

WHO AM I?

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Introduction

Jiddu Krishnamurti-

Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) was an influential philosopher, spiritual teacher, and speaker who challenged traditional beliefs and institutions. He is best known for his radical approach to self-inquiry, meditation, and the exploration of human consciousness. Krishnamurti's teachings aimed to awaken individuals to their own freedom, transformation, and the possibility of a profound shift in human consciousness. Krishnamurti was born in Madanapalle, a small town in South India. At a young age, he was discovered by the Theosophical Society, a spiritual organization that proclaimed him as the potential vehicle for the coming World Teacher or Maitreya. However, as Krishnamurti matured, he rejected the role assigned to him and dissolved the Order of the Star, an organization that had formed around him, in 1929. He renounced all forms of authority, including religious and spiritual organizations, and urged individuals to discover truth for themselves. Throughout his life, Krishnamurti traveled extensively and delivered countless public talks and dialogues, engaging in discussions with intellectuals, religious leaders, and seekers of truth. His style was characterized by a unique blend of intellectual rigor, clarity, and directness. He encouraged his audience to question their own beliefs, conditioning, and the limitations of thought in order to access a deeper level of awareness and insight. Krishnamurti's teachings focused on the importance of self-awareness, radical self-inquiry, and the dissolution of psychological conditioning. He emphasized the need to observe the mind without judgment or identification, enabling a direct perception of truth beyond the influence of personal bias and social conditioning. Krishnamurti challenged his listeners to look deeply into their own consciousness, explore the nature of thought, fear, desire, and the ego, and awaken to a state of profound transformation and inner freedom. Krishnamurti's teachings spanned a wide range of topics, including the nature of truth, the pursuit of knowledge, the exploration of the self, meditation, education, and the relationship between individuals and society. He emphasized the importance of psychological and spiritual revolution as the basis for creating a harmonious and compassionate world. Krishnamurti authored numerous books that captured the essence of his teachings, including "Freedom from the Known," "The First and Last Freedom," and "The Awakening of Intelligence." These writings continue to inspire individuals from diverse backgrounds and have had a profound impact on the fields of philosophy, psychology, and spirituality. Jiddu Krishnamurti's legacy lies in his radical invitation for individuals to embark on a journey of self-discovery, free from the constraints of authority and dogma. His teachings

encourage a direct exploration of the mind, a deep questioning of one's beliefs and assumptions, and the possibility of a profound transformation in human consciousness. Krishnamurti's message resonates with those seeking a path of genuine self-discovery, freedom, and the awakening of intelligence beyond the limitations of thought.

Ramana Maharshi-

Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950) was a renowned spiritual teacher and one of the most revered sages of modern India. He is known for his profound teachings on self-inquiry and his silent transmission of spiritual awakening. Maharshi's teachings have inspired millions of people worldwide and continue to have a profound impact on seekers of truth. 6 Born as Venkataraman Iyer in Tiruchuli, a small village in South India, Ramana Maharshi had a transformative spiritual experience at the age of 16. In 1896, he spontaneously entered into a state of self-realization and had a deep realization of his true nature. This experience led him to leave his family home and embark on a spiritual quest. Maharshi traveled to the sacred mountain of Arunachala and settled in the town of Tiruvannamalai, where he spent the majority of his life in deep contemplation and meditation. He lived in relative seclusion in the sacred caves and later in the ashram called Ramanashram, which grew around him. His teachings and presence attracted devotees from various backgrounds and walks of life. Ramana Maharshi's central teaching revolved around the practice of self-inquiry or "Who am I?" In his teachings, he emphasized the importance of directing one's attention inward, questioning the nature of the self and seeking the source of the "I" thought. Through selfinquiry, Maharshi pointed to the realization of one's true nature as pure consciousness or the Self, which transcends the limitations of the body, mind, and ego. Despite his silence, Ramana Maharshi's presence and teachings had a transformative impact on those who sought his guidance. Many experienced spiritual awakening or a shift in consciousness in his presence. Maharshi's teachings continue to inspire spiritual seekers and his ashram, Sri Ramana Ashram, remains a place of pilgrimage and study. Ramana Maharshi left behind a significant body of teachings, including his seminal work "Upadesa Saram" (The Essence of Instruction) and "Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi," which are collections of his conversations with devotees. His teachings emphasize the direct path to self-realization, the power of self-inquiry, and the transcendence of the ego to discover one's true nature. 7 Maharshi's teachings continue to resonate with those on a spiritual quest, inviting individuals to discover the eternal truth within themselves.

Nisargadatta Maharaj-

Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897-1981), born as Maruti Shivrampant Kambli, was a revered Indian spiritual teacher and master of Advaita Vedanta, a non-dualistic philosophy emphasizing the unity of all existence. Maharaj's teachings have had a profound impact on seekers of truth worldwide, and his book "I Am That" has become a spiritual classic. Born in a small village in Maharashtra, India, Nisargadatta Maharaj led a humble life as a shopkeeper. In 1951, at the age of 54, he experienced a spontaneous and profound spiritual awakening. Following his awakening, Maharaj renounced his worldly life and dedicated himself to the path of self-realization and guiding others towards spiritual liberation. Maharaj's teaching method was simple and direct. He emphasized self-inquiry as the primary means to realize one's true nature. His core teaching revolved around the inquiry into the sense of "I am," encouraging his followers to investigate the source and nature of their individual identity. Maharaj pointed to the timeless awareness that underlies all experiences and forms, beyond the limitations of body, mind, and ego. Nisargadatta Maharaj's teachings were characterized by their clarity, simplicity, and uncompromising nature. He emphasized the need to transcend concepts and beliefs, inviting his disciples to go beyond words and directly experience the truth of their own being. Maharaj would often challenge his students to question their assumptions, beliefs, and identification with transient phenomena, guiding them towards the recognition of their essential nature as pure consciousness. Though Maharaj did not establish any formal organization or ashram, he welcomed sincere seekers into his tiny apartment in Mumbai, where he offered guidance and support. His teachings attracted people from all walks of life, including spiritual seekers, philosophers, scientists, and ordinary individuals seeking clarity and liberation. The profound impact of Nisargadatta Maharaj's teachings can be felt through the compilation of his dialogues and teachings, primarily documented in the book "I Am That." In this book, Maharaj addresses a wide range of topics, including self-realization, the nature of consciousness, the illusion of individuality, the role of desire and attachment, and the nature of suffering and liberation. Nisargadatta Maharaj's teachings continue to resonate with truthseekers around the world, offering profound insights into the nature of reality and the possibility of transcending the limitations of the personal self. His uncompromising approach, emphasis on direct experience, and invitation to realize the timeless essence within oneself make him a revered figure in the realm of spiritual awakening and self-realization.

Who am I?

J krishnmurti -

Public Question & Answer 1 in Colombo, 12 November 1980

I am a human being, not a label. I am a human being who is looking for truth, who wants to live peacefully, justly, with right behaviour. One must have freedom because we are prisoners psychologically.

Public Discussion 1, Saanen, 3 August 1966

When I am confused, what do I do? I look at myself. Who is the entity that is looking at myself? He is part of the confusion. Therefore why don't I stop looking at myself? When I am lost in a jungle, what do I do? I don't go around like a squirrel or a monkey all over the place. I stop. I take stock of where I am. Psychologically, we are afraid, confused and all the rest of it, and being incapable of resolving it, not knowing what to do with it, we invent an idea. But you cannot understand the confusion if you have an idea. Therefore drop the idea. Drop it. First drop the idea, the ideal, the purpose, and be sure that you have dropped it completely so that it doesn't interfere and come back in another way. This is what I mean by stopping.

Students Discussion 3 in Gstaad, 29 July 1966

I am terribly serious because I want to find out what to do. If anybody tells me what to do, they are telling me out of their confusion – it doesn't matter who it is. So I don't ask anybody. Now I have stopped, and I'm not asking your opinion. I want to know facts, only facts.

Students Discussion 2 in Schönried, 10 July 1969

You are living on words. When I say, 'I am a Brahmin,' which is a conclusion, I have an idea what a Brahmin is, I am born in that class, and I am that. I live on words: a memory of what Brahmin should be, the tradition, the conditioning, which are all words, words, words. I am frightened of being without the word because, in the word, I have found security. Being a 'Catholic', saying, 'I am not a Catholic,' I am in tremendous danger of losing my job, being looked down upon as an atheist, and all the rest of it. So I have found something

extraordinary: my whole life of conflict is based on words. I am – whatever I am – words and memories: dead. Words are dead, and memories are dead. So I am dead, living on dead things. I live on conclusions.

Public Talk 5 in Saanen, 16 July 1963

Fear is you who are observing it. Therefore there is no question of getting rid of fear. When you try to get rid of fear, you develop resistance called courage, which becomes an effort, and you are caught again in fear

NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ

QUESTION : We are advised to worship Reality personified as God, or as the Perfect Man. We are told not to attempt the worship of the Absolute, as it is much too difficult for a brain-centred consciousness.

Nisargadatta: Truth is simple and open to all. Why do you complicate? Truth is loving and lovable. It includes all, accepts all, purifies all. It is untruth that is difficult and a source of trouble. It always wants, expects, demands. Being false, it is empty, always in search of confirmation and reassurance. It is afraid of and avoids enquiry. It identifies itself with any support, however weak and momentary. Whatever it gets, it loses and asks for more. Therefore put no faith in the conscious. Nothing you can see, feel, or think is so. Even sin and virtue, merit and demerit are not what they appear. Usually the bad and the good are a matter of convention and custom and are shunned or welcomed, according to how the words are used.

Question: Are there not good desires and bad, high desires and low?

Nisargadatta: All desires are bad, but some are worse than others. Pursue any desire, it will always give you trouble.

Question: Even the desire to be free of desire?

Nisargadatta: Why desire at all? Desiring a state of freedom from desire will not set you free. Nothing can set you free, because you are free. See your Self [Atman] with desireless clarity, that is all.

Question: It takes time to know one's Self.

Nisargadatta: How can time help you? Time is a succession of moments; each moment appears out of nothing and disappears into nothing, never to reappear. How can you build on something so fleeting?

Question: What is permanent?

Nisargadatta: Look to your Self for the permanent. Dive deep within and find what is real in you.

Question: How to look for my Self?

Nisargadatta: Whatever happens, it happens to you. What you do, the doer is in you. Find the subject of all that you are as a person.

Question: What else can I be?

Nisargadatta: Find out. Even if I tell you that you are the Witness, the silent Watcher, it will mean nothing to you, unless you find the way to your own Being.

Question: My question is: How to find the way to one's own Being?

Nisargadatta: Give up all questions except one: "Who am I?" After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you are. The "I am" is certain. The "I am this" is not. Struggle to find out what you are in reality.

Question: I am doing nothing else for the last 60 years.

Nisargadatta: What is wrong with striving? Why look for results? Striving itself is your real nature.

Question: Striving is painful.

Nisargadatta: You make it so by seeking results. Strive without seeking, struggle without greed.

Question: Why has God made me as I am?

Nisargadatta: Which God are you talking about? What is God? Is he not the very light by which you ask the question? "I am" itself is God. The seeking itself is God. In seeking you discover that you are neither the body nor mind, and the love of the Self in you is for the Self in all. The two are one. The consciousness in you and the consciousness in me, apparently two, really one, seek unity and that is love.

Question: How am I to find that love?

Nisargadatta: What do you love now? The "I am". Give your heart and mind to it, think of nothing else. This, when effortless and natural, is the highest state. In it love itself is the lover and the beloved.

Question: Everybody wants to live, to exist. Is it not self-love?

Nisargadatta: All desire has its source in the self [jiva]. It is all a matter of choosing the right desire.

Question: What is right and what is wrong varies with habit and custom. Standards vary with societies.

Nisargadatta: Discard all traditional standards. Leave them to the hypocrites. Only what liberates you from desire and fear and wrong ideas is good. As long as you worry about sin and virtue you will have no peace.

Question: I grant that sin and virtue are social norms. But there may be also spiritual sins and virtues. I mean by spiritual the Absolute. Is there such a thing as absolute sin or absolute virtue?

Nisargadatta: Sin and virtue refer to a person only. Without a sinful or virtuous person what is sin or virtue? At the level of the Absolute there are no persons; the ocean of pure Awareness is neither virtuous nor sinful. Sin and virtue are invariably relative.

Question: Can I do away with such unnecessary notions?

Nisargadatta: Not as long as you think yourself to be a person.

Question: By what sign shall I know that I am beyond sin and virtue?

Nisargadatta: By being free from all desire and fear, from the very idea of being a person. To nourish the ideas "I am a sinner" or "I am not a sinner" is sin. To identify oneself with the particular is all the sin there is. The impersonal is real, the personal appears and disappears. "I am" is the impersonal Being. "I am this" is the person. The person is relative and the pure Being – fundamental.

Question: Surely pure Being is not unconscious, nor is it devoid of discrimination. How can it be beyond sin and virtue? Just tell us, please, has it intelligence or not?

Nisargadatta: All these questions arise from your believing yourself to be a person. Go beyond the personal and see.

Question: What exactly do you mean when you ask me to stop being a person?

Nisargadatta: I do not ask you to stop being – that you cannot. I ask you only to stop imagining that you were born, have parents, are a body, will die and so on. Just try, make a beginning – it is not as hard as you think.

Question: To think oneself as the personal is the sin of the impersonal.

Nisargadatta: Again the personal point of view! Why do you insist on polluting the impersonal with your ideas of sin and virtue? It just does not apply. The impersonal cannot be described in terms of good and bad. It is Being – Wisdom – Love – all absolute. Where is the scope for sin there? And virtue is only the opposite of sin.

Question: We talk of divine virtue.

Nisargadatta: True virtue is divine nature [swarupa]. What you are really is your virtue. But the opposite of sin which you call virtue is only obedience born out of fear.

Question: Then why all effort at being good?

Nisargadatta: It keeps you on the move. You go on and on till you find God. Then God takes you into Himself – and makes you as He is.

Question: The same action is considered natural at one point and a sin at another. What makes it sinful?

Nisargadatta: Whatever you do against your better knowledge is sin.

Question: Knowledge depends on memory.

Nisargadatta: Remembering your Self is virtue, forgetting your Self is sin. It all boils down to the mental or psychological link between the Spirit and matter. We may call the link psyche [antahkarana]. When the psyche is raw, undeveloped, quite primitive, it is subject to gross illusions. As it grows in breadth and sensitivity, it becomes a perfect link between pure matter and pure Spirit and gives meaning to matter and expression to Spirit.

There is the material world [mahadakash] and the spiritual [paramakash]. Between lies the universal mind [chidakash] which is also the universal heart [premakash]. It is wise love that makes the two one.

Question: Some people are stupid, some are intelligent. The difference is in their psyche. The ripe ones had more experience behind them. Just like a child grows by eating and drinking, sleeping and playing, so is man's psyche shaped by all he thinks and feels and does, until it is perfect enough to serve as a bridge between the Spirit and the body. As a bridge permits the traffic between the banks, so does the psyche bring together the Source and its expression.

Nisargadatta: Call it love. The bridge is love.

Question: Ultimately all is experience. Whatever we think, feel, do is experience. Behind it is the experiencer. So all we know consists of these two, the experiencer and the experience. But the two are really one – the experiencer alone is the experience. Still, the experiencer takes the experience to be outside. In the same way the Spirit and the body are one; they only appear as two.

Nisargadatta: To the Spirit there is no second.

Question: To whom then does the second appear? It seems to me that duality is an illusion induced by the imperfection of the psyche. When the psyche is perfect, duality is no longer seen.

Nisargadatta: You have said it.

Question: Still I have to repeat my very simple question: Who makes the distinction between sin and virtue?

Nisargadatta: He who has a body, sins with the body, he who has a mind, sins with the mind.

Question: Surely, the mere possession of mind and body does not compel to sin. There must be a third factor at the root of it. I come back again and again to this question of sin and virtue, because now-a-days young people keep on saying that there is no such thing as sin, that one need not be squermish and should follow the moment's desire readily. They will accept neither tradition nor authority and can be influenced only by solid and honest thought. If they refrain from certain actions, it is through fear of police rather than by conviction. Undoubtedly there is something in what they say, for we can see how our values change from place to place and time to time. For instance, killing in war is great virtue today and may be considered a horrible crime next century.

Nisargadatta: A man who moves with the earth will necessarily experience days and nights. He who stays with the sun will know no darkness. My world is not yours. As I see it, you all are on a stage performing. There is no reality about your comings and goings. And your problems are so unreal!

Question: We may be sleep-walkers, or subject to nightmares. Is there nothing you can do?

Nisargadatta: I am doing: I did enter your dreamlike state to tell you, "Stop hurting yourself and others, stop suffering, wake up."

Question: Why then don't we wake up?

Nisargadatta: You will. I shall not be thwarted. It may take some time. When you shall begin to question your dream, awakening will be not far away.

Ramana Maharshi

1. Who am I?

The gross body which is composed of the seven humours (dhatus), I am not; the five cognitive sense organs, viz., the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell, which apprehend their respective objects, viz. sound, touch, colour, taste and odour, I am not; the five cognitive sense organs, viz., the organs of speech, locomotion, grasping, excretion and procreation, which have as their respective functions, speaking, moving, grasping, excreting and enjoying, I am not; the five vital airs, prana, etc., which perform respectively the five functions of in-breathing, etc., I am not; even the mind which thinks, I am not; the nescience too, which is endowed only with the residual impressions of objects and in which there are no objects and no functionings, I am not.

2. If I am none of these, then who am I?

After negating all of the above mentioned as ‘not this’, ‘not this’, that Awareness which alone remains – that I am.

3. What is the nature of Awareness?

The nature of Awareness is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

4. When will the realization of the Self be gained?

When the world which is what-is-seen has been removed, there will be realization of the Self which is the seer.

5. Will there not be realization of the Self even while the world is there (taken as real)?

There will not be.

6. Why?

The seer and the object seen are like the rope and the snake. Just as the knowledge of the rope which is the substratum will not arise unless the false knowledge of the illusory serpent goes, so the realization of the Self which is the substratum will not be gained unless the belief that the world is real is removed.

7. When will the world which is the object seen be removed?

When the mind, which is the cause of all cognition and of all actions, becomes quiescent, the world will disappear.

8. What is the nature of the mind?

What is called 'mind' is a wondrous power residing in the Self. It causes all thoughts to arise. Apart from thoughts, there is no such thing as mind.

Therefore, thought is the nature of mind. Apart from thoughts, there is no independent entity called the world. In deep sleep there are no thoughts, and there is no world. In the states of waking and dream, there are thoughts, and there is a world also. Just as the spider emits the thread (of the web) out of itself and again withdraws it into itself, likewise the mind projects the world out of itself and again resolves it into itself. When the mind comes out of the Self, the world appears. Therefore, when the world appears (to be real), the Self does not appear; and when the Self appears (shines) the world does not appear. When one persistently inquires into the nature of the mind, the mind will end leaving the Self (as the residue). What is referred to as the Self is the Atman. The mind always exists only in dependence on something gross; it cannot stay alone. It is the mind that is called the subtle body or the soul (jiva).

9. What is the path of inquiry for understanding the nature of the mind?

That which rises as 'I' in this body is the mind. If one inquires as to where in the 18 body the thought 'I' rises first, one would discover that it rises in the heart. That is the place of the mind's origin. Even if one thinks constantly 'I-I', one will be led to that place. Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the 'I'-thought is the first. It is only after the rise of this that the other thoughts arise. It is after the appearance of the first personal pronoun that the second and third personal pronouns appear; without the first personal pronoun there will not be the second and third.

10. How will the mind become quiescent? By the inquiry 'Who am I?'.

The thought 'Who am I?' will destroy all other thoughts, and like the stick used for stirring the burning pyre, it will itself in the end get destroyed. Then, there will arise Self-realization.

11. What is the means for constantly holding on to the thought 'Who am I?'

When other thoughts arise, one should not pursue them, but should inquire: 'To whom do they arise?' It does not matter how many thoughts arise. As each thought arises, one should inquire with diligence, 'To whom has this thought arisen?'. The answer that would emerge would be 'to me'. Thereupon if one inquires 'Who am I?', the mind will go back to its source; and the thought that arose will become quiescent. With repeated practice in this manner, the mind will develop the skill to stay in its source. When the mind that is subtle goes out through the brain and the sense-organs, the gross names and forms appear; when it stays in the heart, the names and forms disappear. Not letting the mind

go out, but retaining it in the Heart is what is called 'inwardness' (antarmukha). Letting the mind go out of the Heart is known as 'externalisation' (bahirmukha). Thus, when the mind stays in the Heart, the 'I' which is the source of all thoughts will go, and the Self which ever exists will shine. Whatever one does, one should do without the egoity 'I'. If one acts in that way, all will appear as of the nature of Siva (God).

12. Are there no other means for making the mind quiescent?

Other than inquiry, there are no adequate means. If through other means it is sought to control the mind, the mind will appear to be controlled, but will again go forth. Through the control of breath also, the mind will become quiescent; but it will be quiescent only so long as the breath remains controlled, and when the breath resumes the mind also will again start moving and will wander as impelled by residual impressions. The source is the same for both mind and breath. Thought, indeed, is the nature of the mind. The thought 'I' is the first thought of the mind; and that is egoity. It is from that whence egoity originates that breath also originates. Therefore, when the mind becomes quiescent, the breath is controlled, and when the breath is controlled the mind becomes quiescent. But in deep sleep, although the mind becomes quiescent, the breath does not stop. This is because of the will of God, so that the body may be preserved and other people may not be under the impression that it is dead. In the state of waking and in samadhi, when the mind becomes quiescent the breath is controlled. Breath is the gross form of mind. Till the time of death, the mind keeps breath in the body; and when the body dies, the mind takes the breath along with it. Therefore, the exercise of breath control is only an aid for rendering the mind quiescent (manonigraha); it will not destroy the mind (manonasa). Like the practice of breath control, meditation on the forms of God, repetition of mantras, restriction on food, etc., are but aids for rendering the mind quiescent. Through meditation on the forms of God and through repetition of mantras, the mind becomes one-pointed. The mind will always be wandering. Just as when a chain is given to an elephant to hold in its trunk it will go along grasping the chain and nothing else, so also when the mind is occupied with a name or form it will grasp that alone. When the mind expands in the form of countless thoughts, each thought becomes weak; but as thoughts get resolved the mind becomes one-pointed and strong; for such a mind Self-inquiry will become easy. Of all the restrictive rules, that relating to the taking of sattvic food in moderate quantities is the best; by observing this rule, the sattvic quality of mind will increase, and that will be helpful to Self-inquiry.

13. The residual impressions (thoughts) of objects appear unending like the waves of an ocean. When will all of them get destroyed?

As the meditation on the Self rises higher and higher, the thoughts will get destroyed.

14. Is it possible for the residual impressions of objects that come from beginningless time, as it were, to be resolved, and for one to remain as the pure Self ?

Without yielding to the doubt ‘Is it possible, or not?’, one should persistently hold on to the meditation on the Self. Even if one be a great sinner, one should not worry and weep ‘O! I am a sinner, how can I be saved?’ One should completely renounce the thought ‘I am a sinner’ and concentrate keenly on meditation on the Self; then, one would surely succeed. There are not two minds – one good and the other evil; the mind is only one. It is the residual impressions that are of two kinds – auspicious and inauspicious. When the mind is under the influence of auspicious impressions it is called good; and when it is under the influence of inauspicious impressions it is regarded as evil. The mind should not be allowed to wander towards worldly objects and what concerns other people. However bad other people may be, one should bear no hatred for them. Both desire and hatred should be eschewed. All that one gives to others one gives to one’s self. If this truth is understood who will not give to others? When one’s self arises all arises; when one’s self becomes quiescent all becomes quiescent. To the extent we behave with humility, to that extent there will result good. If the mind is rendered quiescent, one may live anywhere.

15. How long should inquiry be practised?

As long as there are impressions of objects in the mind, so long the inquiry ‘Who am I?’ is required. As thoughts arise they should be destroyed then and there in the very place of their origin, through inquiry. If one resorts to contemplation of the Self uninterruptedly, until the Self is gained, that alone would do. As long as there are enemies within the fortress, they will continue to sally forth; if they are destroyed as they emerge, the fortress will fall into our hands.

16. What is the nature of the Self?

What exists in truth is the Self alone. The world, the individual soul and God are appearances in it, like silver in mother-of pearl; these three appear at the same time and disappear at the same time. The Self is that where there is absolutely no ‘I’-thought. That is called ‘Silence’. The Self itself is the world; the Self itself is ‘I’; the Self itself is God; all is Siva, the Self.

17. Is not everything the work of God?

Without desire, resolve, or effort, the sun rises; and in its mere presence, the sun stone emits fire, the lotus blooms, water evaporates, people perform their various functions and then rest. Just as in the presence of the magnet the needle moves, it is by virtue of the mere presence of God that the souls governed by the three (cosmic) functions or the fivefold divine activity perform their actions and then rest, in accordance with their respective karmas. God has no resolve; no karma attaches itself to Him. That is like worldly actions not affecting the sun, or like the merits and demerits of the other four elements not affecting all-pervading space.

18. Of the devotees, who is the greatest?

He who gives himself up to the Self that is God is the most excellent devotee. Giving one's self up to God means remaining constantly in the Self without giving room for the rise of any thoughts other than that of the Self. Whatever burdens are thrown on God, He bears them. Since the supreme power of God makes all things move, why should we, without submitting ourselves to it, constantly worry ourselves with thoughts as to what should be done and how, and what should not be done and how not? We know that the train carries all loads, so after getting on it why should we carry our small luggage on our head to our discomfort, instead of putting it down in the train and feeling at ease?

19. What is non-attachment?

As thoughts arise, destroying them utterly without any residue in the very place of their origin is non-attachment. Just as the pearl-diver ties a stone to his waist, sinks to the bottom of the sea and there takes the pearls, so each one of us should be endowed with non-attachment, dive within oneself and obtain the Self-Pearl.

20. Is it not possible for God and the Guru to effect the liberation of a soul?

God and the Guru will only show the way to liberation; they will not by themselves take the soul to the state of liberation. In truth, God and the Guru are not different. Just as the prey which has fallen into the jaws of a tiger has no escape, so those who have come within the ambit of the Guru's gracious look will be saved by the Guru and will not get lost; yet, each one should, by his own effort pursue the path shown by God or Guru and gain liberation. One can know oneself only with one's own eye of knowledge, and not with somebody else's. Does he who is Rama require the help of a mirror to know that he is Rama?

21. Is it necessary for one who longs for liberation to inquire into the nature of categories (tattvas)?

Just as one who wants to throw away garbage has no need to analyse it and see what it is, so one who wants to know the Self has no need to count the number of categories or inquire into their characteristics; what he has to do is to reject altogether the categories that hide the Self. The world should be considered like a dream.

22. Is there no difference between waking and dream?

Waking is long and dream short; other than this there is no difference. Just as waking happenings seem real while awake, so do those in a dream while dreaming. In 34 dream the mind takes on another body. In both waking and dream states thoughts, names and forms occur simultaneously.

23. Is it any use reading books for those who long for liberation?

All the texts say that in order to gain liberation one should render the mind quiescent; therefore their conclusive teaching is that the mind should be rendered quiescent; once this has been understood there is no need for endless reading. In order to quieten the mind one has only to inquire within oneself what one's Self is; how could this search be done in books? One should know one's Self with one's own eye of wisdom. The Self is within the five sheaths; but books are outside them. Since the Self has to be inquired into by discarding the five sheaths, it is futile to search for it in books. There will come a time when one will have to forget all that one has learned.

24. What is happiness?

Happiness is the very nature of the Self; happiness and the Self are not different. There is no happiness in any object of the world. We imagine through our ignorance that we derive happiness from objects. When the mind goes out, it experiences misery. In truth, when its desires are fulfilled, it returns to its own place and enjoys the happiness that is the Self. Similarly, in the states of sleep, samadhi and fainting, and when the object desired is obtained or the object disliked is removed, the mind becomes inward-turned, and enjoys pure Self-Happiness. Thus the mind moves without rest alternately going out of the Self and returning to it. Under the tree the shade is pleasant; out in the open the heat is scorching. A person who has been going about in the sun feels cool when he reaches the shade. Someone who keeps on going from the shade into the sun and then back into the shade is a fool. A wise man stays permanently in the shade. Similarly, the mind of the one who knows the truth does not leave Brahman. The mind of the ignorant, on the contrary, revolves in the world,

feeling miserable, and for a little time returns to Brahman to experience happiness. In fact, what is called the world is only thought. When the world disappears, i.e., when there is no thought, the mind experiences happiness; and when the world appears, it goes through misery.

25. What is wisdom-insight (jnana drishti)?

Remaining quiet is what is called wisdom-insight. To remain quiet is to resolve the mind in the Self. Telepathy, knowing past, present and future happenings and clairvoyance do not constitute wisdom-insight.

26. What is the relation between desirelessness and wisdom?

Desirelessness is wisdom. The two are not different; they are the same. Desirelessness is refraining from turning the mind towards any object. Wisdom means the appearance of no object. In other words, not seeking what is other than the Self is detachment or desirelessness; not leaving the Self is wisdom.

27. What is the difference between inquiry and meditation?

Inquiry consists in retaining the mind in the Self. Meditation consists in thinking that one's self is Brahman, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

28. What is liberation?

Inquiring into the nature of one's self that is in bondage, and realising one's true nature is liberation.