Abraham, then ! Miraculously he had realized the unreasonable hopes of Abraham; and now he wished to take away what he had given, A foolish hope it had been, but Abraham had not laughed when the promise had been made him. Now all was lost- the trusting hope of seventy



years, the brief joy at the fulfilment of his hopes. Who, then, is he that snatches away the old man's staff, who that demands that he himself shall break it in two? Who is he that renders disconsolate the grey hair of old age, who is he that demands that he himself shall do it? Is there no pity for the venerable old man, and none for the innocent child? And yet was Abraham God's chosen one, and yet was it the Lord that tempted him. And now all was to be lost! The glorious remembrance of him by a whole race, the promise of Abraham's seed- all that was but a whim, a passing fancy of the Lord, which Abraham was now to destroy forever! That glorious treasure, as old as the faith in Abraham's heart, and many, many years older than Isaac, the fruit of Abraham's life, sanctified by prayers, matured in struggles- the blessing on the lips of Abraham : this fruit was now to be plucked before the appointed time, and to remain without significance; for of what significance were it if Isaac was to be sacrificed? That sad and yet blessed hour when Abraham was to take leave from all that was dear to him, the hour when he would once more lift up his venerable head, when his face would shine like the countenance of the Lord, the hour when he would collect his whole soul for a blessing strong enough to render Isaac blessed all the days of his life- that hour was not to come! He was to say farewell to Isaac, to be sure, but in such wise that he himself was to remain behind ; death was to part them, but in such wise that Isaac was to die. The old man was not in happiness to lay his hand on Isaac's head when the hour of death came, but, tired of life, to lay violent hands on Isaac. And it was God who tempted him. Woe, woe to the messenger who would have come before Abraham with such a command ! Who would have dared to be the messenger of such dread tidings? But it was God that tempted Abraham. But Abraham had faith, and had faith for this life. Indeed, had his faith been but concerning the life to come, then might he more easily have cast away all, in order to hasten out of this world which was not his... But Abraham had faith and doubted not, but trusted that the improbable would come to pass. If Abraham had doubted, then would he have undertaken something else, something great and noble; for what could Abraham have undertaken but was great and noble ! He would have proceeded to Mount Moriah, he would have cloven the wood, and fired it, and unsheathed his knife- he would have cried out to God : "Despise not this sacrifice ; it is not, indeed, the best I have ; for what is an old man against a child foretold of God ; but it is the best I can give thee. Let Isaac never know that he must find consolation in his youth." He would have plunged the steel in his own breast. And he would have been admired throughout the world, and his name would not have been forgotten; but it is one thing to be admired and another, to be a lode-star which guides one troubled in mind. But Abraham

had faith. He prayed not for mercy and that he might prevail upon the Lord : it was only when just retribution was to be visited upon Sodom and Gomorrha that Abraham ventured to beseech Him for mercy. We read in Scripture: "And God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold here I am. You, whom I am now addressing, did you do likewise: when you saw the dire dispensations of Providence approach threateningly, did you not then say to the mountains, Fall on me; and to the hills, Cover me? Or, if you were stronger in faith, did not your step linger along the way, longing for the old accustomed paths, as it were? And when the voice called you, did you answer, then, or not at all, and if you did, perchance in a low voice, or whispering?" Not thus Abraham, but gladly and cheerfully and trustingly, and with a resonant voice he made answer: "Here am I." And we read further : "And Abraham rose up early in the morning." He made haste as though for some joyous occasion, and early in the morning he was in the appointed place, on Mount Moriah. He said nothing to Sarah, nothing to Eliezer, his steward ; for who would have understood him? Did not his temptation by its very nature demand of him the vow of silence? "He laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." My listener! Many a father there has been who thought that with his child he lost the dearest of all there was in the world for him ; yet assuredly no child ever was in that sense a pledge of God as was Isaac to Abraham. Many a father there has been who lost his child ; but then it was God, the unchangeable and inscrutable will of the Almighty and His hand which took it. Not thus with Abraham. For him was reserved a more severe trial, and Isaac's fate was put into Abraham's hand together with the knife. And there he stood, the old man, with his only hope! Yet did he not doubt, nor look anxiously to the left or right, nor challenge Heaven with his prayers. He knew it was God the Almighty who now put him to the test ; he knew it was the greatest sacrifice which could be demanded of him ; but he knew also that no sacrifice was too great which God demanded- and he drew forth his knife. Who strengthened Abraham's arm, who supported his right arm that it drooped not powerless ? For he who contemplates this scene is unnerved. Who strengthened Abraham's soul so that his eyes grew not too dim to see either Isaac or the ram? For he who contemplates this scene will be struck with blindness. And yet, it is rare enough that one is unnerved or is struck with blindness, and still more rare that one narrates worthily what there did take place between father and son. To be sure, we know well enough- it was but a trial! If Abraham had doubted, when standing on Mount Moriah ; if he had looked about him in perplexity ; if he had accidentally discovered the ram before drawing his knife; if God had

permitted him to sacrifice it instead of Isaac- then would he have returned home, and all would have been as before, he would have had Sarah and would have kept Isaac; and yet how different all would have been! For then had his return been a flight, his salvation an accident, his reward disgrace, his future, perchance, perdition. Then would he have borne witness neither to his faith nor to God's mercy, but would have witnessed only to the terror of going to Mount Moriah. Then Abraham would not have been forgotten, nor either Mount Moriah. It would be mentioned, then, not as is Mount Ararat on which the Ark landed, but as a sign of terror, because it was there Abraham doubted. Venerable patriarch Abraham ! When you returned home from Mount Moriah you required no encomiums to console you for what you had lost ; for, indeed, you did win all and still kept Isaac, as we all know. And the Lord did no more take him from your side, but you sate gladly at table with him in your tent as in the life to come you will, for all times. Venerable patriarch Abraham! Thousands of years have passed since those times, but still you need no late-born lover to snatch your memory from the power of oblivion, for every language remembers you- and yet do you reward your lover more gloriously than any one, rendering him blessed in your bosom, and taking heart and eyes captive by the marvel of your deed. Venerable patriarch Abraham ! Second father of the race! You who first perceived and bore witness to that unbounded passion which has but scorn for the terrible fight with the raging elements and the strength of brute creation, in order to struggle with God; you who first felt that sublimest of all passions, you who found the holy, pure, humble expression for the divine madness which was a marvel to the heathen- forgive him who would speak in your praise, in case he did it not fittingly. He spoke humbly, as if it concerned the desire of his heart; he spoke briefly, as is seemly; but he will never forget that you required a hundred years to obtain a son of your old age, against all expectations; that you had to draw the knife before being permitted to keep Isaac ; he will never forget that in a hundred and thirty years you never got farther than to faith.

S>M>

Sri Bhagawan receives a repeater-wristwatch as a gift. It is courteously declined.

B.: What use have I of telling the time? I am like the character shown in "The Mystery of the Leaping Fish", who requires merely a simple clock with the four indications of Eats, Drinks, Dope and Sleep to tell him what he must be doing at any given point in time. What am I going to do by means of ascertaining what the time is? I only have to be told when to go for food, when to go for a walk, and when to go to assist in the kitchen: that is all!

S>M>

Q.: The Church says that God is a Trinity. Yet it is also said in the Bible, "Thou shalt have none other gods before me."

B.: God is certainly [not more than] 1. The Trinity is His attribute; the attribute is not apart from Him in the same way that the lusture of a pearl is never apart from the pearl. A sphere passing through a plane would make its appearance as a point, become a circle, expand in circumference, then diminish in circumference and finally become a point again before vanishing out of sight entirely. Yet the sphere in itself is neither a point nor a circle; it merely appears that way to those whose horizon of perceptibility is limited to 2 dimensions. Again take the example of a torus passing through a plane; sometimes it would be 2 distinct shapes, but at other times only 1; further, whilst entering and exiting it would be a point only; yet as far as the torus itself were concerned, it would not be aware of any of these alternative representations or renditions; they would be meant only for those who are limited in their perception. Likewise here. God is only 1. Out of His Grace and Mercy towards ourselves He has made Himself visible under many forms and names. If you want to Realise God as He truly IS, give yourself up to Him unreservedly- i.e., surrender unconditionally.

S>M>

A Moslem gentleman named Basheer Mohammed Hafiz Sayyadh, son of Kadher Hussein Hafiz Sayyadh, has arrived at the ashram. He seems a regular visitor here and converses freely with the master. He was formerly employed as a professor in the University of Aligarh; now he is in the employ of Allahabad University.

B.: Why are you slipping away when the vedas are being chanted at this place?

Q.: It would be shirk [blasphemy] in Islam to hear other Gods being praised; that is why.

B.: There are no multiple Gods. Whether alquran praises Him or the vedas praise Him, all praise Him only. All rivers which discharge themselves into the ocean are only going to the same place, but this will not be obvious to us if we look at the paths of these rivers only without paying attention to their ultimate destination. [with unusual certitude of tenor] You may stay here whilst the vedas are being recited at this place. Will you?

Q.: Yes.

S>M>

Q.: Many have read or listened to Sri Bhagawan's teaching of Ajata-advaita. Yet, amongst these, not many manage to obtain practical Realisation of the Self. Can Sri Bhagawan please tell us what the reason for this is?

B.: A Jnani who lived 1900 years ago has put it the following way: "Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: but when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred."

Q.: Am I good earth or stony ground- or am I a thorny bush? Please tell me that there is hope for Realisation in this incumbent lifetime of mine.

B.: Why should you carry upon your head the burden of responsibility for your own Realisation? Surrender that also to God and be at peace.

Q.: If I surrender unconditionally to God, will he make me Realise the Self automatically, although I may not engage myself in practice of any sadhana?

B.: This question will cease to bother you once you surrender unto Him unreservedly. Doubts and questions arise only so long as one has not perfectly surrendered oneself. Only surrender for its own sake can genuinely bring about Jnana. People try to surrender by saying in front of God's altar, 'Now I am surrendering to you; therefore, you should certainly bestow Jnana upon me.'. This is not surrender; it is a barter-transaction. To surrender is to simply LET GO of all one's mental cares, worries and anxieties in the unwavering conviction that He that created knows best how to take care of His creation. Do not worry about Realisation. Let it come when it has to. You surrender to God wholeheartedly and with that your job stands finished.

S>M>

Q.: Eichendorff wrote, 'Ich möcht' am liebsten sterben, Da wär's auf einmal still!'. Is desire to die necessary if we want to Realise the Self?

B.: Desire for death of ignorance; this desire is certainly of significant assistance in bringing about extirpation of ignorance; but even this desire must ultimately disappear before Realisation can dawn.

S>M>

Q.: Sri Bhagawan seems to have said, 'Each one is already a Realised-soul, here and now.'. Then where is the need for expenditure of effort in order so as to Realise the Self?

B.: Efforts are not made to acquire Realisation afresh; for that which is newly obtained will also be lost in due course; whereas the Self can never be lost. Why is effort made when it is perfectly true that the Self forever stands already Realised? Because we imagine otherwise! Effort is made only so that

all [such perverse] imagination on our part may cease; it is only after the unequivocal death of imagination that Reality Shines-forth. Imagining 'I am Brahman.' cannot lead one to the state of being Brahman. Mind must be increasingly worn down, decimated and ultimately annihilated if Jnana is to Shine-forth. Mind is a tool that is useful in relation to the purpose of creating and measuring variety; when it is given the task of knowing itself, it fails miserably and also humbly subsides, acknowledging the futility of all its effort in trying to know itself; it is at this point that the Higher Power manifests Himself and comes to the mumukshu's rescue.

Q.: What is the difference between turiya and jagrat-sushupti?

B.: There is none. It is said that turiya is the 4th state following jagrat, swapna and sushupti. It is not so. Turiya is the natural state of beingness underlying and encompassing these 3 states; these transitory 3 are fleeting superimpositions over that perpetually stationary 1.

Q.: The Jnani's state is said to be turiyatheetam- i.e., beyond even the 4th state.

B.: Yes. These states pertain to the mind only. There is no mind in the Jnani.

Q.: But it is said, 'The Jnani's mind functions in the subtle vijnanamayakosha, through which he maintains contact with the outside world.'

B.: There is no world in Jnana. Axioms like the one mentioned by you now have been developed by other people so that they can make sense of the Jnani's words, behaviour and actions by means of using their intellect; from the Jnani's own point of view they do not make any sense whatsoever.

S>M>

Q.: About 2 years ago at Kumbakonam, I met Kuttralam-swami, who apparently used to regularly stay with Sri Bhagawan during Bhagawan's Virupaksha-cave days. Whilst we were conversing, he advised me to watch my diet carefully; he said that by means of following the proper diet, man may live fully his officially designated lifespan of 125 years. I feel disgusted to think that despite having stayed for so many years with Bhagawan, this man pays importance only to the body and not to Atmasakshatkaram. He was evidently only thinking all the time about how to prolong life in the body, but never dedicated his energy toward-

B.: Is this man still alive?

Q.: No; I heard that he died shortly after the occasion of my meeting him at Kumbakonam.

Cycle-Pillai: That man always used to boast about the various siddhis he had. He once even claimed that he could lift a fully-grown elephant with his bare hands; I should have responded by asking him to-

B.: When a man is dead, please discuss his good qualities, and not his bad ones. Do you know how affectionate he was towards 'this'? Once we were on our way to ezhusunai. We would have gone up to approximately the place where Skandhashram is situated today when we noticed him silently following our party, holding a big pitcher of water adroitly balanced upon his head. I asked him why he was doing so. He said, 'If Bhagawan suddenly feels thirsty whilst walking on the Hill, what will he do? Who is there to help him?'. He was always a secret devotee of mine; he would offer to massage my legs only when there was nobody around in the vicinity. For some reason, he was particularly anxious that his devotion to me should not become known to anybody... I fain relish this kind of devotion!

The master's voice was choked and his eyes looked watery; hurriedly he got up and rummaged through the book-cases in the Hall for sometime before finally extracting a copy of 'Self-Realisation'; he then returned to the Sofa and opened the book at precisely the right page, so as to show to the Hall an old photograph taken near the Virupaksha-cave:

B.: This was captured 20 years ago. Standing to my right Kandasamy and Perumalsamy; sitting beneath me are my mother and Palanisamy; to Palanisamy's left Subrahmanya-sastrigazl is seated holding open a book, with the child Renukambal seated on his lap; sitting beneath these are Sivaprakasam-pillaivazl, Easwarasamy and Narayana-reddiar; to Narayana-reddiar's right Ayyasamy is standing and beneath him Kuttralam-swami is sitting.

C.P.: Is the child Renukambal the sastrigazl's own daughter?

B.: No; he is the child's chithappa; the child herself is naught but Balakuchambal's natthanar's daughter.

C.P.: I heard that Balakuchambal herself passed away a long time ago.

B.: Yes; it was a severe blow to both Echammal and her sister.

Q.: It is said that those who come to Bhagawan invariably lose many friends and relatives within a short span of time to the jaws of death; it is also said that Bhagawan himself is the reason for such phenomena taking place, since he wants his devotees to recognise the futility of samsara and turn away from the same. Is it true that Sri Bhagawan arranges for many immensely beloved relatives of his closest devotees- such as Echammal- to die early deaths, since he wants such devotees to recognise the futility of one's bodily existence? To drive home the truth of Ajata-advaita effectively, does Sri Bhagawan unhesitatingly sacrifice lives- with benevolent motive, of course?

B.: Why blame 'this' for the mysterious works of Grace perpetrated by the Hill yonder?

Q.: So that is why Bhagawan has sung, 'Velivittaenunseyal... etc..!'

The master laughed but did not otherwise respond.

S>M>

A certain Mrs. Ganapathy Aiyer from Tirupathi had in the morning said unto the master that it were her earnest feeling that if she were permitted to touch the master's feet once, everything would be alright in relation to her spiritual quest, and Realisation would be assured for her in her incumbent birth.

Touching the master's body was, of course, not permitted according to the ashram's rules and regulations. At the time, the master had kept quiet upon hearing the request. Now it was late evening; the time would have been around 21|45. The Hall was mostly empty except for the regular occupants. The Maharshi sat up on the Sofa, leaving his legs to dangle down to the floor, which was something rare for him to do; for he usually sat cross-legged; then he glanced at the sorrowful lady kindly and spoke thus-

B.: Child, you may fulfill your desire now if you so prefer.

The lady at once eagerly lurched forward and planted her forehead firmly upon the master's feet; then she bathed the master's feet with a great torrent of tears.

Q.: What can I do, oh! Bhagawan? I keep having disturbing visions wherein I am lying on a bed with Lord Subrahmanya, and embracing Him as my Lord and husband. I have told this fact to one other person only, and that is my husband. Am I going mad? I don't know. Please protect me from harm. If such experiences are an obstacle to Realisation, please remove them one way or the other. I feel that I slowly becoming insane; since I do not have a Guru to guide me on the path, I do not know whether I am on the right track as regards the quest for Realisation. Please help me, Bhagawan; for you are my only hope.

B.: Who said that you have no Guru? Why should you worry? Why should you permit anything to upset your mind? I AM YOUR GURU. Never forget this.

The Hall was shocked into a sudden, spellbound silence. There was such an authoritative tone to the statement that the lady herself seemed momentarily taken aback and robbed of her wits. How many people had begged the master to acknowledge themselves to be his devotees! How many times had he been asked whether he could be taken to be the Guru needed to show the way to Realisation! Invariably he would reply in an impersonal way, hinting that the Self was the Guru for all. But now- this apparently simple-looking yet evidently strong-willed lady had elicited from his lips an assurance not merely that she was his disciple, but that he was her Guru!

P>S>

This is the only occasion, to the best of my knowledge, in the whole of his life, wherein the master had acknowledged directly to anybody that he indeed was



the Guru. The incident goes on to show that sincere devotion does work wonders!

S>M>

Q.: It is said that even a Jnani's body must necessarily suffer the impact of prarabdha karma. Is it so?

B.: Yes. Listen to the following story-

Once upon a time a scholar from Northern India came to Appayya Dikshidhar's house to engage him in a debate. At that time, the Dikshidhar was suffering from severe stomach-pain caused on account of indigestion. Yet he agreed to participate in the debate, since the visitor had come from a far-away place by means of undertaking lots of effort on account of continuous travel, and he wished to disappoint him not. Before the commencement of the debate the Dikshidhar pulled out a blade of grass from the ground and kept it by his side; then he sprinkled a few drops of water upon it from his udhrini and chanted a certain incantation; the next minute the blade of grass started twitching and quivering in a strange manner. The Dikshidhar then informed that astonished visitor that they could now proceed with the debate; but the visitor was of an exceedingly inquisitive nature.

V.: Sir, why and how have you made this blade of grass jump about by your side?

D.: I have transferred my stomach-pain to this blade of grass temporarily so that I may take part in this debate without having to feel the distraction of pain. Once the debate stands completed, I shall again take back the pain unto my body.

V.: I see that you possess extraordinary spiritual power. This being the case, why shall you not, by means of deploying your thaumaturgic prowesses, straightaway banish the pain completely from your body?

D.: This suffering from stomach-pain is my prarabdha and I shall have to bear it; nothing can be done about it and there is no escape from it. All that can be done is to secure some temporary relief so that the distraction remains in abeyance for the time being whilst the debate is to be carried on.

V.: In transferring your stomach-pain to the blade of grass by your side, are you not bringing on further karmic consequences, since the blade is now suffering instead of you? Are you not wrecking needless vengeance upon an harmless and innocent blade of grass?

D.: What is mentioned by you is perfectly correct, my friend! However, I am doing this only to oblige you; you have come all this way just to debate with me; how can I turn you away empty-handed and disappointed? Yes, I shall in future have to suffer the karmic consequences of having needlessly inflicted pain on this hapless, tiny blade of grass, but I do not mind it in the slightest because I feel that it is a necessary thing to do for me to satisfy your desire to engage in debate with me!

The scholar realised the greatness of the Dikshidhar and went away a humbler man.

Q.: But that means there is suffering possible even for one who has Realised the Self.

B.: No. One who has Realised the Self is the Self Itself. The Self can never suffer. Your question was about the Jnani's body. The Jnani does not know his body. It seems to exist only from the point of view of another. Considered as an objectively real entity, the Jnani's body does seem to suffer just like other bodies do, and its karma is inexorable and unavoidable. However, all this is not from the Jnani's own standpoint. All he knows is to be the Self.

29th September, 1936

Q.: What is the difference between the Vedantic-philosophy and the Pratyabhijna-philosophy?

B.: In Vedanta, maya is explained as the sakti of illusion founded in Siva. Maya has no independent existence. Having brought out the illusion that the world is in itself objectively real, she continues to play upon the ignorance of the victims. When the reality of her not being is found, she disappears. Pratyabhijna says that Sakti is coeval with Siva. The one does not exist without the other. Siva is unmanifest, whereas Sakti is manifest on account of Her independent will or swatantra. Her manifestation is the display of the cosmos on the screen of pure consciousness, like images in a mirror. The reflected images cannot remain in the absence of a mirror. So also the world cannot have an independent existence. Swatantra is explained as being an attribute of the Supreme. Sri Sankara also says that the Absolute is without attributes and that maya is not and has no real being. What is the difference between the two? There is no difference. Both schools agree that the display of the cosmos is not real. The images contained in a mirror cannot in any way be real. The world does not exist in Reality. The substance of the world is the Self only. Both schools mean the same thing. Their ultimate aim is Realisation of Absolute Consciousness. The unreality of the cosmos is implied in Pratyabhijna, whereas it is explicit in Vedanta. If the world be taken as Brahman, it is always real. Vedanta says that there is no diversity, meaning that the objects we see in the world are all vested in the same Single Reality. There is agreement on all points between the two schools, except in nomenclature and manner of expression.

S>M>

Q.: A donkey cannot possibly appreciate the sweet fragrance of the camphor it carries on its back. Likewise there are many in Tiruvannamalai who are maliciously spreading canards about Sri Bhagawan. How shall we reform them and make the whole world see the greatness of Sri Bhagawan?

B.: The only thing you can change about the world is your attitude towards it.

Q.: What about social-reform then? Are social-reformers all fools?

B.: First reform yourself and then you can reform the world. First let us perfect ourselves and then we can make efforts to bring perfection to the world. Ourselves being imperfect, what eligibility or right do we have to try to reform the world? On the other hand, one who is perfect sees only perfection everywhere. So far as the Jnani is concerned always and everywhere- [in English] All is Well.

Q.: Why then does evil happen in the world?

B.: Swami Vivekananda has said: 'How can you see evil outside, unless it is within you?'. Those who are themselves perfect see only perfection [wherever they might happen to look]. If you see imperfection somewhere, the lacuna, problem or defect lies with you, not in that which is seen; there is nothing to be seen; only the seer exists.

Q.: All this is Vedanta. I am talking about the real world. Pragmatically speaking, how can we eliminate suffering from the world?

B.: Only by eliminating the sufferer.

Q.: Can the man on the Clapham omnibus be expected to understand all these high-flying Vedantic concepts? I wonder why B. refuses to step down from the pedestal of Vedanta and talk to us practically- on our level.

B.: There is only one level- He is the Self.

S>M>

Q.: Please explain the shloka Om tryambakam yajamahe... etc..

B.: The shloka must be read in the correct sense so that its import may be taken cognisance of in the intended manner. Mruthyormukshiyamamruthat is the entreaty. Mruthyor is to be understood as being in shashtivibhakti. So- what is the meaning? It is 'mamukshiyamruthyormruthat'- i.e., do not Emancipate from Immortality of Death. In other words, you need not attain the Self; rather, remain without leaving the Self; that is enough. Death or absence of ego is the natural state- It is Immortality- i.e., mruthyormruthaha. Emancipation from this- i.e., mruthyormruthatmochanam is bondage or ignorance, because it implies separation from the Self. So, pray that mamukshiyamruthyormruthat- i.e., that you should not get Emancipated from mruthyormruthaha or Immortality that is Death. The implication of the shloka is as follows- that Union with the Self is not possible because there are no 2 selves so that they may Unite; all that is possible is to not Emancipate or Separate yourself from Immortality of Death [mruthyormruthaha] or the Self- this alone is actual Emancipation.

Q.: But this seems to be a rather eccentric interpretation.

B.: I have said what I know.

S>M>

Q.: I have everything I want but not peace of mind. How may I obtain the same?

B.: Bhakti shall fulfill your desire.

Q.: But I am devoted to God. Yet there is no peace of mind for me. I want to know how I can gain peace of mind. Kindly advise me.

B.: Surrender yourself to the Almighty.

Q.: Am I worthy of being His devotee?

B.: Anyone can be a devotee. Spiritual provender is common to all and never denied to anyone.

Q.: But for me there are duties of grihastha dharma. Can I also practise devotion?

B.: Yes. Are you the body which bears the weight of grihastha dharma? Are you not pure consciousness? The body, its grihastha dharma and the world are only phenomena appearing on pure consciousness, which itself remains completely unaffected and stationary. What prevents you from abiding as pure consciousness?

Q.: Is vichara compatible with grihastha dharma?

B.: There cannot be anything apart from one's Self. Everything is verily the Self. The Self is nothing but you. The question of compatibility or otherwise cannot arise.

Q.: After the death of my son I am disgusted with worldly life. I want to devote myself to the higher, spiritual life. But my duties as a gruhini do not permit me to lead a monastic life. I do not know what to do. I request the Maharshi to help me with his nectarous words of advice. I want to know whether and how I may retire from the world and take up a life of service to God.

B.: Substance is Real whilst form is not. Your son has not gone anywhere. In substance he is always here and now. The birth and death of your son have taken place in the Self only.

Q.: Even after hearing B.'s words I am not able to overcome my grief.

B.: Recall the state of sleep. Were you aware of anything happening? If the son or the world be real, should they not be present with you in sleep? You cannot deny your existence in sleep. Nor can you deny you were happy then. You are the same person now raising questions and doubts, and seeking answers and clarifications. Now you are not happy, according to you. But you were happy in sleep. What has transpired in the meantime so that the happiness of sleep should have become obnubilated? It is the rise of ego. The ego is the new arrival in the jagrat state. There was no ego in sleep.

Q.: Is B. then advising me to remain asleep all the time?

B.: Remain awake to consciousness and asleep to everything else- i.e., in jagrat-sushupti. Ya esha supthaeshu jagarthi kamam kamam purusho

nirmimanaha thadhaeva shukram thadhbrahma thadhaevamruthamuchyate. Indeed we ourselves are that Purusha. But to Realise Him the mind must be transmuted into simple, pure consciousness of being to which thought is altogether alien.

Q.: How to go beyond birth and death?

B.: By getting rid of the ego. The birth of the ego is called the birth of the person: there is no other birth. Whatever is born is bound to die. Kill the ego: there is no fear of recurring death for what is once and for all dead. The Self remains even after the death of the ego. Then what remains is Bliss alone- that is Immortality.

Q.: Is retirement from the world not necessary to achieve Realisation?

B.: Retirement means abidance in the Self: nothing more. Sannyasa does not mean escaping from one set of surroundings and getting yourself entangled in another set, nor leaving the gross world and entering the subtle world. Sannyasa simply means giving up the not-Self.

Q.: Pragmatically speaking, how is that to be done?

B.: Doubts arise to the doubter. But who is the doubter or thinker? Hold on to the "I" which raises doubts, asks questions or thinks thoughts. Then thought-waves will perturb you no more. By means of remaining with "I-am", we master the art of immersing ourselves in the experience of the Heart.

Q.: How to obtain chitta-shuddhi?

B.: By scrutinising who it is who is complaining of chitta-kalangam. Then thoughts vanish. What is left is only shuddha-chittam.

Q.: What is the objective of vichara?

B.: To see wherefrom arises "I". The source of "I" is pure consciousness in which there can be no "I" sense.

Q.: All this seems to be difficult. May I traverse instead the bhakti marga?

B.: Bhakti implies absolute surrender of the ego. Vichara implies continuous search for the ego. The purpose is the same: it is extirpation of the non-existent ego.

Q.: Shall I opt for bhakti? It is said that Bhakti is an easier path to God than Jnana.

B.: Everything depends upon the individual's temperament.

Q.: Shall I try meditating on a form? Will it suit my temperament?

B.: What is meditation? It is to hold on to a single thought to the exclusion of all others. In due course that one thought also disappears. Then what remains is the Self. Concentrating on a form is a way to continuously hold on to one thought. It drives away other thoughts. The one thought of God dominates the field of the mind- this is the fruit of concentration. The objective of meditation is thus the same as that of vichara: annihilation of thought.

Q.: Can we see God in concrete physical form? Is it possible?

B.: Yes. But visions of God are mental in character. The concrete physical form seen by the devotee is still seen only inside the devotee's mind. The particular form and appearance of God-manifestation are determined by the mind of the devotee. But these intra-mental experiences are not the finality. There is the sense of duality in them. It is like seeing a vision of God inside a dream. After God is perceived in a vision, vichara ought to commence; this ends in Realisation of the Self. Vichara is the ultimate route. Some find vichara practicable and easy. Others find bhakti so but not vichara. It all depends upon the nature of the individual's latent mental pre-dispositions and proclivities.

Q.: Mr. Brunton saw Bhagawan in London.

B.: London is only in the mind.

Q.: But it was a solid physical appearance that he saw- not a hallucination.

B.: It was an intra-mental experience- that is all.

Q.: How shall I reach the Self?

B.: There is no such thing as reaching the Self. If the Self were to be reached, it would mean that the Self is not here and now, but that it should be obtained anew. What is accomplished newly will also be lost- and is thus seen to be impermanent in nature. What is not permanent is not worth striving for. You talk of reaching the Self. The Self is not to be reached. You are the Self. You are already the Self and were never anything but; but you are ignorant of this your blissful Real state. Why? Because ignorance obnubilates your Real nature and draws a veil over the Self which is pure Bliss. Abhyasa is directed only at obliteration of ignorance. What is ignorance?

Q.: Is it the idea 'I am the body.'?

B.: Not only that idea, but any idea is an obstacle to the Revelation of the Self. Ideas are chitta vrittis- i.e., knots in pure consciousness. These knots are spurious artefacts of wrong knowledge embedded in consciousness, which by itself is blemishless like the clear-sky. Ignorance of the Self is merely wrong knowledge; this wrong knowledge is manifested as false or incorrect identification of the Self with body, mind, intellect, etc.; if such factitious identity is annihilated, the Self is Revealed.

Q.: How shall I do so?

B.: By incessantly pursuing the investigation, 'Who am I?'

Q.: Can an ordinary person like me also Realise the Self?

B.: Why not? You are already the Self. Realisation is common to everyone. The Self cannot recognise any difference in those who aspire for Him. The doubt, 'Can I Realise?' or the feeling, 'I have not realised.' are also obstacles to Revelation of the Self- be free from these also.

Q.: Please give me an experience of the Self. Unless I obtain atleast once the experience, how can I successfully free myself from thought?

B.: No such pre-requisite is genuinely necessary. This idea is only a mental concept devised by your own imagination. The mind creates such ideas because you have identified yourself with body, mind, intellect, etc.; if this false identity is relinquished, ignorance vanishes and Truth is Revealed.

Q.: There are disciples of Bhagavan who have on account of his Grace Realised the Self without any considerable difficulty. I too wish to have Bhagawan's Grace. I find myself unable to partake of Bhagawan's holy company as much as I want to and as often as I wish. Possibly I may not be able to return. I request that Bhagavan's Grace descend upon me.

B.: Where are you going? You are not going anywhere.

Q.: B. means that I am distinct from by body and therefore should not associate myself with it?

B.: Even supposing you are the body, has your body come from Lucknow to Tiruvannamalai? You merely sat in one place and one conveyance or another moved; yet when asked you say that it is you who have come here; but what is the actual fact of the matter? Are you the body? No. The Self does not move. The world moves in the Self. You are only what you are. There is no change in you. Thus, even after what seemingly appears to be departure from here, you are here, there and everywhere. Only these scenes shift. There is no change nor movement in you. You are always stationary. As for Grace- Grace is within you. Can Grace be found without? What is external is totally useless. Grace is the Self. You are never out of Its operation. Grace is always there. As for distance- the frog sits under the flower but gets nothing; on the other hand, the bee goes on moving from place to place but sips honey everywhere. People imagine that those crowding around a Jnani obtain special favours from him. Is he so asinine as to be flattered by people's sycophancy towards him? Does distance matter? Do you think that those living far away from the Guru obtain less Grace than those who crowd around him? If the Guru shows partiality, can he be a Jnani? The Guru is pleased with him alone who relinquishes his ego entirely- who abandons his individuality forever; such a man is well taken care of wherever he may be. He need not pray; God looks after him unasked.

Q.: When I remember your form, my mind should be strengthened and some response should come from your side in reciprocity. I should not be left exclusively to my individual efforts, which are thoroughly weak. Without Bhagawan's Grace to assist me I am quite lost.

B.: Grace is the Self. Remember: if you desire Bhagawan's Grace, you are prompted to do so by the Self. Is not Grace already there? Is there even a

single moment when Grace is not operating upon you? Your remembrance of Bhagawan is a demonstration of the fact that Bhagawan's Grace is operative in you. Grace is the response from Grace to your craving for Grace and Grace is the stimulus that makes you crave for Grace. Grace is the Self and the Self is nothing but Grace. So, really there is no cause for anxiety.

S>M>

Q.: Can I engage in vichara, even whilst remaining in the entrapment of samsara?

B.: Yes. But who told you that you are now trapped in samsara? Why should you think, 'I am trapped in samsara.' and so on? The fact is, there is neither bondage nor liberation. One simply remains as one really IS.

Q.: Is not the householder's life a hindrance? Do not all the sacred-books advocate leaving one's house and moving into a forest? For Realisation should not one's life in the world be given up completely? Is not sannyasa necessary for Realisation?

B.: Samsara and sannyasa are only in your own mind. You talk of life in the world- but what world? Is there a world apart from one's mind? The world does not speak out saying 'I am the world.'; for if it did, it would always be there- even when you are in the sushupti state. But in deep sleep is there any world? No. Since it is not in sleep it is impermanent. Being impermanent it has no possible capacity for svagrani [ipsum candentem]; having no capacity to shine by its own light it is easily subdued by the Self. The Self alone is permanent and real. You talk of sannyasa. What is the true import of sannyasa? It is non-identification of the Self with not-Self. On extirpation of ignorance, not-Self, which is already non-existent, is found by itself not to exist and never returns after making such discovery; this is known as Jnana. Real renunciation does not involve leaving the house and moving into a jungle or desert. It simply means giving up not-Self. If not-Self is abandoned, the Self stands Revealed.

Q.: Why then did you leave your house in your youth?

B.: My prarabdha lies this way- yours that way.

Q.: Shall I not also leave my house?

B.: If that had been your prarabdha, the question would not have arisen.

Q.: Then it seems I am fated to remain in the world and engage in spiritual practice; that being so, can I Realise the Self in this lifetime?

B.: Yes. You are always the Self- only you are yet to relinquish the realm of thought that adumbrates the Self. With sincere, continuous and persistent practice of vichara, thought is snuffed out and the Self is Revealed. Earnest efforts never fail. Success is bound to result.



Q.: Yes. I shall try to practise vichara. But I beg B. to bless me with his Grace so that I can Realise the Self in this lifetime.

B.: [smiled but proffered no reply]

S>M>

Q.: Certain particular Christian sects believe that the world was created not by God but by a mischievous and malevolent spirit known as "the Demiurge". Does Sri Bhagawan support this rather bizarre idea?

B.: That mischievous entity which has given rise to the birth of the world is naught but your own mind. Consider why there is no world in sleep.

Q.: Because there is no mind available then to project it forth?

B.: Exactly.

Q.: What is man's primary obligation unto God?

B.: "...thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."

Q.: It happens to be my observation that Bhagawan quotes Jesus as and when the occasion suits him; but Jesus has said, "Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?"; whereas Bhagawan insists that plant-based food alone should be acceptable to the spiritual aspirant.

B.: If you are able to consume flesh and yet at the same time keep your mind from wandering, who is stopping you from eating meat?

Q.: Those who restrict themselves to plant-based diets: do they automatically become Jnanis?

E.Z.: They find their sadhana to be easier and their mind less uncooperative, less unyielding and less recalcitrant[in remaining permanently submerged in its source, the Heart]. Am I correct, Bhagawan?

B.: Yes.

Q.: What is the link between food-consumed and the nature of the mind?

B.: Rajasic foods excite the mind and stir up its passions. Tamasic foods put the mind to sleep. Only sattvic foods are conducive in facilitating the mind to remain in its natural essence of pure beingness.

Q.: But meat- fish, at the very least- has nutritional value that cannot possibly be found in plant-based food.

E.Z.: Spinach, they say, contains all the same nutrients that fish do.

Q.: Bhagawan is advising visitors to avoid meat. But today morning I noticed a resident Caucasian in this ashram consuming it not far away from where we are seated now.

B.: [seeming alarmed] Eh?

Chadwick: Early in the morning near the cow-shed today, he kept staring at me frightfully all along whilst I sat down upon a rock and engaged myself in chewing on a chunk of halwa that was distributed yesterday night in the Hall, when my stomach was a tad queasy, making me save it for the morrow; I was wondering about the stare; now I know!

The Hall had a good laugh.

S>M>

Mr. Knowles: We all imagine that Jesus was a saintly figure who was forgiving and tolerant, but let us take a look at what this book has to tell us-

He read out as follows from the book, "The Apocryphal New Testament: Being all the Gospels, Epistles, and other pieces now Extant, Attributed in the First Four Centuries to Jesus Christ, His Apostles and Their Companions; and not included, by Its Compilers, in the Authorized New Testament; Translated from the Original Tongues; Illustrated from Ancient Paintings and Sculptures."-

Again on another day the Lord Jesus was with some boys by a river and they drew water out of the river by little channels, and made little fish-pools. But the Lord Jesus had made twelve sparrows, and placed them about his pool on each side, three on a side. But it was the Sabbath day, and the son of Hanani a Jew came by, and saw them making these things, and said. Do ye thus make figures of clay on the Sabbath? And he ran to them, and broke down their fish-pools. But when the Lord Jesus clapped his hands over the sparrows which he had made, they fled away chirping. At length the son of Hanani coming to the fish-pool of Jesus to destroy it, the water vanished away, and the Lord Jesus said to him, In like manner as this water has vanished, so shall thy life vanish; and presently the boy died. Another time, when the Lord Jesus was coming home in the evening with Joseph, he met a boy, who ran so hard against him, that he threw him down ; To whom the Lord Jesus said, As thou hast thrown me down, so shalt thou fall, nor ever rise. And that moment the boy fell down and died. There was also at Jerusalem one named Zaccheus, who was a schoolmaster. And he said to Joseph, Joseph, why dost thou not send Jesus to me, that he may learn his letters? Joseph agreed, and told St. Mary ; So they brought him to that master ; who, as soon as he saw him, wrote out an alphabet for him. And he bade him say Aleph ; and when he had said Aleph, the master bade him pronounce Beth. Then the Lord Jesus said to him. Tell me first the meaning of the letter Aleph, and then I will pronounce Beth. And when the master threatened to whip him, the Lord Jesus explained to him the meaning of the letters Aleph and Beth ; Also which were the straight figures of the letters, which the oblique, and what letters had double figures ; which had points, and which had none ; why one letter went before another ; and many other things he began to tell him, and

explain, of which the master himself had never heard, nor read in any book. The Lord Jesus farther said to the master. Take notice how I say to thee ; then he began clearly and distinctly to say Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, and so on to the end of the alphabet. At this the master was so surprised, that he said, I believe this boy was born before Noah ; And turning to Joseph, he said. Thou hast brought a boy to me to be taught, who is more learned than any master. He said also unto St. Mary, This your son has no need of any learning. They brought him then to a more learned master, who, when he saw him, said, say Aleph. And when he had said Aleph, the master bade him pronounce Beth ; to which the Lord Jesus replied, Tell me first the meaning of the letter Aleph, and then I will pronounce Beth. But this master, when he lift up his hand to whip him, had his hand presently withered, and he died. Then said Joseph to St. Mary, henceforth we will not allow him to go out of the house ; for every one who displeases him is killed.

Chadwick: [addressing the master, his eyes shining with tears] Is it all true? Oh! dear me; how horrible! Did our Jesus really do all these nasty things?

B.: Do you feel disturbed by Apocrypha that say such things?

C.: Yes.

B.: Then feel free not to believe in them.

Chadwick immediately brightened up like a small child which had just been furnished with an unshakeable reassurance from a trusted elder.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that Jesus derived his own power not directly from God, but from John the Baptist. Is this true? And what of the 12 apostles: did they receive their power directly from God or from Jesus?

B.: All receive power or Grace from the same, Single source: which is the Heart. Grace is from within, and not from without.

K.: Sir, I have here just those precise words, from the very mouth of Jesus Himself, that shall answer your question-

[reading out as follows from the book Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Gospel (with extracts from the Books of the Saviour appended) originally translated from Greek into Coptic and now for the first time Englished From Schwartze's Latin Version of the only known Coptic MS. and checked by Amelineau's French Version with an Introduction by G. R. S. Mead]

Rejoice, therefore, and be glad, in that when I came into the world, from the beginning, I brought with me 12 powers, as I told you from the beginning. I took them from the hands of the 12 saviours of the treasure of light, according to the command of the first mystery. These powers, therefore, I cast into the wombs of your mothers, when I came into the world, and they are those which are in your bodies this day. For these powers have been given unto you

before the whole world, for it is ye who are to save the whole world, and that ye may be able to bear the threat of the rulers of the world, and the calamities of the world, and their dangers, and all the persecutions which the rulers of the height must bring upon you. Many times have I said unto you, the power which is in you, I have brought it from the twelve saviours which are in the treasure of light. For which cause I said unto you from the beginning that ye were not of this world. And I also am not of this world, for all men who are of this world have taken their soul from the rulers of the aeons. But the power which is in you is from me. Ye are souls which pertain to the height, which I have brought from the twelve saviours of the treasure of light, and which I have received as a share of my power, which I received from the beginning. And when I set forth to come into this world, I passed through the midst of the rulers of the sphere ; I assumed the likeness of the angel Gabriel, in order that the rulers of the aeons might not recognise me, but think that I was the angel Gabriel. It came to pass, when I had passed through the midst of the rulers of the aeons, that I looked down on the world of men, by order of the first mystery; I found Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, before she had conceived him ; I cast into her a power which I had received from the hand of the little lao, the good, who is in the midst, that he might preach before me and prepare my way, and baptise in the water of the remission of sins. This power, then, is in the body of John. Moreover, in the region of the soul of the rulers, destined to receive it, I found the soul of the prophet Elias, in the aeons of the sphere, and I took him, and receiving his soul also, I brought it to the virgin of light, and she gave it to her receivers ; they brought it to the sphere of the rulers, and cast it into the womb of Elizabeth. Wherefore the power of the little lao, who is in the midst, and the soul of Elias the prophet, are united with the body of John the Baptist. For this cause have ye been in doubt aforetime, when I said unto you, 'John said, I am not the Christ ' ; and ye said unto me, ' It is written in the Scripture, that when the Christ shall come, Elias will come before him, and prepare his way.' And I, when ye had said this unto me, replied unto you, ' Elias verily is come, and hath prepared all things, according as it is written ; and they have done unto him whatsoever they would.' And when I perceived that ye did not understand that I had spoken concerning the soul of Elias united with John the Baptist, I answered you openly and face to face with the words, ' If ye will receive it, John the Baptist is Elias who, I said, was for to come.' It came to pass, after these things, that I looked down again into the world of men ; I found Mary, who is called my mother, after the material body ; I spoke to her also in the form of Gabriel ; and when she had betaken herself into the height towards me, I implanted in her the first power which I had received from the hands of Barbelo, that is to say, the body which

I bore in the height, and instead of the soul, I implanted in her the power which I had received from the hands of the great Sabaoth, the good, who is in the region of the right. And the twelve powers of the twelve saviours of the treasure of light, which I had received from the twelve ministers of the midst, I cast into the sphere of the rulers ; and the decans of the rulers, with their workmen, thought that they were the souls of the rulers ; and the workmen brought them, and I bound them into the bodies of your mothers. And when your time was full, ye were brought forth into the world, no soul of the rulers being in you. Ye have received your portion from the power which the last supporter breathed into the mixture, which [power] was blended with all the invisibles and rulers, and all the aeons. Once only was it blended with the world of destruction, which is the mixture. This [power] I brought out from myself from the beginning; I cast it into the first statute, and the first statute cast a portion thereof into the great light, and the great light cast a portion of that which it received into the five supporters, and the last supporter took a portion of that which it received, and cast it into the mixture. And this [power] dwelleth in all those who dwell in the mixture, in the manner in which I have just told you. Rejoice, and be glad, and add joy to joy, for the times are fulfilled for me to put on my vesture, which hath been prepared for me from the beginning; the same which I laid up in the last mystery, until the time of its completion. The time of its completion is the time when I shall receive commandment from the first mystery to speak to you from the beginning of the truth to the end thereof, and from the interiors of the interiors, for the world is to be saved by you. Rejoice, therefore, and be glad, for ye are more blessed than all men who are on the earth, for it is ye who shall save the whole world.

C.: All this sounds to me like a good load of worthless rubbish. Is there any genuine evidence to support that Jesus actually said these things?

K.: He did say them. Emperor Constantine and the ghost of Paul of Tarsus conspired together and edited those bits out of the New Testament that they did not like personally, or that they felt would compromise or weaken their position of absolute dominion over the early Church.

C.: [turning to the master] Is it all true?

B.: I have just said that you are wholly free to disbelieve in matters that threaten to shake your faith. Why go on getting perturbed?

S>M>

The question was now raised in the Hall as to what proof there was on hand to support the view that Jesus had ever existed at all in history.

E.Z.: I have read that several independent Greek and Roman scholars, having nothing to do with Christianity, living in the immediate century following the

crucifixion of Jesus, have written about the event.

K.: Yes; listen to this, for instance-

[reading out as follows from the book *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop Of Cesarea, in Palestine: Translated from the Original, with an Introduction, by Christian Frederick Cruse, D.D. and an Historical View of the Council Of Nice, by Isaac Boyle, D.D.*]

It was the forty-second year of the reign of Augustus, but the twenty-eighth from the subjugation of Egypt and the death of Antony and Cleopatra, which terminated the dynasty of the Ptolemies, when, according to prophetic prediction, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea; the same year, when the first census was taken, and Quirinius was governor of Syria. (This Quirinius is the same Cyrenius mentioned by St. Luke. The former is the original Roman name, the latter the Latin mode of transferring the name from the Greek. Had it been recollected that the Greek name was not the original, this proper name would not have been returned to its own language, in a form so disguised.) This census is mentioned by Flavins Josephus, the distinguished historian among the Hebrews, who also adds another account respecting the sect of the Galileans, which arose about the same time, of which also mention is made by our Luke in his book of Acts, in the following words - " After this man arose Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing (assessment), and drew away much people after him, he also preached ; and all, even as many as obeyed him were dispersed." The aforesaid author agreeing with this statement in the 18th book of his *Antiquities*, adds the following : " But Quirinius, who belonged to the senate, and having enjoying other offices, advanced through all the grades of office to the consulship, a man also of great dignity in other respects, by the appointment of Cesar, came to Syria, with a small force, and with judicial power over the people, to take a valuation of their property." A little after he says : " But Judas, the Gaulonite, sprung from the town called Gamala, together with Sadducus, a Pharisee, headed a revolt of the people, saying that the assessment had nothing else in view but manifest slavery ; and they exhorted the people to assert their liberty." He also writes in the second book of the history of the Jewish War, concerning the same man : " About this time a certain Judas of Galilee, stimulated the inhabitants to revolt, urging it as a reproach, that they endured paying tribute, and that they who had God for their master, suffered mortals to usurp the sovereignty over them." Thus far Josephus. At the time that Herod was king, who was the first foreigner that reigned over the Jewish people, the prophecy recorded by Moses received its fulfilment, viz. " That a prince should not fail of Judah, nor a ruler from his loins, until he should come for whom it is reserved." (This celebrated passage

mentioned here is extracted from the Septuagint, which Eusebius invariably quotes.) The same, he also shows, would be the expectation of the nations. The prediction was evidently not accomplished, as long as they were at liberty to have their own native rulers, which continued from the time of Moses down to the reign of Augustus. Under him, Herod was the first foreigner that obtained the government of the Jews; for, as Josephus has written, he was an Idumean by the father's side, and an Arabian by the mother's.

Q.: What evidence does the passage cited by you provide in favour of your position that Jesus actually walked this earth in flesh and blood?

K.: The census mentioned herein contains the name of Jesus and all the members of his family, including his parents and brothers; a copy thereof, I have heard, has been preserved at the Bodleian Library at Oxford. My position in relation to the Christ is that he was merely an ordinary Jewish preacher, healer and exorcist who happened to invent certain revolutionary ideas, which did not go down well with those who were in power in Judea at the time; Jesus wanted to secure freedom for the Jews from Roman occupation and establish an independent Jewish nation-state with himself as its absolute monarch; since this was a direct threat to Roman sovereignty over the region, he was captured, tried and executed in the most brutal fashion which was then in vogue in the Roman Empire. Jesus was thus only an aspirant to the royal lineage of King Solomon and actually possessed for himself no right of pre-emption over it. He would never have considered himself to be God; being a Jew he would naturally have accepted Yehwah as being his God. The myth of him being the son of God was invented and propagated together by the scheming brains of Emperor Constantine and the ghost of Paul of Tarsus; they perpetrated such sinister design of fraud because they wanted to gain political control over the followers of Jesus, who were by that time numbering in the thousands. I assure you, sirs: there was nothing divine about Jesus. He was in fact nothing more than a silly occult-magician, much like how we have Mr. Aleister Crowley today-  
The blasphemous comparison gave rise to immediate tumultuous outcries of protest in the Hall; Chadwick's cheeks were glowing reddishly; only the master seemed as usual unruffled. Many Caucasians glowered furiously at Mr. Knowles; he wisely got up and left the Hall, and would return again only in the evening.

S>M>

Q.: How is one to disconnect one's mind from sensory perceptivities?

B.: Why do you want to achieve this? Do you think that absence of sensory perception means Jnana?

Q.: Yes.

B.: In that case, consumption of chloroform is the way to Jnana.

Q.: But our elders have said that the senses must be subdued ere Jnana can be attained.

B.: That only means cultivation of vairagya[indifference or disaffection towards worldly affairs] is desirable for the mumukshu[spiritual aspirant].

Q.: How shall I obtain vairagya?

B.: The standard method prescribed for it by the Vedanta system is sravana, manana and nidhidhyasana.

Q.: But 'Who am I?' is a quicker way: is that correct?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Whenever I am plagued by ill-health, which these days is quite often, I feel terrified, because should I fall seriously ill, there is nobody to take care of me; my children have settled in Bombay, and I have no desire to go stay with them and be a burden unto them; I want to remain independent till the end of my days; I am frequently attacked by an all-consuming fear that I shall become an invalid and so require mandatorily to be dependent upon somebody all the time. I want to remain free and happy. How shall I do so?

B.: All your problems are arising owing to the fact that the self is confused with the body; the self is neither body nor mind, but Self. Even if the Jnani were to be bound from the top of his head to the tip of his toes with iron chains and manacles, the fact would be incapable of interfering with his Bliss in the slightest; he cannot think 'I am bound.' or 'I am free.'. The way for Eternal Life is to wholly perish in the Absolute. Give up the erroneous habit of identifying the self with body or mind and remain free here and now. Why should you wait for freedom to dawn upon your head one distant day in the future? Surrender the ego once and for all and be free here and now.

Q.: But Jnana is said to be very difficult to attain.

B.: This thought of difficulty is in itself the chief difficulty amongst difficulties; abandon this thought also and remain as you are. Why worry about old age and disease? They pertain to the body only. When you know that you are not the body, why should these thoughts bother you any further?

Q.: Whenever I try vichara, I fall involuntarily sound asleep.

B.: It does not matter. Go on attempting vichara whenever you happen to be besieged by thought. If and when sleep overtakes you by force, you can do nothing about it; resume vichara after you come out of sleep and happen to start thinking again.

Q.: How to defeat illusion?

B.: Illusion itself is illusory. Illusion cannot be used to defeat illusion. Remain as you truly are and illusion will fade away of its own accord. Illusion is the same as 'I' or the aham-vritti. As long as you imagine yourself to exist that



which is truly in existence does not Shine-forth. Cessation of imagination results in Revelation of Reality. See whether this thing called 'I' exists. Search for it incessantly and intensely; when this is done, it disappears: or rather, it, including such discoverer, is discovered never to have existed. Then Reality alone is left as residue. Jnana does not involve acquisition of wisdom, but divestiture of nescience. The Self is already Realised. It is we who say that we are not Realised, that we are ajnanis. So, find out who it is that proclaims forth the asseveration that he is an ajnani. Then all will be well. Can there be darkness before the sun? Likewise, can there be any ignorance before the Self? Ajnana is really impossible. Whether they are aware of the fact or not, all are verily Jnanis only.

Q.: That is the Jnani's standpoint.

B.: Why are you always thinking, 'I am an ajnani.'? Give up that thought also and all will be well. There is no need to be worried. Everything will come aright in the end.

S>M>

Chadwick: I have just gone through B.V.N. Swami's typewritten notes, that were taken down by him for the purpose of compiling together Sri Bhagawan's biography. He has omitted much interesting material from the final published version; I wonder why. Did Bhagawan request the Swami that these omissions be made?

After remaining unresponsive for sometime, the master proceeded to extract a hand-written note from a book-case and handed it over to Chadwick;

Chadwick seemed to instantly recognise it as being the handwriting of B.V.N. Swami; the following, inter alia, were the contents of the note-

**Only 3 omissions were suggested by the Maharshi himself-**

- a] the incident wherein the boy Venkatraman facilitated his friend Narayanasamy to experience temporary loss of body-consciousness;**
- b] the incident wherein the boy Venkatraman psychokinetically caused the movement of his body from his house to the garbhagruham of the Sahayavalli-shrine inside the Bhumadeshwara-temple or prayed, with relevant repercussion immediately following suit, unto God that such movement might be caused, after, having made paper-boats out of documents appurtenant to legal-cases handled by his father, he discovered that the elders of the house were upset with him; and**
- c] the incident wherein Sri Ramana Maharshi wholly cured an individual of leprosy by means of applying thiruneer on the affected regions of the patient's body, which incident transpired whilst the Maharshi was dwelling at Skandasramam.**

G.: An appendix has been added in the most recent edition, entitled, 'A strange and remarkable incident in the life of Sri Maharshi.'. It seems that Sri Bhagawan died and then wondrously resurrected himself back to life near Amaipparai, on the Hill. Did B. recommend that this occurrence be added to the work?

B.: No. My role in drafting the published-version of the book was only what you see in this note. Everything else was exclusively B.V.N. Swami's decision. He worked day and night for the book. If you take a look at the mass of detailed interviews with various persons associated with 'this' which he compiled and brought here, you head might start reeling; stacked vertically, the great sheaf of papers would have been taller than Major Chadwick himself! [laughter in the Hall]

C.: Having done so much, he seems to have lost faith in Bhagawan. I keep wondering why he left Tiruvannamalai for good.

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: Some take a long duration of time and effort to Realise the Self; whereas for others, Realisation comes after a brief, quick period of abhyasa. Why this imparity?

B.: Different minds are mature or ripe to varying extents; that is why.

Q.: What does ripeness[pakkuvam] mean in relation to the spiritual context?

B.: One's extent of mental introversion; in other words, the extent of the mind's willingness and eagerness to surrender itself unto the Heart.

Ripeness[pakkuvam] is everything.

S>M>

Q.: They tell me that the Jnani knows everything. Please tell me whether the ancient, legendary continent of Atlantis actually existed or not.

Bhagawan did not respond, but-

Mr. Knowles: Certainly it did, sir. The island-continent of Atlantis certainly existed prior to the time of the Biblical-flood; it is mentioned by a number of ancient scholarly writers; for instance, consider what the following book has to say-

[reading out as follows from the book, Plato: Timaeus and Critias- Translated into English with Introductions and Notes on the Text by A. E. Taylor, Professor of Moral Philosophy, University of Edinburgh]

"Your people can recall but one deluge, though there were many before it, and, what is more, you do not know that the bravest and noblest men of all history once existed in your own land. You and all your fellow-citizens are sprung from a scanty remnant of them, though you never suspect this, because their survivors for many generations passed away without utterance in writing. Yes, Solon, once on a time, before the great Deluge, what is now Athens was a city right valiant in war and with laws in all things exceeding excellent. Her exploits and her polities are said to have been the noblest of all under heaven whereof any report has come to our ears." When Solon heard this, he was amazed and besought the priests with much earnestness to tell

him the full tale of those our citizens of old in order. So the priest made answer. " Solon, I will not stint you , the tale shall be told, for love of you and your city, but, chiefly, of the goddess, your patron, foster- mother and tutress, and ours. Yours she was first, taking over the seed of you from Earth and Hephaestus, ours later by a thousand years. Now the age of our native institutions is recorded in our sacred writings as eight thousand years. So I will unfold to you in few the laws of your citizens of nine thousand years ago, and the noblest of their exploits , the full and precise story shall be related some other time, at our leisure, with the very texts before us. First, then, compare jmur laws with ours here in Sais ; you will still find among us many an illustration of those you then had. There is, first, the sharp separation of the priesthood from other classes, next, the rule for the craftsmen: each craft, herdsmen, hunters, farmers, plies its own calling, meddling with no other. The soldiery, in especial, as you must have observed, are a class apart from all others, forbidden by the law to concern themselves with any calling but war. Moreover, the fashion of their equipment is with shield and spear, arms which we were the first people in all Asia to bear, being so taught by the goddess, even as she had taught you first in your part of the world[;Egypt being regarded, in the customary Greek fashion, as a part of Asia]. Next, as to wisdom , you see what care our law has bestowed on it from its very starting-point , how it has encouraged cosmology, devising salutary regulations for human life, down to the very rules of divination and medicine, from that divine study, and conquering all the sciences which attend it. Now all this order and system the goddess had bestowed on you before us in your first establishment. The region wherein you were born she chose for herself, because she perceived that its well-tempered climate would bear a harvest of most intelligent men. Being then a lover alike of war and of wisdom, she chose out the region which would yield hei men likest herself, and made her first settlement there. You dwelt there, then, under laws like these and even better, surpassmg all mankind in all manner of goodness, as was but meet for the progeny and pupils of gods. Now the great deeds of your city which are recorded and admired among us are many, but one there is surpassing the rest in heroic valour. Our records tell us of a proud and mighty power which your city once arrested as it poured itself over all Europe and Asia from its base m the Atlantic Ocean. In those far-away days that Ocean could be navigated, as there was an island outside the channel which your countrymen tell me you call the 'pillars of Heracles'. This island was larger than Libya and Asia together, and from it sea-farers, in those times, could make their way to the others, and thence to the whole of the opposite continent, which encircles the true outer Ocean (The waters within the channel just mentioned are

manifestly a basin with a narrow entrance, what lies beyond it is the real Ocean, and it is the land enclosing that Ocean which should rightly be called a Continent). In this Atlantic island had arisen a great and wonderful monarchy, which was mistress of the whole island as well as of many others and of parts of the mainland[;the mainland meant is the supposed outer continent which is imagined to enclose the whole 'Ocean']. Its monarchs, moreover, within the straits, held Libya as far as the Egyptian border, and Europe as far as Tyrrhenia. Now, this power concentrated its forces on an attempt to enslave your country, ours, and the whole territory within the straits at one fell swoop. It was then, Solon, that your city's qualities of heroism and energy shone out in the eyes of mankind. She took the lead in daring and military skill. At the head of the Hellenes, and then, when her allies had been forced to abandon her, in isolation, she faced the supreme peril, overthrew the invaders and set up her trophy. Those who had not yet been subdued she preserved from subjugation, all the rest of us who dwell within the limits set by Heracles she generously liberated. Afterwards came a time of extraordinary earthquakes and inundations. In one terrible day and night of storm, your warriors were swallowed in a body by the earth, and Atlantis likewise sank into the sea and vanished. This is why the Ocean in that part to this day cannot be navigated or explored, owing to the great depth of the mud caused by the subsiding of the island."

S>M>

Q.: Please consider the following passage from the book, 'Apocryphal Acts of Paul, Peter, John, Andrew and Thomas: By Bernhard Pick':

...the King said to him : Art thou John, who said that my Kingdom would speedily be uprooted, and that another King, Jesus, was going to reign instead of me? And John answered and said to him : Thou also shalt reign for many years given to thee by God, and after thee very many others ; and when the times of the things upon earth have been fulfilled, out of heaven shall come a King, eternal, true, Judge of living and dead, to whom every nation and tribe shall confess, through whom every earthly power and dominion shall be brought to nothing, and every mouth speaking strange things shall be shut. This is the mighty Lord and King of all breath and flesh, the Word and Son of the living One, who is Jesus Christ. At this Domitian said to him : What is the proof of these things? I am not persuaded by words only ; words are a sight of the unseen. Thou rigorously preachest a strange God and adorest him instead of the true gods, which we worship. Meanwhile I will try and find out whether the God, whom thou preachest, will help thee. What canst thou show in earth or heaven by the power of him who is destined to reign, as thou sayest ? For he will do it, if he is the Son of God. And immediately John asked

for a deadly poison. And the King having ordered poison to be given to him, they brought it on the instant. John therefore having taken it, put it into a large cup, and filled it with water, and mixed it, and cried out with a loud voice, and said : In thy name, Jesus Christ, Son of God, I drink the cup which Thou wilt sweeten, and the poison in it do Thou mingle with the Holy Spirit, and make it become a draught of life and salvation for the healing of soul and body, for digestion and harmless assimilation, for faith not to be repented of, for an undeniable testimony of death as the cup of thanksgiving. (According to the Vatican recension the King orders a magician, an excellent worker of the devil, to come, and says to him : Prepare for me such a deadly poison, that he who touches it, dies within an hour. The magician does as he is bidden and brings the poison to the King. The King says : " Let it be given to John the Galilean." The magician fills the cup and gives it to John. He takes the poison, makes the sign of the cross over it, calls upon the Lord Jesus Christ and drinks it as with great pleasure.) And when he had drunk the cup, those standing beside Domitian expected that he was going to fall to the ground in convulsions. And when John stood, cheerful, and talked with them safe, Domitian was enraged against those who had given him the poison, as having spared John. And they swore by the fortune and health of the King, and said that there could not be a stronger poison than this. And John perceiving what they were whispering to one another, said to the King: Do not take it ill, O King, but let a trial be made, and thou shalt learn the power of the poison. Let some condemned criminal be brought from the prison. And when he had come, John put water into the cup, and swirled it round, and gave it with all the dregs to the condemned criminal. And he, having taken it and drunk, immediately fell down and died. (The Vatican recension narrates : The King and the magician and all standing beside the King are amazed at the non-effect of the poison. The King is enraged against the magician, as having spared John. But John saith to him "The poison is deadly ; but Christ, my God, who said that were those who believe on him shall drink something deadly, it shall not hurt them, has made this also and all arts of the devil and his servants of no effect. But if thou, O King, wilt know the truth of those words, let some condemned criminal, etc., etc.) And when all wondered at the signs that had been done, and when Domitian, seized by fear, intended to retire and go to his palace, John said to him : O, Domitian, King of the Romans, didst thou contrive this, that, thou being present and bearing witness, I might to-day become a murderer? What is to be done about the dead body which is lying? And the King ordered it to be taken and thrown away. But John, going up to the dead body, said, O God, Maker of the heavens. Lord and Master of angels, of glories, of powers, in the name of

Jesus Christ, Thine only begotten Son, give to this man who has died for this occasion a renewal of life, and restore him his soul, that Domitian may learn that the Word of God is much more powerful than poison, and is the ruler of life. And having taken him by the hand, he raised him up alive. (The Vatican recension reads: When the king and all beside him saw this, they were greatly afraid. Saith John : " Since I am the cause of the death of this man, it is my duty to revive him by prayer." Having stood there for one hour in prayer, he raised the dead in the presence of the King and those who were with him.) As we see in the account elucidated above, Jesus has bestowed such highly esteemed supernatural powers unto his followers; why should not Bhagawan do likewise and bless us, his followers, with similar powers, so that we might go out and preach the Gospel of the Maharshi to the whole world? It is time the world woke up to Bhagawan's teachings.

B.: Leave alone the question of awakening the world; first and foremost, have you woken up, yourself?

Q.: Certainly.

B.: Is it after awakening that you are still talking about a world that is in need of help?

S>M>

Q.: Most Caucasians fail to understand or appreciate Bhagawan's teachings that there exists no world to be helped or rescued. How unfortunate!

B.: Never mind. You look to yourself.

Chadwick.: Which Caucasian so far has understood Bhagawan's teachings best, atleast on the theoretical level?

B.: The Polish gentleman Morris Freeman, perhaps.

C.: Oh! How is it that I haven't met him yet? Who is he?

B.: On the other hand, you are certain to have glimpsed him here; but he is an unpretentious, unobtrusive chap. He is the good friend of Frau Wanda Dwynoshchev, who at this very moment happens to be sitting opposite you.

C.: [with an astonished look] Oh! madam, please oblige me in this: write to him saying that the next time he comes here, he must needs introduce himself to me, Major Chadwick; I am positively burning with eagerness to meet and talk to him! What is your name again, did you say, kind madam?

Q.: You may call me Umadevi.

C.: Oh! You seem to have formally converted to Hinduism- [turning to Bhagawan to ask him something]

B.: [laughing] No, no, such step is not a sine qua non for Realisation; it is left to the individual temperament.

Chadwick seemed greatly relieved; somebody in the Hall remarked-

Q.: She has gone all the way to the Himalayas, it seems, so that she might become converted into a Hindu.

B.: Is that so? [smiling at the woman]

S>M>

Q.: Some heretics suggest that Jesus was a married man. Might it have been so?

B.: Perhaps; but had it been so, would the fact make him any lesser a Jnani?

Q.: How can a married man be a Jnani? Is not brahmacharya a fundamental eligibility-criterion or sine qua non pre-condition for Jnana?

B.: What is Brahmacharya?

Q.: Not expending even a single drop of semen.

B.: Such is your opinion.

Q.: What then is actual brahmacharya in Sri Bhagawan's opinion?

B.: Unwavering abidance in the Self.

Q.: 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me...'; what does it signify? Was the Christ reluctant to take upon his own shoulders the collective sin of all mankind? Was the Christ unwilling to go to the cross so as to purchase the redemption of all of humanity from the vicious clutches of sin? Was he disinterested in performing or discharging his role as the Saviour of man?

B.: He was merely wondering whether there was any other way by means of which God's plan for the world could be brought to fruition; a moment later he reminds himself of the inherent inexorability of God's will and gives himself up to it wholly and wholeheartedly.

Q.: Did then Jesus also suffer from doubt and confusion, just as mortals do?

B.: What is cast into a human-frame must needs respect the limitations characterising such frame.

Q.: But can a Jnani possibly feel hesitation, trepidation or uncertainty?

B.: Emotions, including the ones mentioned by you, are not alien to the Jnani; he can certainly feel any and every emotion. However, there is 1 crucial difference: he is never deluded into embracing the abysmal fatuity of believing that he is the one feeling those emotions. The Jnani's apparent mental activity is like the hissing of a cobra whose fangs and poison-manufacturing orifice were removed long ago: it can do no harm.

Q.: Likewise, what is the explanation for 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani'?

B.: Jesus was simply reciting Psalm 22.

Q.: When a man is being put through such an agonisingly humiliating and horrendously painful punishment, would it ever occur to him to sing Bible verses?

B.: Jesus knew that he was not the body. He would have simply watched on with child-like curiosity whilst the procedure [of Crucifixion] was being carried out.

Q.: Did he feel pain?

B.: The body would have felt pain.

Q.: What is the reason for particularly selecting Psalm 22 to recite whilst being crucified?

B.: It was spontaneously done; but as far as we are concerned, the significance of the choice of verse can be understood by us as implying that he indeed was the Anointed-one.

Q.: How shall a man repent for his sins?

B.: By sacrificing the sinning ego.

S>M>

Q.: How much meaning is actually there in undertaking vows of monasticism? I have always wondered about the question.

B.: The ego does not necessarily become more docile merely on account of the fact that such a vow has been undertaken by you.

Mr. Knowles: The German intellectual Adolf von Harnack has discussed the futility of the concept of monkhood in these following words:

Fragen wir nun die römisch- oder die griechisch-katholische Kirche, worin besteht das vollkommenste christliche Leben, so antworten sie beide: in dem Dienste Gottes unter Verzicht auf alle Güter des Lebens, auf Eigentum, Ehe, persönlichen Willen und persönliche Ehre, kurz in der religiösen Weltflucht, in dem Mönchtum. Der wahre Mönch ist der wahre, vollkommenste Christ. Das Mönchtum ist also nicht eine mehr oder weniger zufällige Erscheinung in den katholischen Kirchen neben anderen, sondern, wie die Kirchen heute sind und wie sie schon seit Jahrhunderten das Evangelium verstanden haben, ist es eine in ihrem Wesen begründete Institution: es ist das christliche Leben. Wir werden deshalb erwarten dürfen, dass in den Idealen des Mönchtums sich auch die Ideale der Kirche, in der Geschichte des Mönchtums sich die Geschichte der Kirche darstellen werden. Aber kann das Mönchtum überhaupt wechselnde Ideale, kann es eine Geschichte haben? Ist es nicht verurteilt, in großartiger Einförmigkeit tausendfacher Wiederholung durch die Geschichte zu schreiten? Welch' einer Veränderung sind die Ideale der Armut, der Ehelosigkeit, der entschlossenen Weltflucht fähig? Welch' eine Geschichte können die erleben oder herbeiführen, welche mit der Welt auch ihren wechselnden Gestalten, d. h. ihrer Geschichte, den Rücken gekehrt? Ist nicht Weltentsagung zugleich Verzicht auf alle Entwicklung und alle Geschichte? Oder, wenn sie das in Wirklichkeit nicht gewesen ist, ist nicht eine Geschichte der Ideale des Mönchtums schon ein Protest gegen den



Gedanken des Mönchtums überhaupt? Es scheint so, und vielleicht scheint es nicht bloß so. Aber das lehrt die Geschichte des Abendlandes auch dem flüchtigsten Beobachter: das Mönchtum hat seine Geschichte gehabt, nicht nur eine äußere, sondern auch eine innere, voll von gewaltigsten Veränderungen und gewaltigsten Wirkungen. Welch' eine Kluft trennt den schweigsamen Büsser der Wüste, der ein Menschenleben hindurch in keines Menschen Auge geblickt hat, von dem Mönche, der einer Welt Befehle gab! Und dazwischen die Hunderte von Gestalten, eigentümlich und verschieden, und doch Mönche, alle begeistert und beherrscht von der Idee, der Welt zu entsagen. Aber noch mehr: alle Regungen des Gemütes, die leidenschaftlichsten und die zartesten, kommen uns ans jener Welt der Weltentsagung entgegen. Kunst, Poesie und Wissenschaft haben dort ihre Pflege gefunden, ja die Anfänge der Zivilisation unseres Vaterlandes sind ein Kapitel aus der Geschichte des Mönchtums. Hat das Mönchtum dieses alles nur leisten können, indem es seine Ideale verließ, oder lassen seine eigensten Ideale solche Wirkungen zu? Setzt die Weltentsagung eine zweite Welt und eine zweite Geschichte, der gemeinen ähnlich, nur reiner und größer, oder muss sie die Welt zur Wüste werden lassen? Ist das das wahre Mönchtum, welches in der Welt den Tempel Gottes sieht und auch in der schweigsamen Natur entzückt das Wehen göttlichen Geistes vernimmt, oder ist das das wahre Mönchtum, welches behauptet, die Welt mitsamt ihrer Natur und ihrer Geschichte sei des Teufels? Beide Lösungen tönen zu uns herüber aus dem Reiche der Weltentsagung: welche von ihnen ist authentisch und hat das geschichtliche Recht für sich?

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that the lady-novelist Pearl Buck visited Sri Bhagawan last year?

B.: No; but a letter was received from a person writing under that name.

T.K.S.: It must have been that same lady-novelist; her epistle did not reveal much about herself, but I remember a woman by that name earnestly did write to the ashram asking for more of 'the Maharshi's teachings'; the writer of the letter said that she had been highly impressed by Mr. Brunton's account of our Bhagawan in Secret India. I think I remember reading from her that she had heard of Mr. Brunton's book through Dr. Gaulthernus; the latter Caucasian is apparently a fellow-member of the Pasadena Theosophical Lodge with the comediac-actor Sammy Cohen, who, she said, happens to be her husband's friend.

Chadwick: Is this Sammy Cohen related to you, Cohen?

E.Z.: Eh? Isn't he the one that plays a 'Pvt. Lipinsky' in 'What Price Glory'?

Well, I certainly don't know; I mean, he might be, for all I know; I have never met him, though!

S>M>

Q.: In the book 'The Secret of The Golden Flower; translated into English by Cary F. Baynes from the German translation by Richard Wilhelm', we find the following interesting line: 'The secret of the magic of life consists in using action in order to achieve non-action.'. My inference is that the teaching of Ajata-advaita seems to find parallels in many other ancient cultures; the German Sanskrit-teacher Heinrich Zimmer has brought forth an essay highlighting many such similarities between Vedantic ideas and ideas embodied in other antediluvian spiritual traditions around the globe.

B.: To all deep-thinking minds the same, unique conclusion is inevitable and unavoidable: mind and world rise and set together as one; therefore they are not apart from each other.

Q.: But the apparent multiplicity of individuals must be explained somehow or the other.

B.: Everything seen by him is vested in the seer only. You alone exist.

Q.: This is an impossible idea; I am unable to digest it.

B.: A little practise will make you think differently.

Q.: Practise refers to 'Who am I?'; is that not so?

B.: Yes; vichara is the safest and most efficacious manner by means of which the mind may be turned inwards and sunk in its source, the Heart.

S>M>

Q.: I have a fear that if I practise vichara continuously, I may become an inert object, like a vegetable or a stone. Will I lose my ability to function normally in the world if I start making intense efforts to Realise the Self? I have the fear that one fine morning I might be reduced into a comatose state consequent to my desire to Realise Brahman. Please guide me.

B.: There is no need to fear. Vichara is a safe path; the risks mentioned by you have no basis in factuality.

30th September, 1936

Q.: Why and how did the Self forget His true nature and become limited as the ego?

B.: No such thing can happen. People speak of memory and oblivion of the Fullness of the Self. Oblivion and memory are only thought-forms. They will alternate so long as there are thoughts. But Reality lies beyond these. Memory or oblivion must be dependent on something; that something must be foreign too; otherwise there cannot be oblivion. What is this something? It is called 'I' by everyone. When one looks for it, it is not found because it is not real. Therefore, 'I' is synonymous with maya, avidya or ajnana. To realise that there never was ignorance is the goal of all the spiritual teachings. Ignorance

must be of one who is aware. Awareness is jnana. Jnana is eternal and natural. Ajnana is unnatural and unreal.

Q.: Having heard this truth, why does not one remain content?

B.: Because one's samskaras have not been destroyed. Unless and until one's samskaras cease to exist, there will always be doubt and the idea of separateness; all abhyasa is directed only at destroying these; in order to do so their roots must be cut; their roots are the samskaras; these are rendered ineffective by the practice of vichara. The Guru leaves it to the seeker to himself shake off his samskaras, in order so that he might himself find out that there is no ignorance. However, hearing this truth (sravana) is not enough; merely hearing the same will not implant it firmly in the mind; for making such knowledge unshakeable, one has to practise reflection (manana) and one-pointedness (nididhyasana). These latter two processes scorch the seeds of vasanas so that they are rendered ineffective. Yet it is true that some extraordinary persons obtain unshakeable knowledge even upon hearing the truth only once. Why? Because they are kruthopasakaha (advanced seekers), whereas the akruthopasakaha (inexperienced seekers) take longer to gain unshakeable knowledge.

Q.: But how did ignorance arise at all?

B.: Ignorance never arose; the same has no real being. That which is, is only Jnana or the Self.

Q.: Why then do I not Realise Jnana?

B.: Because of the samskaras. However, find out who does not Realise and what he does not Realise. Then it will be clear that there is no ignorance.

Q.: In the Gita, Sri Krishna says that there is nothing different from himself. But he also says that the world is like beads strung on a rope, which is himself. How are these two statements to be reconciled?

B.: Neither the rope nor the beads are apart from him. From him emerges the rope, and from the rope emerge the beads. However, there cannot be anything apart from Him. The rope and the beads are verily himself.

Q.: Unity can prevail only after attainment of Realisation. Until we merge into Bhagawan we must make do with duality or samsara. Am I right?

B.: Where are we now? Are we apart from Bhagawan? Samsara is in Bhagawan and we are also only in Bhagawan.

Q.: That is the standpoint of the Jnani. As far as I am concerned, samsara or duality [vipareetam] for me will persist until Jnana is obtained.

B.: It is samskara that causes samsara. Remain free from samskara and there will be no samsara.

Q.: The jiva has forgotten the truth that everything is Bhagawan only; as a consequence, it is now unable to identify itself with God.

B.: Whose is the forgetfulness?

Q.: The one that is subject to avastathraya.

B.: Who is that one?

Q.: It is the jivatman.

B.: Who is the jivatman?

Q.: It belongs to the Paramatman.

B.: Let the Paramatman ask then.

Q.: Presently I shall make my doubt clear by means of an illustration.

B.: Do you think that anybody wants the doubt to be illustrated and made clear? Direct experience[pratyaksha] does not require examples for elucidation.

Q.: There is pratyaksha and but there is also avarana.

B.: What is swathed and by what?

Q.: Whilst I am dreaming a world appears to me but the same disappears on waking.

B.: Wake up similarly from the present dream.

Q.: Prakrti is reluctant to permit me to awaken into Jnana.

B.: Realise the Purusha and then prakriti will be helpless.

Q.: There is a granthi (knot) between them.

B.: Whose is that knot? Who binds whom?

Q.: It is on account of Brahman.

B.: In that case, Brahman must ask or must be asked. To whom is avastathraya? To whom is the granthi? You are always saying 'I ask.'. Who is that 'I'?

Q.: I admit that I do not know anything. I have come here only to learn from Sri Bhagawan.

B.: The Real 'I' is eternal. It would vanish if it were anything particular. It is Perfection. So it cannot be found as an object.

Q.: But I am imperfect.

B.: Did you feel imperfection in your sleep?

Q.: No.

B.: Then why do you not remain so even now? Bring sleep into the waking state and you will be all right. Yanishasarvabhoothanam thasyam jagarti samyami yasyam jagrati bhootani sanisha pashyatho munehe.

Q.: The shloka mentioned is applicable to Jnanis only. It cannot be applied to the man on the Clapham omnibus.

B.: Who is Jnani and who is ajnani?

Q.: Suppose somebody slaps Sri Bhagawan across the face; does he feel it or not?

B.: A man under chloroform or under influence of alcohol does not feel it. Is he a Jnani? Is Jnana inconsistent with bodily-sensations?

Q.: In bodily-sensations there is seer, seen and sight; therefore the same are not characteristic of Jnana.

B.: In sleep, in trance, in absent-mindedness, there is no differentiation or bodily-sensation. Do you call it Jnana? What has happened in these states? Is that which then was, absent now? That which IS, exists forever.

Differentiation is owing to the mind. The mind is sometimes present at other times absent. There is no change in Reality. Reality is always Supreme Bliss.

Q.: Bliss is the outcome of practice. What is that practice?

B.: To find out to whom all these doubts arise.

Q.: They arise to the ego.

B.: Wherefrom does ego arise?

Q.: Sri Bhagawan's guidance is necessary to show me the way.

B.: There is no use in seeking without; seek within.

Q.: I am unable to find the ego by search. I falter and stop there.

B.: Think whether there can be anything to obtain. Can anything be added to your true nature?

Q.: But how to obtain knowledge of Parabrahman?

B.: Do not trouble yourself about Parabrahman. Let Him be as He is. Why do you care about Him? Did you care about Parabrahman in the state of sushupti?

Q.: No.

B.: Then why do you care now? The same person who slept is present now too. You are the same you in all the three states.

Q.: But sleep and waking are two different states having different effects.

B.: How does the fact matter to you? The Self is the same, all through.

Q.: The mind is not steady in meditation.

B.: Whenever it wanders, turn it inward again and again.

Q.: When mental perturbation overpowers me, vichara becomes impossible.

B.: Because the mind is too weak. Make it strong.

Q.: By what means?

B.: It depends according to the maturity of the aspirant. Those who are fit for it can take up vichara directly. Others have to go through pranayama, moortidhyana, etc.; the point is to gain introversion of mind.

Q.: What is the result of such abhyasa?

B.: Misery is removed; our aim is removal of misery. You do not acquire happiness. Your very nature is happiness. Bliss is not newly earned. All that is done is removal of unhappiness. These methods do it.

Q.: Association with a Jnani may strengthen the mind. But there must also be practice. What practice should be made?

B.: Yes. Practice also is necessary. Practice means removal of predispositions. Practice is not for any fresh gain; it is to kill one's predispositions.

Q.: Will such practice give me the power to Realise Parabrahman?

B.: Practice is in itself power. If one's thoughts are reduced to a single thought the mind is said to have grown strong. When practice has become unshakeable, you abide in your natural state.

Q.: What is such practice?

B.: Vichara.

Q.: What is the aim to be kept in view? Practice requires an aim.

B.: Self is the aim. What other aim can there be? All other aims are for those who are incapable of athmalakshya. Other practices lead you ultimately only to vichara. One-pointedness is the fruit of all kinds of practice. One may get it quickly; another after a long time. Everything depends on the intensity of the practice.

Q.: Peace is extolled more than anything else. How shall we gain the same?

B.: Peace is your very nature. Forgetfulness never overtakes the Self. The Self is now confounded with non-Self and therefore you speak of forgetfulness of the Self, Peace, etc.; oblivion will never rear up its head if this confusion is put an end to.

Q.: How is that done?

B.: Vichara is the way. One-pointedness means cessation of mental activities. Forgetfulness can never overtake the Self. There is nothing for the Self to either forget or remember. There is not more than one Self. Practice is only meant to remove one's vishayavasanas and poorvasamskaras.

Q.: But samskaras and vasanas are infinite and eternal- they come from beginningless time.

B.: This thought itself is merely a samskara. Give up such notorious ideas and be at peace. Peace is ever-present[nityapratyaksha]. But you hold it down, rise over it as the ego and thus disturb it. Thereafter you say, 'I want Peace.'

Q.: Will Peace be gradual?

B.: Yes. Shanaihi shanairoopamaebdhudhya dhruthi gruhi thaya aathmasamstham manaha krutva na kinchidhapi chintayaet.

S>M>

Q.: It seems B. told Mr. Brunton, 'The world of name and form is an illusory superimposition over Reality, which is the fundamental abiding substratum underlying it.' Will he please explain this theory to me also?

B.: The superimposition is seen only if and when you are enmeshed in it- i.e., for Reality there cannot be illusion.

Q.: Really am I subject to ensnarement in the web of illusion or am I eternally free? If I am myself Reality, and if illusion cannot affect Reality, then who am I, the one who is experiencing illusion?

B.: [smiling] Exactly.

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: Illusion and "I" refer to the same thing. All the countless worlds are built only on the precarious foundation of this one mysterious thing which everybody keeps calling "I", without knowing what it is. "I" is a dimensionless portal or causeway- it is a door. On one side it opens out into the diversity of avidya-maya. On the other it leads into Reality. You decide where you want to go and proceed accordingly.

Q.: But free-will is said to be a myth.

B.: Yes. But so far as other matters are concerned you act as though it exists. On the other hand, when it comes to abhyasa or the question of making attempt to sink the mind into the Heart, you invoke the excuse of predestination. Why this bias? So long as the illusion of free-will persists, make productive use of the same by deploying it towards attempting to achieve perfect introversion of mind. When the illusion of free-will has been transcended, [it is discovered that the question of] necessity for abhyasa has [already] faded away.

Q.: Sri Ramakrishna touched Vivekananda and the latter Realised the Self. How is it possible?

B.: Sri Ramakrishna did not touch all with the same effect being brought about in consequence. Vivekananda was a ripe soul. He was exceedingly anxious to Realise the Self. Such instant awakening is possible for spiritually ripe persons only. Sri Ramakrishna did not create the Self for Vivekananda to Realise; he merely woke him momentarily up to his true, Absolute nature.

Q.: Can the same miracle be worked for all?

B.: If they happen to be fit for it. Fitness is the point. A strong man controls a weaker man. A strong mind controls a weaker mind. What happened in the case of Vivekananda was only a temporary effect. Why did Vivekananda not sit contented after obtaining the experience? Why did he continue to wander about after the incident cited took place? Because the effect was only temporary.

Q.: How shall I make my truculent mind dive into the blissful Heart?

B.: The mind now sees itself diversified as the cosmos; if such diversity is not manifest it remains in its own essence- which is the Heart. Submerging oneself in the Heart means remaining without distractions. The Heart is the

one and only Reality. Mind is only a transient phase. To inhere permanently in pure consciousness bereft of thought is the one and only way to enter the Heart. Since a man identifies himself with body, mind, intellect, etc. he imagines that the world is something separate or apart from him. This wrong identification has arisen because he has lost his moorings in the Real and has swerved from his original state, which is one of unalloyed bliss. He is now advised to give up all his ideas, to trace back his ego to its source and that done remain there as the Self. In the state of self-abidance, there are no differences- such as 'I' or 'you'- possible and no questions or doubts will arise. The sacred-books are meant only to help man to retrace his steps to his original source. He need not attain anything new. If he will only give up all his ideas- which are nothing but useless accretions which veil Revelation of the Self- he will be able to Realise the unqualified happiness of the Self, which is blissful beyond imagination; but instead of doing so he tries to catch hold of something strange and mysterious because he believes that his happiness lies elsewhere; herein lies his mistake. If one remains as pure consciousness there is bliss only. Probably man thinks that being still does not bring about the state of bliss. Such attitude arises on account of his ignorance.

Q.: How shall we remove such ignorance?

B.: Only by asking yourself to whom ignorance has arisen.

Q.: How to control lust, anger, etc.?

B.: Only by interrogating yourself, 'To whom do these passions arise?'. If you have Realised the Self, there will be found nothing apart from the Self. Then, there cannot arise any need to control anything. Who is to control what?

Q.: That is the viewpoint of the Realised person. What is the answer to my question from the sadhaka's point of view?

B.: Who asked you to imagine that you are a sadhaka?

Q.: Shall I imagine, then, that I have already Realised the Self- when in fact I have done no such thing?

B.: Must you always imagine something or the other?

Q.: I cannot imagine a state of no-imagination.

B.: The state of no-imagination cannot be imagined. Simply abide in it.

Q.: How?

B.: By volitionlessly and effortlessly remaining without thinking- i.e., summa-iruthal.

Q.: Impossible.

B.: That is why vichara is suggested.

Q.: Which is genuine vichara- asking myself 'Who am I?' everytime a thought arises or keenly investigating the problem of who I am?



B.: The latter. If you want to get rid of a poisonous tree, do you lop off its leaves one by one? What is the use of such an approach? In the time it takes for you to cut down 1 leaf, multiple leaves in multitudinous number and multifariousness would have sprouted forth from the vicious tree. Instead, attack the poisonous rhizome of illusion, namely the aham vritti, straightaway!

Q.: I am trying to do so. But my vasanas prove to be an obstacle. What can I do?

B.: Never mind obstacles. Keep on going. Do not sit down or pause to moan or complain, but keep on going. The only important thing is to keep on going. If you try to take stock of progress yet to be made, you will feel alarmed and then further progress would have become impossible. So, never stop, but go on escalating. One day you will reach the summit- or rather, Realise that you never left it. Until then, climb relentlessly and incessantly. Do not bother about obstacles, progress, etc.; simply and only go on scaling.

S>M>

Q.: If a person whom we love dies, grief is the result. How shall we avoid such grief- by loving all alike or by not loving at all?

B.: The death of the dead results in grief for the other who lives. The only way to get rid of grief is to NOT LIVE. Kill the one who grieves. Who will remain then to suffer? The ego must die. That is the only way out. The alternatives suggested by you all amount to the same. When all is One, who is there unto whom we may direct our love or hatred? Who shall love whom and who shall hate whom?

Q.: What is the special significance of touching B.'s feet? Will it make me Realise the Self more quickly? Then why has the practice been banned by the sarvadhikari?

B.: Can there be anything outside you? Can Emancipation come from outside? Impossible. So, touch the Heart with the mind. Only this touching is of any genuine use. Everything else is worthless gibberish meant for putting up a display of pomp, so that an impressive show is made available for others to see and appreciate. But the Guru cannot be deceived. He knows who has truly surrendered himself body, mind and soul and who not. The genuine devotee knows how to embrace his Lord in the Heart- he is a clandestine lover whose trysts with his beloved master are kept jealously secret. His Love is too lofty to admit any relevance to formalities. He weeps for his beloved on the inside and wears a casual, nonchalant smile on the outside. 'How shall I know whether God exists or not? And why would I bother about the question? Do I not have anything else to occupy myself with? Would anybody worry himself over such silly questions?' he asks outwardly. Inwardly his heart

throbs with the joy of ecstatic, insane Love for his beloved Lord. It is the empty vessels that make more noise.

Q.: What is the difference between suryamargam and chandhramargam? Which is more efficacious?

B.: They are terms which mean [respectively] Jnana-margam and Yoga-margam. Some people say that after cleansing the 72000 nadis present in the body, finally the sushumna-nadi is made fully pure, the mind passes up to the sahasrara and there is nectar-trickling from the ajna-chakra. But consider for yourself whether these are anything more than mere mental concepts. You are as of yet overwhelmed by other concepts. Now you desire to introduce these further concepts into your already over-burdened mind, through the conduit of this Yoga system. What will be the result?

Q.: [jocundously] Will I go mad?!

The poet Sri Muruganar: What is the doubt in it? Remember: பீலிபெய் சாகாடும் அச்சிறும் அப்பண்டஞ்சால மிகுத்துப் பெயினம் .

B.: Yes. What is the objective of sadhana? It is to exorcise a man of conceptual knowledge and to make him inhere as pure consciousness to which thought is wholly alien. So, we see that naturally remaining bereft of thoughts is the goal of all sadhana. This being the case- why not go straight to it? Why add new encumbrances to the incumbently existing ones? Is it not total absurdity?

S>M>

Q.: Why should I Realise Jnana? Is it morally acceptable to continue to live as an ignorant being even after having come across the teachings of the Ajata-advaita system of philosophy? Is there anything wrong in living as an ignorant creature?

B.: If you feel no inner urge to Realise the Self, don't bother about anything to do with Ajata-advaita. Carry on with the world. However- it is true that nature does have an obvious message for man. While the rest of the universe lovingly embraces Entropy, why does embodied-life wage war against it? The fact shows that something is wrong. Nature is trying to tell you something. 'Can you prevail against me? So, stop fighting. Surrender.' is the message. Clausius' Law requires that if you want to stop Entropy from behaving in concordance with its fundamental or intrinsic nature of increasing with passage of time, constant expenditure of energy- i.e., effort is required. And what is the reward for such effort? Only further obligation to endlessly put in more and more such effort. So, fighting Entropy is meaningless- because there is no such thing as winning; people fight just so that they do not lose. The great secret in life is to stop fighting Entropy and surrender. It is then that you Realise your identity with the Absolute.

Q.: The body cannot remain without consuming energy. Should I commit suicide then?

B.: What was elucidated concerns the mind and its attitude towards life. Even after loss of volition to live and attainment of the perfectly effortless state, the body's actions continue for sometime automatically; we need not concern ourselves with the fact. Karma can take place without karta also. Even after elimination of the dehasana the body's actions may continue, but we would have nothing to do with it. What is required to Realise the Self is complete loss of one's faculty of volition and one's possibility for expenditure of effort- in other words, complete relinquishment of the practice of resisting Randomness or of waging war against Entropy.

Q.: So I should meekly accept whatever happens in life- is that it? 'Do not hurl kicks against the pricks.' is the message- am I correct?

B.: Yes. What comes let come. What goes let go. See what remains.

Q.: Is this not the sordid attitude of defeatism?

B.: No; it is the sublime attitude of surrender.

S>M>

A gloomy-looking Caucasian with a glowering-countenance, Mr. William Snead, walked upto the Sofa and introduced himself. He operates a small retailing-store in Cherokee County, Alabama. He has always cherished a great love of travelling about the world. He chose India for this year's vacation because he felt it would be inexpensive. He has friends in Sri Aurobindo's ashram; they had invited him along with his family to stay with them awhile. Although not given to the habit of reading, 2 days back he noticed a certain book lying about and picked up Brunton's Secret India casually; and somehow he finished reading it in a day. Even as he was reading, he was inexplicably seized by an irresistible temptation to visit the 'Maharishee'. He was strongly dissuaded from going. But the attempted discouragement, far from causing him any discombobulation, only fuelled his determination to come here and see who this 'Maharishee' character was. So, leaving his family behind, he has arrived here today morning. Now he wanted to read out to the master a few paragraphs from some volume he clutched in hand; assent was given; I peered closely and observed the book's title to be- 'Worlds in the making: the evolution of the universe; by Svante Arrhenius, director of the Physico-chemical Nobel Institute, Stockholm'. Presently his droning monotone swooped down upon the Hall:

*In my opinion it would be a perfectly just scientific procedure, if we, after the failure of all our attempts to produce organisms from lifeless matter, put the question, whether life has had a beginning at all, or whether it is not as old as matter, and whether seeds have not been carried from one planet to another and have developed everywhere where they have fallen on a fertile soil. A very*

*ancient speculation, still clung to by many naturalists (so much so that I have a choice of modern terms to quote in expressing it), supposes that, under meteorological conditions very different from the present, dead matter may have run together or crystallized or fermented into 'germs of life,' 'organic cells' or 'protoplasm.' But science brings a vast mass of inductive evidence against this hypothesis of spontaneous generation. Dead matter cannot become living without coming under the influence of matter previously alive. Although this conclusion may sound somewhat dogmatic, it yet demonstrates how strongly many scientists feel the necessity of finding a meaningful way of solving the question of how life must have originated from lifeless matter. The so-called theory of panspermia really shows a way. According to this theory life-giving seeds are drifting about in space. They encounter the planets and fill their surfaces with life as soon as the necessary conditions for the existence of organic beings are established. This theory suggests that life may have been transplanted for eternal ages from solar system to solar system and from planet to planet of the same system. But as among the billions of grains of pollen which the wind carries away from a large tree a fir-tree, for instance only one may on an average give birth to a new tree, thus of the billions, or perhaps trillions, of germs which the radiation pressure drives out into space, only one may really bring life to a foreign planet on which life had not yet arisen, and become the originator of living beings on that planet. Finally, we perceive that, according to this version of the theory of panspermia, all organic beings in the whole universe should be related to one another, and should consist of cells which are built up of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen. The imagined existence of living beings in other worlds in whose constitution carbon is supposed to be replaced by silicon or titanium must be relegated to the realm of improbability. Life on other inhabited planets has probably developed along lines which are closely related to those of our earth, and this implies the conclusion that life must always recommence from its very lowest type, just as every individual, however highly developed it may be, has by itself passed through all the stages of evolution from the single cell upward.*

Now the glum Caucasian had questions for Bhagawan-

Q.: They say that a Jnani knows everything. I hope you would have the willingness to fulfill my curiosity. From my childhood onwards I have had the thirst to solve the mystery of life. How did life evolve from insentient materials? Does life encompass an actual non-physical component or is consciousness a mere accidental by-product of functioning of the organic materials the body is made of? Can it be that life on Earth was seeded from outer space? If so, what is that primordial source to which owe their origin all life-forms in the universe, and where in the universe is it located? Can life be created in a laboratory from insentient materials? Is a soul needed to bring forth and sustain life or will the correct combination of organic chemicals skillfully assembled in a laboratory succeed in creating life?

B.: First of all, what do you mean by 'life'?

Q.: Just sometime back you said that it is the ability- combined with the willingness- to resist Entropy. I am satisfied with that definition.

B.: The characteristic of continuously battling Entropy belongs to the body; I was metaphorically applying it to the mind to bring out the need to surrender one's faculty of personal volition or individual will, in order so as for immutable and imperishable Peace to dawn; that elucidation has nothing to do with what Life is. The answer to this exploration- which forms the object of such passionate fascination on your part- lies in finding out what is meant by 'life'. Do that first and then we may move on to raising other questions. What is life? Find out. Why should we confuse life with the body? If the body perishes, do you perish?

Q.: Why, yes. Can it be otherwise?

B.: It certainly is otherwise.

Q.: I don't understand what you are trying to tell me, sir.

B.: Life and consciousness are one and the same. By itself consciousness has no body, form or shape. When ideas appear or take shape in consciousness, we imagine that we have a body. The body and the world are just appearances in consciousness, which alone is Life. Melting down gold ornaments does not destroy the gold of which they are made. You are under the impression that life is co-eval with the body; this is a wrong notion. Life is indestructible.

Q.: But I feel conscious of my body.

B.: Body-consciousness is only a derivatory, reflected consciousness. It is comparable to a ray of light from the sun. The sun in this context is the original, parent consciousness, which is your true Self.

Q.: How shall I know this parent consciousness?

B.: Can a ray of light from the sun be used to measure the amount of light emitted by the sun? The reflected stream of consciousness or body-consciousness is the obscuration obnubilating the original source of consciousness from being revealed. How then can the reflected consciousness be used to reach the original consciousness? Is it not absurd? What we have to do is to make the reflected consciousness subside so that the original consciousness stands Revealed.

Q.: How is that to be done?

B.: Only by investigating, 'Who am I?'. This investigation reveals Eternal Life to be your own Immortal Self.

S>M>

Q.: A few years back I read a letter published in the journal Nature, which suggested that we might conceive of the beginning of the universe as the form

of a 'unique atom', the mass of which would be equivalent to the total mass of the universe. The contributor went on to suggest that this highly unstable atom would then divide itself into smaller and smaller atoms by a kind of 'super-radioactive process', eventually giving rise to the universe we see around us today. He goes on to add as follows- [reading out from a piece of note-paper]

***Clearly such primeval quantum of matter could not conceal in itself the whole course of evolution; but, according to the principle of indeterminacy, that is not necessary. Our world is now understood to be a world where something really happens; the whole story of the world need not have been written down in the first quantum like a song on the disc of a phonograph. The whole matter of the world must have been present at the beginning, but the story it has to tell may be written step by step.***

Does Sri Bhagawan accept this theory of creation, where the cosmos is postulated to have gradually expanded from a single cosmic-egg? I thought it might fit in with his ideas of predestination nicely, because this model of creation perfectly favours determinism.

B.: No such thing as the cosmos was ever created; this is the one and only truth. Everything else is merely mind-manufactured delusion.

Q.: But I have heard B. saying more than once, 'The world is merely an appearance in and of the Self.'

B.: There are people who will not be satisfied unless given some sort of elucidation which encompasses an explanatory reason for their quotidian, temporal experience of speculating a world; for their sake such things can be said. But what is the actual fact of the matter? Can there be anything apart from one's Self? The Self alone IS. There cannot be anything known as 'world'.

Q.: What about avidya-maya? It is said to be inscrutable.

B.: Perception of world is caused on account of ignorance or maya. Ignorance is born of the mind. Seek the mind. It disappears. Reality is left over as the residue. Then there cannot be any trouble from maya.

S>M>

Q.: Can I Realise the Self by means of performing philanthropic actions?

B.: The idea of one being bound by a moral obligation to engage in righteous conduct is simply a conduit for the aham vritti to continue to survive and flourish. The sadhaka should recognise it as being deadly bait bringing about future bondage when some action presents itself which makes him feel that he wishes to do it because the doing of it is construed by his mind as being an act of human kindness and sympathy; without realising that it will metamorphose into the cause of future bondage, he is tempted into doing

such action because he feels that doing it will fetch him spiritual merit [satkarma]. He thinks that as a consequence of behaving as if he were a non-doer [akarta] and a detached-soul [assanga-purusha] fulfilment of desires will not affect him and he can therefore do altruistic acts without having to be re-born. It is absurd. He will become bound all the same, and shall have to be re-born God knows how many times more. That future bondage results in re-births is authoritatively stated in the sacred-books. However, this does not mean that you should not help those suffering people who are in need of genuine aid, or that you should not engage in philanthropic activities or righteous conduct. What is condemned is only the feeling or sense of doership, not the deed. The thought, 'I am helping [him].' should not come to the mind. Action[karma] causes bondage certainly if but only if the feeling of being the doer remains in the mind. If you are able to work without retaining the feeling of doership, go ahead and serve society; there is no harm in it. But this question, 'Should I help fellow man?' would not have arisen had it been your destiny[prarabdha] to engage in performing philanthropic actions; had your destiny been that way, you would not sit here raising the question- you would be out there helping.

Q.: But I do want to help fellow man. Am I destined to do so or not?

B.: Don't bother about the question. If you feel like helping, help. But don't go on thinking, 'Shall I help or not?' and ruin your own peace of mind. Helping society should be done without expectation, anticipation, hope, etc. of reward or return; then alone can it be called nishkamyā karma. Otherwise your actions will lead to further bondage.

S>M>

Q.: In his 'Meditationes de prima philosophia', Descartes opines that if only he could find some reason to doubt each one of his present opinions in his quest to seek sturdier foundations for knowledge, such quest would surely succeed; but again, rather than doubt each one of his opinions individually, he reasons subsequently that he might cast them all into doubt if he can doubt the foundations and basic principles on which all of his opinions are founded. Is B.'s vichara method analogous to this sort of radical self-doubting?

B.: Yes- doubt the doubter. Doubts may be many and never-ending. Doubter is only one. Solving the doubt concerning the doubter's apparent existence, all doubt is put an end to- once and for all. King Janaka said, 'At last I have discovered the thief who has been ruining me all along. Now I shall execute him summarily.'. So, once you come to know that the aham-vritti is the cause of all your misery, what are you waiting for? Finish off the thief and rest in peace forevermore.

Q.: How to get rid of vasanas which are preventing me from Realising the Self?

B.: Ignore the mind and its contents, including vasanas, samskaras, etc.; if the mind is rebellious let it be. You pay it no attention, but rather repose blissfully in the quiescence of pure consciousness. When you pay it attention, the mind obtains more fuel. If you ignore the mind, it will die away of its own accord. Only by means of keeping it in perpetual inactivity can the mind be killed. This game is to be won only by means of perpetual non-participation.

S>M>

Q.: Which system of medicine in B.'s opinion is the best- the one introduced by Caucasians or traditional Indian methodologies?

G.: Some say that Homoeopathy is the most effective remedy in the long run although it might not produce immediate results.

B.: Medicines? The body itself is the biggest disease. To prolong and perpetuate the lifespan of this disease, people take all sorts of drugs and remedies. Strange world!

G.: People do so because they are under the deluded impression that the body is "I".

Attendant: To remove that wrong impression, one must frequently remind oneself that one is not the body, but Brahman.

B.: That is not a correct approach; it will not bring about Emancipation; it will make the sadhaka imagine that he is Brahman and he will start behaving crazily, becoming a thorough nuisance to both himself and those unfortunate ones around him. Ahambrahmasmi is only a thought. Why should you think Ahambrahmasmi, instead of obliterating the ego and thus actually abiding as Brahman? If you feel hungry, will you go on staring at a mango or will you eat it? Can Ahambrahmasmi bring about Emancipation? There is only one way to Realise the Self, and that is the investigation 'Who am I?'.  
G.: Sometimes B. suggests ananyasharanagati also to be a way.

G.: Sometimes B. suggests ananyasharanagati also to be a way.

B.: 'Tis merely another name for vichara. Either inevitably implies the other also.

S>M>

Q.: It is said that Shiva in the form of a yogi is sitting somewhere on the Arunachala Hill. Where can we find him on the mountain? Is the saying true or just a myth to fool the credulous? Will having darshan of this yogi make me Realise the Self at once?

B.: Seeing God is not Realisation. Visions of God[Ishwara] are on the mental plane. The Real God lies behind the mind. Investigating 'Who am I?' is the one infallible means to find Him in His true, eternal abode- the Heart.

Q.: Is the aham-vritti itself just a vasana?



B.: Yes; it is the primordial or principal vasana without which no other vasana could exist; all vrittis are strung upon only this one single parent vritti. If the aham-vritti is snuffed out, other vrittis are automatically rendered impotent and impuissant. Destruction of the aham-vritti is known as Manonasham or Jnana.

Q.: Should all other vasanas be destroyed before we can proceed to annihilate the aham-vritti- or can a sadhaka tackle the aham-vritti straightaway?

B.: It depends upon the vairagya of the aspirant. To ruin the aham-vritti all at once requires vairagya as boundless as the sky.

Q.: How may we cultivate such vairagya?

B.: Vichara is the way. Constant vichara steadily introverts the mind and gradually, gently turns it self-wards, eventually plunging and submerging it completely into the Heart when poornapakkuvam has dawned; then the mind, being altogether denuded of vrittis, is destroyed by the Heart; this is the only genuine Emancipation. Introversion[antarmukabhavam] means inherence of the mind- in its entirety- in the lusture of pure consciousness emanating from the Self. Vairagya means persistently shunning the not-Self. Thus, can there be any difference between introversion and vairagya?

Q.: How shall I obtain the Grace to Realise the Self?

B.: By introverting the mind- i.e., through vichara.

Q.: It is to introvert the mind that Grace is solicited.

B.: Yes- it is cyclical: Through vichara Grace is earned; it is Grace that makes vichara possible. It is like dislodging a large boulder near the summit of a huge mountain. Initially great effort is needed. Thereafter you can sit back and enjoy the ride. Start with the practice. The rest is automatic and it is only a matter of time before the mind is extirpated in the Heart. Once a certain critical level of introversion is reached, the mind can no longer stay away from the Heart. Normally the mind is like a piece of rock in space orbiting around the sun. To break the centripetal-force propelling the object on its circular orbit, [application of] immense energy or effort is required. But once the body has started to hurtle[accelerate] towards the sun, the sun's gravity will take care of the rest of the work, and no other effort would [thereafter] be needed [to push the body into the sun].

Q.: The body may also break its orbit by falling away from the sun and becoming lost in the dark, fathomless depths of empty space.

B.: The danger you mention is very real for those on the [Raja]yoga-margam, because some people imagine the mindless state of shoonyam to be Jnana and will not listen to sense when told otherwise; that is why for the [Raja]yoga-margam a genuinely Realised Guru in human form is a sine qua non; otherwise the aspirant will in all likelihood unknowingly mistake the

shoonyastithi to be Jnana and rest in it, eventually becoming hopelessly lost. Vichara poses no such danger; the orbit-breaking force exerted by this sadhana is always applied in such an inclination as to precisely drive the mind solely towards and into the blissful Heart. For vichara the Heart Himself lovingly assumes the role of Guru and if the aspirant is sufficiently mature, no other Guru is necessary.

Q.: How shall I tell whether I am in the shoonyastithi or in antarmukabhavam?

B.: The former is a variant of sleep- i.e., the current of awareness is either dim or in severe cases of affliction not there. In antarmukabhavam the mind is fully alert, aware or conscious, but not extraneously active- i.e., not active w.r.t. sensory perceptivities, intellectual effervescences, etc.; many quack-practitioners or teachers of meditation tutor shoonyastithi and purposely delude their pupils into believing that it is Jnana. Shoonyastithi is deadly spiritual poison; it drives one away from the Heart; [thereafter] the lost ground has to be recovered all the way [by means of doubling-back] if Jnana is to be reached. That is why meditation is not encouraged here, but only vichara.

Q.: So [this kind of malapropos] meditation, far from helping me to Realise the Self, is actually harmful.

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: Will B. agree with me that Meher Baba is actually teaching only this shoonyastithi? I hear that many people, particularly Caucasians, are falling prey to all his devilish tricks.

B.: [no response]

Q.: What shall we say to those unfortunate deceived persons who are falling prey to such harmful teachings of charlatans?

B.: [no response]

G.: We can ask them to come to Bhagawan!

S>M>

Q.: B. says: 'Manadhai Aathmasvaroopathil lahikkaseivadhe Jnanadrushtiyagum.' What is the meaning?

B.: Keep the mind permanently submerged in the Heart.

Q.: How is that to be done?

B.: Chittam is only one. Turned outwards it becomes thoughts, objects and the cosmos. Turned inwards it becomes the Self. To Realise the Self it is necessary to merge the mind in the Heart; for this the mind must be turned away from the world and introverted; to accomplish this incessant and unflagging practice of vichara is unequivocally necessary.

S>M>

Q.: How is rebirth made possible?

B.: It is on account of one's vishayavasanas. But birth is only a mental phenomenon. At the time of death, memories which are stored in the brain perish together with the body, but vasanas attach themselves to the heart and cause the illusion of being embodied to continue by means of causing further birth.

Q.: How shall we get rid of these vasanas which prevent one from partaking of the bliss of the Self?

B.: By achieving introversion of mind- i.e., vichara is the way.

Q.: But it is to bring about introversion of mind that vasanas are sought to be obliterated.

B.: Yes- it is cyclical: start with the practice without entangling yourself in all this futile theory.

Q.: It is said that vairagya is necessary for Realisation of the Self. What is vairagya?

B.: It is aversion to samsara or not-Self; thus it is the same as inherence in the Self.

Q.: By practising vichara can we gain vairagya?

B.: Yes; but it must be continuously and incessantly practiced. Practising it for a few hours each day will not be adequate. One should not try to set time apart for practice. Vichara must be practised hand-in-hand[co-evally] with one's quotidian life. Practice must be carried on all the time. Only then is Realisation made possible.

S>M>

Q.: All my efforts to sink the mind in the Heart have proved to be in futility. What fault am I committing?

B.: If the volition to sink the mind in the Heart is still present, how it can be said that you are in the state of unequivocal absence of volition, which is a sine qua non for effortless submergence of the mind in the Heart? The mind cannot sink into the Heart in consequence of the fact that you desire it so to do. If all contents of or knots[vrittis] in the mind stand destroyed, what remains is merely pure consciousness to which formulation or sustenance of thought is wholly alien. Such pure consciousness cannot remain apart from its source for long; soon it sinks into the Heart and is dissolved there once and for all like a salt-dall in the ocean; this is how Emancipation naturally takes place. One cannot succeed in forcing the mind to sink into the Heart; apart from other considerations [which might turn out to prove a hindrance to such submergence], the effort [directed at achieving such submergence] will itself obstruct you from so doing. You are asking this question because you are applying quotidian logic in trying to tackle the Self. In worldly life, when you want to attain something, you make effort to get it. So here[-i.e., w.r.t. the

question of Realisation] also you are trying to do the same thing. But can it work? To Realise the Self the effortless and volitionless state must first be gained; for this the mind must be made steadily one-pointed and free from distraction or restlessness- i.e., it must develop antarmukabhavam[introversion]; for this incessant and continuous practice of vichara is necessary. Trying to use force to lead the mind into the Heart will not work. The mind must sink into the Heart- extemporaneously and effortlessly- owing to absence of distraction- i.e., chitta-vrittis. We see therefore that whilst distractions still remain latent in the mind, Realisation is altogether unlikely. The mind's distractions have been accumulated over a long period of time; they will not go all of a sudden. To root them out, steadfast and unflagging practice of vichara is necessary.

Q.: Should vichara be taken up even whilst the mind is at peace?

B.: Yes. It should be practised until the mind stands destroyed. Even when at peace or whilst in a mood of happiness, the mind must not be permitted to rest. Happiness or peace is also just another mental mode. The happiness you mention is the happiness of manolayam; there is no meaningful comparison possible with the unalloyed ecstasy of the Self, which is unfathomable bliss beyond imagination and beyond possibility of conception by the mind.

Q.: So I should not take rest at all whilst practising vichara?

B.: What do you suppose is vichara? Do you think it involves repeatedly asking yourself the question, 'Who am I?'. The actual import of vichara is to effect subsidence of mind in the Heart. The investigation is certainly to be undertaken the moment a thought arises, but it is pursued only to the extent that thoughts present themselves. When thoughts do not arise the mind must be kept a prisoner of the Heart-cave. You are always at rest; only you do not know it. Thoughts ruin your rest. So, remain without thinking. There is no question of taking rest during one's practising of vichara. Vichara is practised only so that we can take rest eternally. Whenever some thought arises to ruin the mind's nativistic state of nivritti, kill it then and there by wielding the axe of vichara. Vichara is not to be thought of as sadhana performed so that one may acquire or obtain something. Vichara is the weapon used to axe down whenever something and whatever arises to ruin one's natural state of ceaseless rest. Where then is the question of taking rest from vichara?

S>M>

Q.: How to achieve control of mind?

B.: What do you mean by mind? Mind is only a stream of thoughts. Can it be controlled by one of those thoughts, namely the desire to control the mind? The mind cannot kill the mind. No amount of effort made by the mind could

ever possibly result in its eradication. The only way to kill the mind is to find its source and hold on to the same. Then the mind will automatically fade away of its own accord. Mental activity cannot destroy the mind. On the other hand, complete absence of mental activity reveals the mind's eternal non-existence.

Q.: Yes. But practically what am I to do?

B.: Either see the source of the mind so that it may disappear or surrender unreservedly to the substratum of appearances so that it may be struck down. These are the only 2 ways to escape from the experience of illusion known as mind.

Q.: Sometimes B. asks aspirants to constantly watch the aham-vritti, so that the Self may be revealed.

B.: Yes. Constantly attempting to watch the aham-vritti leads to the source of the mind, because the aham-vritti is nothing but that source.

Q.: Having reached the aham-vritti, how shall we destroy it, so that Jnana may dawn?

B.: Having reached the source, further effort or volition is an impediment. If the mind stands having been reduced to pure consciousness to which thought, volition or effort is totally alien, there cannot be any motive or desire in that state- including any aspiration to Realise the Self. Only such a denuded mind is automatically pulled within, dissolved and destroyed in the Self, but it would have no desire for nor aversion to such a thing happening. A mind which has lost all of its vrittis is certain to be annihilated by the Self. Vrittis together form the water-proof coat for the salt-dall living in the ocean. They must perish before good results can follow.

Q.: If my effort itself is an obstacle to Realisation, how then can I Realise?

B.: Effort is made to return the mind back to its source everytime a thought arises. Otherwise than this there must be no effort. When the mind has wholly ceased to move in the exterior direction, our abhyasa has fulfilled its purpose- manonivritti. The next stage is the Beyond- it is manonasham. This is not to be reached. Our efforts have already ceased in the previous stage. So, it is for the Heart to grant the same or not; but either way, one whose mind is a denuded expanse of pure consciousness will not mind. If he is still seeking Jnana he is not eligible therefor. So, Summa-irutthal, not sadhana, is the way to Jnana. Jnana is always a gift from Grace. You can never earn Him. By keeping quiet without requiring anything, and by remaining without desiring even a mustard seed, let alone aspiring after Jnana, the man of sagacious discernment obtains Jnana. Rather than foolishly endeavouring to fulfill your desire for Jnana, relinquish that desire also and remain in the state of perfect, motionless alertness- i.e., keep quiet. Then verily but then alone does Jnana dawn.

Q.: Is it possible to win Jnana by means of bhakti?

B.: Yes. "...thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." One who follows this primigenial, autochthonous commandment need not worry about sadhana, etc.; Jnana dawns upon him unasked. But one's Love must be so intense that it does not permit him to think about anything else. Love cannot be performed as sadhana. Sadhana is done for reward. Love naturally occurs; it never seeks or anticipates reward. Love has no expectations or aims. The nun de Lisieux, who was decreed a saint by the Pope, has made the astute observation, 'When one Loves, one does not calculate.'. What is the implication? Genuine Love delights itself in Love alone. Only such pure Love which does not know anything other than Itself leads to Realisation of the Self. Pure Love defies reason; it cannot be called upon to fit within or cater to the semantic requirements of any logically meaningful intellectual framework[of ideas].

Q.: If I surrender to God completely, am I thereby absolved also of my responsibility to Realise within this lifetime?

B.: Yes. Leave everything to Him entirely.

Q.: Is no sadhana necessary then?

B.: Having surrendered the ego, remain in the state wherein there is no ego. That will do.

Q.: What about the need for effort, then?

B.: What do you mean by effort? For the man on the Clapham omnibus, effort means deliberate attempt to suppress thought. It may produce temporary stupefaction of mind, but no permanent benefit is gained. That is not the approach taught here. Tracing each thought back to its source in the Heart is the way, not practising control or suppression of thought. Thought must be made to disappear in such a way that there is no volition or effort involved in keeping up the thoughtless state. It is pointless to forcibly remain without thinking. One who has surrendered should give up his faculty of [individual] will or [personal] volition and not try to obstruct the Almighty or Randomness from doing with him as It should please. The surrendered-one is like a bear caught in a hunter's snare. If the animal moves about its trapped leg, the pain becomes further and further exacerbated and accentuated in consequence of the fact that the injury becomes worse, but that is the only result gained; freedom is not obtained by wrenching the leg. On the other hand, if the animal waits quietly for the hunter to arrive and put an end to its misery, it would manage to get away with a minimal amount of pain and suffering. But in either case the final outcome is that the animal is successfully trapped by the hunter and carried away from the jungle, wherein it was hitherto roaming about

freely. Likewise the mind that has surrendered once to the Sadhguru will be carried off from the jungle of sensory perceptions and intellectual effervescences once and for all, when the time arrives. Until then, be patient and keep quiet. Why bring upon yourself unnecessary anguish by twisting and turning?

Q.: How shall I best remember these soothing words of reassurance from B.? I keep forgetting that I must keep quiet so as to Realise the Self.

B.: Make no effort to either remember or forget anything. Simply remain as you are. B.'s words are not meant for the intellect to ruminate over. Put them into actual practice: plunge the mind in the Heart and let it abide there.

Q.: During vichara sometimes I fall asleep. At other times a mysterious fear arises. The reason for this vague fear is not known to me. But I find it disturbing. For this reason- I am unable to continue with the practice.

B.: Do not fight with sleep. If you are feeling sleepy, sleep. But immediately on waking, resume the practice. When fear arises, ask yourself who becomes aware of that fear.

Q.: But still the fear remains.

B.: [after a long pause] Think of 'this' [striking himself at right-hand side of chest] when you feel fear.

S>M>

Q.: I am finding B.'s vichara method easy to understand but hard to follow in practice.

B.: What is to be done? For Realisation the mind must go back the way it came. Of course giving up our age-old tendencies will not be easy. Amma Syncretica of the Desert has said: "For the man who has been recently won over to the path of the Lord, there is indeed tremendous struggle and toil; but thereafter comes unspeakable joy. One who would light a fire is at first haunted by smoke, so much so that it drives him to tears; but finally he obtains the fire he has been craving for. So also says the sacred-word: our God is a devouring fire; thus it is unavoidable that we ought to light the divine fire within ourselves by means of hard labour and with tears."

Q.: Shall I surrender to God? Will it suffice for Realisation?

B.: Yes. But if you have surrendered, it means that you should be able to abide by the will of God. If something happens in such manner as to displease you or cause you apparent deprivation or harm, or if something does not happen that you had been expecting would happen in such manner as to please you or cause you apparent enrichment or benefit, you should not be upset about the fact, but remain calm and unruffled inwardly.

Q.: Such perfect detachment is possible only for a Jnani.

B.: First try it out and see. Do not peremptorily arrive at decisions based on hypothetical grounds of intellectual consideration, but pragmatically try it out and see.

S>M>

Q.: What is the explanation for all the evil-doings of this world? I mean, if God were to give a damn, He should- at once- be able to put an end to all the evil-doings going on in the world: otherwise, what sort of God is He? Is He then powerless to influence His own creation? Is He an impotent God?

B.: [no response]

Q.: Hallo! Excuse me, sir; I'm asking you a question; what do you mean by looking the other way? Don't know what to say?

B.: [softly] [continuing to gaze into vacant space, seemingly abstractedly] [in English] If you give a damn about Him, He gives plenty damn about you.

S>M>

Q.: Certain groups of so-called sadhus in town are spreading vicious rumours that Sri Bhagawan is teaching black-magic rites in the ashram.

B.: Good. Excellent. If they have run out of ideas for new rumours to spread, let them come here; I have many ideas. [laughs] If [owing to perpetration of such activities on their part] people stop coming here for good, I shall remain eternally indebted to them.

S>M>

Q.: I am doing Omkaram japam. Will it suffice for Realisation?

B.: Always keep your attention fixed constantly on the japi. Everything will come aright in the end.

S>M>

Q.: I am unable to find out "I". Please explain to me what is meant by "I" and "not-I".

B.: Pure consciousness in which there is no scope for thought to occur is "I". This pure consciousness is called mahat, akhandakara-vritti or ஈஷ்வராந்தவ்யாகரணம் . It is subservient to the state of the Jnani, which is "no-I".

Q.: The Jnani's "I" is the Self. Is that right?

B.: The Self does not say "I". That which says "I" cannot be the Self. The Self shines in silent Revelation without saying anything.

Q.: Is desire for Jnana an obstacle to Realisation of Jnana?

B.: Yes. Only a mind altogether bereft of desire, thought and any other chitta-vritti[modification of consciousness] can remain permanently submerged in the Heart. Without perpetual submergence there can be no dissolution.

Q.: Why is it said that ananda is also an obstacle to Jnana?



B.: Ananda is a state of mind. Jnana is the supreme state of no-mind. That bliss which is co-eval with the Self is the same as Jnana. On the other hand, that bliss which is experienced by the mind is only a mental modification; it is simply ignorance in yet another disguise. Just at the time of commencement of coital penetration, [in the male cohabitor] there is a euphoric rush of thrilling pleasure searing upwards along the length of the spine and forcefully impinging upon the brain. After eating a heavy meal- particularly one in which one's favourite delicacies were included- one feels a pleasant lull before onset of sleep actually occurs. During meditation some people experience a pleasing and agreeable void-like condition and imagine unto themselves that they have Realised the Self. What is the fact? These kinds of rajasic and tamasic happiness are not Real; nor are they at all desirable. Rather than pleasure or ecstasy, the bliss of the Self is of the nature of supreme, unshakable Peace- i.e., Peace to which possibility of perturbation is altogether alien. Rajasic and tamasic pleasures are highly addictive; his craving to experience them distract the aspirant from abidance in the Self; one who is serious about the quest avoids them like the plague.

Q.: How and why did the mind or ego arise?

B.: See if it arose.

Q.: What about creation? How and why did it arise?

B.: The phenomenon known as 'mind' is the origin of all creation that you see. Mind and creation all refer to one and the same thing: avidya-maya. So, the answer to this question is the same as that to the previous one: see if it arose.

Q.: How can I tell when I have Realised the Self?

B.: This question would not arise- neither would any other question.

Q.: How can I tell whether somebody is a genuinely Realised soul or only yet another charlatan?

B.: Only a Jnani can identify a Jnani. But when you come into contact with a Realised soul who is destined to be your Guru, you might find that your mind has become motionlessly alert, quiet and still without any effort or volition on your part. Rather than produce any euphoric exultation, the Jnani's presence[sannidhi] brings stillness and peace to the mind.

S>M>

Q.: I am practising vichara round the clock. But yet despite my best efforts I am unable to Realise the Self. What can I do? I am at my wits' end. Please tell me what I shall do.

B.: Is Realisation your birth-right? Can Realisation be claimed as a matter of right? If you will have peace, surrender to the Self and let Him do with you as He fancies. Can we order Him about as it pleases us?

Q.: But I want to gain Realisation of the Self.

B.: That very anxiety or aspiration is also an obstacle to Realisation. Why continue to hold on to it? For Realisation it is necessary to COMPLETELY LET GO. Some say, 'I have let go of everything; but yet there is no Realisation for me.'. Had you genuinely let go of everything, would have this question arisen- or any other? If everything has- i.e., if all of the mind's contents have- genuinely been lost, only pure consciousness remains behind as the substratum constituting the mind. Pure consciousness cannot think thoughts or ask questions or raise doubts or complain about this and that. It can only remain as it IS.

Q.: Then surrender also implies or envisages the possibility that I may not after all Realise Jnana.

B.: That is correct.

Q.: Well, how then can surrender be called a fool-proof method to Realise the Self?

B.: [smiling] From the ego's point of view, it cannot. But in fact it is.

Q.: How maddeningly perplexing! So, only if I accept or embrace wholeheartedly the possibility of non-Realisation can Realisation take place?

B.: Yes. But that wholehearted acceptance is not what it purports to be if it happens in fact to be driven by any [ulterior] motive, desire, ambition, etc.- such as that of Realising the Self.

Q.: The whole thing seems fiendishly difficult. No wonder so few succeed. I mean, how to do something without intending to do it?

B.: It is not a question of doing. It is one of non-doing.

Q.: My question still applies. How to not-do something without intending to not-do it?

B.: Not-doing must become the natural state: that is how.

Q.: And how can that be accomplished?

B.: By practice. Little drops make an ocean. Everytime you notice your mind active in the outward direction, pull it back so that it remains active in the inward direction alone. The mind must be aware or conscious but otherwise inactive. Bereftitude of thought, and eventually of possibility of thought, is the goal.

S>M>

Q.: Are the 3 states equally fictitious?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then how am I able to tell the difference between them?

B.: On the contrary, you think or imagine that you are able to tell the difference between them.

Q.: So I am now in what state?

B.: There is only 1 Real state. That is the state everybody is in. Only- for some unknown reason- people imagine unto themselves otherwise.

Q.: If everything is only in my imagination, I could- right now- actually be sleeping, and dreaming all this up- isn't that right?

B.: That is without doubt the case.

Q.: But you are corroborating my experience!

B.: Did I tell you so? I am only a figment of your own imagination. I am now appearing and talking in this dream of yours. Actually, I don't exist at all.

Nothing could ever exist but Reality.

Q.: How shocking! Could you possibly be joking?

B.: No.

Q.: So I am now sleeping and dreaming this entire thing- the world, this place, you- up?

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: My God! Please tell me you're joking- please!

B.: No.

Q.: How can I wake up, then? I want to wake up!

B.: Vichara is the only way.

Q.: What about sharanagati?

B.: They are the same thing.

S>M>

Q.: Will repeating, 'I am not the body or ego but the Self.' do any good?

B.: It is not an advisable practice. The ego may end up imagining itself to be Brahman; in that deluded and deranged condition it might cause you to seriously harm yourself and others. Moreover, such bhava could cause considerable spiritual retardation or even retrogression, because the repetition may reaffirm and strengthen the fallacious idea or conviction in you that there is an "I" who asseverates unto himself that he is Brahman. It is better to opt for vichara. The way to Emancipation is 'Who am I?' and not 'I am the Self.'. The Self does not think or say 'I am the Self.'. He has no thoughts. He is always silent.

Q.: I am nearing 73 years of age. I have tried to practice vichara, but my efforts have been rewarded only with failure so far. But I intend to go on trying. My question is: what is the reason for my failure to Realise the Self, although I am perseverant in pursuing the practice? Is it because Sri Bhagawan is not my Guru? My Guru is Sai Baba. It has been always so for our family from the days of my late father. Will the 'Who am I?' practice work only if I renounce Sai Baba as my Guru and accept Sri Bhagawan instead? Will the vichara abhyasa suggested by Sri Bhagawan yield the desired result only if the abhyasi's Guru is Sri Bhagawan? Will the vichara abhyasa suggested by Sri

Bhagawan yield the desired result only if the abhyasi stays in the physical proximity of Sri Bhagawan? Does Sri Bhagawan suggest that I change my Guru from Sai Baba to Sri Bhagawan? In fact I feel tempted so to do, but I do not know if it would be the right thing to do. I request Sri Bhagawan to please guide me in the right direction.

Q.: Keep on practising. You need not worry about lack of progress. Only the effort is in our hands. You make incessant and unflagging effort to discover the Self and let the Higher Power take care of the rest. Effort is needed until effortless abidance in pure consciousness has become the permanent, natural state and thoughts have disappeared forever. You need not change your Guru. There is no multiplicity in the Guru. He is only One. He is the same Self that you are trying to discover by means of practising introversion of mind. Since you now identify yourself with form, you are asking what the Guru's form ought ideally to be. The Guru is formless. We give Him some form so that it may be possible for us to conceive of Him by using the mind. Then where is the Guru actually? He is the Heart. So, continue with the vichara 'Who am I?'. Sai Baba will show you His light from within. There is no need for any other Guru. Physical proximity or separation has no meaning w.r.t. the Guru's Grace. It is immaterial to the Guru whether you are in Tiruvannamalai or Shirdi or Poona. He sees only one thing: whether you have totally surrendered yourself to Him or not. Rather than physically remaining at the Guru's feet, the actual way to win Grace is to surrender yourself- heart and soul, mind and body- to Him.

Q.: How shall I surrender myself to God?

B.: Yes- consider what is yours that it may be surrendered unto Him. Everything has verily always been His. Really the only thing it is possible for you to surrender is the erroneous belief or notion that there ever could be anything for you to surrender. You and everything you believe is yours is ever His; giving up all notions to the contrary and keeping quiet is called surrender. People offer the Guru flowers and fruits. Who are you to offer Him His own possessions? People say, 'I am willing, ready and eager to offer my life itself for my Guru.'. It is like breaking off a piece of கருப்பட்டி from a statue of Vinayakar made out of கருப்பட்டி and then employing it in doing naivaedya for the same idol. Is it not absurd? What right have we over anything? Everything is His. He is all. Surrender means to give up the idea that you ever could have anything to surrender. "I" means egotism. If you seek it, it is not found at all. So there is really no surrenderer to surrender anything, and neither is there anything to surrender, because everything is His and He is all; discovery of this fact for yourself is called surrender.

Q.: I understand the philosophical aspect of it. But pragmatically speaking, how to surrender?

B.: Stop imagining yourself to be a person inhabiting a body, to be something that has name and form and to be a constituent of something called 'world' the apparent existence of which is discerned on account of functioning of sensory perceptivities.

Q.: If I could do all these things, there would be no need for me to come to Sri Bhagawan- I would already be a Jnani! Please give an easier way for me to surrender.

B.: Whatever happens or does not happen, take it to be God's will.

Q.: Even when bad things happen?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How would God ever permit bad things to happen to His devotee?

B.: One who surrenders himself to God accepts God as his master. Whether what he does or abstains from doing seems good or bad in your eyes, accept it as His will; such is what is meant by surrender. It is not for us to sit in judgement over Him or goings-on in the world which is caused to function on account of the light of His effulgence. Do you think He is bound by your sense of right and wrong? "I receive not honour from men." So, we must not arrogate ourselves to the position of sitting in judgement over Him or His apparent actions. Whatever He gives us, let us meekly accept the same, be it in our petty opinion good or otherwise. When the Lord tortured him with calamity after calamity, all Job could think of saying was: 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'. When Hiranyakashipu tortured his son in all sorts of ways, never once did it occur to Prahladhan to say anything other than Narayana, Narayana. This is what is meant by surrender. One who has truly surrendered to God unreservedly sees- actually- everything in God alone and God alone in everything. He does not think, 'It is God alone who is doing all this to me. I must implicitly accept it without asking questions or raising complaints. It is His will.', because that conviction has already entrenched itself deeply and inalienably within his mind; now contrary thoughts would not appear to him at all. "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" must be the attitude of surrender.

Q.: If I surrender myself to God, is no prayer to Him then necessary?

B.: Surrender is the loftiest prayer. We need not tell God our requirements. He knows them and will Himself look after them of His own accord, provided we surrender to Him unconditionally. "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." Where is the need to ask God

for Realisation or for anything at all? He knows what to do, when and how. Leave everything in His hands entirely and BE at peace.

S>M>

Q.: What is "I"? What is "I-I"? Please explain this to me.

B.: "I" is the aham-vritti- i.e., the primordial mental modification or primogenitalis-tenebra of ignorance or notion-of-"I". "I" is only a thought. "I-I" is pure consciousness to which possibility of thought is altogether alien. Trace "I-I" back to its source and the Self stands Revealed. "I-I" is referred to as aham-sphuranam in Vedantic parlance.

Q.: Is "I-I" accompanied by light-rays emanating from the r.h.s. of the chest?

B.: The sphuranam involved is not of physical light. Clear light of consciousness shines forth without obnubilation by thought; it is in that sense that the term sphuranam is used. But some may feel a pulsating-sensation in the r.h.s. of the chest whilst inhering in the sphuranam. But physical sensations are immaterial. What is necessary is to remain free from thought. If we have reached the primal mental state of subjective-awareness-sustained-effortlessly-and-volitionlessly, and if we are able to abide in that state permanently, our job is done; thereafter the Beyond takes care of everything. All effort is needed only until all effort has become impossible.

S>M>

Q.: Tulsidas has sung: Soyi janahi jehi dehu janayi janath thumhim thumhim hoyi jayi. How then can we hope to Realise the Self with our petty efforts?

B.: The mind's own endeavour to remain silent or still can- with enormous difficulty- bring about a quiescent mind, but no amount of effort effectuated or travail countenanced by the mind can as a meritorious consequence ever lead to its destruction, because manonasham or Jnana is without exception a gift from Grace; it is not possible to deserve it; it is not possible to earn it; it is not possible to obtain it as a matter of right. What role then does effort play? If the ego has reduced itself to almost nothing, God will finish the job. But this is left solely to His discretion. The ego can never earn the right to be eliminated by the Self. Jnana can never be claimed as a matter of right.

Q.: Then effort is useless- is that right?

B.: No. Your effort must be made in the spirit of loving self-surrender, which means you are always prepared to have your effort go without being rewarded in the slightest. It should be totally acceptable to one even if all his effort were to go altogether in vain; only then can it legitimately be said of him that he has completely surrendered the ego. Such arrantly indifferent climate of mind, wherein one has ceased to care even about one's own Emancipation, is possible only if one's effort was made not with the motive of obtaining Realisation, but exclusively for Love. Making effort to Realise is not a barter-

transaction. If there is expectation or anticipation of reward or benefit for surrender, no surrender ever took place. But trying to remain indifferent so that this requirement for indifference stands fulfilled is not genuine indifference. One must actually be indifferent to everything. Only then is Realisation made possible.

Q.: So I should make effort without bothering about results or consequences?

B.: Yes.

Q.: And I should make continuous effort without sparing a single thought to- and without in the least caring- whether I shall finally Realise the Self or not?

B.: Yes.

Q.: How could anybody possibly be so pococurante of mind?

B.: By ceasing to care about the ego. The ego has only 1 source of nourishment for its sustenance: your paying attention to it. If this is cut off, the ego fades away of its own accord. There is only 1 way to win this game: by constantly, obdurately and persistently refusing to participate.

Q.: If the effort may pitilessly end in failure even if it happens to be my maximally intensest effort and the utmost possible from my side, where is the incentive to make effort?

B.: It requires guilelessness to Realise the Self. A calculating mentality will not get you anywhere. [Even] before commencement of embarkment on the quest, as a pre-requisite or pre-condition for initiation of such embarkment you are asking for guarantee of success. Can this be given? Even in worldly matters it is not available. So, make assiduous effort without bothering yourself about and burdening yourself with such magniloquent and infructuous questions, and one day success is bound to result.

Q.: Sometimes I hear you saying that only effortless awareness can reveal the Self. But now you are asking me to put in effort.

B.: Remaining without thinking requires effort in the beginning. Later on with continuous practice it becomes effortless. Thoughtlessness is the natural state. Until it becomes effortless, spontaneous and automatic, effort is necessary [of being expended in order so as] to remain in it.

Q.: How shall I win the Grace of the Almighty?

B.: You go on practising and Grace will come looking for you. No separate effort is required to obtain Grace- the practice itself will do.

S>M>

Q.: Why do not Mahatmas alleviate the sufferings of the world?

B.: He who spectates a world may try to ameliorate the sufferings he perceives therein.

Q.: I don't understand.

B.: [no response]

S>M>

Q.: You have not taken diksha from any of the 5 Sankaracharyas. What right have you got to teach Advaita?

B.: Did I say that I am teaching anything?

Q.: Why are so many people coming here to see you then from all sorts of far-away places?

B.: I earnestly have not the faintest clue. Why not ask them?

Q.: They have come because they want to become a Jnani like you. They hope to acquire Realisation under your training or guidance. Am I right?

B.: Who is to teach whom- and why? I do not see anybody who is ajnani.

Q.: So from your point of view, all people in the world are Jnanis. Am I right?

B.: Yes.

Q.: But that is not their experience.

B.: Can one who closes his eyes and complains of darkness be helped?

Q.: So according to you ajnana is brought about upon themselves on purpose by people.

B.: Can it be any other way?

S>M>

Q.: Is there duality in sleep?

B.: Yes. In jagrat and swapna, duality or nescience assumes form or shape. In sushupti it remains formless and shapeless. That is the only difference.

Q.: I am perturbed by my thoughts which rush forth to disturb my peace all the time. I have tried vichara. But it seems to be a weak method. Instead of asking 'To whom has this thought occurred?' everytime a thought occurs, can we not have a quicker or more radical method?

B.: There are no short-cuts to success. Adamantine perseverance is needed. Go on with your practice until absence of thought together with motionless alertness has become the natural state of mind.

Q.: Sometimes when I reach the state of thoughtlessness I feel a blank pervading.

B.: Go beyond. Ask yourself who feels that blank. It is important to remain aware or conscious while remaining free of thought. Otherwise the mind will slip into layam.

Q.: I want God's Grace so that I can succeed on the quest.

B.: Surrender to Him your responsibilities and remain care-free.

Q.: Including my responsibility to Realise the Self?

B.: Yes.

Q.: If I remain idle who will take care of my family?

B.: Did I ask you to remain idle? Only give up the idea of yourself being the doer.



Q.: Should I think, 'God is the doer of all actions that I perform.'?

B.: When asked to abandon one idea, you ask which substitute is to be taken up in its stead. All ideas are obstacles. Give up the idea that the body is you. Give up the idea that the body's actions are your actions. Remain blissfully free from all ideas.

Q.: How can activities be performed if one gives up thinking?

B.: Excellently- better than otherwise, in fact. Try it and see. You will be surprised to discover that [even] all along everything has been taking place only automatically. Only we have been absurdly imagining ourselves to be the doer.

Q.: What is the advantage w.r.t. spiritual practice carried on in a forest as against in one's house?

B.: What matters is vairagya. The physical environment makes no difference. No matter where you are, keep your mind locked up in the Heart. That done, forest and house are all found to be the same. Therefore then this question will not arise.

Q.: But how to make the mind inhere in the Heart?

B.: Go on incessantly with vichara into "I". Everything will come aright in the end.

S>M>

Q.: Which is better: jnana-margam or bhakti-margam?

B.: It depends on the temperament of the individual. Both lead to the same goal: egolessness.

Q.: Buddha said: 'Accept the pain.'. B. says, 'Inquire who feels the pain.'.

B.: The first is sharanagati and the second vichara. Either approach leads to Emancipation, provided there is unflinching persistence. Complete surrender is another name for Jnana or Emancipation.

Q.: I want freedom from samsara. When will samsara let go of me?

B.: You let go of samsara and samsara will let go of you. Let go and you will be let go. It is you and you alone who are holding on. Let go and be free. Jnana is simply the art of LETTING GO.

Q.: Letting go- of what?

B.: Everything.

Q.: Meaning I should leave my house and move into some deserted forest?

B.: No. 'Totally abandon the mind together with all of its contents.' is the message.

Q.: Pragmatically how can I do this?

B.: Vichara is the way.

Q.: Is the doctrine of original sin correct? Are we all sinners? The Vedas say that we are Parabrahman. But Christians believe that all men are sinners. I

find it ridiculous that they should condemn themselves in this way, needlessly.

B.: The original sin is the aham-vritti. Because of it man faces untold misery and his true nature of bliss without beginning or end is veiled from him.

Q.: Why did God permit the aham-vritti to arise?

B.: See if it arose.

Q.: What is the difference between dehathmabuddi, dehavasana and aham-vritti?

B.: The first is the asinine conviction, 'I am the body.'. The second is the craving or longing to experience sensory perceptions [through the bodily organs facilitating sensory perceptivity]. The third is the primeval vasana or vritti out of which every other springs. Destruction of the aham-vritti is known as Jnana.

Q.: Then where is the need to ask 'Who am I?' everytime a thought arises? We could simply kill the aham-vritti and be done with it.

B.: Everything depends upon the vairagya of the aspirant. Tackling and extirpating the aham-vritti requires absolute vairagya. It is to facilitate you to gradually cultivate the same that the investigation 'Who am I?' is suggested.

Q.: Is hatha-yoga useful? What about pranayama?

B.: They are preliminary stepping stones.

S>M>

Q.: Do our ancestors really go to pithrulogam? Is it not a deceitful ploy to ensure steady income for the vaidheeha-brahmanas? If pithrulogam really exists, where is it? Why are scientists unable to see it using their telescopic reflectors? What is B.'s opinion? Does pithrulogam really exist or not?

B.: If the body felt and the world seen by you exist, certainly pithrulogam also exists.

Q.: I see the world functioning around me but I cannot see pithrulogam. Can concrete physical objects be relegated to the realm of shadowy imagination?

B.: Objects derive the basis for their apparent reality only from your imagination, which concocts or conjures up their appearance.

Q.: Others see the same world which I see.

B.: Who sees those others?

Q.: So, everything is an illusion.

B.: Yes.

Q.: How and why did illusion arise?

B.: If illusion arose once it can arise any number of times. If you were born once you can be born any number of times. So the solution to your question lies in discovering that you were never born or that illusion never arose.

Q.: What about the world? Can we deny the fact that the cosmos has entered into manifestation?

B.: Does the manifestation mentioned by you make itself apparent to you whilst you are in the state of deep slumber? No. So, the existence of the world is myth, not fact. The truth is that no such thing as the cosmos could ever exist. The Self alone exists; He alone IS.

Q.: What then is the meaning of the saying, 'The cosmos is Real if it is regarded as the Self.'?

B.: The statement mentioned by you does not mean intellectually telling yourself 'The cosmos is not apart from the Self, which I verily am.' could in any way ever be legitimately opined to be an act of making a meaningful asseveration. The cosmos is Real only to the Jnani- because He is it. Illicitly appropriating or arrogating the experience of Jnana to itself the mind may imagine or delude itself into believing that it is itself Parabrahman; such paranoia on the part of the mind does not transform the mind in actuality into Parabrahman. I can put up a sign outside this hut, saying, 'Governor-General's office'. Does that make me the Viceroy of India? So, the statement 'The cosmos is Real as the Self.' is applicable to those alone who genuinely have found their Self. To others the cosmos is a mere dream- a figment of the imagination.

Q.: Is Being-consciousness the same as the Self?

B.: Again, this statement has to be understood in the correct sense. The Jnani's experience of Being-consciousness is not the same as yours. Your incumbent subjective-experience of Being-consciousness is merely a monad-like phenomenon of reflection shining by the light of that Almighty-being, the Self, who is perfectly unattainable like the Sun. The mind can never comprehend its parent entity, the Self. Can a ray of light from the Sun measure the Sun? So long as the reflecting-medium known as 'mind' exists, you have never known Truth. Those who have merely gained chitta-shuddhi are not Jnanis. Jnana is only in manonasham. The Self is beyond the comprehension of or apprehension by the mind.

Q.: But I heard that once B. told somebody: 'The Realised-man's mind is like the moon during day-time.'. Is the mind destroyed when Jnana dawns- or not?

B.: When a rope[which has been made from fibre extracted out of coconuts] is burnt, the ashes left behind look just like a rope. But try to touch it and see. Will you be able to grasp it or pick it up? No. Why? Because the rope as such exists from the onlooker's point of view only. In fact there is no rope once it has been completely devoured by fire. Likewise the Jnana-agni known as Arunachala has already swallowed and consumed me whole. I have no feeling of being in existence, because I actually exist- as Him. So, the Jnani's mind is merely an appearance that seems to exist- but from the point of view

of others who have minds only; He Himself knows nothing of it- He is lost in the Beyond like a salt-doll thrown into the ocean.

S>M>

Q.: Sri B. has written 5 magnificent poems in praise of Lord Arunachalaeshwara. Can it be done without using the mind? Can one whose mind is not functioning write so beautifully? How is it possible? What is the explanation?

B.: Activity goes on after the mind is lost, but it is not apart from the Self. It is the mind which contains the sense of doership. After mind has been extinguished, activities still continue as ordained by prarabdha, but they have no power to disturb the peace of the Self. This is understood only when we ourselves reach that state.

Q.: Is the Jnani's awareness of the Self diminished when his body is sleeping?

B.: No. In fact, the Jnani is not aware of the Self; he abides as It.

S>M>

Q.: Why does Existence exist?

B.: Is Existence asking the question?

Q.: No. But I am.

B.: Are you then apart from Existence? Who are you?

Q.: I have come here to make the discovery that I am one with Parabrahman. How am I to go about it? Why should I ask myself 'Who am I?' when the Vedas explicitly declare that I am already one with Parabrahman? Is not the answer to the question already known? The answer is Parabrahmaivaham. Am I right?

B.: When your body suffers injury, do you become disturbed of mind?

Q.: Yes; but what does that have anything to-

B.: If you are Parabrahman, why bother even if the body is burnt into ashes? Surely Parabrahman is not going to be affected by the loss of your body?

Q.: So the idea 'I am the body.' is latently present in the mind...

B.: Yes. And telling yourself 'I am the Self.' is not going to lead you anywhere. The way to Realisation is 'Who am I?'

S>M>

Q.: It is said that at the time of departing from the world, one who is a Jnani does not leave behind a corpse at death, but disappears in a blazing flash of reddish light. Is this true?

B.: We cannot make any hard and fast rule about it. It depends upon the Jnani's prarabdha. The Jnani does not see himself as being one with the body. Its disappearance or destruction cannot affect him. He has already perished in the Beyond. Can He have anything left to lose?

Q.: How does the Jnani's awareness of the Self differ from my consciousness of being?

B.: Similar to the difference between a reflection of the Sun in a dewdrop and the Sun Himself.

Q.: The Jnani's actions are said to be God's own actions.

B.: 'Tis merely another way of saying that the Jnani never does anything; He is always idle.

Q.: Can one learn the truth about God by means of reading books and attending lectures?

B.: Description of the thing is not the thing. The finger pointing out the moon to you is not the moon. For Realisation, practice is necessary. Introversion of mind is the practice. How to achieve the same? 'Who am I?' is the way. The investigation should be carried on round-the-clock.

Q.: How then will my quotidian tasks go on? I need to earn a livelihood to support myself financially. I cannot live in a forest and eat roots and shoots like a wild animal.

B.: Who asked you to go to any forest? Remain in the world and carry on the practice.

Q.: My work will suffer if I ask myself 'Who am I?' and at the same time try to attend to office-duties. I am an accountant. If I ask myself 'Who am I?' and at the same time try to post an amount in the general-ledger, I may, owing to lapse of concentration, post it under the wrong account-head.

B.: Have you seen an experienced tightrope-walker at work? With his hands he holds the beam perfectly still and parallel to the ground; at the same time he adroitly maintains his grip on the rope with his feet. How do you think it is made possible? Does he have an extra pair of eyes? Does he have an unusually large brain? Nothing of the sort. Then what is the secret?

PRACTICE. Likewise here.

Q.: How long does it take to achieve this sort of expertise in managing vichara and quotidian tasks at the same time? And until then what do I do?

B.: Never mind how long it takes; and no matter however long it might take, do it! Until then- keep trying!

S>M>

Q.: What is the link between the ego and the world?

B.: The ego includes the world. What you call 'world' is nothing but thought.

The world cannot be the source of its appearance, because anything that appears cannot be the source of itself. We think that seeing and touching objects is proof of the world's reality, but the opposite is true- things appear exclusively because they do not exist. That which exists actually IS; how could it appear? That which appears never existed; how ever could it BE? Sri

Krishna beautifully summarises the lovely truth of Ajata-advaita in verse 2:16 of the Gita. So, concern yourself exclusively with what IS and pay absolutely no heed to what IS-not. That is the way to Jnana.

Q.: So, when B. says that the cosmos does not exist, he means it- literally?

B.: Yes.

Q.: If the cosmos is merely an idea which has taken up residence in my mind, then what is that fundamental phasenraum out of which such idea- or any idea- is made?

B.: Thought.

Q.: So, thoughts are made up of consciousness. But if the basic, underlying constituting-element or fundamental phasenraum out of which thoughts are formulated is consciousness, we have a problem, because then consciousness carries with it the germ of manifestation as thought- is that not the natural inference to arrive at?

B.: On the other hand, thought is alien to consciousness.

Q.: Why then does thought occur from consciousness?

B.: You seem not to have understood correctly. There is no vileness in consciousness; there cannot be. Consciousness is always pure consciousness, because [it is fact that] there is consciousness alone and nothing besides. All there is, is only consciousness. When the light of consciousness falls on the collection of vrittis known as the jivatman, the latter glows and we call the combination a person or an individual- similar to how a red-hot ball of iron glows because of the fire that is operative upon it. In essence, the jivatman is only the aham-vritti; all other vrittis are only modifications of this one single vritti. But the jivatman or aham-vritti is itself made up of consciousness only. Gold is called a bracelet or necklace or ring, but it is in fact nothing of the sort: it is only gold. Knots[chitta-vrittis] are there in consciousness the same way froth is there on the ocean. Your actual identity is the ocean- froth is always there on the ocean. But the problem is that here each bubble in the froth of the ocean of universal consciousness of the Self imagines itself to be distinct or separate from the whole- i.e., the ocean in its entirety. This faculty of imagination is known as the ego. It is unreal. If it is lost, only the Real remains.

Q.: How did such imagination arise?

B.: The moment you investigate to whom it has arisen, you find that it never arose- that you have always been the ocean; the one who makes this discovery [that the ego is non-existent] perishes together with the ego, for he too was not apart from the ego. All our misery arises on account of the fact that we fail to ask ourselves one simple question: Who am I?

S>M>

Q.: I want to Realise the Self. Please help me.

B.: Surrender yourself; it is all that necessary.

Q.: If I surrender myself I must relinquish the ambition or aspiration to Realise the Self together with all my other desires. Is that right?

B.: Yes.

Q.: If I surrender myself, is then vichara-abhyasa not necessary to Realise the Self?

B.: But surrender is not merely saying the words 'I surrender.'. Surrender means non-emergence of the ego or aham-vritti. People imagine that surrender is easy because they think all they have to do [in order so as to have surrendered] is to stand before the deity and say with their lips, 'I surrender.'. But what is the fact? You cannot have likes or dislikes after surrender. Surrender implies loss of volition or one's faculty of will. People think they can do whatever they like after surrender, and that God will accept the blame for all their wanton misdemeanors. Is He a fool? Genuine surrender is unequivocal extirpation of will or volition. One who surrenders can thereafter have neither will nor volition. Your will or volition should [have] become entirely non-existent- otherwise you never surrendered. Perfect surrender is the same as absence of ego. Some come here and raise the complaint, 'I have surrendered myself long ago. But yet I am unable to Realise the Self.'. It is absurd. If you had genuinely surrendered, would anybody remain thereafter to raise this cavil? The surrendered mind cannot raise such questions- or any question. The surrendered mind is always quiescent in the blissful light of the resplendent Heart; it is utterly incapable of movement. The surrendered mind cannot crave for Realisation- nor anything else. To surrender is to absolutely LET GO.

Q.: Shall then I leave my house and move into some forest if I want to surrender?

B.: When we talk of 'letting go', we mean obliterating the mind and its vrittis. Surrendering does not necessitate moving into places uninhabited by other humans, etc.; it is mental solitude that matters.

Q.: What is meant by 'mental solitude'?

B.: Remaining without thinking- but effortlessly and volitionlessly so.

Q.: How is that to be done?

B.: If you surrender to God, He takes care of it.

Q.: So if I surrender, I am no longer responsible for my own Emancipation?

B.: That is correct.

Q.: How to win Grace? Is it by surrendering?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Why does God permit evil occurrences to happen in the world? Is it so that I am encouraged to turn inwards and Realise the Self?

B.: Yes.

Q.: But why should there be ignorance now?

B.: See the sun and there is no darkness. Similarly, see the Self and there is no ignorance.

S>M>

Q.: How can I experience pure awareness?

B.: If thoughts are stilled, what remains left over is only pure awareness. Pure awareness is perpetually self-resplendent; abandon the idea that there is an "I" who experiences it. If the thought "I" is traced back to its source, pure awareness spontaneously manifests itself as "I-I".

Q.: May I know what is meant by "I-I"?

B.: It is flashing forth of the light of continuous self-awareness. It has nothing to do with any intellectual sprightliness of mind. "I-I" reigns where mental activity has subsided in its entirety.

Q.: How shall I conquer the urge to indulge in sexual activity?

B.: The more you inhere in the Self, the more such predilections and propensities drop away of their own accord. When effortless and volitionless abidance incessantly in blissful Beingness of the Self stands accomplished, the mind ceases to crave for other sources of ecstasy.

S>M>

A band of Malayali pilgrims from Kocchyn and other places has dropped itself in upon the ashram to take a peek at Sri Bhagawan; by them Sri Bhagawan has been handed over a huge picture of Mother Kali to bless; it is almost half the size of the Sofa. Kali's wrath is horrific to behold. She is holding up her 4 hands in a terrifying display of the bedazzling extent of her might. Her hands hold a thrishoolam, an aruvazl, the head of a demon, and a bowl- whose contents are boiling and sizzling evidently with the heat of her implacatable fury- into which blood from the severed head held by the hand above is dripping in rapid streams. A diadem of made of skulls adorns her forehead and a garland of skulls hangs around her neck; a belt of cloven hands strung together sits beneath her navel; she is not wearing any other clothes. Her disheveled hair is hanging down loose by her ankles. She is standing on the banks of a river of frothing blood. Her mouth is wide open and the protruding tongue hangs down loose. Her right foot is on the ground; the left tramples down upon the chest of her beloved husband, Lord Shiva! The master held the frame in his hands steadily; although regard having been had to its size the object must have been quite heavy, the hands that carried it flinched not in the slightest in bearing what they held aloft in the air. B. looked into the image



steadily for sometime, his expression inscrutably solemn. Then with a smile he handed it back. After the party prostrated and left questions from the Hall were awaiting the master.

Q.: The severed head belonged to the demon Raktabeeja- is that not so?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Is it not frightening to be worshipping such ugradeivangkal?

B.: For some souls harsh measures are necessary to exorcise off the ego. Attempt to obtain Realisation is nothing but exorcism. The ego is a tenacious demon; breaking his grip requires persistent, incessant practice.

Q.: So can we say that is the significance of 'Paeithanam vida vidappaeiyai piditthu... etc.'?

B.: [smiling] You may say so.

S>M>

A Mr. Daniel Rajadurai, college student from Madras, studying wood-carving in the Havell's School of Industrial Arts-

Q.: You mention demons. Some say that the demoniac races mentioned in Hindu mythology are in fact the dark-skinned Dravidian race, who were the original inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent; whereas the Devas are the fair-skinned Aryans who invaded India and drove the native denizens of the land southwards, summarily executing those who refused to move, exterminating them through the method of impaling them, by means of tying their knees to their chests and forcefully plunging them down upon the sharpened ends of wooden poles having charred, pointed tips, specially designed for the purpose, so that their intestines should come spilling out of their mouths; obviously, the Devas are the Brahmins and the Dravidians the native races of India. Excavations at the town of Larkana in Sind, conducted a decade ago by the Government under the supervision of the highly competent Director-General of Archeology, the Cambridge scholar Sir Marshall, have revealed that the native inhabitants of India were treated this way in the hands of the invading Aryans or Brahmins. An excellent 3 volume compilation in detail elucidating the gentleman's stirring findings was published by Arthur Probsthain in 1931. My point is, uptill this day the Brahmin continues to oppress and harass races he considers lower in the scale of evolution; he has for the purpose invented the practice known as **കൃഷ്ണപ്രാഥമ്യം**; day in and day out, he systematically exploits them in order so as to derive every sort of gain from their labour, but will resolutely deny that they are human-beings! As a Brahmin, sir, how do you feel about this?

B.: Who said I am a Brahmin?

Q.: Sir, I am perfectly aware that I am talking to Mr. Venkatrama Aiyer. Your self-professed divinity is of no concern to me. I am of a scientific temper, you

see. This is the era where man has learnt to split the atom and look inside. We must be rational in our outlook. Will anybody believe in God, etc. in these modern times? God, so far as I am concerned, is a money-making gimmick with which to dupe the weak and the credulous. I am not to be taken in... Anyway, what is your opinion regarding the question of the never-ending atrocities perpetrated by the Brahmins even upto this day against those they see as belonging to inferior races? In the area reserved in this ashram for partaking of food, I noticed that there is a cloth-screen installed, serving the purpose of shutting off and secluding the not-Brahmins from the Brahmins. What is the obvious inference? You are in support of ശ്രീശാസ്ത്രം - am I right?

Chadwick: Bhagawan never ordered any such thing. The people here have done it to preserve their self-supposed orthodoxy. Anyway, if you are an inveterate materialist, what business have you in paying a visit to Bhagawan?

Q.: I am just curious to take a look at him after reading Mr. Brunton's Secret India...

E.Z.: Your splendid opinions do not exactly seem to qualify you to be the right sort of person to be visiting ashrams...

Q.: [Ignoring the Shylock, addressing the master] What is your opinion concerning the legislation passed in the British parliament last year, eliminating the diarchy-system at the provincial level, paving the way for the provincial assemblies to include an unlimited number of elected representatives from the states, and expanding the electorate for the provincial elections? What about the fact that the promised 'Dominion Status' has not come?

C.: Bhagawan does not harbour opinions on political or social issues...

Q.: What does he do at all, then? He is just sitting around in idle fashion...

B.: He does not do anything. He does not know anything. He is a good-for-nothing fellow. But you are not like that- so why waste your precious time in visiting useless places such as this?

Q.: You are right. What must I be thinking?

He rose and left the Hall without so much as a backward glance.

S>M>

Q.: Is it true that Bhagawan has said, "If a man is destined not to Realise the Self, no matter what manner of aid or assistance is offered unto him or stands available so as to be plunged into ready deployment by him, he will not Realise the Self. On the other hand, if a man is destined to Realise the Self, no matter what manner of hindrance or trammel is placed across his path or is forced to be encountered by him, he will Realise the Self."?

B.: The statement is correct.

Q.: Then what is the use of making efforts to Realise the Self?

B.: What gives you the luxury of entitling yourself to believe that you will not Realise the Self?

Q.: Only the commonplace belief that unlikely things are unlikely to happen.

B.: On the other hand, they happen all the time.

Q.: If the Aathman has already decided not to permit me to Realise the Self notwithstanding my best, sincere efforts in that direction, what is the point of me making any efforts at all to Realise the Self?

B.: Did the Aathman come and tell you that he has made this decision? It is your own ego which pestilentially formulates such infructuous non-issues and then bombards your mind with them, so that you are distracted and thwarted from making efforts to Realise the Self. In order so that it may safely retain itself from getting destroyed, the ego might manufacture all sorts of excuses to keep you away from abhyasa; do not believe these deceptive ideas concocted by the ego. Incessantly go on perseverantly and pertinaciously with your efforts to Realise and one day the Self shall Reveal Himself. Never feel discouraged with lack of progress. The Self- although here and now- cannot be Realised overnight. Rome was not built in a day.

Q.: I have many problems in my office and home. They will not allow me to focus on the quest to Realise the Self.

B.: Perception of the problem is the only problem. Since you go on thinking about the problem, the problem grows bigger and bigger. Eventually it becomes unmanageable and drives you mad. Why? Because you keep paying attention to it, because you go on worrying about it.

Q.: Ignoring a problem is no way to solve it.

B.: Neither is thinking about it.

Q.: What Maharshi is saying makes no sense to me. If a problem has to be solved, a solution must be found. Without thinking, without analysing the problem, how can I devise a solution to it?

B.: Keep the mind quiescent in the Heart. The solution springs forth or flashes upon mind in an instant- uninvited, of its own accord.

Q.: Is the Maharshi serious?

B.: Try it and see. Such phenomenon cannot be explained or understood using any theoretical parameters- it has to be experienced.

Q.: Will this- pardon me- crazy approach to solving problems work for all people and all problems?

B.: It works no matter what the problem might happen to be. But it needs a mind which is completely submerged in the Heart and which feels no inclination at all to leave the Heart.

Q.: Then it might not work for the man on the Clapham omnibus.

B.: All their lives people wander about trying to 'do' something. One who has seen the futility of the 'doing' approach alone recognises the value of the 'non-doing' approach; until then he thinks that 'doing' is virtuous and righteous and 'non-doing' indolent and otiose. It would be erroneous to assume that சும்மாயிருத்தல் [non-doing] is the same as சோம்பேறித்தனம் [sybaritism, hedonism or epicureanism]. There is a difference between not doing anything and there not being anybody to do anything. For the Emancipated man effort is impossible and so is volition, although you may see his body moving about and doing things.

Q.: Is simply remaining idle the solution to the question of Realisation?

B.: Remaining idle is not the same as keeping the body idle and permitting thought to run riot. The mind must remain without thinking and without falling asleep, but neither effort nor volition must aid it to remain in such state. This alone is actually remaining idle[summa-irutthal].

Q.: I cannot even imagine such a state.

B.: The state of summa-irutthal cannot be conceived of or imagined or visualised by the mind. All that is possible is to BE it. By means of expenditure of effort or pursuit of desire you cannot reach it; rather, total absence of effort and of volition reveals that you were never different from it. All our effort is only to become perfectly effortless.

Q.: It is said that unselfish, platonic love for fellow man leads to Emancipation from samsara. Is this true?

B.: Action performed without harbouring the idea of being the doer thereof helps in effecting purification of mind.

S>M>

Q.: Why does God permit evil-minded persons and evil-doers to exist in the world? He is omnipotent, is He not? Should He not get rid of such persons by means a single wave of the hand?

B.: Good and evil are relative terms.

Q.: I am aware of this familiar argument; it is used by philosophers all the time to answer the question of why God permits evil to subsist on in the world. But some persons in this world are downright iniquitous. Will Bhagawan deny the fact?

B.: Let God take care of His creation. You bother about yourself first and foremost. Only evil could ever see evil. Are you perfect? That which is Itself perfect sees perfection and perfection alone everywhere. That which sees imperfection sees so exclusively because it is itself imperfect. Swami Vivekananda said, 'How can you see evil outside, unless it is within you?'. To the Realised-one, the world is overflowing with perfection everywhere; all He

can possibly see is perfection only. Therefore, know this- Everywhere, in everything and always: ALL IS WELL.

Q.: What is the purpose of life?

B.: It is to raise this question to oneself and find out the answer for oneself.

Q.: But what is the answer to the question? I acknowledge my inability to fathom out the answer for myself by myself. Thus, I am asking for your help.

B.: The idea that there is a 'one' who is experiencing what he calls a 'life' is illusory, false and wrong. Life, which is pure consciousness, does not and cannot question the reason for its own existence. There is nothing apart from Life so that it can raise this question. So, really the question does not arise at all. What is actually Life does not and cannot have such a thing as purpose or objective; it is effortless and volitionless Bliss. But what you [evidently] mean by 'life' is your life. You are asking me the reason for your bodily existence, imagining that the body is yourself. In effect, thinking that you are identical with the body and thus that you were born, you are asking me why you were born. But is the body "I"? Does it ask, 'Excuse me, kind sir, could you please tell me why I happen to exist and why I was born?'' No. Who raises the question then?

Q.: Bhagawan has cleverly transformed my original query into his usual 'Who am I?' question!

B.: Any question, if thought about deeply enough, reduces itself into that one single question. You are asking for the purpose of life because you are under the wrong impression that your bodily existence is real. Your question about life pertains to mundane life or the bodily existence because with reference to Absolute Existence the question can never arise: who would be there to ask anything? So, in asking what the purpose of your life is, you are without doubt asking the reason for your birth. You say unto me: 'I was born. Tell me why.'. I say unto you: 'You were never born. You are the Unborn. Realise It.'. Only if your birth actually did take place do we have to ask why it took place.

Q.: But this body here was born! That is a fact! How can it be denied?!

B.: The body and "I" are not one and the same thing. The body was born and it will perish. "I" was never born, never changes and never perishes.

Q.: What is the proof that I am not this body? When I am walking under the hot sun, I feel the heat on my skin- not that on anybody else's. When I swim in a river, I feel the fluidity and coldness of the water on my skin- not that on anybody else's. How then can I say that this body is not me? Does it not sound silly to say such a thing?

B.: You may have similar sensations in your dreams also. Does that mean your dreams are real?

Q.: Is the world a mere dream, then?

B.: Undoubtedly.

Q.: But you are here! Are we both dreaming the same dream, then? Is it not too much of a co-incidence that so many people in this world should be dreaming up the same world precisely- same sun, same moon, same Tiruvannamalai, same Bhagawan, etc., etc.?

B.: Everything, including the other people you mention, is your own mental creation. This is your own dream, through and through.

Q.: Including Sri Ramana Maharshi, who happens to be telling me this now?

B.: Absolutely.

Q.: What proof is available so that I may believe in this explanation?

B.: Were you asked to believe in anything? Keep an open mind. Admitting that it is possible for everything to be unreal or a dream is sufficient to eventually make you see Truth. It needs expenditure of mental effort to even see a world. When all possibility for such expenditure has faded away entirely, there will not remain any world [to exist, see or be seen]. That is when the Self is Realised.

S>M>

Q.: Does B. have the ability to make his body invisible?

B.: It is already so.

Q.: Nonsense. I see B. on the Sofa as usual.

B.: I was referring to my own point of view.

Q.: Do Bhagawan's eyes not see the body sitting on this Sofa here?

B.: These eyes cannot see Bhagawan. Bhagawan is the Deep Beyond.

Q.: I heard that Siddha-purushazi possess the ability to make their bodies invisible. Why won't B. admit the fact?

B.: The Jnana-siddha has no body. That is his experience.

Q.: But I can see B. having a body- it is sitting right in front of me, here on this Sofa.

B.: That is the onlooker's point of view.

Q.: What does Bhagawan's intellect tell him when his eyes see his body?

B.: These eyes may be open. They do not see anything.

Q.: Is it owing to some defect of vision?

B.: No. It is owing to perfection of vision.

Q.: How can a man with healthy eyes have them open and yet not see anything?

B.: The Jnani is like a new-born infant. Its eyes are open. Yet it does not see anything. It moves about its hands and legs and smiles, but everything is done unknowingly.

Q.: An adult like that would be diagnosed with serious mental retardation.

B.: The Jnani is worse than mentally retarded: He is mentally not-present.

Q.: But how then is B. able to have this conversation with me? To formulate intelligible words and speak them requires a mind.

B.: Some power seems to animate this body and get done whatever job it is that needs to be done. The Jnani Himself would not know anything about it. Relative knowledge needs a mind [to understand or process].

Q.: So B. does not know that this conversation is taking place between us?

B.: There is no Bhagawan independent of the Self to attend to or know anything.

Q.: I do not understand what is said.

B.: The world and its goings-on are the Self Itself. Therefore the question of the Self being aware of them or unaware cannot arise.

Q.: But usually B. says that the world is a dream.

B.: From the point of view of the man on the Clapham omnibus, certainly the world is a dream. But from the Jnani's point of view there can be no such thing as non-Reality. To Him everything is Real: exclusively because He is verily everything.

S>M>

Q.: Is surrender a means to Realise the Self?

B.: Yes: provided it is unconditional, surrender is a fool-proof way to Realise the Self.

Q.: What is the guarantee that I shall Realise the Self if I surrender?

B.: You are missing the point of surrender.

Q.: How so?

B.: To surrender is to let go of everything without anticipating or expecting anything in return. Letting go of everything also encompasses abandoning the aspiration to Realise the Self. Suppose you are holding a red-hot iron-ball. Your hand is quivering in unbearable pain. Somebody suggests unto you that you let go. If your response is 'What benefit will I obtain if I let go?', will not the other person wonder 'Poor fellow! The pain of holding that dreadful thing in his hand- has it addled his brains?? That is how it is to me [now upon having listened to your question]. Samsara is intolerably painful. Why look for reasons to let go of it? If samsara still appears as being acceptable to one- no matter however remotely or infinitesimally so- can he Realise the Self? One who does not see samsara as actually being the horribly excruciating misery that it indeed really is- will he Realise the Self?

Q.: Suppose I surrender but yet fail to Realise the Self- what then?

B.: Yes- that possibility is always there from the ego's point of view.

Q.: But just now you said: 'Surrender is a fool-proof way to Realise the Self.'

B.: What did the preceding words say? Surrender works only if it is unconditional. That means your mind must be genuinely reconciled to the

possibility that anything can happen or not happen, including one's failure to Realise the Self.

Q.: So success in Realising the Self is made possible only if I wholeheartedly accept the possibility that I may fail to Realise the Self?

B.: Such acceptance must be natural or genuine. For instance, it must not be self-imposed so that the condition 'For Realisation to be made possible, the mind ought to stand reconciled to the possibility that anything can happen or not happen, including one's failure to Realise the Self.' may be attempted to be rendered satisfied.

Q.: The idea sounds complicated.

B.: On the other hand, it is so utterly simple that trying to communicate it leads us into a hopeless quagmire of complicated-sounding ideas. **TOTALLY LET GO** and the Self stands Realised: that is all there is to Realisation.

S>M>

Q.: Siddhis such as making the body invisible, making it levitate high up in the air or fly, making it impervious to fire, etc.: do they come to the Jnani automatically?

B.: If such be his prarabdha- not otherwise.

Q.: B. is omnipotent. Shall he not utilise his unlimited powers to help the suffering masses of humanity? Shall he not take up an active role in guiding mankind along the proper path to follow- both spiritually and otherwise?

B.: How do you know that I am not doing it?

Q.: But B. never left Tiruvannamalai since 1896. Other spiritual heavy-weights in India such as J.K. and Meher Baba travel around the world attempting to enlighten people.

TKS.: Those people go around from place to place, but seated at this one corner of the world B. draws here people from all nooks and crannies of the globe!

The master smiled but did not say anything.

S>M>

Q.: How shall I become a disciple of Sri Bhagawan?

B.: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Q.: So, those who sincerely follow his teachings are [deemed to be counted as being amongst] B.'s disciples. May we say so?

B.: [smiling] Yes.

Q.: How to escape from sin that I have already perpetrated, which causes a series of painful rebirths according to Hindu philosophy?

B.: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."



Q.: Will faith in Jesus suffice to save me from sin?

B.: All that is necessary is to Love Him with all your heart. Your Love is its own reward; you need crave none other.

S>M>

Q.: The objective of vichara is to destroy the ego- am I correct?

B.: What does not exist cannot be destroyed. What really exists cannot be destroyed, because it is immutable and imperishable. So, where is the question of destroying anything? Experience of mind is a self-contained illusion; all that is necessary in order so as to dissolve it is that you look properly at it: then you find out that it was never there. At twilight, a lamp-post situated in a corner of the road may trick you into believing that some crook is standing there, waiting to spring upon you and attack. Hurrying so as to run away from the spot will not help, because at every corner you turn you will meet with the same disturbance. There is only 1 way to overcome the problem: stand still and face it. Look at the crook closely. Then you discover that there never was any crook- that all along only an innocent and harmless lamp-post had been standing there. Did the crook disappear? No: he never existed. All along he was there only in your imagination. Likewise is it with the ego. It is a non-existent foe who gives us so much trouble. Look continuously at the mind and it will disappear, never to have existed. Continuous search for the mind results in its disappearance.

Q.: Will chanting A-HAM mentally lead to Realisation of the Self?

B.: Whilst doing it, fix your attention at the source of the japam in you- i.e., scrutinize wherefrom within yourself the japam arises and retain your faculty of attention exclusively at such source.

Q.: B. means the right-hand side of the chest- am I correct?

B.: Trace back the feeling of "I" or the japam until it merges back there. Concentrating on that spot in the body may result in chitta-shuddhi for the time being. If you are seeking Realisation the mind must be traced back into the Heart. Fixing one's [faculty of] attention or concentration on anything is mental activity. Only subsidence or cessation of mental activity Reveals the Heart. When you are asked to merge back into the Heart, whence you have come, it does not mean this is to be accomplished by means of 'doing'. To 'do' is to use the mind or permit it to function- i.e., to encourage it to drift away from the Heart. Not to 'do' is to not stand in the way of the mind becoming permanently submerged in the Heart. You need not try to assist the mind to reach the Heart. Anything you try to do in facilitating the mind to sink into the Heart will only drive the mind farther away from the Heart. There is only one way to truly reach the Heart, and that is relinquishment of the realm of doing once and for all. Abandon trying to do anything with the mind. Keep the mind

perfectly awake and alert but perfectly motionless and still. Effort made or volition entertained to remain motionless is also movement. If the mind is indefinitely kept up in jagrat-sushupti, it sinks into the Heart automatically and is dissolved there once and for all like a salt-doll thrown into the ocean. So, rather than concentrating on the right-hand side of the chest, seek the source of the mind and in consequence practically discover it to be on the right-hand side of the chest. People ask what sadhana should be done to keep the mind still. What reply is to be given to this query? Stillness is one's natural state. We ruin it by permitting thoughts to arise. Stop thinking and the mind is still. It is as simple as that.

Q.: I am trying to stop the flow of thought. I am not meeting with any success.

B.: Why? Because you endeavour to counter thought with thought. The thought 'I must not think thought.' cannot kill thought. Only stillness can extinguish thought.

Q.: How can I cultivate this stillness?

B.: By giving up vrittis of mind.

Q.: How is that to be done?

B.: 'Who am I?' is the way.

S>M>

Q.: Is effort a hindrance to Realisation of the Self?

B.: Yes.

Q.: Then why does B. exhort us to put in effort to Realise the Self?

B.: Effort is necessary until it has become unnecessary.

Q.: I don't understand what B. is telling me.

B.: Until the mind has become reduced into the primordial state of pure consciousness to which possibility of expenditure of effort and accommodation of volition are altogether alien, effort is necessary to gain such natural state. Once this state is reached, further effort returns one to the quagmire of 'doing'. So, make effort until it has become impossible to make any more effort- i.e., until the sashwatamanonivritti state stands reached. This will not happen in a day. It needs relentless practice over a prolonged period of time.

Q.: But Sri Ramana Maharshi Realised in 27 minutes of practice in Madurai!

B.: Not all are born the same. At the time of birth some people have minds that are more introverted than those of others [also whose birth has just taken place].

Q.: Why this disparity?

B.: It is unnecessary and pointless to go into it. Work with what you have.

At this point, the morose-looking "good ol' boy" from Alabama, Mr. Snead, wanted to participate in the conversation by means of reading out what would

according to him be a passage relevant to the topic perceived by him as being incumbently subject to discussion in the Hall with the master, from a highly ancient-looking book he now happened to clutch in hand. I observed the book's title to be: 'Ancient Philosophy; or, The Enchiridion of Epictetus, and Chrusa Epe of Pythagoras, Translated into English Prose and Verse, by the Honourable Thomas Talbot'. Apparently feeling severely encouraged by the warm smile the master gave unto him in response to this request of his, the man now proceeded to bombard the Hall with his loud drone:

How various are those things which claim the care  
Of restless man in Life's contracted sphere.  
Some lie within his scope- Ambition's dream,  
Desire, Love, Hatred, Envy's wasting flame.  
Some fly his grasp; nor can his will control  
Wealth, Glory, Honour; Idols of his soul.  
Unyielding things, these mock his fond embrace.  
And those supply and claim the vacant place.  
Those things within our power by Nature placed  
Unfettered are, and by fair Freedom graced:  
While those without, a sickly servile race.  
Nor Liberty can boast, nor resting place;  
Impotent slaves of never-ceasing toil,  
The trembling offspring of a foreign soil.  
Pause then and note unerring Nature's law;  
Betwixt things opposed a due distinction draw:  
What is a slave by Nature's fixed decree.  
Mistake not for the chainless and the free.  
All foreign right with thy whole heart disown,  
Nor deem another's privilege thine own:  
Since straying without the limits of thy sphere  
Brings grief of mind and soul-corroding care;  
Ire, discontent, possess thy mind within;  
And rage employs thy tongue against God and men.  
Who knows another's rights, and knows his own,  
And bounds his wishes by just claims alone;  
Who grants to all what things to them belong,  
Through Life's rough way moves peacefully along.  
Act thus: thou needest not outward violence fear;  
Serene and peaceful shall be thy career.  
For thee no foe in ambushade shall lie,  
To watch thy footsteps with a treacherous eye.

In legal conflicts, broils, and party rage  
Thy will shall never lead thee to engage.

None at thy hands shall injury receive;  
And none shall cause thy honest heart to grieve.

B.: The idea endeavoured to be conveyed is the same: some things are in our control and others not; let us courageously act on what we can help; let us serenely accept what we cannot; and let us be perspicacious enough to discern the difference. The point is, do not brood over anything. If it is your destiny to do something about it, you will do it; otherwise you will not be able to help it; either way do not fritter away any of your mental energy unproductively thinking about it.

S>M>

Q.: How to acquire the siddhi of at will manifesting objects desired by one? Is there any particular meditation practice which can be followed for it?

B.: There are other places where such things may be learnt.

Q.: Where?

B.: I don't know.

Q.: There are said to be herbs growing on this Hill which can transmute base metals into gold. You have lived for 3 decades on this Hill. You must know- please tell me where they grow. You are said to be Sarvagnar. Don't say you don't know. I shall be highly disappointed.

B.: This Hill itself is the philosopher's stone which converts the base mind into the Self, which is incontaminable like gold.

Q.: You are an Enlightened being. Why not show some siddhis to entertain the public? What is the point in sitting idly and uselessly like this?

B.: [smiles but does not say anything]

S>M>

Q.: What is the use of Jnana?

B.: What is the use of quinine?

Q.: It is used to treat those diagnosed with malaria.

B.: Likewise, Jnana is used to treat those afflicted with samsara.

Q.: Only those affected by disease swallow medicine.

B.: Yes. Only those to whom samsara has become entirely unacceptable [could ever] take up seriously the quest for Jnana. There are some who are horrified by the idea of being confined to their bodily existence. Naturally the vigour with which they pursue search for their Real nature will be vastly greater than that possessed by a casual seeker, who is attempting to Realise the Self merely out of curiosity or inquisitiveness.

Q.: So fear of one's own mortality is a good motivator perpetually reminding man of the need to embark on the quest to discover his immortal Self.

B.: Exactly.

S>M>

Q.: When he was here, Sri Narasimha-swamigazl seems to have begun to formulate a conversational version of Sri Ramana Gita. But it appears he abandoned the work halfway through. I was perusing the manuscript yesterday and observed that there is a purported conversation in which Sri Bhagawan has been caricatured as saying that certain qualifications are necessary for those intending to successfully pursue vichara. Will please B. explain those qualifications?

B.: It is enough to intuitively recognise that the three states are passing phenomena not having any reality.

Q.: I am a man who is utterly new to spiritual practice. Should I begin with vichara? Or should I begin with an easier method, such as watching the breath, for instance, and move on to vichara once my mind has acquired sufficient maturity?

B.: No method is per se easy or difficult. Depending upon one's temperament, what one finds easy the next man finds difficult. The thing to do is to stick to what fascinates you. Never mind which method is best. Which method appeals to you?

Q.: I like to meditate on the picture of Sri Krishna. But B. has opined that vichara is the only means to pierce and sunder the veil of ignorance. So, I tend to castigate myself that I am following a method, which, according to B., does not lead me to Realisation.

B.: Who said that I disapprove of other methods? You may go on following your present method until you yourself feel, intuitively rather than intellectually, that the time has come for you to give up the sadhana. At that point in time the mind will automatically begin to gravitate towards unintermittently reflecting upon 'I'. Fascination with 'I' leads to spontaneous vichara. Vichara, if not done for its own sake, does not bring forth a successful result. If a splinter of wood is stuck in your gum, your tongue will of its own accord go on trying to uproot it, without the need for any conscious effort on your part. Vichara will succeed only when there is that degree of spontaneity. The tongue knows that the splinter is a foreign body and must go. It will go on fighting until the alien appendage comes loose. Likewise, the mind must be able naturally to discern the ego, to which it owes its apparent existence, as being an unnatural and alien entity. This perspicaciousness will come only after prolonged practice [abhyasa]. That abhyasa may take up any form which appeals to you. Whatever road you are pursuing now will of its own accord lead you to vichara when the moment is ripe, provided you are sincere and unrelenting in your effort.

S>M>

Q.: When thoughts occur, I should revert my attention back to Subjective Consciousness. That is the point of vichara. Is that right?

B.: What you mention is without doubt vichara. But there is more to it [vichara].

Q.: Please explain.

B.: Rather than meaninglessly concentrating on the Absolute Self, which is beyond the pale of understanding or perception by mind or through mental faculty, work with what you have. See what the ego is. What is this 'me'? That is the investigation needed. There can be no investigation into the Absolute. Work not with what is unknown but with what you readily have: the ego 'I'.

S>M>

The 'Rabies terror' which apparently is spreading through the town has left its mark upon the ashram also. Today afternoon, a puny, pygmy-like resident of the ashram's Yajur-veda patashalai, 'Andavanae' Ramanathan, was bodily carried into the master's presence by 3 persons; he seemed to be in a semi-conscious state. Allegedly yesterday night a rabid dog had bit him. Fearing that he may give birth to rabid puppies at any time, the sarvadhikari and other office-bearers had allegedly tied him up by an ankle to a pillar in the dilapidated mandapam opposite the ashram and left him quarantined there with some plantain fruits for company. When the master heard about it, he seems to have ordered that the man be brought before him at once. This was done despite protests from several quarters highlighting the dangers involved in permitting such person to return to civil society. The small man was resuscitated in B.'s presence. At length he stopped moaning and groaning. He looked at Bhagawan and tears began to stream out of his eyes. He gulped down some water proffered unto him by the attendant. A doctor from town has been summoned to the ashram. He is still awaited. The sarvadhikari has ordered the attendants to keep a close eye on him and report to him immediately should he start behaving or barking like a dog, or foaming at the mouth. Nobody at the ashram has had the courage to dress the man's wounds, lest they fall victim themselves to the dreaded malady. The poor, trembling creature is sitting in a corner of the Hall, and the attendants have their eyes glued on him and their ears pricked up, watching out sharply for a growl or bark or any other dog-like behaviour. The wounded man's only comfort seems to be Bhagawan, who occasionally glances and smiles at him, as though endeavouring to boster up his spirits.

S>M>

Late in the evening today, Mr. Knowles tearfully took leave of the master. Before his departure, he presented to the master as a gift to the ashram from

out of his rucksack the enormous book in 6 volumes, **An Exposition of the Old and New Testament; by Matthew Henry** . He told Bhagawan, 'Since Maharshi quotes often from the Bible whilst explaining his teachings to attendees in the Hall, I thought this might be useful for him...'. The master accepted the volumes with a smile. Mr. Knowles prostrated on the floor, his eyes still moist, gazed once more into the master's fathomless eyes, and then turned around and exited from the Hall. I never saw him again.

S>M>

Mr. Snead had heard that it was customary to sing before Bhagawan in the Hall on the day of one's arrival at the ashram for the first time. He was quickly assured that no such custom existed; thereupon he looked crestfallen and dejected; taking cognisance of the gentleman's sad expression, the master of his own accord told him gently that he may sing if he wished so to do and was eager so to do. Mr. Snead brightened up instantly. He sang in the Hall the popular Southern United-states folk songs, 'Oh! Susanna, don't you cry for me; I come from Alabama, with my Banjo on my knee...', 'We are a band of brothers and native to the soil; fighting for the property we gained by honest toil...' and 'Oh! my darling, Clementine; you were lost and gone forever...'. He also read out an essay about his visit the previous year to Fort Frederica, situated in St. Simon's Island, Georgia, and then another essay describing his first visit to the Broadway-theatre to see the musical-play "Bombo", starring Mr. Al Jolson. Bhagawan kindly appreciated the child-like man, and he seemed to glow with pleasure. The master then asked him where he was staying. Mr. Snead responded saying that he was staying with Mr. Aravind Bose, a devotee of the master who lived some distance away from the ashram on the opposite side of the road; for Mr. Bose had recently constructed an additional cottage next to his own residence for visitors to stay in, since the ashram was finding it strenuous to accommodate the ever-increasing number of visitors coming to see Sri Bhagawan within its own premises.

BLUTKEIM's Note:

**Thus ends Part One of Amor Sempiternus, covering the months July 1936, August 1936 and September 1936. Part Two of Amor Sempiternus, covering the last three months of 1936, will be forwarded by me to Sri Ramanasramam once they have published Part One; as on date I am still working on the retrieving and assembling the files pertaining to Part Two. The ashram will receive Part Two only after it has come to my notice that they have published Part One successfully. I think that the following words from Mr. Chaucer would be relevant to mention here:**

**N**ow praye I to hem alle that herken thys lityl tretise or  
rede/that yf there be ony thyng that lyketh hem/ that  
therof they thanke our lordz Ihesu cryst of whom procedeth  
deth alle vyty and goodnes / And yf there be ony thyng  
that dysplese hem I praye hem also that they arrette it to the de  
faute of myn vnconnyng & not to my vytyl/ that wold fayn haue  
sayd better yf that I had had connyng /

Thank you. Om Sri Ramanarpanamasthu.

**Concluding Shloka for this Work:**

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥