

# The Various Texts of 'Who am I?' — 1

By Michael James

## Introduction

Between 1923 and 1936 at least five different texts of the work *Nan Yar? (Who am I?)* appeared in print in Tamil. Of these, one was edited by Sri Bhagavan Himself, three were edited by Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai, and one was edited by other devotees. In addition to these five printed texts, in the notebooks of Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai we find a number of other texts or drafts edited by him which were probably never printed. Of these, three texts (two drafts in Tamil and one draft in English) are of special interest, both because they help to give us an insight into how the various different texts evolved and took shape, and also because each one contains some useful and significant sayings or wordings of Sri Bhagavan which are not found in the presently available printed texts.

Therefore, if it is the Will of Sri Bhagavan, I would like to contribute a series of articles in the forthcoming issues of *The Mountain Path* in which I will give English translations of each of these texts and also offer a comparative study made of one text with another, thereby attempting to highlight all the points of variation or of any other special interest. For convenience of reference, I have allotted a letter as a label to each text, following an order which seems to be the most probable chronological order in which the texts were edited, and throughout this series of articles I shall be referring to each text by the letter thus allotted:

**Text A:** The earliest available text, edited by Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai and corrected by Sri Bhagavan sometime before 6.1.1920, and containing 13 questions and answers, which was subsequently printed at least twice, as an appendix to the 3rd edition (1931) and 4th edition (1946) of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*.

**Texts AS:** A manuscript dated 30.12.22 and

31.12.22 found in one of Sri Pillai's notebooks containing 21 (+2) points which are not included in text A but of which most are found in the later texts of *Nan Yar?* and which may therefore be regarded as a supplement to text A.

**Text B:** A text containing 27 questions and answers (the first 12 of which are identical to the first 12 of text A) which was printed as an appendix to the first edition (1923) of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*.

**Text C:** manuscript draft in English, various copies of which are found in Sri Pillai's notebooks, and which contains 23 questions and answers and 14 stray sayings of Sri Bhagavan.

**Text D:** A manuscript draft dated 21.2.24 found in one of Sri Pillai's notebooks containing 25 (+1) questions and answers and 15 stray sayings of Sri Bhagavan.

**Text E:** A very important text containing 30 questions and answers and 11 stray sayings of Sri Bhagavan, which was printed probably three or four times between the years 1924 and 1936, and which is the most complete record available in print of the teachings received by Sri Pillai from Sri Bhagavan.

**Text F:** The essay version edited by Sri Bhagavan Himself (upon the basis of the material available in text E), which was first printed in a booklet entitled *Upadesa Mozhigal* in the year 1927 or 1928, which was later included in the first edition (1931) and all the subsequent editions of *Sri Ramana Nutrirattu* (The Collected Works of Sri Bhagavan, in Tamil), and a facsimile of which in Sri Bhagavan's own handwriting was reproduced on pp. 44-47 of the June 1993 issue of *The Mountain path*.

**Text G:** The version containing 28 questions and answers, which was edited by other devotees in the mid-1930's, based upon the structure

of the earlier text E but incorporating into that structure many of the improvements and refinements made by Sri Bhagavan while editing text F, and which has been printed at least fourteen times (the 5th to 18th editions of the *Nan Yar?* booklet) between 1936 and the present day.

In the next issue of *The Mountain path* I will take up text A as the first subject of our study, but before proceeding to do so I will first give here an English rendering of lines 37 to 73 of *Anugraha Ahaval*, in which Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai has given a poetic paraphrase of the most important points of *upadesa* which he received from Sri Bhagavan in the year 1902 or thereafter and which later came to form the work *Nan Yar? Anugaha Ahaval* is a poem consisting of 207 lines composed by Sri Pillai in which he narrates various experiences he had of the Grace of Sri Bhagavan both in his inner and in his outer life. This poem, which was composed sometime prior to the year 1920, was first published in 1923 along with two other poems of his, *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval* and *Sri Ramana Pada Malai*, and it has been included in all the subsequent editions of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*. The first 24 lines of this poem contain general praise of Sri Bhagavan, and in lines 25 to 36 Sri Pillai begins to narrate his own experience as follows:

While I, a mean wretch, was studying in an English college, a question arose in my ignorant mind, 'Who am I who whirl about agitated?' (25-27); though I searched and looked for an answer to this [question] in good books, and though I approached and asked You, who knew [the truth], I, a dog, did not understand deeply due to the intense impurity of my mind (28-31), and did not think of clinging to the Grace of *Pasupati* [You, O Sri Bhagavan, the Lord of all souls] (32), and [hence], revelling intoxicated in [all] the paths I came across, I underwent many miseries in the hand-mill [of mundane human life] due to past *karmas* (33-34), my mind became confused, and [finally] when, thinking to be saved by attaining Your Grace, I approached You, with tender words (35-36) [You graciously revealed the path of

enquiry (78), saying as follows].

Then in lines 37 to 73 Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai continues to summarise the teachings he received from Sri Bhagavan as follows:

**One reality (*vastu*), which abides within this fleshy body as the true meaning of the word 'I', exists as distinct [from this body], as indestructible, as *jnanamaya* [of the nature of *jnana* or pure Self-consciousness], and as abundant bliss (37-40); if you wish to know that supreme reality (41), the exalted path is only to enquire 'Then who am I?', having banished [from your mind] the attachment (*abhimana*) of thinking the body, which is not that reality, to be 'I' (42-45); when enquiring [thus], though *vasanas* [inherent tastes of the mind to attend to sense-objects] obstruct by rising and coming out without limit (46-47), just as without succumbing to fear a mighty warrior intent upon capturing a fortress, as and when they [the enemies] come incessantly kills by words the enemies who rise and surge forth from within the fortress and having [thus] destroyed that army which was coming out, enters that fortress (48-52), so if, without wanting even to the least extent to complete the thought which rises, one asks 'To whom does it appear?' [one will be reminded] 'It appears to me,' whereupon if one asks 'Who am I?', that thought will be destroyed (53-56); if in this manner one destroys all thoughts as and when they rise, finally even that [first] thought 'I [am the body]' will perish [being deprived of any other thoughts to feed upon] and the unsurpassed and unequalled supreme reality, which is called Self, alone will shine (57-60); just as a person who, wishing to obtain the pearl lying at the bottom of the ocean, has entered that [ocean], plunges and dives deep, deep into it again and again, and, even though the ocean-water obstructs and causes him much trouble, raising him up to the outer surface, he [finally] brings up [the pearl] (61-66), so when one seeks that beautiful pearl [the real Self] by scrutinizing who one is (66-67), countless crores of thoughts about outer things will obstruct**

and drag one, casting one out towards the world (68-69), and yet in spite of their casting one out [thus], if, like a simple woman who will not cease going after something she has set her heart upon, one plunges and dives, dives, dives deep within oneself, one can know oneself (69-72); that knowledge alone is the rare and precious state of liberation (73).

Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai then concludes his account of this particular phase of his experience of Sri Bhagavan's Grace by singing in lines 74 to 78 as follows:

"Not only did You [O Sri Bhagavan] bestow

Grace by impressing [the truth] upon my mind by saying thus (74), but by making all my *karanas* [the mind, intellect, senses and so on] subside by Your power as the form of mere consciousness (75-76) You also graciously revealed the path of enquiry (78) to me who was incarnated within this body (77)."<sup>1</sup>

(To be continued)

<sup>1</sup> See also the present writer's article on Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai in *The Mountain Path*, January 1988 issue, pp. 40-44 — Editor.

### Appeal

In response to the appeal we published on page 43 of our last (Aradhana) issue of *The Mountain Path*, we have received a number of useful old editions of *Nan Yar?* (*Who am I?*). We now have for our archives most of the old editions going back as far as the fifth edition (1936). Still missing, however, are the following three very important publications:

1. The first edition of *Nan Yar?*, published in 1924.
2. The fourth edition of *Nan Yar?*, published probably some time around 1934.
3. The book *Upadesa Mozhigal*, published both as a separate booklet in 1927 or 1928 and as an appendix to Iswara Swami's book, *Sri Ramana Maharshi Charitam*, published in 1928.

If any devotee can send us either an original or a xerox copy of any of the above three publications, this will help our researches tremendously and be of great benefit to all Ramana-bhaktas.

In addition, if anyone can send us an original or a xerox copy of an edition of *Nan Yar?* published prior to 1936, it will be of great help and service in making our Ashram archives more complete in regard to this most essential work of Sri Bhagavan.

— Editor

# The Various Texts of 'Who am I?' — 2

By Michael James

## Text A

In our Ashram archives there is a bundle containing the manuscripts of Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai, numbered 'TAM-29' and containing a total of 47 items, most of which are in the form of notebooks and some of which are in the form of bunches of rough papers, either loose or stitched together. For ease of reference these 47 items have been numbered as SP-1 to SP-47, but the sequence of these numbers is entirely random and bears no relation to the dates found in some of the items or to the chronological order in which they were written. These manuscripts contain various drafts of the teachings which now form the work *Nan Yar?* ("Who am I?"), besides numerous drafts and copies of Sri Pillai's songs, poems and other writings on Sri Bhagavan and His teachings (some of which have been printed and some of which have never been printed), and also many notes containing Sri Pillai's reflections on Sri Bhagavan's teachings and on various other philosophies, written both in Tamil and in English. Most of the contents of these manuscripts show clearly that the one all-absorbing interest in the life of Sri Pillai was his great longing to understand somehow or other the true answer to the question 'Who am I?'. Some of the contents are written so hastily and roughly, or have become so faded, that they are now almost illegible, whereas some other contents are fair-copies in very neat handwriting, the ink of which is still very clear and unfaded.

Of these 47 items, one of the most interesting and useful is a good-quality notebook with a hard red cover numbered SP-20. The first 54 pages of this notebook (4 unnumbered and 50 numbered pages) are a very neat fair-copy in the handwriting of Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai of the contents of his book *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*. The 3rd and 4th unnumbered pages contain the preface (*mukhavurai*) which was subsequently printed in all the editions of this

book, with just one interesting addition, namely the date (6.1.1920) and place (Idaiyanpalchori) where it was written. This date is a clear indication that the contents of the subsequent 50 pages of this notebook are all writings which were originally drafted sometime prior to 6.1.1920. Numbered pages 1 to 20 contain the poem *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*, 21 to 31 contain the poem *Anugraha Ahaval*, 32 to 41 contain the poem *Sri Ramana Pada Malai*, and 42 to 50 contain an appendix (*anubandham*) consisting of text A of *Nan Yar?*. On page 42, after the word *anubandham* Sri Pillai has added in brackets the significant words '*Maharishigal tiruttapattapadi*', which mean 'As corrected by Maharshi' and which clearly show that text A as found in these pages is a fair-copy of a draft of *Nan Yar?* which had been seen and corrected by Sri Bhagavan Himself.

Subsequently in 1923 when *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval* was first printed, in place of this text A, text B was printed<sup>1</sup>. However text B is actually almost identical to text A except that fourteen extra questions and answers have been added after answer 12 and before the last answer. Text A as such was, however, printed as the *anubandham* to both the 3rd edition (1931) and 4th edition (1946) of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*.<sup>2</sup> When the printed version of text A contained in those two editions is closely com-

<sup>1</sup> In my article on Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai in the January 1988 issue of *The Mountain Path*, I had written mistakenly on p. 41 that text A was the text included in the 1st edition (1923) of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*, because at that time I had never seen a copy of that edition and hence, based upon various references to it that I had read in *Self-Realization* (7th ed., p. 77) and elsewhere, I assumed that the *anubandham* in that edition contained only text A, as was the case with the *anubandham* in the 3rd and 4th editions, which I had seen.

<sup>2</sup> In the only copy which I have seen of the 2nd edition (1929) of this book, this *anubandham* was not included.

pared with the manuscript version of text A contained in SP-20, some slight differences can be noticed, and hence whenever it is necessary to draw a distinction between these two versions I shall refer to the manuscript version as text AM and the printed version as text AP.

The differences between these two texts are seldom of any significance as far as the meaning is concerned, and are generally mere variations in spelling. For example, whereas in text AM we generally find the word 'I' written as 'Yan', throughout the text AP we find it printed as 'Nan', and the introductory sentence of the text, "The enquiry 'Who am I?' alone will give liberation", reads as "Yana rengira vicharanaiye motchattaik kodukkum" in text AM and as "Nanar? ennum vicharanaiye mokshattaik kodukkum" in text AP. That is, whereas the spelling in text AM (as also in text B) is following a highly literary and more ancient style, the spelling in text AP (as also in most of the other later texts) is following a simpler and more modern style. However, a few of the differences between texts AM and AP are more than mere stylistic variations and, though minor, are of some noteworthy significance, and hence all such differences will be pointed out below in the footnotes of this article.

The following is a literal translation of text AM:

\* \* \*

**The enquiry 'Who am I?' alone will give liberation (moksha).**

1. *Who am I?*

**1.<sup>3</sup> The gross body, which is composed of the seven dhatus [chyle, blood, flesh, fat, bone, marrow and semen], is not 'I'. 2. The five sense-organs (jnanendriyas), namely the ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose, which individually and respectively know the five sense-knowledges (vishayas), namely sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, are not 'I'. 3. The five organs of action**

**(karmendriyas), namely the mouth, legs, hands<sup>4</sup>, anus and genitals, which perform the five functions of speaking, walking, giving, excreting and enjoying, are not 'I'. 4. The five vital airs such as prana, which perform the five [vital] functions such as respiration, are not 'I'. 5. Even the mind, which thinks, is not 'I'.<sup>5</sup> 6. Even the ignorance [of deep sleep], which is devoid of all sense-knowledges and all actions and which remains with only the vishaya-vasanas [the latent tendencies or tastes for sense-knowledges], is not 'I'.**

2. *If all these are not 'I', then who am I?*

**Having negated and removed<sup>6</sup> as 'not I'<sup>7</sup> all that is mentioned above, the knowledge which solitarily remains, alone is 'I'.**

3. *What is the nature of [this] knowledge?*

**The nature of [this] knowledge is existence-consciousness-bliss (sat-chit-ananda). [It is] the state [literally, place] in which the thought 'I' does not exist even in the least.<sup>8</sup> This itself is called Silence (mauna). This Self alone exists. The world, soul and God are imaginary superimpositions (kalpanas) and it<sup>9</sup> like silver in the mother-of-pearl. Therefore Self**

<sup>3</sup> In text AM the six sentences in answer 1 have been numbered, but these numbers are not found in text AP, text B or any other printed text.

<sup>4</sup> In text AP the word *pani* (hand or arm) has been inadvertently printed before the word *padam* (foot or leg).

<sup>5</sup> In text B this fifth sentence (*Ninaikkindra manamum nan andru*) has been inadvertently omitted in print.

<sup>6</sup> In texts, AM, AP and B the word *neeki* (having removed or dismissed) comes after the words *neti seydu* (having negated), but in all other texts it has been omitted.

<sup>7</sup> In texts AM and B the words *nan alla* (not I) occur only once here, whereas in AP and other texts these words are repeated, *nan alla, nan alla*.

<sup>8</sup> In text AP this second sentence (*Nan ennum ninaivu kinjittum illada idam*) has been inadvertently omitted in print.

(*swarupam*) itself is God. Self itself is 'I'. Self itself is the souls. Self itself is the world. All is verily the supreme Self (*siva-swarupam*).

4. *When will Self-realization (swarupa-darsanam) be attained?*

**When what-is-seen (*drisya*) is removed, the realization of Self, which is the seer (*drik*)<sup>10</sup>, will arise.**

5. *Will not Self-realization arise even while what-is-seen exists?*

**It will not arise. The seer and what-is-seen are like the rope and the snake. When the knowledge of the snake, the imaginary superimposition, has not gone, can the knowledge of the rope, the base (*adhistanam*), appear?**

6. *When will the world, which is what-is-seen, be removed?*

**If the mind, which is the cause of all [objective] knowledge and all action, subsides, the world will disappear.**

7. *What is the nature of the mind?*

**Thought alone is the nature (*swarupam*) of the mind. It is a power (*sakti*). It expands as all objects. When it subsides within itself, that is, in Self, Self will appear. When it comes out, the world will appear. Therefore, when the world appears, Self does not appear.**

8. *How will the mind subside?*

**The mind will subside only by means of the enquiry 'Who am I?'. The thought 'Who am I?', having destroyed all other thoughts, will<sup>11</sup> itself be destroyed like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre; then Self-realization will arise. When the thought 'I' subsides, the breath also subsides. From where the ego originates, there alone<sup>12</sup> the breath originates. Whatever one does, one should do without 'I', the**

**ego. If one remains thus<sup>13</sup>, even one's wife will appear as though Jagadiswari [the Mother of the universe]. Whoever sacrifices himself to Self, who is God, he alone is the [true] devotee.**

9. *Are there no other means by which the mind will subside?*

**Other than enquiry (*vichara*), there are no adequate means. If made to subside by other means, the mind will remain as if subsided, but will rise again.**

10. *Vishaya-vasanas [inherent tastes for sense-objects] rise without limit like waves in the ocean; when will they all be removed?*

**As Self-attention (*swarupa-dhyana*) increases more and more, all the *vasanas* will subside.**

<sup>9</sup> The word *adil* (in it), though implied, is not actually given here in texts AM, B, D or E; it was first added by Sri Bhagavan in text F, and was therefore incorporated in the later texts AP and G.

<sup>10</sup> Though Sri Bhagavan here refers to Self as the 'seer' (*drik*), it should not be thought that Self is really a seer of objects, for in truth all objects are seen only by the mind. Self is described in scriptures as the seer (*drik*) because it is only by the light of Self that all things are seen. But as Sri Bhagavan explains in chapter 3 of *Vichara Sangraham*, since the word 'seer' (*drik*) is applicable only in relation to the objects seen (*drisya*), and since the objects seen are not other than Self, Self is in truth not a seer. Therefore the use of the word 'seer' in the present context should be understood to be figurative and not literal. It may also be noted here that when Sri Bhagavan wrote text F, He omitted the words *drik* and *drisya* from this portion, presumably in order to avoid giving rise to a possible misunderstanding.

<sup>11</sup> In text AP the word *mudivil*, meaning 'in the end' or 'finally', is added here. This word does not occur in text E or any of the earlier texts, and it appears to have been first added by Sri Bhagavan while writing text F.

<sup>12</sup> In the earlier texts such as AM, B, D and E the Tamil words used here are *ange tan* (there alone), but while editing text F Sri Bhagavan refined this sentence by writing *angirundu tan* (from there alone). This later refined wording is included in text AP.

<sup>13</sup> In texts AM and B the wording used here is *appadi yirundal* (if one remains thus), whereas in text AP the wording *appadi seydal* (if one does thus) is used.

11. *Is it possible to remove all the vishaya-vasanas, which come from time immemorial, and to remain as Self alone?*

Without giving room even to the doubt-thought 'Is it possible or not?' one should steadfastly cling to Self-attention. If one thus goes on scrutinizing the nature of the mind, the mind will end up as Self<sup>14</sup>.

12. *For how long is this enquiry necessary?*

As long as there are *vishaya-vasanas* in the mind, so long is the enquiry 'Who am I?' necessary. As long as there are enemies in the fort, they will be continuously coming out. If one were to be continuously cutting them<sup>15</sup> down as and when they come, the fort would fall into one's hands. Likewise, as and when thoughts appear, then and there one should annihilate them by *vichara-jnana* [knowledge born of enquiry]. Destroying in their<sup>16</sup> very source all thoughts that rise, without leaving even a single one, is desirelessness (*vairagya*). Until one attains Self, one should not give up enquiry.

13. *All these are the will of God (iswara-sankalpa), are they not?*

Just as by<sup>17</sup> the mere presence of the sun, which rises without desire (*iccha*), intention (*sankalpa*) or effort (*yatna*), the sun-crystal<sup>18</sup> emits fire, the lotus blossoms<sup>19</sup>, water evaporates and the people of the world<sup>20</sup> commense, perform and stop their respective activities, and just as in front of a magnet the needle moves, so the souls (*jivas*) — who are subject to the three divine functions (*muttozhil*) or five divine functions (*panchakrityas*)<sup>21</sup>, which take place by the mere *sannidhana-visesha* [the distinguishing quality of the presence] of God, who is one devoid of intention (*sankalpa*) — perform and stop their

activities in accordance with their respective *karmas*<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless<sup>23</sup>, He

<sup>14</sup> "the mind will end up as Self" (*manam tanaha mudiyum*): that is, the mind will finally turn out to be nothing other than Self. In texts E and F, however, this clause reads as "*tane manamay mudiyum*", which literally means 'Self alone will end up as the mind' and which in the context conveys the sense 'Self alone will finally turn out to be that which is now mistaken to be the mind'.

<sup>15</sup> The word 'them' (*avargalai*), though implied, is not actually given here in texts AM, B, D or E; it was first added by Sri Bhagavan in text F, and was therefore incorporated in the later texts AP and G.

<sup>16</sup> The word 'their' (*avatrini*) is implied here but is actually given in Tamil only in text AP.

<sup>17</sup> The wording here in texts AM, B, D and AP is *sannidhi mattirattal* (by the mere presence), whereas the wording in texts E, F and G is *sannidhi mattirattil* (in the mere presence).

<sup>18</sup> The 'sun-crystal' (*kantakkal*), also known as *surya-kanta*, is a form of crystalline quartz which, like a magnifying lens, can focus the sunlight to produce fire.

<sup>19</sup> The words 'the lotus blossoms' (*tamarai malartalum*), which occur here in texts AM, AP and D, have been inadvertently omitted in texts B, C and E. Since Sri Bhagavan was referring to text E while editing text F, in the early draft of text F in His handwriting which was reproduced in *The Mountain Path*, June 1993, p. 47, these words are missing. However, this omission must later have been noticed by Him, so in text F as printed in all the editions of *Sri Ramana Nutrirattu* these words (spelt as *tamarai yalarvadum* in the first two editions and as *tamarai malarvadum* in all later editions) are included in this sentence.

<sup>20</sup> The word used here in texts AM, B, D and E is *ulaham* or *lokam*, which literally means 'the world' but which in the context is used to mean 'the people of the world'. When writing text F, Sri Bhagavan corrected this word as *ulahor*, which literally means 'the people of the world'. This corrected version has been printed in the later texts AP and G.

<sup>21</sup> According to the different classifications given in scriptures, the divine functions are said to be three, namely creation (*srishiti*), sustenance (*sthititi*) and destruction (*samhara*), or five, namely these three plus veiling (*tirodhana*) and Grace (*anugraha*).

<sup>22</sup> That is, in accordance not only with their destiny (*prarabdha karma*) but also with their former tendencies toward action (*purva karma vasanas*).

<sup>23</sup> In most texts including AM and F the word *andri* (nevertheless, however, except, although) comes here after a full stop as the beginning of a new sentence, but in text AP the full stop is omitted and *andri* is linked to the previous sentence making the two sentences into one. This does not, however, make any substantial change to the overall meaning conveyed.

[God] is not one who has intention (*sankalpa*). Not even a single action (*karma*) will affect [literally, approach or adhere to] Him. That<sup>24</sup> is like<sup>25</sup> the actions in the world not affecting the sun. It is also like the good and bad qualities of the other four elements [namely earth, water, air and fire] not affecting the all-pervading space.

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In all the editions of *Sri Ramana Vijayam* (a Tamil biography of Sri Bhagavan written by Suddhananda Bharatiyar) from the first edition (1932) up to the eighth edition (1979) a version

<sup>24</sup> The word *adu* (that), though implied in the verb *polum* (it is like), is not actually given here in texts AM, B or D, but is added in texts E, F, AP and G.

<sup>25</sup> In texts AM, B, D and E this last sentence is split into two, each one of which ends with the word *polum* (it

## The Power of Divine Grace<sup>1</sup>

By Sri Muruganar

1427. If He makes to act, who indeed will not act? If He makes to subside, who indeed will not subside? If He feeds, who indeed will not eat? If He puts to sleep, who indeed will not sleep? If He causes to wither, who indeed will not wither? If He causes to flourish, who indeed will not flourish? If He shows, who indeed will not see? [But] When Venkatavar [Sri Ramana] does not show, who can see?

1428. If He uplifts, who indeed will not come up? If He puts down, who indeed will not go down? If He creates, who indeed will not come into existence? If He destroys, who indeed will not be destroyed? If He changes, who indeed will not be changed? If He deludes, who indeed will not be deluded? If He enlightens, who indeed will not be enlightened? [But] when Venkatavar does not enlighten, who can be enlightened?

1429. If He makes to abide, who indeed will not abide? If He makes to function, who indeed will not function? If He nourishes, whose body will not thrive? If He ordains severe starvation, who indeed will not become emaciated? If He causes grief, who indeed will not grieve? If He causes joy, who indeed will not rejoice? If He reforms, who indeed will not be reformed? [But] when Venkatavar does not reform, who can be reformed?

1430. If He causes to grow, who indeed will not grow? If He causes to perish, who indeed will not perish? If He causes fatigue, who indeed will not be fatigued? If He revives, who indeed will not be revived? If He causes to bow down, who indeed will not bow down? If He causes to praise, who indeed will not praise? If He causes to revel, who indeed will not revel? [But] when He does not graciously cause to revel, who can revel?

*Translator's note:* In this song Sri Muruganar expresses in a beautiful and forceful manner the profound truth that, in accordance with the ancient Tamil proverb, "*Avan arul andri or anum asaiyadu*" (Not even an atom moves except by His Grace), everything in our life, including the ultimate attainment of Self-knowledge, happens only by the power of the divine Grace of Sri Ramana, which is in reality the only power that truly exists. Though in these four verses no explicit reference is made to the attainment of Self-knowledge, the last two questions of each verse do refer implicitly to that attainment, "seeing" Self, "being enlightened" by the light of Self-knowledge, "being reformed" as Self and "reveling" in the bliss of Self. This same truth is also expressed with still more explicit reference to Self-attainment by Sri Sadhu Om Swami in verse 584 of *Sri Ramana Sahasram*:

"If You [O Sri Ramana] show, I see; if You close my eye [of consciousness], I sleep; if You make me sing [in praise of You] by songs, I sing. If You make to act, who is there who will not act? If by Your Grace You embrace in Self, tell me, who is there who will not be united with You?"

<sup>1</sup> Tiruvarul Tiram, a poem from *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai*, translated by Michael James.



of *Nan Yar?* is printed containing fourteen questions and answers. For those who do not know how this version came into being, it appears to be yet another early text of *Nan Yar?*, and since the wording in this version is quite different from that found in all the other texts, it has created a doubt in the minds of some devotees regarding the accuracy of the wordings recorded by Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai of Sri Bhagavan's teachings. However this doubt is in fact ungrounded, because the version in those editions of *Sri Ramana Vijayam* was not actually written by Sri Pillai but is only a Tamil translation by Suddhananda Bharatiyar of the free English rendering made by B.V. Narasimha Swami of text AM<sup>26</sup> which has been printed in all the editions of *Self-Realization*. Having come to know this fact and wishing to avoid the danger of creating confusion in the minds of the readers, while publishing the ninth edition of *Sri Ramana Vijayam* in 1986 the authorities of Sri Ramanasramam decided that, in place of that old version written by Suddhananda Bharatiyar, it would be more suitable to print text G, which is not only a much more authentic version but also a more complete and useful recording of the teachings given by Sri Bhagavan to Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai.

In this context a further doubt arises, namely how is it that in his free English rendering of text AM printed in *Self-Realization* B.V. Narasimha Swami has given fourteen questions and answers in place of the thirteen given in the Tamil original? The answer is that at the very beginning of his translation he has added an extra question, "Swami, Who am I? How is salvation attained?" (1st ed., 1931, p. 75; 7th ed., 1968, p. 81), for which he gives as the answer a free and expanded rendering of the introductory sentences from the Tamil original, "*Yanar engira vicharanaiye motchattaik kodukkum*". In fact, though in the later editions of *Self-Realization* this translation is preceded by the sentence, "The fourteen questions and answers elicited in 1902, or soon after, from the Swami are set out below" (7th ed., p. 81), when we refer to two of the copies of the original manuscript

of *Self-Realization* which are preserved in the archives of Sri Ramanasramam (archive No. 1299-q Eng. E-NA), or to the first edition of that book printed in 1931 (archive No. 2003 Eng. E-NA, p. 75), we find that in this sentence the word 'thirteen' was originally given in place of 'fourteen' and that the extra question added by B.V. Narasimha Swami at the beginning was not numbered, unlike the other questions, which were numbered. However, whereas in the first copy of the manuscript the other questions are numbered correctly as 1 to 13 as in text A, in another copy of the manuscript and also in the first edition these thirteen questions have been numbered as 2 to 14.

With reference to the questions and answers which formed text A, one interesting point is recorded by B.V. Narasimha Swami. That is, in the first edition, p. 72, he writes:

"... At that time, the Swami [Sri Bhagavan] was observing silence. Therefore the questions [put to Him by Sivaprakasam Pillai] were sometimes answered by gestures. At times when the answers were not understood, they were written down by the Swami on the floor, or on a slate. These questions and answers were published by Sivaprakasam Pillai in 1923, along with a couple of poems<sup>27</sup> describing the Swami's life and his own special experiences with the Swami. Of the answers to the questions, that relating to the

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is like). However while writing text F Sri Bhagavan omitted the first *polum* and linked the two sentences as one; this revised sentence written by Him was adopted in both the later texts AP and G.

<sup>26</sup> The fact that B.V. Narasimha Swami made his translation from text AM rather than from text AP is apparent from the fact that in the answer to question 3 he has included the meaning of the second sentence, which (as noted above in footnote 8) was inadvertently omitted in text AP.

<sup>27</sup> Actually in the first edition of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval* published in 1923, these questions and answers (in the form of text B) were published along with three poems of Sivaprakasam Pillai, namely *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*, *Anugraha Ahaval* and *Sri Ramana Pada Malai*.

thirteenth<sup>28</sup> was written down by the Swami on a slate, and copied immediately after on paper by the questioner and retained by him. The other questions and answers were retained by him in memory and written down subsequently..."

However, a slight doubt does arise about the accuracy of the information given in the last two sentences of this passage when we notice the fact that on p. 97 of the fourth edition (1944)<sup>29</sup> of the same book a somewhat different and contradictory piece of information is given, namely "...of the several answers given to him by the Sage, fourteen were written down by the Sage himself on a slate, and copied immediately on paper by the questioner and retained by him. The other questions and answers he wrote, soon after, from his memory..." My own personal feeling is that what was written in the first edition is probably the more accurate of the two versions, but we really have no means now of ascertaining for sure which, if either, of the two versions is actually correct, so as with so many other doubtful details regarding the life of Sri Bhagavan and the genesis of His works we have no choice but to keep an open mind on this

subject. All that we can do with the information at present available to us is simply to place on record the fact that this is a point about which some doubt must exist.

(To be continued)

<sup>28</sup> Here the answer relating to the thirteenth question means that relating to the last question of text A. In more recent editions of *Self-Realization*, however, we find this sentence reworded and printed as, "The answer to the fourteenth question was written down by the Swami on a slate and copied immediately after on paper by the questioner and retained by him" (7th ed., p. 77). But here again the words "the answer to the fourteenth question" mean only the answer to the same last question of text A.

<sup>29</sup> The 4th edition of *Self-Realization* was a version completely rewritten by the author from the earlier editions, and hence not only is its structure different but it also contains certain pieces of information not given in any of the other editions. The 5th edition (1953) was revised from the 3rd edition (1936) with the addition of an epilogue by S.S. Cohen, and therefore it is much closer (both in its structure and in the information it contains) to the first three editions than to the 4th edition. The subsequent editions are little changed from the 5th edition except for the addition of two brief sections entitled 'Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi' and 'The Mountain Path' at the end of the epilogue.

### Errata

Some errors which have occurred in the printing of the translation of lines from *Anugraha Ahaval* on pp. 145-6 of our last issue should be corrected as follows:

Page	column	Line	For	Read
145	2	24	words	sword
"	"	"	enemies	enemy
"	"	28	wanting	liking
"	"	48	he [finally]	[finally]
146	2	7	incamated	incorporated

## The Various Texts of 'Who am I?' — 3

by Michael James

### Text AS

On pages 98 to 114 of the same notebook (SP-20) in which the earliest manuscript of text A is found (see *The Mountain Path*, Aradhana issue 1994, p. 38), Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai has noted many other sayings of Sri Bhagavan under the heading 'Sri Ramana Maharshigalin Upadesa Mozhigal' (Sri Ramana Maharshi's Words of Instruction). Many of these sayings were later included in the various printed and unprinted versions of *Nan Yar?*, worded either in the same or in a similar manner, but some are not found elsewhere. These sayings are divided into 21 passages dated 30.12.22, plus an additional 2 passages numbered 5 (a) and 5 (b), which are dated 31.12.22.

Since these sayings can be regarded as a supplement to text A, I shall refer to them as text AS. On reading texts A and AS we can notice that between them they contain almost all the ideas found in the present-day printed versions of *Nan Yar?* One idea which is not found in these two texts, however, is the simile of the pearl-diver tying a stone to his waist and diving deep to take the pearl lying at the bottom of the ocean, but this simile is found in lines 61-66 of *Anugraha Ahaval* (a translation of which is given on p. 145 of *The Mountain Path*, Jayanthi issue 1993) and was also included soon afterwards in the answer to question 15 of text B. In addition to this simile, many of the ideas contained in the last three paragraphs of text F do not appear in texts A and AS, but are all nevertheless found in text E and also in some other early versions.

The following is a literal translation of text AS:

#### Sri Ramana Maharshi's Words of Instruction

1. **Just as the spider spins out the thread from within itself and again withdraws it into itself, in the very same manner the mind also projects the world from within itself and again absorbs it into itself.**
2. *One day when, surrounded by some Madras gentlemen, Brahmasri Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastrigal asked Sri Maharshi what His experience was, He replied to that as seen below:-*  
**"That which is called 'I' (nan) having gone, that which is called 'Self' (tan)**
3. **shines. Sometimes the universe itself does not appear."** (*nan=ahankaram; tan=swarupam.*)
3. **The mind stands only by always grasping [literally, following] something gross. Separately it does not stand. The mind alone is called the subtle body (sukshma sarira) and soul (jiva).**
4. *The path by which to investigate<sup>1</sup> and know the nature of the mind:—*  
**What rises in the body as 'I', that is the mind. It is necessary to investigate and know in which place the thought 'I' first rises in the body. That**

place alone is the abode (*iruppidam*) of the mind. That itself is called the heart (*hridayam*)<sup>2</sup>. Only in that place do anger, fear and so on first arise<sup>3</sup>. Even if one always goes on saying 'Who am I? Who am I?' it will take to that place<sup>4</sup>. Of all the thoughts which appear in the mind, the thought 'I' alone is the first thought. Only after this thought rises do other thoughts rise. Only after the first person appears do the second and third persons appear. Without the first person, the second and third persons do not exist<sup>5</sup>.

5. *The path by which to cling unceasingly to the investigation 'Who am I?':—*

If other thoughts rise, without endeavouring to complete them one should investigate to whom they rose. However much thoughts rise, so what? As soon as each thought rises, one should vigilantly investigate 'to whom has this risen?' If one investigates thus, it will be clear 'to me'. If one investigates 'Who am I?' the mind will return to its abode (*iruppidam*). The thought which rose will also subside. When one again and again practices thus, the power of the mind to stand remaining in its abode will go on increasing. When the mind goes out through the brain and sense-organs, names and forms (that is, thoughts) appear. When the mind remains in the heart, which is its abode, names and forms disappear. Keeping the mind in the heart without letting it go out is alone named 'I-ward facing' (*ahamukham*) or 'inward facing' (*antarmukham*). Letting it go out from the heart is alone named 'outward facing' (*bahirmukham*). When the mind thus remains in the heart, all thoughts other than the thought 'Who am I?' will subside. Afterwards

even the thought 'Who am I?' [that is, the effort made to attend to 'I'] will subside. When that subsides, that which is the ever-existing reality (*vastu*) will shine. That which is called 'I' (*nan*) having gone, that which is called Self (*tan*) will shine. Doing mind-restraint (*mano-nigraha*) thus alone is *tapas*. This alone is one's work. He who does his work will not attend to the work of others. One should not give room to slipping away from the thought of one's own Self (*swatma-chintana*). However much be the duties (activities) one must do, when the time appropriate for them passes, all the other time one should do only Self-investigation (*atma-vichara*). Even when one is sitting, when one is standing and when one is walking one can do Self-investigation,

<sup>1</sup> In this and the subsequent articles in this series, wherever the word *vichara* or its verbal form is used in Tamil, I shall translate it as 'investigation' or 'investigate' rather than 'enquiry' or 'enquire', since I feel the former conveys more accurately and clearly the sense in which this word is actually used by Sri Bhagavan in His teachings. That is, though in English the words 'enquire' and 'investigate' are very close in meaning, the word 'enquire' tends more to convey the sense of questioning or asking, whereas the word 'investigate' conveys in a clearer manner the sense of scrutinizing or attending very keenly in order to know by direct experience, which is actually what Sri Bhagavan expects us to do.

<sup>2</sup> See passage 19 below.

<sup>3</sup> This idea is not found in any of the printed versions of *Nan Yar?* but is found in an expanded form in the third paragraph of the answer to question 8 in text C, where Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai records in English, "It is the place where emotions, such as pride, anger, fear, sexual passion etc. are first felt".

<sup>4</sup> This same sentence, either with or without the word 'always' (*sada*), is also found in other early versions of *Nan Yar?* such as text D, answer to question 7(2), and text E, answer to question 9. But when Sri Bhagavan rewrote *Nan Yar?* in the form of an essay (text F), He refined the idea expressed here by writing, "Even if one goes on thinking 'I, I', it will take to that place".

<sup>5</sup> In the original manuscript Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai has added here in English within brackets, "Without the 1st person there can't be 2nd or 3rd persons".

can one not? If the mind happens to forget the investigation 'Who am I?' due to the tastes for sense-perceptions (*vishaya-vasanas*), when that investigation again comes to memory, one should make effort to remain without leaving it<sup>6</sup>. However great a sinner one may be, if one goes on lamenting and weeping, "I am a great sinner. How can I be saved?" his being saved is difficult. Whoever gives up the thought that he is a sinner and has perseverance in Self-investigation (*swarupa-vichara*), he alone will be saved. The thought of one's own Self (*swa-swarupa-chintanai*) should exist without ceasing (*nirantaram*). That alone is sufficient. If it is a question of going forwards, however fast one may run one can run. Running backwards is very difficult. Similarly the mind becoming 'I-ward facing' (*ahamukham*) is difficult<sup>7</sup>. By Self-investigation done without interruption bondage to the body (*deha-bandham*) will cease. After one has known oneself, however much thoughts arise he will not get bondage<sup>8</sup>.

6. *The help which God and Guru render to jivas:—*

God and Guru will only show the path to attain liberation (*mukti*) but cannot of their own accord<sup>9</sup> establish *jivas* in liberation. Each one should by his own effort act in accordance with the path which God or Guru has shown and attain liberation. It is necessary to know oneself only by one's own eye of knowledge (*jnana-kan*); instead, how is it possible to know by someone else? To know oneself as oneself is a mirror necessary? To know 'I am Devadattan' there is no other requirement (*apeksha*). Similarly to know oneself as oneself there is also not any requirement<sup>10</sup>.

7. *The uselessness of investigation of the principles (tattvas):—*

**Just as there is no benefit in one who should sweep up and discard a barber's rubbish, forsaking to discard that rubbish all together, counting that there are so many hairs in it and scrutinizing their length, colour and so on, so there is no benefit in one who has desire for liberation, instead of all together collectively discarding all of the *tattvas*, which are other than himself and concealing himself, counting that the *tattvas* are so many**

<sup>6</sup> The important ideas expressed in this and the preceding six sentences are not found in any of the printed versions of *Nan Yar?*, though the idea in the third of these seven sentences is also found in text D, stray saying 14.

<sup>7</sup> The ideas expressed in these three sentences, which are not found in any printed version, are also expressed in a slightly more developed manner in both text C, stray saying 14, and text D, stray saying 1.

<sup>8</sup> See the same idea expressed in text D, answer to question 8. Compare also *Guru Vachaka Kovai* verse 944, in which Sri Bhagavan says, 'Whatever thoughts may arise, due to the fact that they cannot come into existence without the indispensable Self, not succumbing to negligence (*pramada*) which expresses [itself in the form of the false notion], 'Alas, in the midst [of these thoughts] the state of Self has slipped away', is also that [the greatness of *granthi-bheda*, the severance of the knot of ignorance or identification with the body]".

<sup>9</sup> "Of their own accord" (*tamahave*): that is, unless the *jiva* earnestly longs for liberation and prays to them for their help. God or Guru will never force liberation, which is the destruction of the individuality, upon any *jiva* who does not sincerely and whole-heartedly want it, but they will certainly not fail to bestow their gracious, all-powerful and ever-unfailing help upon those *jivas* who earnestly seek it, thereby enabling them to turn within and attain liberation. In this context we should bear in mind the assurance given by Sri Bhagavan in other texts of *Nan Yar?*, "However much burden we place upon God, He bears all of it", which means that however unfit and incapable we may feel ourself to be, if we rely entirely upon the Grace of God or Guru they will surely bear the burden and responsibility of establishing us in the state of liberation.

<sup>10</sup> That is, there is not any need of the aid of anything other than one's own Self-consciousness "I am", which ever exists and shines by its own light.

and investigating their qualities and actions. It is necessary to consider the universe like a dream.

8. *The uselessness of scriptures for mumukshus [aspirants for liberation] :—*

Every scripture says that it is necessary to make the mind subside. Therefore, after knowing that mind-restraint (*mano-nigraha*) alone is the intention of the scriptures, what is the benefit in reading the scriptures again and again? For making the mind subside, it is necessary to investigate who one is. Therefore, instead of investigating and knowing who is oneself, who exists within the five sheaths (*pancha-kosas*), liking to know oneself through scriptures is only futile. All the scriptures that have been read will at one time end up having to be forgotten.

9. *What is happiness? Does it exist in Self? Does it exist in the objects of the world?*

What is called happiness (*sukham*) is the very nature of Self. Happiness and Self-happiness are not different. Self-happiness (*atma-sukham*) alone exists. That alone is what is real. Happiness is not obtainable in even one of the objects of the world. We think that happiness is obtained from them due to our wrong discrimination (*avivekam*). In truth, whenever our intentions are fulfilled, the mind, returning to its proper place (*yatha-sthanam*), experiences Self-happiness alone. Similarly, in sleep, in swoon, when desired objects are obtained, and when harm occurs to disliked objects, the mind becoming inward-facing (*antarmukham*) experiences Self-happiness alone. In this way the mind wanders without rest, going outside leaving Self, and returning within. When it comes outside, it

experiences misery (*dukkham*). When it returns within, it experiences happiness (*sukham*). At the foot of the tree the shade is blissful. Outside the sun's heat is scorching. A person who is wandering outside moves into the shade and feels cool. After a brief while he stirs outside, and, unable to bear the scorching of the heat, again comes beneath the tree. In this manner he is engaged in going from the shade into the sunshine, and in moving from the sunshine into the shade. He who acts thus is a person devoid of discrimination. A person who has discrimination, on the other hand, does not leave the shade. Similarly, the mind of the sage (*jnani*) does not leave *Brahman*. But the mind of the ignorant person (*ajnani*), on the other hand, is engaged in roaming in the world and suffering, and in returning in *Brahman* for a brief while and enjoying happiness. As that which is called 'I' (*nan*) subsides more and more, that which is called called Self (*tan*) will come out [that is, will become manifest]. (That is, as the mind subsides more and more, happiness will increase.) Though that which is called Self is the ever-existing reality (*vastu*), if that which is called 'I' sinks, it appears as if it were manifesting in the open.

10. *Jnana-drishti:—*

Being still (*summa iruppadu*) alone is named 'knowledge-sight' (*jnana-drishti*). Being still is only making the mind to subside in Self. Other than this, knowing the thoughts of others, knowing the three times, knowing what is happening in distant places, and so on, are not *jnana-drishti*.

11. *Desirelessness:— What is the connection between desirelessness (nirasa) and knowledge (jnana)?*

Desirelessness itself is knowledge. Desirelessness and knowledge are not different. What is called knowledge is being (*iruppadu*) without any object appearing. What is called desirelessness is being (*iruppadu*) without the mind moving towards any object<sup>11</sup>.

12. What is the difference between investigation (*vichara*) and meditation (*dhyana*)?

Meditation is imagining (*bhavippadu*) oneself as the absolute reality (*brahman*) and as existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*). Investigation is being (*iruppadu*) having the mind kept only in itself [or only in its own place], that is, only in Self (*atma*).

13. If it is said 'giving the soul to God', what is the meaning?

Being (*iruppadu*) without giving room to the rising of any thought other than the thought of Self (*atma-chintana*) is alone giving [surrendering] the soul to God.

14. If it is said 'liberation' (*mukti*), what is the meaning?

Destruction of the tendencies (*vasanakshaya*) is alone liberation<sup>12</sup>. Investigating and knowing who is the person who is in bondage, is alone liberation. Knowing one's true nature (*yathartha swarupa*) is alone liberation.

15. Since one supreme ruling power (*parameswara shakti*) is performing all activities, instead of us also submitting to it, thinking constantly 'To act in this way is necessary, to act in that way is necessary' is mere vanity<sup>13</sup>. In spite of seeing that the steam-power in the train is bearing all the burdens, why should we who

travel in it, instead of placing even our small luggage in it and being happily at ease, suffer by bearing it upon our head?

16. Is the mind two, a good mind and a bad mind?

The mind is only one. The tendencies (*vasanas*) are of two kinds, auspicious (*subha*) and inauspicious (*asubha*). When the mind is under the sway of auspicious tendencies it is said to be a good mind, and when it is under the sway of inauspicious tendencies, a bad mind.

17. 'I' (*aham*). 'I' is two. One is the 'I' which truly exists (*yatharthamayulla aham*). This is Self (*atma-swarupam*). The other one is that which rises and subsides. This is the ego (*ahankaram*). The meaning of *ahankaram* is *seyyappatta aham* [the 'I' which is made, produced, created or fabricated]<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> When Sri Bhagavan wrote text F, He refined these two sentences (which also appear in text B, answer to question 22, text D, answer to question 20, and text E, answer to question 25) thus: "Being without attending to what-is-other (*anya*) in non-attachment (*vairagya*) or desirelessness (*nirasa*); being without leaving Self is knowledge (*jnana*)". Compare also text C, answer to question 20, and note that in text G, answer to question 26, the old version of these two sentences has been given along with Sri Bhagavan's refined version.

<sup>12</sup> After this sentence Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai has written in grantha script within brackets the Sanskrit words, "*Vasana muktam muktih*", meaning, 'Release from *vasanas* is *mukti*'.

<sup>13</sup> In this text this sentence ends with the emphatic statement "*chintippadavame*", meaning 'thinking is mere vanity' (*avam* means vanity, futility, uselessness, emptiness, nothingness or evil), whereas in all the printed versions of *Nan Yar?* this same sentence ends with the rhetorical question "*chintippaden?*", meaning 'why to think?' which clearly implies the futility or vanity of thinking thus.

<sup>14</sup> This passage about the two 'I's is not found in any of the printed texts but is found slightly differently phrased in text D, answer 24, and in text C, stray saying 11.

18. **Just as that which has been caught in the jaws of a tiger does not return, so those who have been caught in the sight of Guru's grace will be saved<sup>15</sup> by Him and will never instead be forsaken. He who is Guru will be seeing [attentively awaiting the time] when the disciple will become mature. At the time he becomes mature, He will see [by just] one glance. Then except that disciple everyone else will vanish as if they had been burnt by fire. He will place such a matured disciple as equal (*samam*) with Himself<sup>16</sup>.**

19. **Heart (hridayam):— From where thoughts all arise, that alone is the Heart. Therefore Self (*atma-swarupam*) alone is the Heart. Yet they will speak of the heart in many ways saying that it is a lump of flesh (*mamsa-pindam*), that it has a form like a lotus bud, and that it has the shape of a wheel (*chakrakaram*)<sup>17</sup>.**

*"Vidhampadum ulandorum viseda varivayut"* etc. etc. Brahma Gitai<sup>18</sup>.

20. **Just as whether the cart-driver is awake or whether he is asleep the bullocks go on pulling the cart, so whether our liking (*iccha*) exists or whether it has ceased our *karuvis* [instruments, that is, our mental faculties, sense-organs and organs of action] perform their respective actions. Just as even when the cart-driver restrains the bullocks, transgressing him they [sometimes] overturn the cart, in the same way however much we restrain it our mind also will sometimes go [its own way] transgressing us. Insanity (*chitta-bhramai*) is an example for this.**

21. *On hearing that someone called Balayananda Swami<sup>19</sup> had spat on the*

*body of Maharishigal for the fault of Maharishigal not telling Pazhani Swami, who was one among the devotees, to go away from Virupaksha cave in accordance with his [Balyananda's] word, a person called Kambali Swami asked Maharishigal, "What did you do on that occasion?" To that Maharishigal replied as seen below:—*

<sup>15</sup> The word used here is "*rakshikkappaduvar*" meaning 'will be saved', but while writing text F, Sri Bhagavan significantly added a stress by writing "*rakshikkappaduvere*", which conveys the sense 'will surely be saved'.

<sup>16</sup> The last four sentences of passage 18, and also all of passages 19 and 20, were not included in either of the earliest two printed versions, texts B and E, which is possibly the reason why they were not included by Sri Bhagavan in text F.

<sup>17</sup> Compare text C, second paragraph of answer to question 8, where Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai records in English: "The seat of mind is Atma-sorupam. It is also known as Heart. The heart is not the blood-vessel, which is popularly spoken of as heart".

<sup>18</sup> This incomplete quotation from Tattvaraya Swamigal's Tamil rendering of the *Brahma Gita* is the first line of ch. 6, v. 10 (which corresponds to *sloka* 17 of the Sanskrit original, which forms part of the fourth *kanda* of the *Suta Samhita* in the *Skanda Purana*). The meaning of the first two lines of this Tamil verse, which alone are relevant in this context, is, "Due to His benevolently existing and shining as the special knowledge in each heart, which appear diverse [that is, as the peerless, pure, adjunctless, single and indivisible Self-consciousness 'I am' in the heart of each *jiva*, who appear to be different from one another], they [the people who know the truth] call God Himself as the Heart". Compare verse 2 of *Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam*, in which Sri Bhagavan addresses Arunachala and sings, "...Since You dance eternally in the heart as 'I', they say that Your name itself is Heart". See also the *Chandogya Upanishad* 8.8.3, where it is said, "This *atman* verily is in the heart...hence it is the heart..."

<sup>19</sup> Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai has written this swami's name as Balayananda, but probably it should read Balyananda. This incident of his spitting upon the body of Sri Bhagavan was also recorded in ch. 19 of the first edition of *Self-Realisation* and is narrated by Arthur Osborne on p. 65 of *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*.



"I was just laughing. Merely a body which has been spat upon so many times!"<sup>20</sup>

30/12/22 MS<sup>21</sup>

\* \* \*

5(a). *The help which arises to Self-investigation (atma-vichara) by breath-restraint (pranayama), meditation upon a form of God (murti-dhyana) and repetition of sacred words (mantra-japa):—*

Even by *pranayama* the mind will subside. However, so long as the breath (*prana*) remains subsided the mind also will remain subsided, and when the *prana* comes out the mind also will come out and wander under the sway of the tendencies (*vasanas*). Since the rising-place (*utpattisthana*) both of the *prana* and of the mind is only one, when the mind subsides the *prana* also will subside, and when the *prana* subsides the mind also will subside. The *prana* is spoken of as the gross form of the mind. Until the time of death the mind keeps the *prana* in the body, and when the body dies it seizes and takes the *prana* away. Therefore *pranayama* will be an aid for restraining the mind. But by *pranayama* alone the mind does not attain destruction (*nasam*). Restraining the breath is indeed good.

*Murti-dhyana* and *mantra-japa* are also aids for restraining the mind. By them the mind attains one-pointedness (*ekagram*). The mind will be ever moving like the trunk of an elephant. Just as if one gives a chain in the trunk of an elephant it will proceed holding on to that alone without catching hold of anything else, so if

one habituates the mind also to some one form or name it will be holding on to that alone. Because the mind expands as limitless thoughts, each thought becomes extremely weak. As thoughts subside more and more, the mind attains strength. For the mind which has thus attained a one-pointed nature, *atma-vichara* will easily be accomplished.

5(b). *The help to atma-vichara by food-discipline (ahara-niyama).*

By moderate quantities of pure food (*mitamana sattvika ahara*) the *sattva*-quality of the mind increases and help arises for *atma-vichara*. Among all the *niyamas* [restraints or disciplines], *ahara-niyama* indeed is the best.

MS/31-12-22

(To be continued)

<sup>20</sup> The Tamil words spoken by Sri Bhagavan were: "Nan sirttukkonde yirunden. Ettanaiyo taram tuppiyumizhnda dehan dane!" The words 'tuppiyumizhnda deham', which literally mean 'spat body', would normally be taken to mean 'a body which has been spat upon', but could also be taken to mean 'a body which has been spat out'. Thus a deep inner meaning can be seen in these words of Sri Bhagavan. That is, not only had His body been spat upon so many times by others, but it was also a body which He Himself had spat out, that is, had rejected as not 'I'. Just as we would be unconcerned when we see someone spitting upon a lump of earth, because we know that that earth is not 'I' and has no connection with us, so Sri Bhagavan was quite unconcerned when anyone spat upon His body, because He clearly knew that that body was not 'I' or 'mine' and had no connection with Himself. Such was the unshakably firm knowledge or *dridha jnana* which shone in every thought, word and deed of Sri Bhagavan.

<sup>21</sup> MS are the initials of Sri M. Sivaprakasam Pillai, which he sometimes wrote along with the date at the foot of his notes.

## The Various Texts of 'Who am I?' — 4

by Michael James

### Text B

As mentioned on page 37 of *The Mountain Path*, Aradhana Issue, 1994, in the pre-publication manuscript of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval* dated 6.1.1920, text A of *Nan Yar?* (Who am I?) was included as an appendix (*anubandham*), but in 1923 when *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval* actually came to be published for the first time, text B was included as the appendix in place of text A. However, the introductory sentence ("The investigation 'Who am I?' alone will give liberation") and the first twelve questions and answers of text B are the same as those of text A, except for a few printing errors,<sup>1</sup> and the answer to question 13 of text A is reproduced with little change in text B as the answer to question 27. Thus the main difference between these two texts lies in the addition in text B of fourteen extra questions and answers, namely those numbered as 13 to 26.

Text B, which was the first text of *Nan Yar?* ever to be published, appears to have been drafted rather hastily for press, because some of the ideas found in answers 13, 14 and 15 are repetitions of ideas already expressed in answers 3, 8 and 12. This fact was noticed before the printing of the book was completed, because on page 50 at the end of the errata (*pizhai tiruttam*) a note is given saying, "In the appendix the natures of the devotee (*bhakta*), desirelessness (*vairagya*) and Self (*svarupa*) are [each] told twice". The reader may also notice the fact that the answers to questions 16, 17 and 19 to 25 of this text are taken largely from passages in text AS, often with little or no change.

On page 40 of the first edition of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*, a footnote is given to the title of this text saying, "This has been made compiling in a way questions asked on some occasions to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharishi Avargal concerning *Atma-vichara* and the answers which He graciously gave".

The following is a literal translation of the last fifteen questions and answers of text B:

13. *What is the nature of Self (Svarupa)?*

That which truly exists (*yatharthamayulladu*) is only Self (*atma-svarupa*). The world, soul and God are imaginary creations (*kalpanas*) like silver in mother-of-pearl. These three appear simultaneously [literally, in one time] and disappear simultaneously. The place in which the thought 'I' does not exist even in the least is alone Self. That alone is called Silence (*mauna*). Self itself is God. Self itself is 'I'. Self itself is the world<sup>2</sup>.

14. *Among devotees, who is the superior devotee?*

Whoever sacrifices himself to Self, who is God, he alone is the best devotee<sup>3</sup>.

15. *What is desirelessness (vairagya)?*

Whatever thoughts arise, destroying all of them in the very place of rising (*utpattisthana*) without leaving even one, is alone desirelessness<sup>4</sup>. Just as pearl-divers, tying a stone to their waist, dive deep within the ocean and take the pearl lying at its bottom, so if each one dives deep within himself with desirelessness, he can attain the pearl of Self. Unceasing Self-remembrance (*nirantara svarupa-smarana*) should exist. That alone is sufficient.

16. *Is it not possible for God and for Guru to transform a jiva as Sivam?*

God and Guru, showing the path to attain liberation, can establish *jivas* in liberation<sup>5</sup>. Each one by his own efforts alone, acting in accordance with the path which God or Guru has shown, should attain liberation.

It is necessary to know oneself only by one's own eye of knowledge (*jnana-kan*); instead, how can one know by someone else?

For a person called Raman to know himself as Raman, is a mirror necessary?

17. *For a person who has desire for*

*liberation, is investigation of the principles (tattvas), which exist as other than himself, necessary?*

There is no benefit in one who should sweep up and discard a barber's rubbish, counting that there are so many hairs in it and scrutinizing their qualities beginning with length. Like that, there is no benefit in one who should know himself, instead of all together collectively discarding all of the *tattvas*, which are concealing himself, counting that the *tattvas* are so many and investigating their qualities and actions. It is necessary to consider the universe like a dream.

18. *Is there no difference between waking and dream?*

Waking is enduring (*sthira*), dream is fleeting (*asthira*); except this, there is no other difference; to the extent to which all the events which happen in waking appear to be real, similarly to that extent even the events which happen in dream appear at the time of dream to be real. In dream the mind assumes another body.

If one asks the reason for spermatorrhea (*indriya-skhalita*) arising in the waking-body of a person who has seen a dream as if he were embracing a woman, it happens thus

<sup>1</sup> The most significant printing error found in text B is that the fifth sentence of the first answer, "Even the mind, which thinks, is not 'I'", was omitted.

<sup>2</sup> Except for minor changes in wording and a different order of presentation of the ideas, this answer to question 13 is almost the same as that to question 3.

<sup>3</sup> Except for the addition of the word 'best' (*siranda*), this answer to question 14 is the same as the last sentence of answer 8.

<sup>4</sup> The wording of this sentence defining *vairagya* is almost the same as that of the second last sentence of answer 12.

<sup>5</sup> Though in other texts, such as text AS passage 6 and text E answer 19, it is said that God and Guru cannot of their own accord establish *jivas* in liberation, in this text it is said that they can do so. Refer to footnote 9 on p.49 of *The Mountain Path*, Aradhana Issue, 1995.

due to the speed with which the mind enters the waking-body from the dream-body<sup>6</sup>. In both waking and dream, thoughts and names-and-forms appear simultaneously.

19. *For aspirants for liberation (mumukshus) is there benefit by the study of scriptures?*

In every scripture it is said that for attaining liberation it is necessary to make the mind subside. Therefore, after knowing that mind-restraint (*mano-nigraha*) alone is the intention of the scriptures, there is no benefit in studying scriptures without limit. For making the mind subside, it is necessary to investigate who one is. It is necessary to investigate who one is only within oneself; instead, how to investigate oneself in scriptures? That which is called oneself (*tan*) is the reality which exists within the five sheaths (*pancha-kosas*). Whereas the scriptures are something which exists outside the five sheaths. Therefore, investigating in scriptures about the reality called 'I', which it is necessary to investigate setting aside even the five sheaths, is indeed futile. Being (*irupadu*) keeping the mind always in Self is alone named Self-investigation (*Atma-vichara*). All the scriptures that have been studied will at one time end up as that which it is necessary to forget.

20. *What is happiness? Does it exist in Self, or does it exist in the objects of the world?*

What is called happiness is the very nature of Self. Happiness is not different, Self is not different. Self-happiness alone exists; that alone is what is real. Happiness is not obtainable in even a single object of the world. We think that happiness is obtained from them due to our wrong discrimination. In truth, whenever our intentions are fulfilled, the mind, returning to its proper place, experiences Self-happiness alone. Similarly, in sleep, swoon and *samadhi*, and when a desired object is obtained and when harm occurs to disliked objects, the mind,

becoming inward-facing, experiences Self-happiness alone. In this way the mind wanders without rest, going out, leaving Self, and returning within. When it comes outside, it experiences misery<sup>7</sup>. At the foot of the tree the shade is blissful. Outside, the sun's heat is scorching. A person who is wandering outside moves into the shade and feels cool. After a brief while he stirs outside, and unable to bear the scorching of the heat, again comes beneath the tree. In this manner he is engaged in going from the shade into the sunshine, and in moving from the sunshine into the shade. He who acts thus is a person devoid of discrimination. But a person who has discrimination, on the other hand, does not leave the shade. Similarly, the mind of the sage (*jnani*) does not leave Brahman; but the mind of the ignorant person (*ajnani*), on the other hand, is engaged in roaming in the world and suffering, and in returning to Brahman for a brief while and enjoying happiness.

What is called the world is only thought; when the world disappears, the mind experiences bliss (*ananda*); when the world appears, the mind experiences misery.

<sup>6</sup> This saying of Sri Bhagavan was omitted by Him when He wrote text F, but it has been preserved for us by Sri Muruganar in verse 558 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*: "If it be asked, '[When the dream-body and the waking-body are different, how is one to explain] the dripping of semen in the waking-body of one who sees [himself in dream] to be embracing a woman with the dream-body?' [the answer is that it is due to] the speed with which [impelled by the force of its attachment] the mind itself springs from the dream-body into the other waking-body".

<sup>7</sup> One sentence which is found here in text AS, "When it returns within, it experiences happiness", is omitted not only in this text B but also in texts C and E, and hence it is not found in text F, which was written by Sri Bhagavan on the basis of text E. In answer 18 of text D, however, this and the previous sentence are both incorporated in the sentence prior to that, thus: "In this way the mind wanders without rest, going out, leaving Self and experiencing misery, and returning within and experiencing happiness".

21. *If it is said 'knowledge-sight' (jnana-drishti), what is the meaning?*

Being still alone is named *jnana-drishti*. Being still is only making the mind to subside in Self. Other than this, knowing the thoughts of others, knowing the three times, knowing what is happening in distant places, and so on, are not *jnana-drishti*.

22. *What is the connection between desirelessness (nirasa) and knowledge (jnana)?*

Desirelessness itself is knowledge. Desirelessness and knowledge are not different. What is called knowledge is being without any object appearing. What is called desirelessness is being without the mind moving towards any object.

23. *What is the difference between investigation (vichara) and meditation (dhyana)?*

Meditation is imagining oneself as *Brahman* and as *sat-chit-ananda*. Investigation is being, having the mind kept only in itself.

24. *If it is said 'giving the soul to God', what is the meaning?*

Being without giving room to the rising of any thought other than the thought of Self is alone giving the soul to God.

25. *If it is said 'liberation', what is the meaning?*

Knowing one's true nature, having investigated who is the person who is in bondage, is alone liberation.

26. *What is the cause for the creation of the world (jagat-srishti)?*

The volition of God (*isvara-sankalpa*).

27. *What is the cause for the volition of God?*

[The answer to this question is the same as that to question 13 of text A, except for a few minor changes in spelling and for the fact that in this text the words 'the lotus blossoms' (*tamarai malartalum*) were inadvertently omitted<sup>8</sup>.]

(To be continued)

<sup>8</sup> Refer to footnote 19 on p.40 of *The Mountain Path*, Aradhana Issue, 1994.

Do you not see how the colour of a red object placed near glass apparently colours the glass? In reality, no colour taints the glass.

Similarly, the *samsara* experienced by the senses and intellect is attributed by the ignorant to the *Atman*. The individual soul, by the force of this attachment to the mind and senses, inevitably gets caught in the net of the *gunas* of *maya*, and so undergoes the pain and pleasure of *samsara*. It imagines the *gunas* and creates the objects of the senses and the three kinds actions-good, bad, and mixed. This is an eternal law. The individual soul whirls in this self-created suffering or *samsara*, indefinitely till he gains the knowledge of the Self.

— *Adhyatma Ramayana*, 4.3.22, 23-25.

## The Various Texts of 'Who am I? - 5

By Michael James

### Text - C

Among the note books and other manuscripts of Sri M. Sivaprakasam Pillai there are a number of drafts on *Who am I?* not only in Tamil but also in English. For instance, in notebook SP-20 on pp. 124-134 and 114-115 there is a rough draft of an English translation of text A (with the addition of various sentences and passages not in text A) in the handwriting of Sivaprakasam Pillai, initialed MS and dated 21-2-23. Similarly in notebook SP-17 on pp.1-20 there is another rough draft in English which is a revised and slightly expanded version of the above-said translation of text A in SP-20. In this revised draft, which is signed M. Sivaprakasam and dated 25-2-23, question and answer 1 of text A has been expanded as three questions and answers (I-III)<sup>1</sup>, 2-6 are given as IV-VIII, 7 is modified and expanded as IX, 8 is given as X, 9 is given with the addition of two useful sentences<sup>2</sup> as XI, then two extra questions and answers are given as XII and XIII, which are a modified and slightly expanded translation of points 4 and 5 of text AS, and finally 10-13 are given with slight modification and expansion as XIV-XVII.

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<sup>1</sup> The first question which Sri M. Sivaprakasam Pillai asked Sri Bhagavan was "*Nan yar?*" (Who am I?), to which he replied simply, "*Arive nan*", which means knowledge (or consciousness) alone is 'I'. Since this answer of Sri Bhagavan was so very terse and cryptic yet so full of profound meaning and implication, while drafting the early texts of *Nan Yar?* Sivaprakasam Pillai expanded this one question and answer as questions and answers 1 and 2 in which he added for his own clarity of understanding the traditional scriptural teaching of '*neti neti*' (not thus, not thus), and while rewriting the earlier drafts as an essay (text F) Sri Bhagavan felt it

appropriate to retain this addition of Sivaprakasam Pillai, presumably because he knew that it would be useful for other devotees just as it was for Sivaprakasam Pillai. The fact that this '*neti neti*' teaching was not actually said by Sri Bhagavan but was added by Sivaprakasam Pillai was told by his disciple Manikkam Pillai to Sri Sadhu Om Swami, who told it to me. In the light of this information, it is interesting to see how in this English draft on pp.1-5 of SP-17 Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai further expanded this addition to form questions and answers I-IV (as also to a lesser extent he expanded it on pp. 124-126 of SP-20).

<sup>2</sup> See note 7 below.

Of all the English drafts of *Who am I?* made by Sivaprakasam Pillai, perhaps the most interesting is one that I shall call text C. A very rough draft of text C is written in pencil in SP-8, and a slightly revised but still rough draft is written in ink in SP-22, but the clearest draft is written by Sivaprakasam Pillai in a separate manuscript which is preserved in the Asramam archives and catalogued as No.1201 (Eng-A-2). Though none of these drafts are dated, the editing of the matter in this text makes it appear to be a draft intermediate between text A, which was written before 6-1-1920, and text D, which is dated 21-2-1924. The following is an exact reproduction of text C as it was written by Sivaprakasam Pillai in archive manuscript 1201, retaining the same spelling, punctuation and capitalisation used by him, and making no change other than to italicise the questions and the Tamil and Sanskrit words used by him in the text.

### *Who am I?*

Only the enquiry into the nature of the true Self by incessantly putting the question "Who am I?" will lead one to *mukti* or freedom from bondage.

#### I. *Who am I?*

- (1) I am not the physical body composed of the seven substances, flesh, blood, bones, fat, brain, sperm and skin.
- (2) I am not any of the five sensory organs, through which the sensations of sounds, touches, forms, smells and tastes are perceived.
- (3) I am not any of the five organs of action by which the acts of speaking, walking, giving, excreting faeces and copulating are performed.
- (4) I am not '*pranan*' which under

five different names performs five different functions, viz, respiration, circulation, deglutition, digestion and supporting the body.

- (5) I am not the mind, which thinks.
- (6) I am not nescience, in which neither phenomena exist nor actions are performed but only unconscious traces of phenomena and actions exist.

#### II. *If I am not any of the abovedescribed things, then who am I?*

I am consciousness, which, after negating or eliminating as non-self all the abovesaid things, remains as the only residuum.

#### III. *What is the nature of consciousness?*

Consciousness is eternal and blissful. Consciousness has no attributes; it is not different from

bliss and bliss is not different from consciousness. It is the state where the thought of I does not at all exist. This is also called *Monam* (silence). Only this *Atma* has real existence. Nothing else has real existence. The universe (*jagat*), egos (*jeevas*) and God (*Iswara*) are all illusions, just as, when mother of pearl appears as silver, the latter is an illusion. Therefore God, I and other *jeevas*, and *jagat* are all *Atma-sorupam*<sup>3</sup>. Everything is *Sivasorupam* i.e. *Atma-Sorupam*.

IV. *When will Atma-Sorupam (self) be realised?*

When the phenomenal universe disappears, the noumenal *Atma-Sorupam* will be realised.

V. *Cannot sorupam be realised even when the phenomenal universe exists?*

Cannot be; the noumenon and the phenomena are like the real rope and the illusory serpent; will there be the perception of the real rope, so long as the perception of the illusory serpent does not cease?

VI. *When will the illusory universe disappear?*

The universe will disappear, when the mind, which is the cause of all thoughts is controlled and kept quiet.

VII. *What is the nature of mind?*

Mind is nothing but thoughts. Of all thoughts, which are manifested by the mind, the thought of I is the first. Only after this thought

arises, the other thoughts rise. Without the 1st person, there cannot be either the 2nd or 3rd person. The mind is, therefore that which emerges out as I. Just as a spider spins a thread and then absorbs it back into its own body, so the mind unfolds the universe and then folds it back into its own self.

The mind is a power. It manifests itself as all the objects of the universe. When it is dissolved into Self (*Atma-sorupam*), *Sorupam* will shine. When it emerges out, the universe will appear. Therefore when the universe appears, *Sorupam* will not shine.

The mind will always be found connected with a physical body. It is never found alone. The mind is also called *sutchma-sariram* (subtle body) and *jeeva* (ego).

VIII. *How can the mind be controlled and kept quiet?*

The mind can be successfully controlled only by enquiring who I am. This enquiry will destroy all other thoughts<sup>4</sup> and then it will

<sup>3</sup> *Sorupam* is a Tamilised form of the Sanskrit word *Swarupam*, which literally means 'own form' and which Sri Bhagavan often uses either alone or in combination with the word *atma* to denote one's own true nature, the real Self.

<sup>4</sup> In SP-17, p.9, Sivaprakasam Pillai explains this idea by adding in brackets "i.e. the motive to know the real Self will destroy all other motives" after the words "This thought of 'Who am I?' will destroy all other thoughts".



itself die as the corpse-burning stick. Then *Atma-sorupam* will shine. When the thought of I stops, breathing will also stop. *Ahankara* (the thought of I) and breathing originate from the same source. Whatever is done, should be done without *ahankara* (egoism). If one be so, even one's wife will appear to one as the Mother (Goddess) of the universe. He is the greatest *bakta* (devotee) who sacrifices himself (i.e. his ego or *ahankara*) into the *Atma-sorupam*, which is God.

If in the course of *Atmic* enquiry, any other thought or desire rises, no attempt should be made to realise or fulfil it; but the question, "to whom does that thought or desire rise?" should be immediately put. If this question be put, the answer will be "to me". At once the question, "Who am I?" should be put. If this question be put, the mind will return to its seat i.e. the heart, and the thought, which disturbed the enquiry, will vanish. The more and more the mind is trained in this manner, it will attain greater and greater power to remain at its seat. The seat of mind is *Atma-sorupam*. It is also known as Heart. The heart is not the blood-vessel, which is popularly spoken of as heart.<sup>5</sup> If, by the above described practice, the mind remains steadfastly at the heart all thoughts will vanish. Then, the thought of I also will vanish. Then, only that which has real existence will shine. The ego will die and Self alone will shine. Self is *Atma-sorupam*.

The first thought of the mind is the thought of I. What is it that is thought of as I? Although the whole body is generally identified with Self and spoken of as I, it should be ascertained what particular spot in the body is primarily identified with Self and called I. On deep inward contemplation, it will be found that that spot lies inside the chest. It is the place where emotions, such as pride, anger, fear, sexual passion etc. are first felt. Thinking this spot as I is the first thought of the mind. This is the thought, which ought to be crushed.<sup>6</sup>

When the mind emerges out through the brain and the senses, phenomena such as names and forms appear. When it stays at the heart, phenomena do not appear. Retaining the mind at the heart is called *antarmukam* or turning it inward; and letting it out through the senses is called *bhahirmukam* or turning it outward.

IX. *Are there no other methods of controlling the mind?*

There are no other suitable methods except that of *Atmic* enquiry. If the mind is controlled by

<sup>5</sup> These three sentences are not found as such in any Tamil text. Compare passages 4 and 19 of text AS, and also note 17 on p.52 of the *Mountain Path*, Aradhana issue 1995.]

<sup>6</sup> This paragraph is not found as such in any Tamil text, but is found in part in passage 4 of text AS.

other methods, it will keep quiet only for a short time and then resume its activity<sup>7</sup>. The mind can also be controlled by the control of breath. But, only so long as *pranan* remains quiet, the mind will be quiet. When *pranan* resumes its work the mind will do the same. So, by *pranayamam* (control of breath), the mind cannot be entirely controlled and dissolved into self. But *pranayamam* will serve as an aid to one engaged in *Atmic* enquiry. Similarly meditation of a definite form (*murtam*) and muttering of a *mantram* (name of God) will help one who is engaged in the same enquiry. The mind attains the power of concentrating itself on a single object by means of meditating on a single form or muttering a single name. The mind is in constant motion like the trunk of an elephant. If a chain is placed in it, it takes a fast hold of it and does not touch other things. So also, if the mind is trained in the meditation of a single form or name, it becomes attached to it and gives up other thoughts. Since the mind manifests itself as countless thoughts, it is very weak in concentration. As thoughts become less and less its power of concentration increases. Hence, *Atmic* enquiry becomes easy to the mind, which has attained the ability to concentrate itself on a single object. Temperance in eating and taking only such food, as will keep the mind in a peaceful state, furthers the progress of *Atmic* enquiry. Of

all the rules laid down for *mumukshus* (persons desirous of attaining *mukti*) the rule regarding diet is the best. *Ahankara* will be subdued, if a *mumukshu* lives upon food got by begging.<sup>8</sup>

- X. *Numberless thoughts appear from vasanas, the traces contained in the mind, as waves in the ocean. When will they all disappear?*

As meditation grows stronger and stronger, thoughts will become less and less.<sup>9</sup>

- XI. *Is it possible to destroy all traces of thoughts ingrained in the mind from time immemorial and be as Self?*

The mind should be fixed so stead-

<sup>7</sup> In the English text written in SP-17, on p.11 two more sentences are added here which are not in text A: "By the method of Enquiry or *Vicharam*, which is the straight road to Self-realisation, the mind will entirely dissolve itself into the *Atma* and die. By the other methods, it will not die but remain quiescent only for short intervals". The same two sentences are also given in a briefer form in the English text written in SP-20 on p.131.

<sup>8</sup> This last sentence is not found in most Tamil texts except text D, in which it is given as stray saying 2. Similarly, on p.14 of the Tamil biography *Sri Sivaprakasam Charitamum Malaiyum*, Mannikam Pillai records that Sri Bhgavan once said to Sivaprakasam Pillai, "Eating by begging alms from house to house to drive away the affliction of hunger, is a means to destroy the ego" (see also p.82 of *The Inner Circle* compiled by A.R. Natarajan)

<sup>9</sup> On p.16 of SP-17, Sivaprakasam Pillai records this teaching more clearly in the words, "As Self-meditation increases more and more in strength, the other thoughts will become weaker and weaker and die away".

fastly in the meditation of *Atma Sorupam* that it will not be possible for it to entertain even this thought of doubt. If however any doubt arises, no attempt should be made to clear it, but it should at once be questioned to whom that doubt arises and the thought of doubt killed in the manner already described.<sup>10</sup> If, in this manner, the mind's nature be enquired into, the mind will end in Self. Even though a man be a great sinner, he should not grow disconsolate as to whether he will attain *mukti* or not; he should forget even the thought of his being a sinner and concentrate his whole mind on *Atma Sorupam*. Such a man only will get success.

XII. *How long should this enquiry last?*

This enquiry is required as long as there are traces of thoughts in the mind. As long as there are enemies in a fort, they will be coming out. If, as they come out, they are all killed, the fort will be got possession of. Similarly, as thoughts arise, they should all be crushed by the abovesaid intelligent enquiry. Firm resoluteness (*vairagyam*) consists in crushing all thoughts without exception, just as they rise, at the very place of their origin. Enquiry should not cease until *Atma Sorupam* is realised. Stop not until the goal is reached.<sup>11</sup> Just as pearl sinkers dive deep into the sea with weights attached to their bodies and take out the pearls, so also one, who dives deep into one's own

Self with firm resoluteness, will obtain the pearls of *Atmic* bliss. Even though a man may have many duties to perform, he can and must devote all his leisure to self meditation. Incessant cherishing of the thought of *Self-sorupam* is what is required. If however it happens to be forgotten, it should be got hold of firmly, when it comes back to memory again.<sup>12</sup>

XIII. *Are not all these due to the will (desire) of God?*

Just as, in the presence of the Sun, which rises and moves without motive, desire or effort, the sunstone emits fire, water evaporates and all beings on earth act and cease to act and just as needles move in the presence of a magnet, so in the presence of God, who is free from any desire or motive, the three great actions of Creation, Protection and Destruction (or the five great actions of Creation, Protection, Destruction, Causing ignorance and Granting wisdom) take place. The *jeevas*, who are subject to the influence of these actions act and die in accordance with their past *karma*. Apart from this, God

<sup>10</sup> This sentence is not found as such in any Tamil text.

<sup>11</sup> This sentence is not found in any Tamil text, but is found in the English drafts in SP-20 (p.115) and SP-17 (p.18).

<sup>12</sup> Compare these last three sentences of answer XII with passage 5 of text AS and see note 6 on p.49 of *The Mountain Path*, Aradhana issue 1995.

does not possess any motive or desire. He will not be affected by any *karma*, just as the actions of earthly beings do not affect the Sun and just as the qualities of the four *bhutas*, fire, air, earth and water do not affect the Sky (Space), the fifth *bhuta*.

- XIV. *How far is it necessary for one desirous of attaining mukti to enquire into and understand the nature and functions of organs and elements comprised in the body and the universe respectively, which are non-self?*

A sweeper engaged in a shaving saloon should simply sweep away the whole quantity of hair cropped off. It is of no use to him to classify the hairs under different heads and to enquire or understand their qualities. So, one who wants to know his own true Self should simply reject as non-self all the organs and elements together. There is no necessity for him to classify them under various heads and investigate their nature or functions. The whole universe should be regarded as a dream.

- XV. *How far is the study of shastras (books on philosophy useful to mumukshus?*

In every *shastra*, it is laid down that the mind should be controlled and destroyed for attaining *mukti*. So, after knowing that the destruction of mind is the one and the same purpose of all the *shastras*, what is the use of learning *shastras* without limit? *Atmic* enquiry is required to control the mind. *Atmic* enquiry

consists in turning the mind inward into the Self. Self exists within the five *kosams* (sheaths) viz., *Annamayakosam*, *Pranamayakosam* etc. All these *kosams* have to be rejected as non-Self before enquiring who I am or what Self is. There is therefore, no use of studying books, which lie outside the five *kosams*. At one time, all book-learning will have to be forgotten.

- XVI. *What is bliss? Does it exist in Atma (Self) or in the objects of the universe?*

The very nature (*sorupam*) of *Atma* is bliss. *Atma sorupam* and bliss are not different. There is no other bliss except *Atmic* bliss. There is no bliss in any of the objects of the universe. As matter of fact, whenever our desires are fulfilled, the mind returns to its seat and enjoys only the *Atmic* bliss. But we wrongly think that we get this bliss from the objects of our desire. Similarly, in sleep, breathless shocks, and *samadi* (Self-realisation) the mind turns inward and enjoys only the *Atmic* bliss. In this manner, the mind emerges from and returns to the *Atma* incessantly. When it goes out from *Atma*, it suffers misery. The shade beneath a tree is cool. Beyond the tree, the heat of the sun is burning. One, who wanders outside, returns to the shade and enjoys the coolness. After a short time, he goes out and finding that the heat is unbearable again returns to the shade. In this manner, he goes out into the hot plain and returns to the shade again and

again. This man is an ignorant man. He is a wise man, who never leaves the shade. Similarly, the mind of a *Gnani* (one who has realised his true Self) does not leave the *Brahmam* (*Atma sorupam*). But the mind of an *agnani* (one who has not realised his self) goes out into the world and suffers misery and afterwards returns to the *Brahmam* for a short time and enjoys bliss. The *jagat* (universe) consists of only thoughts or phenomena. When the *jagat* disappears, the mind enjoys bliss; when it appears, the mind suffers misery.

XVII. *Is there no difference between the experiences of a dream and those of the waking state?*

The experiences of the waking state are firm; those of a dream are not firm. Except this, there is no difference. The transactions which occur in a dream appear to be at the time of dreaming as much real as the transactions which occur in the waking state appear to be at the time of wakefulness. Both in the waking and dreaming states, thought (memory) and phenomena (names, forms, etc) appear and disappear simultaneously.

XVIII. *Is it not possible for God and Guru to make a jeeva realise his Siva-sorupam?*

It is possible for God and *Guru* to enable *jeevas* to attain *mukti*, by showing to them the way to attain it. Everyone should, by his own effort, follow the path pointed out

by God or *Guru* and achieve *mukti*. One should know one's own true self through one's own mental eye (*gnanadhrishti*). How is it possible to know the Self through others? Is a mirror required for Rama to know that he is Rama?

XIX. *What is the meaning of gnanadhrishti or seeing through the mind's eye?*

*Gnanadhrishti* or seeing through the mind's eye means keeping the mind quiet. Keeping the mind quiet means dissolving the mind in *Atma*. *Gnanadhrishti* does not mean clairvoyance or knowing others' thoughts or occurrences of the past and future.

XX. *What is the connection between non-attachment (nirasai) and knowledge of Self (gnanam)?*

Non-attachment and *gnanam* are not different. In *gnanam* (Self-realisation or knowledge of Self), nothing appears but Self. Non-attachment means not attending to any of the affairs of the universe.

XXI. *What is the difference between vicharam (Atmic enquiry) and meditation (of Atma or Self)?*

Meditation means the thinking of one's true self as *Brahmam*, *Sachitanandam* etc. Enquiry means the concentration of the mind on one's own true Self.

XXII. *What is the meaning of offering one's ego as sacrifice to God?*

Sacrificing the ego to God means keeping the mind always engaged

in the contemplation of *Atma sorupam* and never allowing it to think of other things.

XXIII. *What is the meaning of the term, "mukti"?*

*Mukti* means knowing one's own true Self by enquiring who the person is that is in bondage. *Mukti* also means complete destruction of all traces of thoughts existing in the mind.

1. God accepts and bears all the burdens we throw upon Him.
2. Just as what is seized by the tiger will not be left uneaten, so he, on whom the *Guru* has bestowed his looks of grace, will surely be saved.
3. The more and more humble your behaviour is towards others, the better and better it is for you.
4. You may stay in any place, if only you keep your mind under control.
5. Do not hate others, however bad they may be.
6. Be detached from the affairs of the world.
7. As far as possible, do not interfere in the affairs of others.
8. Whatever one gives to others is given to oneself. Anyone who knows this truth will not fail to give.

9. Never break your word.<sup>13</sup>

10. The dictates of the *Guru* should be strictly obeyed.

11. The term "I" has two meanings. One meaning is *Atma Sorupam* (True Self), which is eternal. The other is the ego (*ahamkaram*) which has beginning and an end.<sup>14</sup>

12. As soon as the thought "I" rises, other things also rise. As soon as this "I" subsides, other things also subside.

13. There are no two minds as good and bad. There is only one mind. Its thoughts are of two kinds, good and bad. When it creates good thoughts, it is called good mind. When it creates bad thoughts, it is called bad mind.

14. A man may run forward however fast he may like. But it is difficult for him to run fast back-ward. So, the mind will work very briskly in the outward direction; but it will be difficult for it to turn and go inward.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> These words of Sri Bhagavan are also recorded in text D (stray saying 9) and text E (stray saying 8), but do not occur in any of the later texts of *Nan Yar?*

<sup>14</sup> This saying is also recorded in text AS (pasage 17), but not in any printed text of *Nan Yar?*

<sup>15</sup> This saying is also recorded in text AS (towards the end of passage 5) and text D (stray saying 1), but not in any printed text of *Nan Yar?*