

DAY BY DAY WITH BHAGAVAN

From a Diary of

A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR

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****Sections marked with “(Selection)” have been condensed for the purposes of this book extraction.*

16-3-45 Morning

A visitor: Should I give up my business and take to reading books on Vedanta?

Bhagavan: If the objects have an independent existence, *i.e.*, if they exist anywhere apart from you, then it may be possible for you to go away from them. But they don't exist apart from you; they owe their existence to you, your thought. So, where can you go, to escape them? As for reading books on Vedanta, you may go on reading any number of them. They can only tell you, 'Realise the Self within you'. The Self cannot be found in books. You have to find it out for yourself, in yourself.

16-9-45 Afternoon

A visitor asked, "What should one, who is an absolute beginner, do in this (*i.e.*, spiritual) line?"

Bhagavan: "The very fact that you put this question shows you know what to do. It is because you feel the want of peace, that you are anxious to take some steps to secure peace. Because I have a little pain in my foot, I am applying this ointment."

Visitor: "What is the method to be adopted for securing peace?"

B: "The conception that there is a goal and a path to it, is wrong. We are the goal or peace always. To get rid of the notion that we are not peace is all that is required."

V: "All books say that the guidance of a Guru is necessary."

B: "The Guru will say only what I am saying now. He will not give you anything you have not already. It is impossible for anyone to get what he has not got already. Even if he gets any such thing, it will go as it came. What comes will also go. What always is will alone remain. The Guru cannot give you anything new, which you have not already. Removal of the notion that we have not realised the Self is all that it is required. We are always the Self. Only, we don't realise it."

The Asramam compounder asked some questions about his experiences during meditation. Bhagavan explained that the Self is the one reality that always exists and it is by its light all other things are seen. We forget it and concentrate on the appearances. The light in the hall burns, both when persons are present there and when they are absent, both when persons are enacting something as in a theatre and when nothing is being enacted. It is the light which enabled us to see the hall, the persons and the acting. We are so engrossed with the objects or appearances revealed by the light that we pay no attention to the light. In the waking state or dream state, in which things appear, and in the sleep state, in which we see nothing, there is

always the light of consciousness or Self, like the hall-lamp always burning. The thing to do is to concentrate on the Seer and not on the seen, not on the objects, but on the Light which reveals them.

9-10-45 Afternoon

Mr. K. Mahatani asked in continuation of the above, “If we want to succeed in any enterprise in the world, we must give our whole mind and heart to it. Otherwise we cannot succeed. So it is rather impracticable to devote one’s mind both to God and worldly activity.”

Bhagavan: “If one keeps fixed in the Self, the activities will still go on and their success will not be affected. One should not have the idea that one is the doer. The activities will still go on. That force, by whatever name you may call it, which brought the body into existence will see to it that the activities which this body is meant to go through are brought about.”

Mr. Mahatani was still not quite satisfied and thereupon Bhagavan referred him to read an article on Renunciation which is found at the end of the Gita Press edition of *Bhagavad Gita*. This article mentions seven stages of Renunciation and Bhagavan said, “Let Mr. Mahatani see if anything in this article appeals to him”. I read out the whole article in the hall for the benefit of all, as Bhagavan desired. It is said there that one who has reached the seventh stage of renunciation will not feel even when his body is cut by a weapon or some other suffering is inflicted on him. When this portion was being read Bhagavan remembered the following poem.

வஞ்சகர் வேல்கொடு மார்பி னெறியினு
மெஞ்ச வேதழன் மூடி யெரியினு
நஞ்சி னொழ னாக நலியினு
மஞ்சி டாரது வானந்த மாவதே.

(i.e., They won’t be afraid even if guileful enemies stab their chest or they are surrounded by fire or bitten by a cobra, All will be bliss for them). This is found in Ponnambala Swami’s commentary on *Bhagavad Gita* in Tamil stanzas, Chapter VI Verse 17 (Page 150 of the Asramam book). Continuing this topic, I said, “It is true such things are said in the books. But we see that the *jnani* feels pain. Even one like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa felt pain when he had cancer of the throat and cried out, ‘Why has mother sent this pain to me?’”

Bhagavan: “ It may be like that in the beginning, due to long association or habit. But afterwards it will pass off.”

In this connection I must record that long ago, once when Bhagavan was suffering from some illness and I expressed concern, Bhagavan was pleased to explain to me that he felt the pain as in a dream and no more.

19-10-45 Morning

A barrister from Bombay asked Bhagavan, “I have read the works of Bhagavan and others and, though I can understand them intellectually, I have not been able to realise anything in experience. I have tried Bhagavan’s method for about six years and yet I have not made any progress. When I meditate, other thoughts come. For people like me, living in cities and doing our work and coming here only occasionally, what *sadhana* would Bhagavan advise so that we may succeed better than I have so far been able to do?”

Bhagavan: “Your real nature is always there, your meditation, etc., come only temporarily. Reality being your Self, there is nothing for you to realise. All that is required is that you should give up regarding the unreal as real, which is what all are doing. The object of all meditation, *dhyana* or *japa* is only that, to give up all thoughts regarding the not-self, to give up many thoughts and to keep to the one thought.

“As for *sadhana*, there are many methods. You may do *vichara*, asking yourself ‘Who am I?’ or, if that does not appeal to you, you may do *dhyana* ‘I am Brahman’ or otherwise, or you may concentrate on a *mantra* or name in *japa*. The object is to make the mind one-pointed, to concentrate it on one thought and thus exclude our many thoughts, and if we do this, eventually even the one thought will go and the mind will get extinguished in its source.”

Visitor: “In actual practice I find I am not able to succeed in my efforts. Unless Bhagavan’s grace descends on me I cannot succeed.”

Bhagavan: “Guru’s grace is always there. You imagine it is something, somewhere high up in the sky, far away, and has to descend. It is really inside you, in your heart, and the moment (by any of the methods) you effect subsidence or merger of the mind into its source, the grace rushes forth, spouting as from a spring, from within you.”

Another visitor asked, “What is the reality of this world?”

Bhagavan: “If you know your reality first, you will be able to know the reality of the world. It is a strange thing that most people do not care to know about their own reality, but are very anxious to know about the reality of the world. You realise your own Self first and then see if the world exists independently of you and is able to come and assert before you its reality or existence.”

Another visitor asked, “Why is there so much pain even for the innocent, such as children for instance? How is it to be explained? With reference to previous births or otherwise?”

Bhagavan: “As about the world, if you know your own reality, these questions won’t arise. All these differences, the pains and miseries of the innocent, as you say, do they exist independently of you? It is you that see these things and ask about them. If by the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ you understand the seer, all problems about the seen will be completely solved.”

Dr. Syed asked, “If a person prays for a spiritual good for say two years and yet is not answered, what should he do?”

Bhagavan: “It may be it is for his good that the prayer is not granted.”

11-11-45 Morning

Maha Vir Prasad, Chief Engineer, U. P., who has been staying here for about twenty days, asked Bhagavan, “I find it said in *Maha Yoga* that in the beginning of meditation one may attend to the breath, *i.e.* its inspiration and expiration, and that after a certain amount of stillness of the mind is thereby attained, one can dive into the heart seeking the source of the mind. I have been badly in want of some such practical hint. Can I follow this method? Is it correct?”

Bhagavan: “The thing is to kill the mind somehow. Those who have not the strength to follow the enquiry method are advised *pranayama* as a help to control the mind. And *pranayama* is of two kinds, one of controlling and regulating the breath and the other of simply watching the breath.”

Prasad: “During meditation I sometimes attain a state lasting for about fifteen minutes, during which I am not aware of anything and am free from all thoughts. Some have told me

that such a state is what may be called *yoga nidra* and that one should guard against such a state as bad.”

Bhagavan: “One should endeavour to get beyond sleep.” (For some reason Bhagavan did not answer further the query put by Prasad). I thereupon advised Prasad to read *Crumbs from the Table*, where this particular matter is dealt with. Bhagavan also asked us to take a copy of the book and give it to Prasad. We did so.

29-12-45 Night (Selection)

Then Mr. P. C. Desai quoted Bhagavan’s “Upadesa Saram” in Sanskrit to the effect, “When you investigate the nature of mind continuously or without break, you find there is no such thing as the mind. This is the straight path for all.” The visitor again asked, “It is said in our scriptures that God it is that creates sustains and destroys all and that He is immanent in all. If so and if God does everything and if all that we do is according to God’s *niyati* (law), and had already been planned in the Cosmic Consciousness. is there individual personality and any responsibility for it?”

Bhagavan: “Of course, there is. The same scriptures have laid down rules as to what men should or should not do. If man is not responsible, then why should those rules have been laid down? You talk of God’s *niyati* and things happening according to it. If you ask God why this creation and all, He would tell you it is according to your karma again. If you believe in God and His *niyati* working out everything, completely surrender yourself to Him and there will be no responsibility for you. Otherwise find out your real nature and thus attain freedom.”

2-1-46 Afternoon

Mr. Joshi has submitted what Bhagavan calls a question paper, and Bhagavan answers the same.

First about the *jnani*’s doing work, without the mind: “You imagine one cannot do work if the mind is killed. Why do you suppose that it is the mind alone that can make one do work. There may be other causes which can also produce activity. Look at this clock, for instance. It is working without a mind. Again suppose we say the *jnani* has a mind. His mind is very

different from the ordinary man's mind. He is like the man who is hearing a story told with his mind all on some distant object. The mind rid of *vasanas*, though doing work, is not doing work. On the other hand, if the mind is full of *vasanas*, it is doing work even if the body is not active or moving."

Question 2: "Is *soham* the same as 'Who am I?'"

Answer: "*Aham* alone is common to them. One is *soham*. The other is *koham*. They are different. Why should we go on saying *soham*? One must find out the real 'I'. In the question 'Who am I?' by 'I' is meant the ego. Trying to trace it and find its source, we see it has no separate existence but merges in the real 'I'."

Question 3: "I find surrender is easier. I want to adopt that path."

Answer: "By whatever path you go, you will have to lose yourself in the One. Surrender is complete only when you reach the stage 'Thou art all' and 'Thy will be done'."

"The state is not different from *jnana*. In *soham* there is *dvaita*. In surrender there is *advaita*. In the reality there is neither *dvaita* nor *advaita*, but That which is, is. Surrender appears easy because people imagine that, once they say with their lips 'I surrender' and put their burdens on their Lord, they can be free and do what they like. But the fact is that you can have no likes or dislikes after your surrender and that your will should become completely non-existent, the Lord's Will taking its place. Such death of the ego is nothing different from *jnana*. So by whatever path you may go, you must come to *jnana* or oneness."

Question 4: "How am I to deal with my passions? Am I to check them or satisfy them? If I follow Bhagavan's method and ask, 'To whom are these passions?' they do not seem to die but grow stronger."

Answer: "That only shows you are not going about my method properly. The right way is to find out the root of all passions, the source whence they proceed, and get rid of that. If you check the passions, they may get suppressed for the moment, but will appear again. If you satisfy them, they will be satisfied only for the moment and will again crave satisfaction. Satisfying desires and thereby trying to root them out is like trying to quench fire by pouring kerosene oil over it. The only way is to find the root of desire and thus remove it."

Another visitor asked Bhagavan, “If I try to make the ‘Who am I?’ enquiry, I fall into sleep. What should I do?”

Bhagavan: “Persist in the enquiry throughout your waking hours. That would be quite enough. If you keep on making the enquiry till you fall asleep, the enquiry will go on during sleep also. Take up the enquiry again as soon as you wake up.”

Another visitor asked Bhagavan if it was not necessary that the *varnasrama* differences should go if the nation was to progress.

Bhagavan: “How can one say whether it is necessary or not necessary? I never say anything on such subjects. People often come and ask me for my opinion on *varnasrama*. If I say anything they will at once go and publish in the papers, ‘So and so also is of such and such an opinion.’ The same scriptures which have laid down *varnasrama dharma* have also proclaimed the oneness of all life and *abheda buddhi* as the only reality. Is it possible for anyone to teach a higher truth than the Unity or oneness of all life? There is no need for anyone to start reforming the country or the nation before reforming himself. Each man’s first duty is to realise his true nature. If after doing it, he feels like reforming the country or nation, by all means let him take up such reform. Ram Tirtha advertised, ‘Wanted reformers - but reformers who will reform themselves first.’ No two persons in the world can be alike or can act alike. External differences are bound to persist, however hard we may try to obliterate them. The attempts of so-called social reformers, to do away with such classes or divisions as *varnasrama* has created, have not succeeded, but have only created new divisions and added a few more castes or classes to the already existing ones, such as the Brahmo-Samajists and the Arya-Samajists. The only solution is for each man to realise his true nature.”

Another visitor said, “*Jnanis* generally retire from active life and do not engage in any worldly activity.”

Bhagavan: “They may or may not. Some, even after realising, carry on trade or business or rule over a kingdom. Some retire into forests and abstain from all acts except those absolutely necessary to keep life in the body. So, we cannot say all *jnanis* give up activity and retire from life.”

Visitor: I want to know if Bhagavan can give concrete examples, like the butcher *Dharmavyadha* mentioned in our books of *jnanis* now living and doing their ordinary daily work in life.

Bhagavan did not answer.

Visitor: “Is renunciation necessary for Self-realisation?”

Bhagavan: “Renunciation and realisation are the same. They are different aspects of the same state. Giving up the non-self is renunciation. Inhering in the Self is *jnana* or Self-realisation. One is the negative and the other the positive aspect of the same, single truth. *Bhakti, jnana, yoga* - are different names for Self-realisation or *mukti* which is our real nature. These appear as the means first. They eventually are the goal. So long as there is conscious effort required on our part to keep up *bhakti, yoga, dhyana*, etc., they are the means. When they go on without any effort on our part, we have attained the goal. There is no realisation to be achieved. The real is ever as it is. What we have done is, we have realised the unreal, *i.e.*, taken for real the unreal. We have to give up that. That is all that is wanted.

Visitor: How has the unreal come? Can the unreal spring from the real?

Bhagavan: See if it has sprung. There is no such thing as the unreal, from another standpoint. The Self alone exists. When you try to trace the ego, based on which alone the world and all exist, you find the ego does not exist at all and so also all this creation.

3-1-46 Afternoon (Selection)

With reference to question 4, Mrs. P. C. Desai quoting the *Bhagavad Gita* asked Bhagavan, “If (as Arjuna was told) there is a certain work destined to be done by each and we shall eventually do it however much we do not wish to do it or refuse to do it, is there any free will?”

Bhagavan said, “It is true that the work meant to be done by us will be done by us. But it is open to us to be free from the joys or pains, pleasant or unpleasant consequences of the work, by not identifying ourselves with the body or that which does the work. If you realise your true nature and know that it is not you that do any work, you will be unaffected by the

consequences of whatever work the body may be engaged in according to destiny or past karma or divine plan, however you may call it. You are always free and there is no limitation of that freedom.”

5-1-46 Afternoon (Selection)

When I entered the hall Bhagavan was answering some question saying, “There is no difference between dream and the waking state except that the dream is short and the waking long. Both are the result of the mind. Because the waking state is long, we imagine that it is our real state. But, as a matter of fact, our real state is what is sometimes called *turiya* or the fourth state which is always as it is and knows nothing of the three *avasthas*, viz., waking, dream or sleep. Because we call these three *avasthas* we call the fourth state also *turiya avastha*. But it is not an *avastha*, but the real and natural state of the Self. When this is realised, we know it is not a *turiya* or fourth state, for a fourth state is only relative, but *turiyatita*, the transcendent state called the fourth state.

A visitor asked Bhagavan, “Priests prescribe various rituals and *pujas* and people are told that unless they properly observe these with fasts, feasts, etc., sin will accrue, and so on. Is there any necessity to observe such rituals and ceremonial worship?”

Bhagavan: “Yes. All such worship is also necessary. It may not be necessary for you. But that does not mean it is necessary for nobody and is no good at all. What is necessary for the infant class pupil is not necessary for the graduate. But even the graduate has to make use of the very alphabet he learnt in the infant class. He knows the full use and significance of the alphabet now.”

The same visitor asked, “I do *Om kara puja*. I say ‘Om Ram’. Is that good?”

Bhagavan: Yes. Any *puja* is good. ‘Om Ram’ or any other name will do. The point is to keep away all other thoughts except the one thought of Om or Ram or God. All *mantra* or *japa* helps that. He who does the *japa* or Ram, e.g., becomes *Rama-maya*. The worshipper becomes in course of time the worshipped. It is only then that he will know the full meaning of the *Om kar* which he was repeating.

Our real nature is *mukti*. But we are imagining we are bound and are making various, strenuous attempts to become free, while we are all the while free. This will be understood

only when we reach that stage. We will be surprised that we were frantically trying to attain something which we have always been and 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 Asramam 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 after great effort to this hall, but is and always has been in the hall. It is exactly like that. If it is asked, why being free we imagine we are bound, 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*."

Another visitor, who said that he was from Sri Aurobindo's Ashram, asked Bhagavan: "But we see pain in the world. A man is hungry. It is a physical reality. It is very real to him. Are we to call it a dream and remain unmoved by his pain?"

Bhagavan: From the point of view of *jnana* or the reality, the pain you speak of is certainly a dream, as is the world of which the pain is an infinitesimal part. In the dream also you yourself feel hunger. You see others suffering hunger. You feed yourself and, moved by pity, feed the others that you find suffering from hunger. So long as the dream lasted, all those pains were quite as real as you now think the pain you see in the world to be. It was only when you woke up that you discovered that the pain in the dream was unreal. You might have eaten to the full and gone to sleep. You dream that you work hard and long in the hot sun all day, are tired and hungry and want to eat a lot. Then you get up and find your stomach is full and you have not stirred out of your bed. But all this is not to say that while you are in the dream you can act as if the pain you feel there is not real. The hunger in the dream has to be assuaged by the food in the dream. The fellow beings you found in the dream so hungry had to be provided with food in that dream. You can never mix up the two states, the dream and the waking state. Till you reach the state of *jnana* and thus wake out of this *maya*, you must do social service by relieving suffering whenever you see it. But even then you must do it, as we are told, without *ahamkara*, *i.e.*, without the sense "I am the doer," but feeling. "I am the Lord's tool." Similarly one must not be conceited, "I am helping a man below me. He needs help. I am in a position to help. I am superior and he inferior." But you must help the man as a means of worshipping God in that man. All such service too is for the Self, not for anybody else. You are not helping anybody else, but only yourself.

Mr. T. P. Ramachandra Aiyar said in this connection “There is the classic example of Abraham Lincoln, who helped a pig to get out of a ditch and in the process had himself and his clothes dirtied. When questioned why he took so much trouble, he replied, ‘I did it to put an end not so much to the pig’s trouble, as to my own pain in seeing the poor thing struggle to get out of the ditch’.”

Mr. Joshi asked: I am a householder. I have dependants and obstacles in the way of my spiritual progress. What should I do?

Bhagavan: See whether those dependants and obstacles are outside you, whether they exist without you.

Joshi: I am a beginner. How should I start?

Bhagavan: Where are you now? Where is the goal? What is the distance to be covered? The Self is not somewhere far away to be reached. You are always that. You have only to give up your habit, a long-standing one, of identifying yourself with the non-self. All effort is only for that. By turning the mind outwards, you have been seeing the world, the non-Self. If you turn it inwards you will see the Self.

7-1-46 Night

Mr. G. L. Sarma seems to have prepared a manuscript on *Gita Saram*. Bhagavan asked Mr. Balaram Reddi to read it out. As it was said in that, “Only when there is complete devotion, the Lord will respond and take complete charge of the devotee,” Mr. P. Bannerji (who has recently come after a stay at Aurobindo’s) asked Bhagavan, “Is it a condition precedent for the Lord showing grace that one must be completely devoted? Would not the Lord naturally in his Grace be kind towards all his children whether they are devoted or not?”

Bhagavan: How can one help being devoted? Everyone loves himself. That is experience. If the Self were not his dearest object, would one love it? The Self or Lord is not somewhere else but is inside each of us and in loving oneself, one loves only the Self.

The visitor could not understand how this was an answer to his question. I explained, “Bhagavan has told us more than once, ‘The Lord’s grace is always flowing. There is no time at which it is not flowing, and no person towards whom it is not flowing. But only those can receive it who have developed the capacity. Devotion is a condition precedent, not for the flowing of grace from the Lord, but for your being able to receive and assimilate the grace which is there always flowing’.”

In this connection Dr. Syed quoted the verse in *Bhagavad Gita* which says that the Lord is the friend of all, the sinner and the saint alike, but that he is specially in the heart of those who cherish him and that such people are dear to Him.

11-1-46 Afternoon

A young man from Colombo asked Bhagavan, “J. Krishnamurti teaches the method of effortless and choiceless awareness as distinct from that of deliberate concentration. Would Sri Bhagavan be pleased to explain how best to practise meditation and what form the object of meditation should take?”

Bhagavan: Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature. If we can attain it or be in that state, it is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age-long *vasanas* carry the mind outward and turn it to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inward. For that, effort is necessary for most people. Of course everybody, every book says, “சும்மா இரு” *i.e.*, “Be quiet or still”. But it is not easy. That is why all this effort is necessary. Even if we find one who has at once achieved the *mauna* or Supreme state indicated by “சும்மா இரு”, you may take it that the effort necessary has already been finished in a previous life. So that, effortless and choiceless awareness is reached only after deliberate meditation. That meditation can take any form which appeals to you best. See what helps you to keep away all other thoughts and adopt that method for your meditation”.

In this connection Bhagavan quoted verses 5 and 52 from “உடல் பொய்யுறவு” and 36 from “பாயப் புலி” of saint Thayumanavar. Their gist is as follows. “Bliss will follow if you are still. But however much you may tell your mind about this truth, the mind will not keep quiet. It is the mind that won’t keep quiet. It is the mind which tells the mind ‘Be quiet

and you will attain bliss'. Though all the scriptures have said it, though we hear about it every day from the great ones, and though even our Guru says it, we never are quiet, but stray into the world of *maya* and sense objects. That is why conscious, deliberate effort or meditation is required to attain that *mauna* state or the state of being quiet.

Another young man from Colombo asked Bhagavan, "How are the three states of consciousness inferior in degree of reality to the fourth? What is the actual relation between these three states and the fourth?"

Bhagavan: There is only one state, that of consciousness or awareness or existence. The three states of waking, dream and sleep cannot be real. They simply come and go. The real will always exist. The 'I' or existence that alone persists in all the three states is real. The other three are not real and so it is not possible to say they have such and such a degree of reality. We may roughly put it like this. Existence or consciousness is the only reality. Consciousness plus waking, we call waking. Consciousness plus sleep, we call sleep. Consciousness plus dream, we call dream. Consciousness is the screen on which all the pictures come and go. The screen is real, the pictures are mere shadows on it. Because by long habit we have been regarding these three states as real, we call the state of mere awareness or consciousness as the fourth. There is however no fourth state, but only one state. In this connection Bhagavan quoted verse 386 from 'பராபரக் கண்ணி' of Thayumanavar and said this so-called fourth state is described as waking sleep or sleep in waking - meaning asleep to the world and awake in the Self.

Mr. O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar (the Congress leader) asked Bhagavan, "But why should these three states come and go on the real state or the screen of the Self?"

Bhagavan: Who puts this question? Does the Self say these states come and go? It is the seer who says these states come and go. The seer and the seen together constitute the mind. See if there is such a thing as the mind. Then, the mind merges in the Self, and there is neither the seer nor the seen. So the real answer to your question is, "Do they come and go? They neither come nor go." The Self alone remains as it ever is. The three states owe their existence to 'அவி சார' (non-enquiry) and enquiry puts an end to them. However much one may explain, the fact will not become clear till oneself attains Self-realisation and wonders how he was blind to the self-evident and only existence so long.

Another visitor asked Bhagavan, “What is the difference between the mind and the Self?”

Bhagavan: There is no difference. The mind turned inwards is the Self; turned outwards, it becomes the ego and all the world. The cotton made into various clothes, we call by various names. The gold made into various ornaments, we call by various names. But all the clothes are cotton and all the ornaments gold. The one is real, the many are mere names and forms.

But the mind does not exist apart from the Self, *i.e.*, it has no independent existence. The Self exists without the mind, never the mind without the Self.

15-2-46

Mr. Ramaswami Iyengar of Kumbakonam, who was staying at Palakottu, passed away this morning about 2 a.m.; and Kunjuswami informed Bhagavan of the same at once. R. passed away with Bhagavan’s name on his lips.

Bhagavan made kind enquiries about Colombo Ramachandra’s health, as he had been suffering from sciatica for about a week now, and was taken to the Doctor in the Government Hospital last evening. Among the letters received today was one from a lady, Kameswaramma, in which she asked for Bhagavan’s opinion on the question whether the body can be kept alive eternally. While perusing the letter, Bhagavan made a few remarks and this led to questions from visitors. Bhagavan repeated his well-known views on the subject, more or less to the following effect : “As this lady writes, some have maintained that the body can be made immortal and they give recipes, medical and other, for perfecting this body and making it defy death. The Siddha school (as it is known in the south) has believed in such a doctrine. Venkaswami Rao in Kumbakonam started a school which believed the same. There is a Society in Pondicherry too. There is also the school which believes in transforming men into supermen by descent of Divine Power, as is mentioned in this letter. But all people, after writing long treatises on the indestructibility of their body, after giving medical recipes and yogic practices to perfect the body and keep it alive for ever, pass away one day!” Somebody raised this question, “What then about those who are spoken of as *chiranjivis* in our books?” Bhagavan replied, “But do they appear in physical bodies? They only appear to you in your *dhyana*.” From this the talk drifted to whether they have individuality and Bhagavan said, “As long as you have individuality, you can see individuality in them, not afterwards!”

In the night Gajanan (Devarata) said to Bhagavan “When Naina went to Gokarnam he went almost to every house and offered his superb *vidya* to everyone. But nobody cared for it then. But now, they come across a verse of his and they go into raptures over it, and exclaim ‘What poetic gift!’ and if they can get a picture of him they worship it as God. This seems to have been the way of the world always. There is a story about Maschendra Nath. It is said he went about saying, “For two *pooran polies* (பூரண போளி) I shall give you Brahman *i.e.*, *jnana*. But nobody cared. At last Goraknath came along and when he heard this offer of M., he said he would bring the *polies*. He went into the city, got up a tall tree, hung from one of the branches head downwards, had a small fire lit up underneath, and made a *chela* or disciple sit by his side. The whole town swarmed around and wondered saying, “What great *tapasya*! Some great Mahatma has come to our place!” People readily offered to do various services and present many things to the great *tapasvi*. The disciple explained that his master would only accept a *bhiksha* in which a thousand persons should all be fed with the best *pooran polies*. This was readily arranged and Goraknath took two *polies* and ran up to Maschendra, telling the people, “You feed the thousand persons. I shall go to the Ganges and offer the *polies* to Ganga.” G. told M., “Here Sir, I have brought the two *polies*. Now give me Brahman!” M. took the two *polies*, bit them here and there, threw the pieces to the birds, dogs and the river, and then both M. and G. disappeared. M. had given G. Brahman.

“It seems to have been the way of the world always. Great men are rarely respected and rated at their true worth in their lives. Even Sankara was bitterly attacked during his lifetime as a *maya asura*. But now he is regarded not only here, but all over the world, as the greatest religious and philosophical thinker the world has produced!” Bhagavan said, “There is another similarity between Sankara and Maschendra Nath. It is said of Maschendra also that he was enjoying the company of a woman and forgot to return at the end of the period fixed by him, and that thereupon his disciple Goraknath went and sang and reminded him and brought him back, in the same way in which Sankara’s disciples are said to have sung *Guru stuti* and brought back Sankara.” Gajanan proceeded to relate that Goraknath was greatly revered in Nepal, from the King downward, and the State coin also bore the name of Goraknath. He said, “It seems, when Goraknath was alive, the then King of Nepal visited him. When G. was apprised of the King’s arrival, he merely spat on the King. The King, to avert the spittle falling on his crown, drew back a little; the spittle fell on his feet. G. is said to have then told the King, ‘You would not let the spittle fall on your head. If it had so fallen, you might have become the head of a big empire. However, as it fell on your feet, you would be the master of a small kingdom’”

The talk then drifted to miracles done by various saints. G. mentioned one Vasudeva Saraswati and said, "He has gone all over India. Bhagavan knows him. He was here too. He did various miracles. One morning he would bathe in the Krishna and at noon he would be found bathing in the Ganges at Benares and at a third place in the evening!" Then G. proceeded to speak of Samartha Rama Das and his miracles, and told the following story : "It seems one of his disciples, greatly devoted to him, used to grind the betel leaves and nut in his own mouth first and then offer it to Ramdas. Some co-disciples thought this sacrilegious and went and told Ramdas, 'Please ask him to bring the pestle and mortar with which he daily prepares betel leaves paste for you.' Ramdas thereupon asked those disciples, 'Yes, go and ask him to bring the mortar.' They accordingly went and told that disciple, 'Master wants us to bring from you the mortar in which you prepare betel leaf for him daily!' The disciple said, 'Wait. I shall give it to you presently.' So saying he took a sword, cut off his head and gave it to the other disciples! When the disciples took the head to the Master, the latter told them, 'Do you now see the *bhakti* of the man whom you misunderstood and maligned? Go and put his head back again on his trunk.' The disciples did as directed and the man came back to life." G. continued and said, "The sword 'Bhavani' was presented to Shivaji by Ramdas. Four men are required to handle that sword, handled by Shivaji. It is now preserved by the British Government."

24-2-46 Morning

About 10-30 a.m. Mrs. Taleyarkhan came near Bhagavan, stood at his feet and asked, "May I say a few words, Bhagavan?" and continued, "I have a great friend, Mrs. W., wife of a prominent official in Los Angeles. In 1942, when I was here, I received a letter from her while I was sitting in this hall. It was a heart-rending letter in which she detailed how her husband fell in love with another woman, got a divorce decree and married the new woman. She was a most beautiful woman, Bhagavan, and they had already a girl about seventeen years old. She was a great society woman and it was impossible that any event of any social importance would take place without her being there. So she felt the grief immensely and wrote it all. I was moved terribly and keenly felt for her and prayed mentally to Bhagavan for her relief. I wrote back to her, sending her a small photo of Bhagavan, and told her, 'Don't be downcast. Your husband will come back to you. I am now with such and such a great personage. I am sending you a small picture of him. Have it on your table. I shall daily pray to him on your behalf. You too pray to him. You will see that you get relief.' But the friend - what do they know about Bhagavan and such things - was disconsolate. She wrote back, 'What you say is impossible. He won't come back.' I wrote again, 'Nothing is impossible

with our Bhagavan. So just go on as I have advised you to do.’ And now, Bhagavan, I have her letter by air-mail today that her husband has come back to her and she is going to set up a new home again. She writes, ‘The impossible has happened. Your “gentleman” (meaning Bhagavan) has really worked a miracle. Now, I and my husband must come and see him. We want to fly and visit your Master, though the passage costs a lot. Please let me know whether there is a hotel there where we can come and stay’. I have always been praying to Bhagavan for this friend and I am glad Bhagavan has done this for her. I feel so grateful and was moved to tears when reading this letter here now.”

I added, “What is there impossible for Bhagavan?” and told Bhagavan, “Only last evening Shroff was complaining to me about his having to go to Delhi. He said, ‘It is the hopelessness of the situation that pains me most. There does not seem to be any chance of my coming here again. If I was certain that once in six months or even once a year, I could be visiting here, I would not feel the separation so much. It is the impossibility of it all that worries me’.” And I told Shroff the same thing that Mrs. T. told her friend :

“There is nothing impossible at all where Bhagavan is concerned. You may get transferred to Madras. You may grow so rich suddenly as to possess a small aeroplane of your own. What is there that cannot happen by His Grace?”

Mrs. Osborne told Bhagavan, “Kitty has written a letter and in it has sent her love to Bhagavan.” Bhagavan, turning to me, said, “She has become shy now. When she was going she made her father come and tell me her message ‘I hope Bhagavan won’t forget me’. And I told her, ‘You don’t forget Bhagavan and Bhagavan won’t forget you’.”

26-2-46 Morning

A visitor told Bhagavan, “Even in my dream I sometimes feel that I am dreaming, *i.e.*, I am conscious that it is a dream and that a fall for instance there cannot hurt me and so on. How is that?”

Bhagavan: How can that be? Even in a dream there must be hurt consequent on a fall. On the other hand, if you are aware it is a dream, you are no longer dreaming. At the best, it may be the transition stage when you are awaking from the dream state.

Another visitor told Bhagavan that some of his dream experiences stood very firmly rooted in his mind, while others were not remembered at all. Bhagavan remarked, “All that we see is a dream, whether we see it in the dream state or in the waking state. On account of some arbitrary standards about the duration of experience and so on, we call one experience dream experience and another waking experience. With reference to Reality, both the experiences are unreal. A man might have such an experience as getting *anugraha* (grace) in his dream and the effect and influence of it on his entire subsequent life may be so profound and so abiding that one cannot call it unreal, while calling real some trifling incident in the waking life, that just flits by, is casual, of no moment whatever and is soon forgotten. Once I had an experience, a vision or dream, whatever you may call it. I and some others including Chadwick had a walk on the hill. Returning, we were walking along a huge street with great buildings on either side. Showing the street and the buildings, I asked Chadwick and the others whether anybody could say that what we were seeing was a dream and they all replied, ‘Which fool will say so?’ and we walked along and entered the hall and the vision or dream ceased or I woke up. What are we to call this?”

Next the talk drifted to the Self being *pratyaksha* (self-evident) and Bhagavan then related how the song “Atma Vidya” was composed. He said, “Any *vidya* is for the purpose of knowing something. If it is so self-evident as to render the well-known classical example of *hastamalakam* or a gooseberry on the palm a false analogy, as Muruganar had put it, where was the need for *atma vidya*, whether you call it easy or not? What Muruganar meant to say was : ‘In the classical example, a hand is necessary, a hand that will and can feel a fruit on it, a fruit, an eye that can see, a person that has already known what fruit it is, and so on, and so forth. But for knowing the Self, nothing at all except the Self is needed.’ In sleep for instance nothing at all exists for us except ourselves and we admit we existed during that sleep. On waking we say, ‘I slept and none of us believes there are two ‘I’s, the one that slept and the one that is awake now. In the classical example all these must exist to make the fruit self-evident. All these depend on or derive from the Self and make the fruit self-evident. How much more self-evident must the Self itself be? Anyhow there it was, Muruganar had written the *pallavi* and *anupallavi* and wanted the *charanams*. He said he could not possibly complete the song, as somehow no more lines would come to him, and so requested me to complete it. Thereupon I wrote this song. First I wrote only one stanza or *charanam*. But Muruganar wanted at least four. Thereupon I made three more. Finally I recollected, I had not made any mention of Annamalai and so made a fifth *charanam* also and made mention of Annamalai in it, as Ponnambalam is mentioned in the stanzas of the song in Nandanar story on which our song is modelled.”

A squirrel came to Bhagavan and he was feeding it with cashew-nut pieces as usual. Turning to me, he said, “Shroff sent some cashew-nuts yesterday and said ‘They were intended for my dumb friends’.” I said, “Probably Bhagavan would object to our calling these squirrels dumb.” Bhagavan said, “They communicate with me. Sometimes I am in a nap. They come and draw attention to their presence by gently biting my finger tips. Besides, they have a lot of language of their own. There is one great thing about these squirrels. You may place any amount of food before them. They will just eat what they need and leave the rest behind. Not so the rat, for instance. It will take everything it finds and stock it in its hole.”

I remarked, “Possibly it would be said that the squirrel is a less intelligent creature than the rat, because it does not plan or provide for the future but lives in the present.” Bhagavan said, “Yes. Yes. We consider it intelligence to plan and live wretchedly like this. See how many animals and birds live in this world without planning and stocking. Are they all dying?”

Bhagavan then began speaking of monkeys and said, “They too don’t build nests or stock things. They eat what they can find, and go and perch on trees when night falls. They are quite happy. I have known something about their organisation, their kings, laws, regulations. Everything is so perfect and well-organised. So much intelligence behind it all. I even know that *tapas* is not unknown to monkeys. A monkey whom we used to call ‘Mottaipaiyan’ was once oppressed and ill-treated by a gang. He went away into the forest for a few days, did *tapas*, acquired strength and returned. When he came and sat on a bough and shook it, all the rest of the monkeys, who had previously ill-treated him and of whom he was previously mortally afraid, were now quaking before him. Yes. I am clear that *tapas* is well known to monkeys.”

1-3-46 Morning

Mr. Osborne said, “Bhagavan, last evening Nuna (*i.e.* his daughter about four years old) told us, ‘Dr. Syed is my best friend in the world.’ Thereupon we asked her, ‘What about Bhagavan? and she replied, ‘Bhagavan is not in the world’.”

Bhagavan was surprised at this remark of the child and involuntarily his finger rose to his nose and, holding it there, he said, “What a sage remark for a child to make! Even great men cannot understand what that remark means. They ought to have asked her, ‘Where else is

Bhagavan, if not in the world'?" Thereupon Mr. Osborne said, "Yes. We did ask her. She said, 'Bhagavan is out of the world'."

Dr. Syed asked Bhagavan, "Does not total or complete surrender require that one should not have left in him the desire even for liberation or God?"

Bhagavan: Complete surrender does require that you have no desire of your own, that God's desire alone is your desire and that you have no desire of your own.

Dr. Syed: Now that I am satisfied on that point, I want to know what are the steps by which I could achieve surrender.

Bhagavan: There are two ways; one is looking into the source of 'I' and merging into that source. The other is feeling I am helpless by myself, God alone is all-powerful and except throwing myself completely on him, there is no other means of safety for me," and thus gradually developing the conviction that God alone exists and the ego does not count. Both methods lead to the same goal. Complete surrender is another name for *jnana* or liberation.

3-3-46 Morning

A visitor quoted verse 33 of Ch. 3 in *Bhagavad Gita* and asked Bhagavan, "Are we then to do nothing and simply allow the senses to go their own way?"

Bhagavan: It only means actions will go on, according to the *gunas* or *prakriti* of the man. They cannot be prevented. But, that is the very reason why man should acquire *jnana* and thus become unaffected by the consequences of such action. The verse says, "Acquire *jnana* and be unattached to the actions and their consequences."

Bhagavan said this after saying, "Let us see in what connection this verse occurs," and looking up the verse in question. Then I remembered that once before I asked Bhagavan about this very same verse, and then Bhagavan pointed out to me the very next verse in which we are directed not to yield to the senses. I mentioned this for the guidance of the visitor. Bhagavan had told me then that, if the two verses were taken together, it could not be contended that Gita teaches 'Don't restrain or attempt to restrain the senses, because what does restraint avail?'

5-5-46

In answer to a visitor, Bhagavan said : "Find out to whom is *Viyoga*. That is *Yoga*. Yoga is common to all paths. Yoga is really nothing but ceasing to think that you are different from the Self or Reality. All the yogas - *karma*, *gnana*, *bhakti* and *raja* - are just different paths to suit different natures with different modes of evolution and to get them out of the long cherished notion that they are different from the Self. There is no question of union or yoga in the sense of going and joining something that is somewhere away from us or different from us, because you never were or could be separate from the Self."

In the afternoon I showed Bhagavan the passage in today's *Sunday Times* where Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, in his radio talk, quotes Sri Shankara's reference to his own experience as proof of the existence of the *Jivanmukta* and about the controversies concerning various kinds of *mukti*. He read out passages from a Tamil book called (*The Truth of Advaita*) in which all doubts about the state of the *jivan mukta* are raised and answered. Then he said :-

"Various illustrations are given in books to enable us to understand how the *gnani* can live and act without the mind, although living and acting require the use of the mind. The potter's wheel goes on turning round even after the potter has ceased to turn it because the pot is finished. In the same way, the electric fan goes on revolving for some minutes after we switch off the current. The *prarabdha* which created the body will make it go through whatever activities it was meant for. But the *gnani* goes through all these activities without the notion that he is the doer of them. It is hard to understand how this is possible. The illustration generally given is that the *gnani* performs actions in some such way as a child that is roused from sleep to eat, eats but does not remember next morning that it ate. It has to be remembered that all these explanations are not for the *gnani*. He knows and has no doubts. He knows that he is not the body and is not doing anything even though his body may be engaged in some activity. These explanations are for the onlookers who think of the *gnani* as one with a body and cannot help identifying him with his body.

"There are various controversies or schools of thought as to whether a *Jnani* can continue to live in his physical body after realization. Some hold that one who dies cannot be a *Jnani*, because his body must vanish into air, or some such thing. They put forward all sorts of funny notions. If a man must at once leave his body when he realises the Self, I wonder how any knowledge of the Self or the state of realisation can come down to other men. And that would mean that all those who have given us the fruits of their Self-realisation in books

cannot be considered *Jnanis* because they went on living after realisation. And if it is held that a man cannot be considered a *Jnani* so long as he performs actions in the world (and action is impossible without the mind), then not only the great Sages who carried on various kinds of work after attaining *Jnana* must not be considered *Jnanis*, but the Gods also, and *Ishwara* Himself, since He continues looking after the world. The fact is that any amount of action can be performed, and performed quite well, by the *Jnani* without his identifying himself with it in any way or ever imagining that he is the doer. Some power acts through his body and uses his body to get the work done."

Bhagavan has said the same on previous occasions also. He continued to speak about *mukti* and said:

"*Mukti* is not anything to be attained. It is our real nature. We are always That. It is only so long as one feels that he is in bondage that he has to try to get released from bondage. When a man feels that he is in bondage he tries to find out for whom is the bondage and by that enquiry discovers that there is no bondage for him but only for the mind, and that the mind itself disappears or proves non-existent when turned inwards instead of outwards towards sense-objects; it merges into its source, the Self, and ceases to exist as a separate entity. In that state there is no feeling either of bondage or liberation. So long as one speaks of *mukti* he is not free from the sense of bondage."

The visitor who had asked about Yoga in the morning now pursued his questions further.

Visitor: I did not quite grasp all that Bhagavan said this morning. What am I to do when the mind strays in various directions during *dhyana*?

Bhagavan: Simply draw the mind back each time it strays and fix it in *dhyana*. There is no other way. (Bhagavan also quoted Chapter VI, Verse 26 from the *Bhagavad Gita* which says the same thing).

Visitor: Then is there no use in *pranayama* (breath control)? Should I not practise it?

Bhagavan: *Pranayama* is also a help. It is one of the various methods that are intended to help us attain *ekagratha* or one-pointedness of mind. *Pranayama* can also help to control the wandering mind and attain this one-pointedness and therefore it can be used. But one should

not stop there. After obtaining control of the mind through *pranayama* one should not rest content with any experiences which may accrue therefrom but should harness the controlled mind to the question 'Who am I?' till the mind merges in the Self.

The visitor further asked whether in his meditation he could use forms and images of God and *mantras*.

Bhagavan: Yes, of course. All these things can help, or why should they be recommended in the books? Various things are prescribed to suit various natures. Each person must choose what seems easiest and appeals to him most.

24-6-46 (Selection)

I asked him which of the poems in his *Ramana Sannidhi Murai* he liked best, but he could not say. I told him that I liked "Arunai Ramanesan" best and proceeded to sing 'தஞ்சமெனத் தாள் சேர்ந்தார்' from it, and *Bhagavan* asked me to translate that also for the Maharani, so I did. The gist of it is that Ramana bears upon his head, because it is his fate, the burdens of all those who throw themselves at his feet and regard him as their sole refuge, that peace comes naturally to all those who live with him, that whatever dangers may threaten his devotees they need have no fear, and that *Bhagavan* had saved him, Muruganar bidding him not to fear.

31-5-46

Mr. Phillips, an Englishman who used to be a missionary and is now a teacher and who has been about 20 years in Hyderabad, came this morning. He said : "I lost my son in the war. What is the way for his salvation?"

Bhagavan was silent for a while and then replied. "Your worry is due to thinking. Anxiety is a creation of the mind. Your real nature is peace. Peace has not got to be achieved; it is our nature. To find consolation, you may reflect : 'God gave, God has taken away; He knows best'. But the true remedy is to enquire into your true nature. It is because you feel that your son does not exist that you feel grief. If you knew that he existed you would not feel grief. That means that the source of the grief is mental and not an actual reality. There is a story

given in some books how two boys went on a pilgrimage and after some days news came back that one of them was dead. However, the wrong one was reported dead, and the result was that the mother who had lost her son went about as cheerful as ever, while the one who had still got her son was weeping and lamenting. So it is not any object or condition that causes grief but only our thought about it. Your son came from the Self and was absorbed back into the Self. Before he was born, where was he apart from the Self? He is our Self in reality. In deep sleep the thought of 'I' or 'child' or 'death' does not occur to you, and you are the same person who existed in sleep. If you enquire in this way and find out your real nature, you will know your son's real nature also. He always exists. It is only you who think he is lost. You create a son in your mind, and think that he is lost, but in the Self he always exists."

K. M. Jivrajani: What is the nature of life after physical death?

Bhagavan: Find out about your present life. Why do you worry about life after death? If you realize the present you will know everything.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan saw a relative of his, a young man called Sesha Aiyar, in the hall. He said : "Seeing you reminds me of something that happened in Dindigul when I was a boy. Your uncle Periappa Seshaiyar was living there then. There was some function in the house and all went to it and then in the night went to the temple. I was left alone in the house. I was sitting reading in the front room, but after a while I locked the front door and fastened the windows and went to sleep. When they returned from the temple no amount of shouting or banging at the door or window could wake me. At last they managed to open the door with a key from the opposite house and then they tried to wake me up by beating me. All the boys beat me to their heart's content, and your uncle did too, but without effect. I knew nothing about it till they told me next morning."

I asked, "How old was Bhagavan then?"

Bhagavan said, "About eleven." Then he continued : "The same sort of thing happened to me in Madurai too. The boys didn't dare touch me when I was awake, but if they had any grudge against me they would come when I was asleep and carry me wherever they liked and beat me as much as they liked and then put me back to bed, and I would know nothing about it until they told me in the morning."

I said : "It would seem that even in those days Bhagavan's sleep was not ordinary sleep but some state like *samadhi*."

Bhagavan: I don't know what state it was, but that is the fact. Some who have written about my life have called it somnambulism.

I: It was certainly not somnambulism; that is walking in one's sleep. This was more like *samadhi* or absorption in the Self.

In the evening Bose asked : "Is it good to do *japa* and *puja* and so on when we know that enquiry into the Self is the real thing?"

Bhagavan: All are good. They will lead to this eventually. *Japa* is our real nature. When we realize the Self then *japa* goes on without effort. What is the means at one stage becomes the goal at another. When effortless, constant *japa* goes on, it is realisation.

Bose: Why did Bhagavan regard Arunachala as Father?

Bhagavan did not reply but sat smiling.

Bose: Perhaps for the benefit of others?

Bhagavan: Yes; so long as there is the feeling 'I', it must have a source from whence it came.

28-6-46

In the afternoon Khanna's wife appealed to Bhagavan in writing : "I am not learned in the Scriptures and I find the method of Self-enquiry too hard for me. I am a woman with seven children and a lot of household cares, and it leaves me little time for meditation. I request Bhagavan to give me some simpler and easier method."

Bhagavan: No learning or knowledge of Scriptures is necessary to know the Self, as no man requires a mirror to see himself. All knowledge is required only to be given up eventually as not-Self. Nor is household work or cares with children necessarily an obstacle. If you can do nothing more, at least continue saying 'I, I' to yourself mentally all the time, as advised in

Who am I?, whatever work you may be doing and whether you are sitting, standing or walking. 'I' is the name of God. It is the first and greatest of all *mantras*. Even OM is second to it.

Khanna: The *jiva* is said to be mind plus illumination. What is it that desires Self-realization and what is it that obstructs our path to Self-realization? It is said that the mind obstructs and the illumination helps.

Bhagavan: Although we describe the *jiva* as mind plus the reflected light of the Self, in actual practice, in life, you cannot separate the two, just as, in the illustrations we used yesterday, you can't separate cloth and whiteness in a white cloth or fire and iron in a red-hot rod. The mind can do nothing by itself. It emerges only with the illumination and can do no action, good or bad, except with the illumination. But while the illumination is always there, enabling the mind to act well or ill, the pleasure or pain resulting from such action is not felt by the illumination, just as when you hammer a red-hot rod it is not the fire but the iron that gets the hammering.

Khanna: Is there destiny? And if what is destined to happen will happen is there any use in prayer or effort or should we just remain idle?

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

Khanna: Are our prayers granted?

Bhagavan: Yes, they are granted. No thought will go in vain. Every thought will produce its effect some time or other. Thought-force will never go in vain.

17-7-46

This morning Bhagavan was speaking about a letter from Mr. Pande, Principal of a college at Khatmandu, telling about an incident that Mr. Pande has already described in the Souvenir volume. A. N. Rao and I wanted to see it, so Bhagavan asked for the letter to be shown to us. This is the incident :- Pande went to the great temple in Tiruvannamalai on the evening of his departure. When he entered the innermost shrine the *lingam* of Arunachalam was pointed out to him, and the young man who was with him, also a devotee of Bhagavan, cried out : 'Arunachala! Arunachala!'; but Pande could not see any *lingam* but only the face of Bhagavan whichever side he turned - everywhere the face of Bhagavan!

5-10-46

This morning a person came and prostrated himself before Bhagavan at the dining hall. He almost touched him, and as I was wondering who it could be, the person announced himself to Bhagavan as Vasu and Bhagavan said, "Is it you? If you had not said it, I should never have recognised you. You have gone down so much." The visitor replied, "I find I must say the same about Bhagavan," To this Bhagavan said, "Why, what is the matter with me? Probably because you are reduced, your eyesight has also become reduced and I appear reduced to you!" Later, in the hall, Bhagavan introduced this gentleman to all present and said, "This is the Vasu who caught hold of me when returning from an oil bath one hot day to Skandasramam and I had that experience of what seemed like utter collapse with even the heartbeat stopping." Then Vasudeva Sastri said, "I was then too young. I did not even know that it was death. But because Palani Swami started crying, I thought it was death and I caught hold of Bhagavan and I was trembling with grief." Bhagavan said here, "I could even in that state clearly see his trembling and emotion." V. added that, after Bhagavan recovered, he told V. and Palani, "What? You thought I died? Did you believe I would die even without telling you?"

Bhagavan also said, "This is the person who, when we were in Virupakshi Cave a tiger came that way one night, hastily ran into the cave leaving us in the verandah, shut the door and then cried to the tiger, 'Come on now. What can you do?'" V. said, "Once Bhagavan and I went round the Hill during the Skandasramam days. When we reached near Easanya Mutt about 8-30 a.m., Bhagavan sat on a rock and said with tears in his eyes he would never again come to the Asramam and would go where he pleased and live in the forests or caves away from all men. I would not leave him and he would not come. It became very late. We went there about

8 or 8-30 a.m. and even when it became 1 p.m. we were still in this deadlock. Bhagavan asked me to go into the town and eat my food and then come back if I wanted. But I was afraid that if I went Bhagavan would go away somewhere. Meanwhile, the Swami of Easanya Mutt very unexpectedly came that way. Ordinarily it could not be expected he would have come there at that time at all. But strange to say, he came that way and he persuaded Bhagavan to go with him to Easanya Mutt. I left Bhagavan there and ran up to the town for my food and came back swiftly, fearing that Bhagavan might have left. But I found him there and we both came to Skandasramam afterwards."

When this was mentioned, Bhagavan said, "Another time too I wanted to run away from all this crowd and live somewhere unknown, freely as I liked. That was when I was in Virupakshi Cave. I felt my being there was an inconvenience and hardship to Jadaswami and some other Swamis there. But on that occasion my plans were frustrated by Yogananda Swami. I tried to be free on a third occasion also. That was after mother's passing away. I did not want to have even an Asramam like Skandasramam and the people that were coming there then. But the result has been this Asramam and all the crowd here. Thus all my three attempts failed."

In another connection also Bhagavan mentioned this Vasudeva Sastri today. Mr. G. V. S. read out a Telugu stanza composed by him on celebration of birthdays (yesterday was G. V. S.'s birthday, it seems). When this was read out, Bhagavan said, "It is this Vasu and others that wanted to celebrate my birthday first in 1912. I was quite opposed to it. But Vasu pleaded with me : 'It is for us and so Bhagavan should not object' and they celebrated it that year for the first time."

In the afternoon, Sundaresa Iyer's grandson (about a month old) was brought by Mr. Narayanaswami Aiyar into the hall to Bhagavan, his daughter following behind. Bhagavan took the child into his hands, when it was offered by N. Aiyar and said, "I was wondering whether you were bringing some doll. He is looking at me and smiling." After holding the child, Bhagavan was about to return him to N. Aiyar, when his daughter ran up to Bhagavan and, showing a red mark on the child's abdomen, said, "There is this red mark on the child. Further he had *Brahma mudi* (literally, knot of Brahma) at the time of his birth." Bhagavan looked at the birthmark and then returned the child. The girl continued and said, "We don't know whether this mark and that knot are good. Mother asked me to ask Bhagavan. Are they good?" Bhagavan was pleased to say, "All is only good". I consider these people extremely lucky and I believe all will be well with this child in his life. Bhagavan further remarked,

after the child was returned and was seated on his grandmother's lap, "It is to attain the state of this babe that all *yoga* is performed. This babe, what thoughts has it now. It does not even blink its eyes." Then the child's mother began singing M. V. R.'s "Saranagati" song. Bhagavan turning to G. V. S. said, "Do you know what happened to this girl? She was living at Cawnpore on the second or third floor and, though there was a tap, it seems water would not flow up there. But she turned the tap and sang this song and then water flowed, it seems. That is a *siddhi*. When the father went to her, she said, 'I will show you a miracle' and repeated the performance before him."

When the birthmark was shown and there was talk about it, Bhagavan said, "I too have a red mark on the sole of my right foot. But the mark on this child's abdomen is big." Then T. S. R. said, "Mr. Ramaswamy Iyer has sung that Bhagavan's feet had become red on account of the burning tears shed at His feet by devotees and another writer has described the red mark as the anklet (*pada chilambu*) mark of Nataraja."

Vasudeva Sastri recounted another incident, which he had seen:-

"One day, when we were at Skandasramam, I was aghast to find a scorpion climbing up over Bhagavan's body in the front and another at the same time climbing down his back. I was terrified and wanted to do something. But Bhagavan remained calm, as if nothing happened, and the two scorpions, after crawling over his body as if over a wall, eventually left him. After they left, Bhagavan explained to us, 'They crawl over you just as they would crawl on the floor or a wall or tree. Do they crawl over these, stinging as they go? It is only because you fear them and do something that they fear you and do something in return'."

8-10-46

This afternoon, a visitor asked Bhagavan, "No doubt the method taught by Bhagavan is direct. But it is so difficult. We do not know how to begin it. If we go on asking, 'Who am I?' 'Who am I?' like a *japa*, with 'Who am I?' for *mantra*, it becomes dull. In other methods, there is something preliminary and positive with which one can begin and then go step by step. But in Bhagavan's method, there is no such thing, and to seek the Self at once, though direct, is difficult."

Bhagavan: "You yourself concede it is the direct method. It is the direct and easy method. When going after other things, alien to us, is so easy, how can it be difficult for one to go to one's own Self? You talk of 'Where to begin'. There is no beginning and no end. You are yourself the beginning and the end. If you are here and the Self somewhere else, and you have to reach that Self, you may be told how to start, how to travel and then how to reach. Suppose you who are now in Ramana Asramam ask, 'I want to go to Ramana Asramam. How shall I start and how to reach it?', what is one to say? A man's search for the Self is like that. He is always the Self and nothing else. You say 'Who am I?' becomes a *japa*. It is not meant that you should go on asking 'Who am I?' In that case, thought will not so easily die. All *japas* are intended, by the use of one thought, the *mantra*, to exclude all other thoughts. This, *japa* eventually does for a man. All other thoughts, except the thought of the *mantra*, gradually die and then even that one thought dies. Our Self is of the nature of *japa*. *Japa* is always going on there. If we give up all thoughts, we shall find *japa* is always there without any effort on our part. In the direct method, as you call it, by saying ask yourself 'Who am I?' you are told to concentrate within yourself where the I-thought (the root of all other thoughts) arises. As the Self is not outside but inside you, you are asked to dive within, instead of going without, and what can be more easy than going to yourself? But the fact remains that to some this method will seem difficult and will not appeal. That is why so many different methods have been taught. Each of them will appeal to some as the best and easiest. That is according to their *pakva* or fitness. But to some, nothing except the *vichara marga* will appeal. They will ask, 'You want me to know or to see this or that. But who is the knower, the seer?' Whatever other method may be chosen, there will be always a doer. That cannot be escaped. Who is that doer must be found out. Till that, the *sadhana* cannot be ended. So eventually, all must come to find out 'Who am I?'. You complain that here is nothing preliminary or positive to start with. You have the 'I' to start with. You know you exist always, whereas the body does not exist always, *e.g.*, in sleep. Sleep reveals that you exist even without a body. We identify the 'I' with a body, we regard the Self as having a body, and as having limits, and hence all our trouble. All that we have to do is to give up identifying our Self with the body, with forms and limits, and then we shall know ourselves as the Self that we always are."

The visitor further asked, "May I believe that there is nothing more to be known now, so far as the technique of *sadhana* is concerned, than that which has been written in your books from time to time? This question arises from the fact that, in all other systems of *sadhana*, the *sadguru* unfolds some secret technique of meditation to his disciple at the time of initiation or *diksha*, as it is called."

Bhagavan: There is nothing more to be known than what you find in books. No secret technique. It is all an open secret, in this system.

Visitor: If, even after God-realisation, one has to pay attention to his bodily needs such as hunger, sleep, rest, heat and cold, of what use is Self-realisation? This state is something, which cannot be called completeness.

Bhagavan: What will be the state after Self-realisation? Why should you bother about it now? Attain Self-realisation, and then see for yourself. But why go to the state of Self-realisation? Even now, are you without Self? And are all these things, eating, sleeping, etc., without or apart from the Self?

17-10-46

This morning Dr. Roy showed before Bhagavan how he writes, reads, reads his watch, etc. I have learnt he is a M. A., B. L., of Calcutta University and has afterwards become a Ph. D. of an American University. In the afternoon, when I entered the hall about 3 P.M., Dr. Roy was asking Bhagavan, "In the case of persons who are not capable of long meditation, will it not be enough if they engage themselves in doing good to others?" Bhagavan replied "Yes, it will do. The idea of good will be at their heart. That is enough. Good, God, Love, are all the same thing. If the person keeps continuously thinking of anyone of these, it will be enough. All meditation is for the purpose of keeping out all other thoughts." After some pause, Bhagavan said, "When one realises the truth and knows that there is neither the seer nor the seen, but only the Self that transcends both, that the Self alone is the screen or the substratum on which the shadow both of the ego and all that it sees, come and go, the feeling that one has not got eyesight, and that therefore one misses the sight of various things, will vanish. The realised being, though he has normal eyesight, does not see all these things." (He sees only the Self and nothing but the Self).

After further discussion with Dr. Roy, Bhagavan added, "There is nothing wrong in seeing anything, this body or the world. The mistake lies in thinking you are the body. There is no harm in thinking the body is in you. The body, world, all must be in the Self; or rather nothing can exist apart from the Self, as no pictures can be seen without the screen on which the shadows can be cast." In answer to a question as to what is the best way to the goal, Bhagavan said, "There is no goal to be reached. There is nothing to be attained. You are the Self. You exist always. Nothing more can be predicated of the Self than that it exists. Seeing

God or the Self is only being the Self or yourself. Seeing is being. You, being the Self, want to know how to attain the Self. It is something like a man being at Ramanasramam asking how many ways are there to reach Ramanasramam and which is the best way for him. All that is required of you is to give up the thought that you are this body and to give up all thoughts of the external things or the not-Self. As often as the mind goes out towards outward objects, prevent it and fix it in the Self or 'I'. That is all the effort required on your part. The different methods prescribed by different thinkers are all agreed on this. The *advaita*, *dvaita*, *visishtadvaita* schools and other schools all agree that the mind must give up thinking of external things and must think of the Self, or God as they may call it. That is called meditation. But meditation being our nature, you will find when you realise the Self that what was once the means is now the goal, that while once you had to make an effort, now you cannot get away from the Self even if you want."

24-11-46

Mrs. Chenoy (from Bombay) asked Bhagavan this evening (after reading *Who am I?*) whether it was the proper thing to do if she asked herself "Who am I?" and told herself she was not this body but a spirit, a spark from the divine flame. Bhagavan first said, "Yes, you might do that or whatever appeals to you. It will come right in the end." But, after a little while, he told her : "There is a stage in the beginning, when you identify yourself with the body, when you are still having the body-consciousness. At that stage, you have the feeling you are different from the reality or God, and then it is, you think of yourself as a devotee of God or as a servant or lover of God. This is the first stage. The second stage is when you think of yourself as a spark of the divine fire or a ray from the divine Sun. Even then there is still that sense of difference and the body-consciousness. The third stage will come when all such difference ceases to exist, and you realise that the Self alone exists. There is an 'I' which comes and goes, and another 'I' which always exists and abides. So long as the first 'I' exists, the body-consciousness and the sense of diversity or *bheda buddhi* will persist. Only when that 'I' dies, the reality will reveal itself. For instance, in sleep, the first 'I' does not exist. You are not then conscious of a body or the world. Only when that 'I' again comes up, as soon as you get out of sleep, do you become conscious of the body and this world. But in sleep you alone existed. For, when you wake up, you are able to say 'I slept soundly.' You, that wake up and say so, are the same that existed during sleep. You don't say that the 'I' which persisted during sleep was a different 'I' from the 'I' present in the waking state. That 'I' which persists always and does not come and go is the reality. The other 'I' which disappears in sleep is not real. One should try and realise in the waking state that state which unconsciously everyone

attains in sleep, the state where the small 'I' disappears and the real 'I' alone is." At this stage, Mrs. C. Asked, "But how is it to be done?" Bhagavan replied, "By enquiring from whence and how does this small 'I' arise. The root of all *bheda buddhi* is this 'I'. It is at the root of all thoughts. If you enquire wherefrom it arises, it disappears."

Mrs. C. then asked, "Am I not then to say (in answer to my own question 'Who am I?') 'I am not this body but a spirit etc.?' " Bhagavan then said, "No. The enquiry 'Who am I?' means really the enquiry within oneself as to wherefrom within the body the 'I'-thought arises. If you concentrate your attention on such an enquiry, the 'I'-thought being the root of all other thoughts, all thoughts will be destroyed and then the Self or the Big 'I' alone will remain as ever. You do not get anything new, or reach somewhere where you were not before. When all other thoughts which were hiding the Self are removed, the Self shines by itself."

Mrs. C. then referred to the portion in the book (*Who am I?*) where it is said, "Even if you keep on saying 'I, I', it will take you to the Self or reality" and asked whether that was not the proper thing to be done. I explained, "The book says one must try and follow the enquiry method which consists in turning one's thoughts inwards and trying to find out wherefrom the 'I', which is the root of all thoughts, arises. If one finds one is not able to do it, one may simply go on repeating 'I, I', as if it were a *mantram* like 'Krishna' or 'Rama' which people use in their *japa*. The idea is to concentrate on one thought to exclude all other thoughts and then eventually even the one thought will die." On this, Mrs. C. asked me, "Will it be of any use if one simply repeats 'I, I' mechanically?" I replied, "When one uses 'I' or other words like 'Krishna', one surely has in one's own mind some idea of the God one calls by the name 'I' or anything else. When a man goes on repeating 'Rama' or 'Krishna', he can't be thinking of a tree as the meaning behind it." After all this, Bhagavan said, "Now you consider you are making an effort and uttering 'I, I' or other *mantrams* and making meditation. But when you reach the final stage, meditation will go on without any effort on your part. You can't get away from it or stop it, for meditation, *japa*, or whatever else you call it, is your real nature."