



13. ALAN JACOBS

ALAN JACOBS was born in 1929 in London. He was a wartime evacuee to the United States at the age of 10, and lived in New York State, attending the Irving School in Tarrytown. He returned to England in 1943 and went to Malvern College, and then served in the Royal Army Education Corps for National Service. He entered the family business and was trained in Management Studies and Clothing Manufacture. He was later appointed the Production Director of Willerby Tailoring. When this family business was sold he became an art dealer and established a reputation as a specialist in Dutch and Flemish 17thC. Paintings, ending up with a Gallery in Duke Street St James's. On retirement he attended poetry workshops at Morley College and the City Literary Institute where he was taught Prosody by the Poets Christopher Reid and the late Julia Casterton. He later became a Professional Life Coach (Coaching Academy), A Neuro Linguistic Programme Practitioner and then an author.

From an early age he has been interested in religion and mysticism. He commenced a personal search for truth, and studied comparative religion. He then entered the Gurdjieff Society in 1957 and remained there until the early seventies. He then met Jiddu Krishnamurti, and studied his teachings until 1979. Next, he discovered Ramana Maharshi and became familiar with his extensive literature and spiritual practice. He is currently President of the Ramana Maharshi Foundation UK.

His first book was Dutch And Flemish 17th C. Painters, A Collectors Guide for McGraw Hill. He then compiled an Anthology the 'Element Book of Mystical Verse' for Element Books, now republished as 'Poetry For The Spirit', by Watkins Publishing and Barnes & Noble. As a Poet he has versified, for 'O' Books both the 'Bhagavad Gita', 'The Principal Upanishads', and 'The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius', as well as compiling a major prose anthology for them entitled 'The Ocean Of Wisdom'. For Watkins Publishing he edited 'Ramana Shankara And The Forty Verses', versified the 'Essential Gnostic Gospels' and compiled an Anthology, the 'Wisdom of Ramesh Balsekar'. XLibris have published a volume of his own poetry, 'Myrobalan of The Magi' and a History of London from a spiritual perspective entitled 'Mysterious London. He recently completed the anthologies 'The Wisdom The Native American Indians', 'Plato's Republic An Abridgement and Modernisation' and 'When Jesus Lived in India' all for Watkins Publishing.

His Poetry collection of Mastering Music Walks The Sunlit Sea contains only sonnets and roundels. He has just had his '108 Sonnets for Awakening' published by O Books. He has been regularly published by the Poetry Magazine 'Reflections', and compiled an anthology of their Poets for the Rowan Press. He has three children, Laura Jacobs Bsc.B.A.PhD, a specialist in Milton Studies, Dr.Keith Jacobs M.A.,PhD, Asst.Prof.of Sociology at the University of Tasmania, Graham Jacobs, A Senior Partner at St.James' Place, Investment Advisors, and six grandchildren. He now lives in London, and annually visits India.

INTERVIEW

Q: Ramana Maharshi seems to have been a major influence over many of these so called “neo advaita teachers” today. This list of teachers is too long to mention but his influence at this point seems

to be worldwide and growing. Teachers often use pictures or writings of his and also claim lineage to him in some form. Do you know if he had a lineage he passed on to a western student like Paul Brunton for example?

Alan Jacobs: Ramana Maharshi did not pass down any lineage in a formal sense to any devotee during his lifetime. Those that were Self Realised by him and who taught later, might possibly say after his death, that they were from his lineage. No lineage was ever passed down to any western student like Paul Brunton or anyone else. Neo Advaita Teachers who are self appointed, and use his picture to suggest they are in his lineage, do so for the prestige it brings them.

Q: I was also wondering if he gave any of these seekers such as Papaji any kind of formal instruction or permission, license of some kind to trade atma or the vichara of atma. Or anything in relation to the traditional teachings of Vedanta?

Alan Jacobs: He did not give any Devotees formal permission to teach even after their Self Realisation. Nevertheless as Jnanis, devotees such as Papaji, Swami Ramdas and Robert Adams, who were Self Realised by him, were entitled to teach in their own right. Naturally they would if asked, attribute their Self Realisation to Ramana Maharshi.

Q: Are there any documented materials concerning his view on dana, giving away the teachings freely, or charging money for teachings of non duality?

Alan Jacobs: There is no document of this kind ever issued by him. He never charged for his Teachings, nor did he ever handle money, after he left home at the age of 16 to his death at 72. His Ashram's financial affairs were solely looked after by the Manager, his brother, Chinaswami. to the Ashram were however, accepted from Devotees.

Q: Did he or someone else handle the money or donations at his ashram?

Alan Jacobs: Yes, the Manager only, his elder brother, Chinaswami only.

Q: Some non dual teachers claim that Ramana Maharshi came to them in a dream, or vision and interpreted as a suggestion that they teach. In effect giving them some kind of metaphysical transmission or permission and direct lineage to charge. If this is the case, is this metaphysical transmission a legitimate form of lineage or permission to teach or trade for the teachings of inquiring about this atma?

Alan Jacobs: This claim might be made by a non dual teacher but there is no actual verification of it ever happening, and it might be claimed just for its prestige.

Q: In your view, is there any time when it's dharmic to charge a fee for the teachings of atma vichara, by Skpye video, facebook, webinar, in person, meeting or a satsang?

Alan Jacobs: From Ramana Maharshi's point of view it would never be dharmic to charge a fee for teaching Self Enquiry by any means. A Self Realised Teacher could, however, accept voluntary donations if offered by devotees.

Q: What is the difference with a "voluntary donation" or with charging a conditional prepaid donation? I ask this because some will ask for a prepaid "donation" by pal pal of \$125 per hour. However without the "donation" being prepaid, there appears to be no atma vichara or satsang instruction because you can't schedule an appointment without prepaying.

Please see example below.

"Private Satsang Appointments with Spiritual Teacher Mr or Mrs. so and so is available for in person, phone or Skype appointments. To make an appointment, please pre-pay by credit card by clicking the PayPal donation button below. PayPal will notify us of your payment. After payment, please click EMAIL to notify us when you wish to schedule your appointment

If you require paying by check, please click EMAIL to request the mailing address. We accept personal checks drawn on a US bank or

money orders in USD. Please mail two weeks prior to your appointment. When you click the "Make a Donation" button, you will be asked to enter the amount of the donation. One Hour Session \$125 – Prepaid (If you are registered for an upcoming Weekend Satsang Retreat, the donation is \$75.00).

Three One hour Sessions at \$115 or \$345 Total – Prepaid "

Alan Jacobs: A voluntary donation is exactly what it says- a free offering of money- with no strings attached, and any amount. Attendance at a Satsangh would be free to all comers , but some may wish to give voluntary donations, others may not, depending on their own finances. Charging for Teaching is like going to any event where charges are made for whatever is going on, and is an entirely different principle. There would be no entry unless you pay the set fee. The example you give is not a voluntary donation which is never obligatory , but a fixed donation, which is compulsory if you wish to attend the event. I trust this makes the difference clear.

Q: The so called world teacher modal of J. Khrishnamuti, set setting and traveling around the globe, living quite a luxurious lifestyle and charging for talks and lectures seems to have been a majour influence for over many western teachers today.

Ramana Maharshi and J. Khrishnamurti were both from India; both studied the ancient traditions but took opposite paths in this regard? Why do you think that is?

Alan Jacobs: Very broadly, Ramana Maharshi was born into a high Brahman family and was steeped in Hindu tradition, and he remained always faithful to that great religion.

J. Krishnamurti was found on a beach as a young boy by members of Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society which consisted mainly of westerners like Leadbetter , Annie Besant and others. He was exposed to many radical ideas as a young man and eventually reacted against Hindu Tradition as a consequence.

Indian spirituality is full of diversity, so you can have many different radical shades of opinion in that vast country.

END OF INTERVIEW