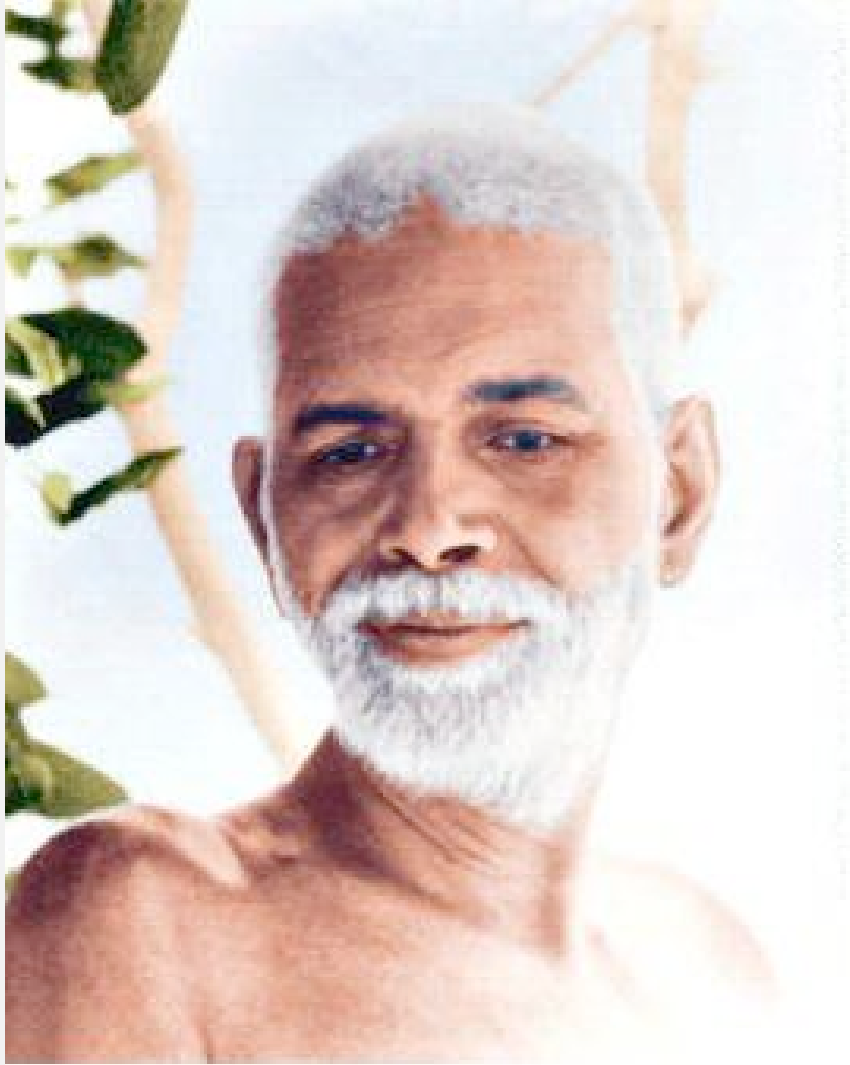


**Bytes of Wisdom
From
Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi**



**Compiled from
Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi
with commentary by
Swami Sadasivananda**



**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH RESPECTFUL THANKSGIVING
TO ARTHUR OSBORNE, WHO IN HIS LIFE OF DISCIPLESHIP TO
SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI SOUGHT TO BRING UNDERSTANDING
FOR THOSE “OF LITTLE DUST”.**



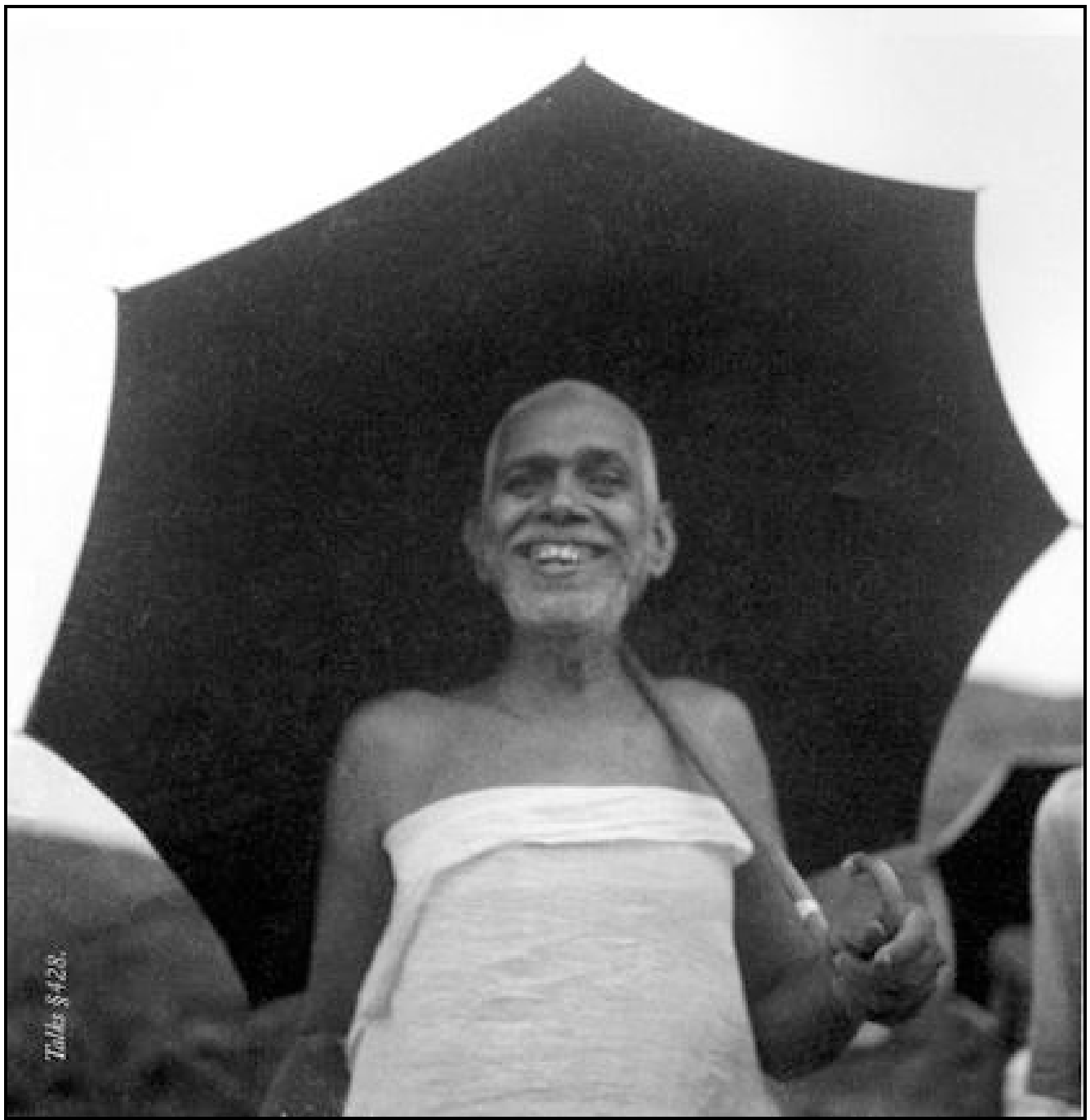
It is related (and the story is no less significant whether historically true or not) that after attaining Enlightenment the Buddha's first impulse was to abide in the effulgence of Bliss without turning back to convey the incommunicable to mankind. Then he reflected, "Some there are who are clear sighted and do not need my teachings, and some whose eyes are clouded with dust who will not heed it though given, but between these two there are also some with but *little dust* in their eyes, who can be helped to see; And for the sake of these I will go back among mankind and teach."

For Those with Little Dust, Selected Writings of Arthur Osborne, p. 85



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**Devotee: “Are we to keep anything against a rainy day;
or to live a precarious life for spiritual attainments?”**

Maharshi: “God looks after everything.”

Talk #377



First Byte from Bhagavan, Taste and See

18th June, 1935 - Talk #55

D.: Can Advaita be realized by japa of holy names; say Rama, Krishna, etc.?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is it not a means of an inferior order?

M.: Have you been told to make japa or to discuss its order in the scheme of things?

Many who lived with Bhagavan during his physical sojourn on Earth said that he embodied the purest simplicity, truth and tradition. Although his guidance was a revelation of Universal Truth, he brought each of his followers to a unique experience of God in their journey toward the realization of the Self.

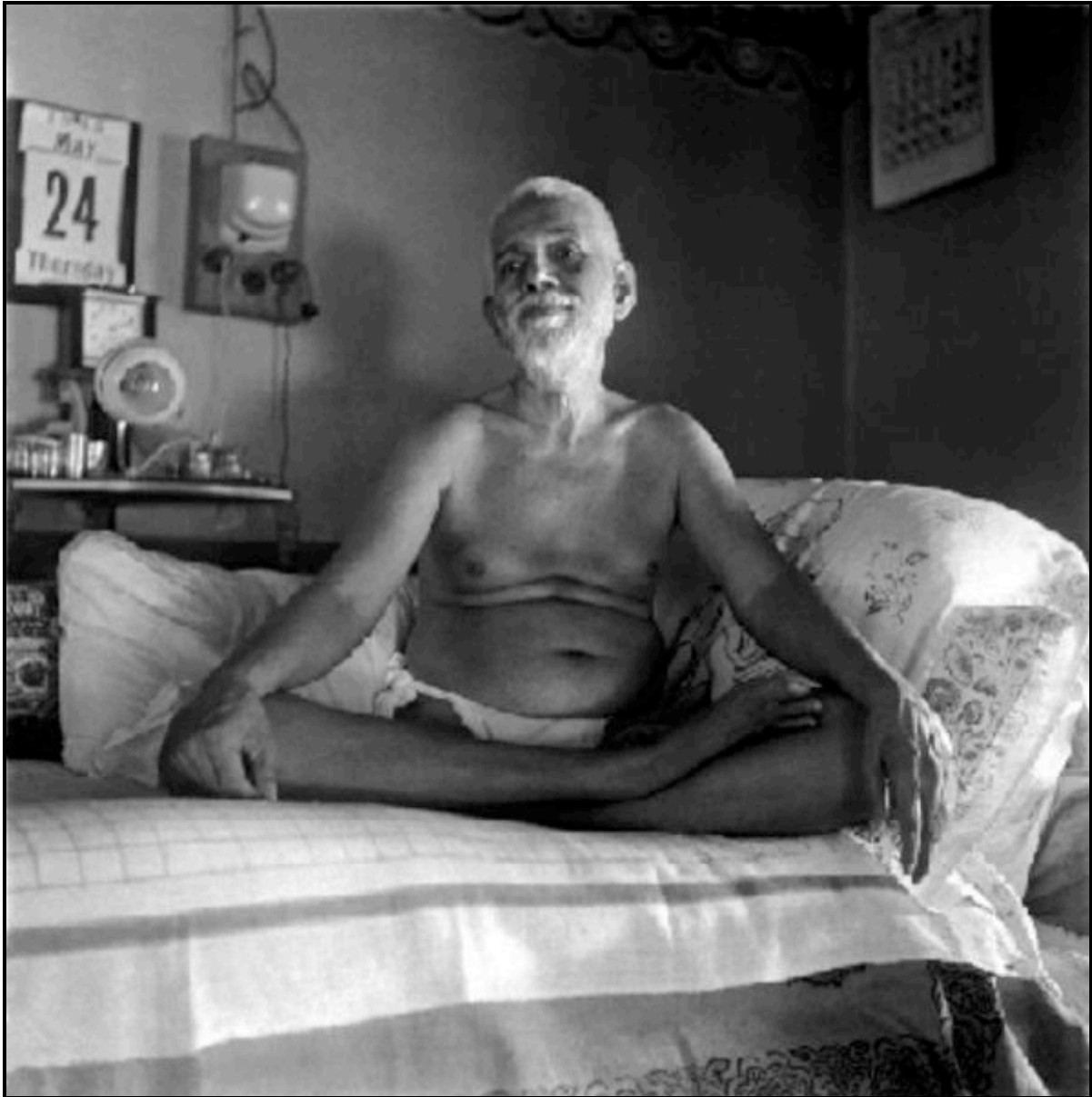
His traditional approach embraced the teaching of the Rishis, including the use of the Name of God as a means of divine ascent. In the diaries of Muruganar Swami, called *Padamalai*, he says:

“Though Bhagavan rarely gave out mantras, when he did, he generally recommended “Siva, Siva’. Muruganar himself was given this mantra by Bhagavan, as were several other devotees including Annamalai Swami, the brother of Rangan (who was one of Bhagavan’s childhood friends), and also an unknown harijan.”

Muruganar continues, making special note of Bhagavan’s teachings regarding the use of mantras:

“Through grace, Padam (Muruganar’s epithet for Bhagavan) ensures that there is never any danger to those who remain in their heart, meditating ‘Sivaya Nama’.”

Although these disciples daily bathed in the spiritual effulgence of Bhagavan’s presence, through his instruction to make japa in meditation, they learned to invoke and taste the Divine Flavor of the Name of God. Taste and see!



**“Love and devotion to God are a bridge
across the abyss to Salvation.”**

Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge p.174



Bhagavan on Trusting in the Divine

28th March, 1935 - Talk #43

Mr. Raghaviah: Men of the world that we are, we have some kind of grief or another and do not know how to get over it. We pray to God and still are not satisfied. What can we do?

Maharshi: Trust God.

Those who live and move with Sri Ramana Maharshi, even though he has shed the physical body, are guided by the polestar of his Perennial Philosophy of “making the mind to bear on God”. (Talk #164) God, in His infinite wisdom, incarnates as an Avatar again and again to show us that the choice is not which method to use to achieve this, but rather which method to use first. Each path is designed to effect unique results that taken all together are essential for ultimate success. One path leads to the next, and they mutually nourish each other along the way.

Is it not for this reason that Bhagavan points us toward the external manifestations of God at the onset of our approach to the illumination of the Self within? If we are to really follow him, then we surely ought to follow his guidance. He prayed to and worshiped the Lord in the form of Arunachala. He points us to the Divine Mother, physically present in the Yantra he himself consecrated. He urges us to read the Bhagavad Gita daily, wherein God Himself declares: “Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me. You shall come even to Me; truly do I promise unto you, (for) you are dear to Me.” (*Gita 18:65*)

In our search to discover “Who we are” Sri Ramana urges us to seek from “Whence we are”, thus he directs our minds and hearts to a God in the flesh.

For we must meet and draw close to God first, in order to truly trust Him.



“Mental japa is very good. That helps meditation. Mind gets identified with the repetition and then you get to know what worship (puja) really is - the losing of one’s individuality in that which is worshipped.”

Talk #31



By practice does Bhagavan mean meditation?

22nd March, 1937 - Talk #377

A middle-aged Andhra visitor: A man is said to be divine. Why then does he have regrets?

M.: Divinity refers to the essential nature. The regrets are of Prakriti.

D.: How is one to overcome regrets? M.: By realising the Divinity in him.

D.: How? M.: By practice.

D.: What kind of practice? M.: Meditation.

D.: Mind is not steady while meditating. M.: It will be all right by practice.

D.: How is the mind to be steadied? M.: By strengthening it.

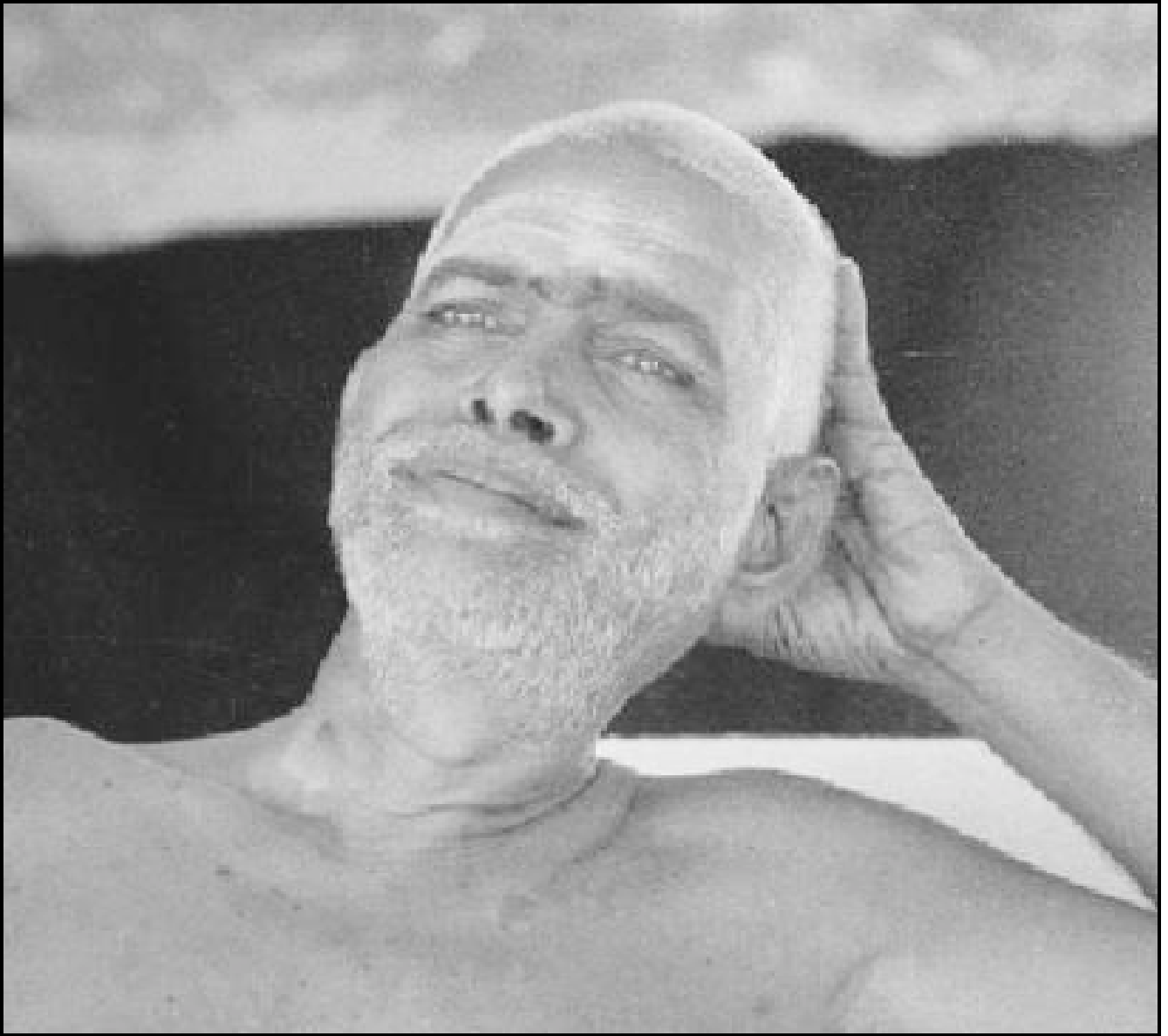
D.: How to strengthen it? M.: It grows strong by satsanga (the company of the wise).

D.: Shall we add prayers, etc.? M.: Yes.

No matter how many times Sri Ramana Maharshi stressed the need for meditation, there will always be those who declare that he never told people to meditate. But these same people are not to be condemned; for they suffer from the same contagious dilemma we all suffer from - human nature. May I cite two scriptural sources for this seemingly outrageous statement? First is from the Bhagavatam, in the Udhaav Parva, where one of the mind-born sons of Brahma declares that death is *pramada*, literally defined as “the willful indifference to the consequences of ignoring God.” Thus, Bhagavan urges for the Divine to be realized *within*, and the means he stressed in the above quote was meditation (universally said to be the best way not only to avoid ignoring God, but to be acutely aware of His Presence). The second, and possibly more to the point, is Terry Pratchett’s fourth Discworld Novel *Mort*. Here Mort inquires of Death why people don’t see Him. Death, with a definably wistful air of sadness responds, “Though they all know that I am part of the arrangement, they refuse to accept what they don’t want to see.”

By Divine Grace, Sri Ramana Maharshi and so many Saints and Sages, are also parts of the arrangement. But they are not afflicted by the contagion of humanity’s wants and dislikes. Bhagavan especially did not preach, nor did he seem to express sadness over the “human condition”. Nonetheless, he wept for his Lord Arunachala, he wept over personal human tragedy, he wept to the point of exhaustion while reading about the dedicated practice and sacrifice of the Saints. And having assumed our human form, he definitely did urge ‘those who had ears to hear’ to find and merge with the source of peace and love and the Divine “small still voice within”. He taught the ‘way that makes us perfect’ within the tradition to which he took birth. Those who have ‘ears to hear’ understand his guidance when he says:

“Practice makes us perfect.”



**"Grace is always there,
it is only you who have to make yourself receptive to it."**

Talk #27



How to seek the Grace of God

December 25th. 1935 - Talk #116

Devotee: Jiva is said to be bound by karma. Is it so?

Maharshi: Let karma enjoy its fruits. As long as you are the doer so long are you the enjoyer.

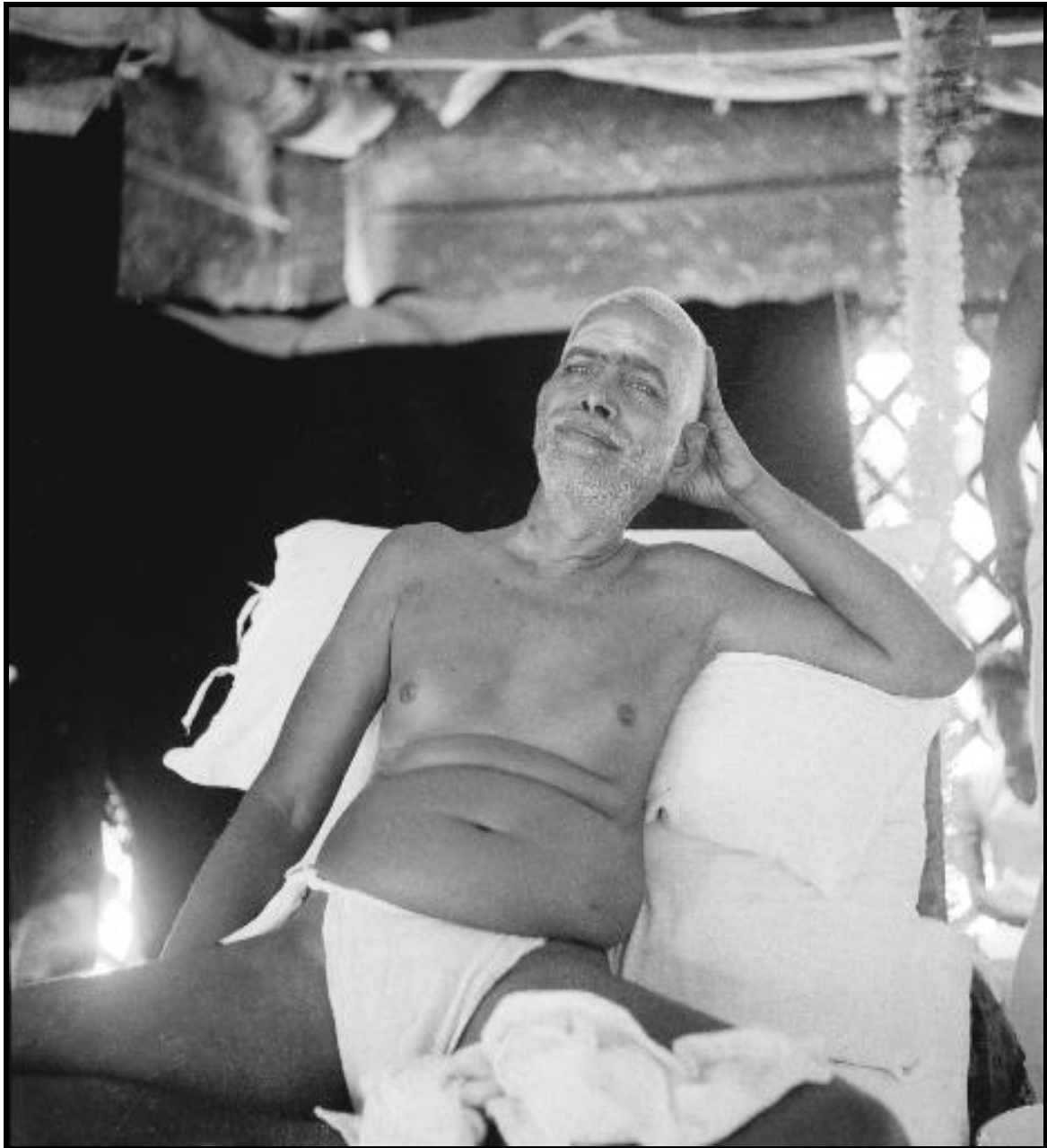
D.: How to get released from karma.

M.: See whose karma it is. You will find you are not the doer. Then you will be free. This requires grace of God for which you should pray to Him, worship Him and meditate on Him.

It was once said by Arthur Osborne, a close disciple of Bhagavan, that what was begun with Sri Ramakrishna ended with Sri Ramana Maharshi. In the process of this wealth of spiritual unfoldment we are guided with the simplest eloquence of grace. For they both were well aware that we have incarnated in the age of -what? Shall we say “Kali Yuga - age of darkest ignorance” or be more persuasive and admit to the “final times” where the Creator admits that mankind has messed up His project to the point of having to start over.

Really, never. For as Paramhansa Yogananda declared: “God never denies us, we deny Him.” So no matter how hard of a time God has in trying to spoon feed us, He keeps His cool, remaining as patient as a Mother. So now, by Divine patience, enters Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Sri Ramakrishna said: “The Grace of God is blowing in the wind, our job is to unfurl our sail and catch it.” Sri Ramana Maharshi *attempted* to clarify for us just what unfurling your sail might mean. In order to free ourselves from incarnations of falling short of the goal, Bhagavan definitively states that such freedom requires grace of God for which we catch hold of by “praying to Him, worshipping Him and meditating on Him”.



D.: What is Guru's Grace? How does it work?

M.: Guru is the Self. D.: How does it lead to realization?

M.: *Isvaro gururatmeti* (God is the same as Guru and Self).

A person begins with dissatisfaction. Not content with the world he seeks satisfaction of desires by prayers to God; his mind is purified; he longs to know God more than to satisfy his carnal desires. Then God's Grace begins to manifest."

Talk #198



How to spell God

10th June, 1936 - Talk #198

Bhagavan: “Turn your vision inward and then the whole world will be full of Supreme Spirit. The world is said to be illusion. Illusion is really Truth. Even the material sciences trace the origin of the universe to some one primordial matter - subtle, exceedingly subtle. God is the same both to those who say the world is real and to their opponents. Their outlook is different. You need not entangle yourself in such disputations. The goal is one and the same for all. Look to it.”

Remember when we were children and our Mother taught us how to spell our first word? Every Mother in the world, as did every Mother from all the worlds, would use the same method. “Look to it!”

Yes my dear, she would say, look straight at it and understand first to recognize what it is. Once you comprehend its form *and could say it's name*, and knew the purpose for which it exists, you will then easily learn to spell it correctly. And remember when we decided to fool our mother, and ourselves, by making a wild guess? Yes, then the sweetest goal of life at that age was withheld - chocolate.

Now that we are all ‘grown up’ is the method of recognizing and comprehending the most significant Word in creation any different? It is no small wonder that within the Orthodox Jewish tradition that Word is spelled G-d. With devotion and astute wisdom they have been shown by the Universal Mother, the Queen of the Sabbath, that worshipful reverence is due to the One primordial Creator of matter. And He is indeed subtle, exceedingly subtle.

Though being subtle to the point of being beyond description, this Lord can be known by direct experience through remembrance of His Name.

All of the *Semitic* (literally meaning *Name-based*) faiths that include Hindu, Jewish, Christian and some sects of Islamic they teach the way to knowledge of God through prayers and repetition of His Name. All of their scriptures declare; “God and His Name are one.”

When this truth is cultivated by being put into practice, as Bhagavan Ramana declares, “the mind is purified”.

When in possession of a purified mind, and longing to know God above all else, God Himself will teach us how to spell His Name.



**"They say that I am dying but I am not going away.
Where could I go? I am here."**

Sri Ramana Maharshi



Transcending both Will and Fate

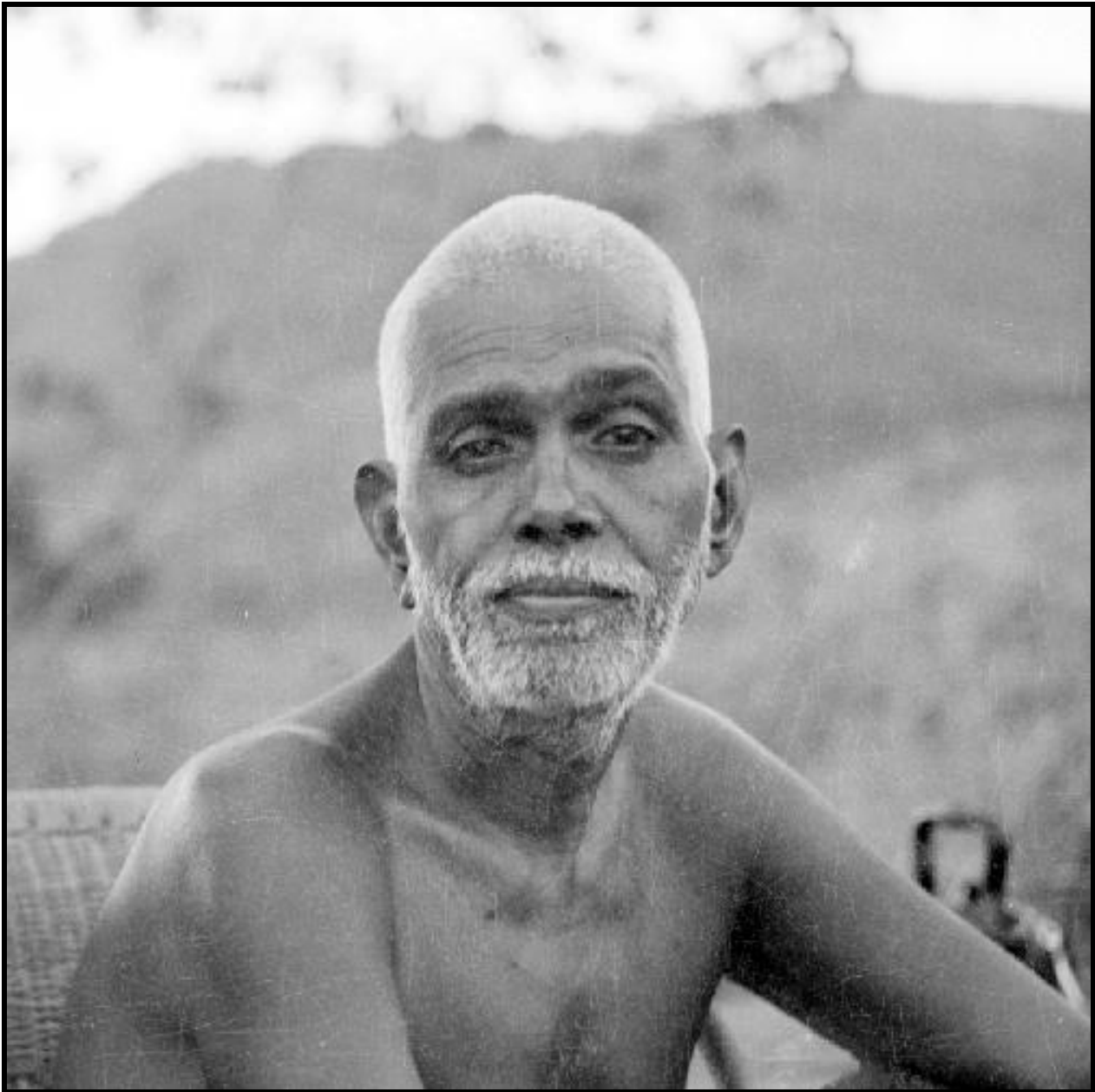
19th June, 1936 - Talk #209

M.: “Whose will is it? ‘It is mine’, you may say. You are beyond will and fate. Abide as that and you transcend them both. That is the meaning of conquering destiny by will. Fate can be conquered. Fate is the result of past actions. By association with the wise the bad tendencies are conquered. One’s experiences are then viewed to their proper perspective... Free-will is implied in the scriptural injunctions to be good. It implies overcoming fate. It is done by wisdom. The fire of wisdom consumes all actions. Wisdom is acquired by association with the wise, or rather, its mental atmosphere.”

During the months of Sri Ramana Maharshi’s final illness in 1950, the attendant, who always remained by his bedside, asked Bhagavan if he was in much pain. The attendant’s hearing prolonged groaning coming from Bhagavan invoked this question. In response, the Maharshi replied: “The sound of groaning is the body following its nature, “I” am untouched and unaffected.” He had conquered fate. In the quote from *Talks* above, Bhagavan clearly guides us to the source of the profound wisdom, which transcends even the most abject physical suffering. “Wisdom is acquired by association with the wise, or rather, its mental atmosphere.” God only knows who will have the good fortune to be in the company of the truly wise. And even if such blessings come to us, how long will they remain? And furthermore, when we are in the “mental atmosphere” of blessedness, will we be receptive to it? Bhagavan declared: "Grace is always there, it is only you who have to make yourself receptive to it."⁽¹⁾ Being physically present within the transforming grace of association with the wise is not a magic potion. We must put forth effort to receive the “transmission” from the wise. To understand this, perhaps we should refer to one of the close disciples of Bhagavan, when he was pondering this very subject: "To do this constitutes the effort of which the teachers and scriptures speak. The mind has created the obstruction; the mind has to remove it. But merely to recognize this, to recognize, that is to say, that the ego is (according to the *Advaitin* or non-dualist) an illusory self or (according to the dualist) a creation of the Spirit, to which it should be totally submissive and passive, is far from constituting the full effort required. Indeed, it increases the obligation for total effort and therefore, so to speak, the guilt in not making effort."⁽²⁾

1. *Be Still, It Is The Wind That Sings*, Arthur Osborne, p. 74

2. *Ibid*, p. 73



Devotee: “I am afraid if I continue like this I shall go to hell.”

**Bhagavan, the Ocean of Compassion without Reason,
tenderly replied:**

“If you do Bhagavan will go after you and bring you back.”

Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge, p.172



Lifetimes of avoiding Bhagavan's Straight Talk!

29th August, 1936 - Talk #241.

D.: How to avoid misery? M.: Has misery a shape? Misery is only unwanted thought. The mind is not strong enough to resist it. D.: How to gain such strength of mind? M.: By worship of God. D.: Meditation of the God of Immanence is hard to understand. M.: Leave God alone. Hold your Self. D.: How to do japa (repetition of mantras)? M.: It is of two kinds - gross and subtle. The latter is meditation on it, and it gives strength to the mind. D.: But the mind does not get steady for meditation. M.: It is due to lack of strength.

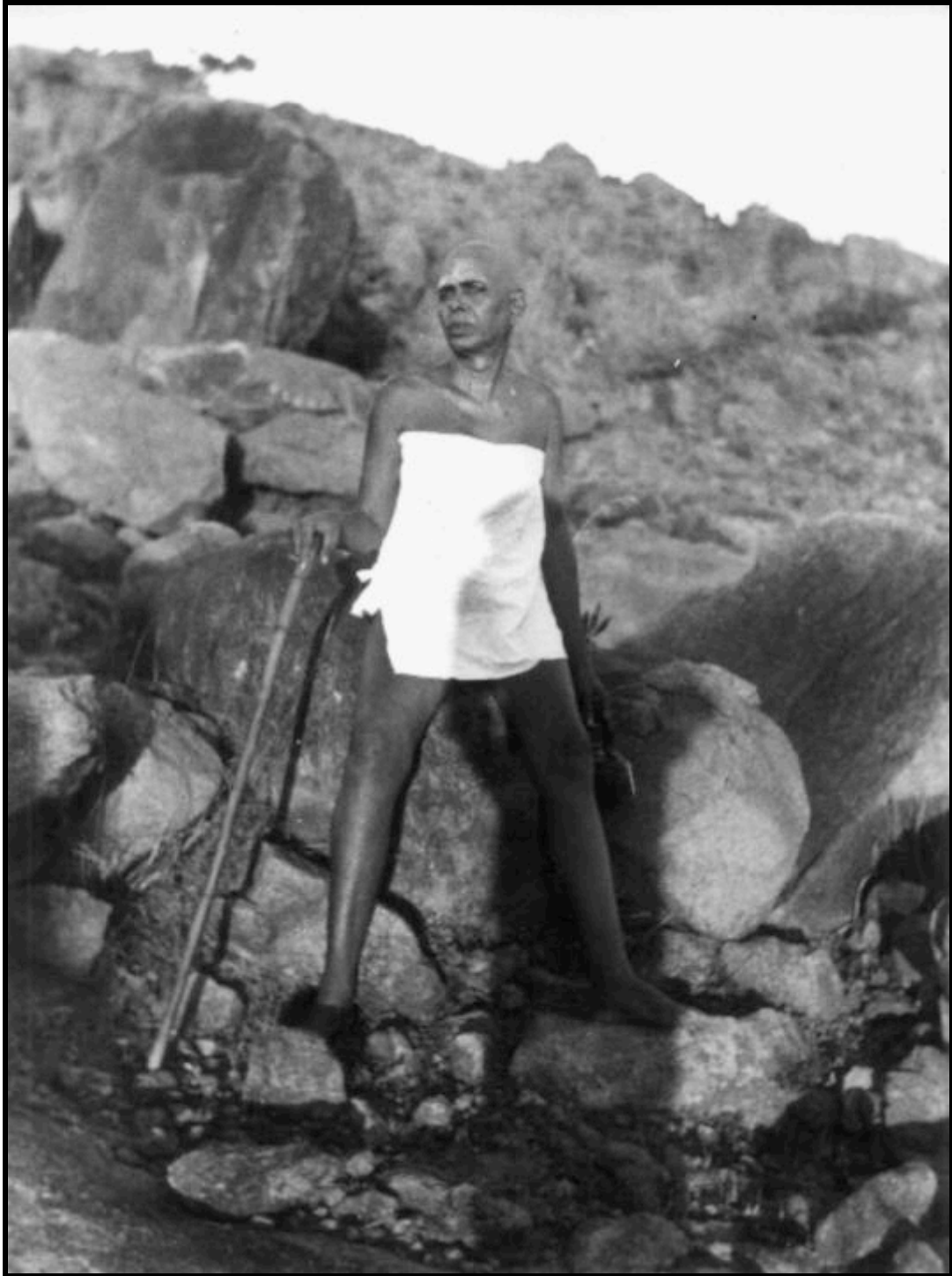
D.: Sandhya is usually done mechanically. Similarly other religious duties. Is it useful? Is it not better to do japa, etc., knowing their meanings?

M.: Um! Um!

Bhagavan's teaching was indeed practical guidance, and exclusively that. He shunned theoretical explanations, and when the questioner persisted in theorizing, Bhagavan would end the line of inquiry by politely saying: "Um! Um!" as shown above, or out rightly declaring: "Enough!"

As Arthur Osborne has said: "Bhagavan kept turning the questioner to practical considerations of sadhana, of the path to be followed. It was that and only that he was here to teach!" Moreover, Bhagavan kept turning the questioner to devotion, worship, and finally an experience of God. The basic premises of the main tenets of Hinduism were the means that Bhagavan employed to guide the faithful to the experience and realization of the Divine. His teaching was never complicated, though many tried to make it so. Perhaps the section from Talks, above, demonstrates how the vagaries of our human minds try to avoid simple, straight talk. As all of the Saints and their scriptures declare, from Buddha to Bhagavan and beyond, the trouble with us (all the trouble in the world) is with unwanted thoughts, and the habits they are built upon. Sri Ramana's whole life and teaching directs us to first face up to this fact and then set about changing our minds. Bhagavan tells us to resist the rascally mind by the strength that comes from practical, not theoretical, surrender to God. Therefore our first, and most significant, prayer to him should be: "How is it done?" and even more, "Please make me want to do it!" His method was, and is, the way that leads to perfection and stillness through meditation and inner inquiry resulting in direct experience of the Divine. Quite frankly, we all have avoided this practice for lifetimes, for why else would we still be being taught it? Having come under his guidance, let us now arise and face Him who says:

"In the Bhagavad Gita it is said that it is the nature of the mind to wander. One must bring one's thoughts to bear on God. By long practice the mind is controlled and made steady." Talk #91



**“Christ-consciousness and Self-Realization
are all the same.”**

Talk #88



Bhagavan on Jesus, His Cross and our own Resurrection

6th November, 1935 - Talk #86

“The Master gave the true significance of the Christian faith thus: Christ is the ego. The Cross is the body. When the ego is crucified, and it perishes, what survives is the Absolute Being (God), (cf. “I and my Father are one”) and this glorious survival is called Resurrection.”

When Bhagavan was a young lad, he possessed two books. One was a traditional collection of hymns and prayers to be recited throughout the week. The second was the Holy Bible. It is said that even before his experience of Self-illumination at age 16, he was a lover of all things Divine. This innate devotion to God and His Saints manifested in the heart of Bhagavan in the purest form; unfettered simplicity.

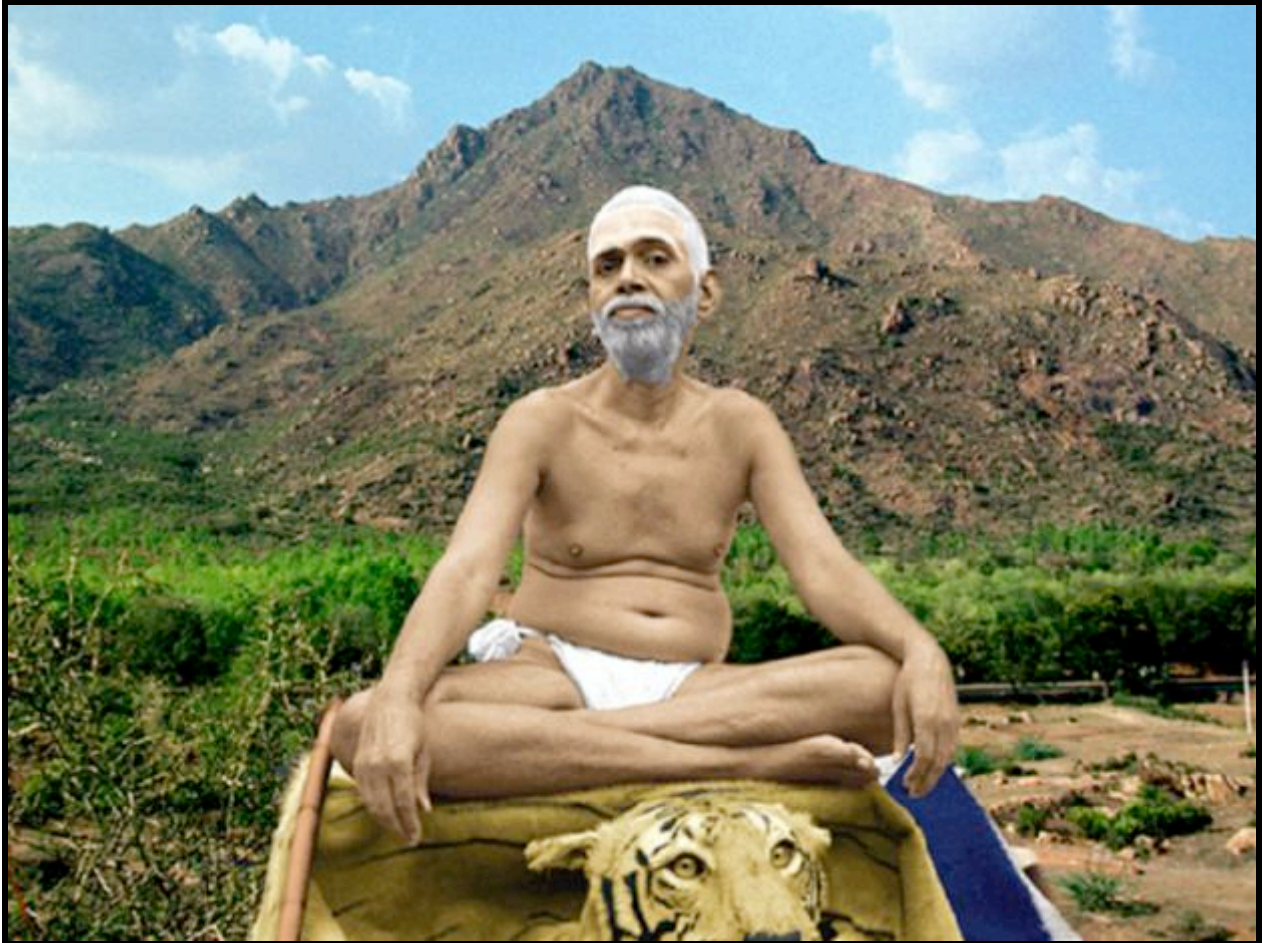
It is no wonder then; in the latter years of his life he retained this unique and naked simplicity in guiding us to understand the most profound Truth of human achievement. In 1935, Bhagavan Ramana declared:

“If told the simple truth - ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is within you’ - mankind is not satisfied and will read complex and far-fetched meanings in such statements.

Mature minds alone can grasp the simple Truth in all its nakedness.”

Talk #96

If we can only maintain an unfettered and simple approach to his guidance, without succumbing to the human urge to complicate the Truth with far-fetched meanings, we will surely attain the glorious survival of our own Resurrection.



“Let each one mind his business. All will be well.”

Talk #161



Sri Ramana Maharshi's advise to us all:

“Stop Killing Yourself!”

15th June, 1935 - Talk 53

D.: “Is it right that we kill other lives, e.g., mosquitoes, bugs?”

M.: “Everyone is a suicide. The eternal, blissful, and natural state has been smothered by this life of ignorance. In this way the present life is due to the killing of the eternal, pristine Being. Is it not a case of suicide? So then, everyone is a suicide. Why worry about murders and killing?”

Although one of the hallmarks of Bhagavan's teaching is its profound simplicity, we are nevertheless faced with a great task at hand.

We must come to understand exactly what he means when he uttered that most simple statement: “Let each one mind his business. All will be well.”

As humans, whose “natural state has been smothered by this life of ignorance”, our duty is to arise out of the stifling darkness which the Buddha simply called ‘wrong awareness.’ What is to be done?

Without succumbing to the urge of theoretical explanation, we can safely arrive at the answer by listening to those who lived with the Maharshi and were awakened by his practical guidance. Arthur Osborne said: “Bhagavan kept turning the questioner to practical considerations of sadhana, of the path to be followed. It was that and only that he was here to teach!”

Bhagavan teaches, and by grace we are taught. We must first face life squarely, and then properly *respond* to it. The path to life, and the abandonment of ‘our suicide’, lies within the effort to abide within ‘right awareness’. Bhagavan's sadhana that Arthur Osborne refers to, is the daily effort to overcome the ‘death’ of the habitual behavior of the Grim Reaper, called the human mind. Bhagavan warns us not to consider this formidable foe as an illusion. Thus he declares:

“The obstacles that hinder realization are habits of the mind (vasanas), and the aids to realization are the teachings of the scriptures and of realized souls.”

Talk #13

Let those who have ears to hear, hear!



**“The ego is the root of all diseases. Give it up.
There will be no disease.”**

Talk #164



Happily accepting the gift of God in the form of illness

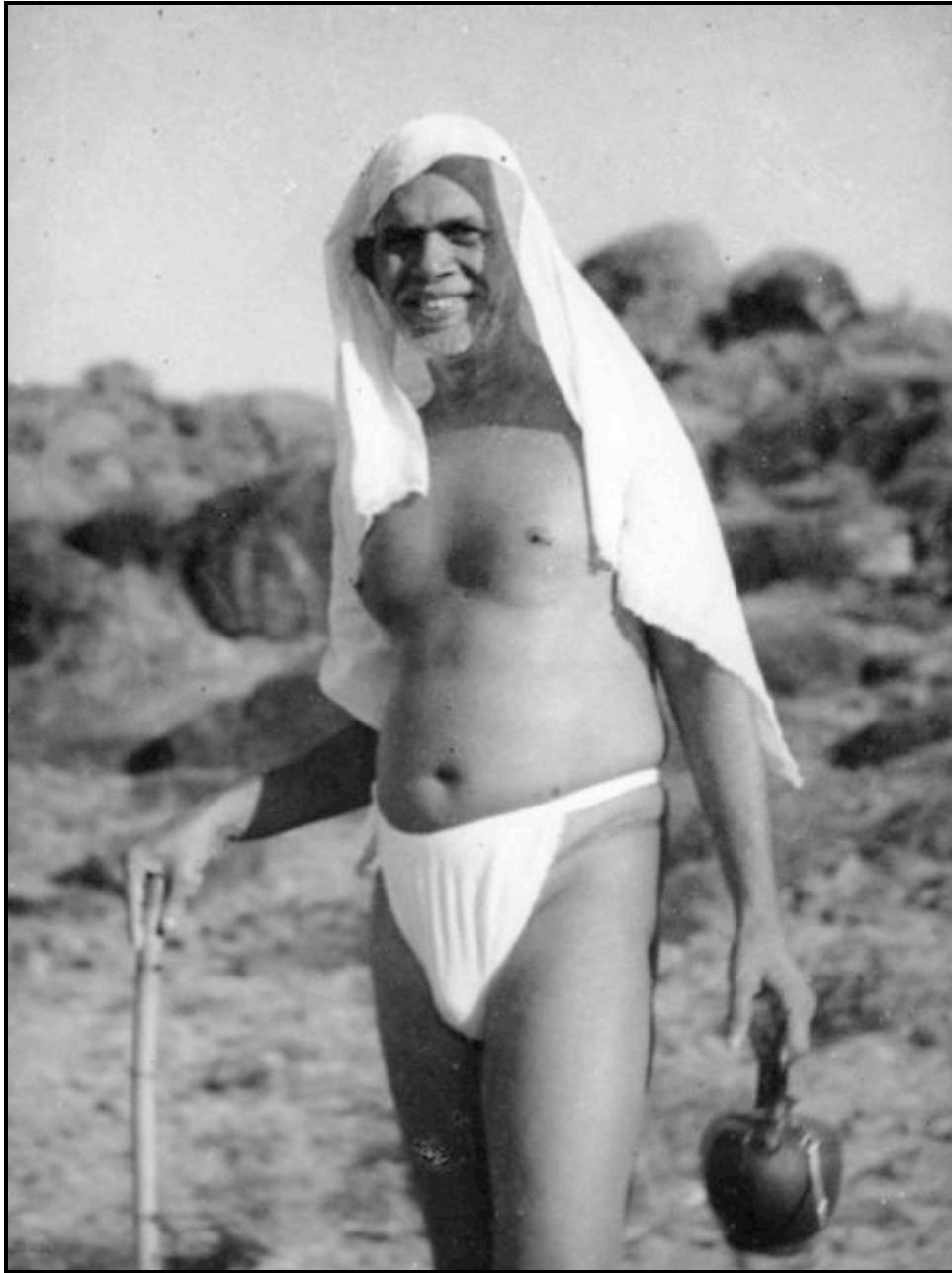
16th December, 1936 - Talk #295

M.: “Your nature is happiness. You say that is not apparent. See what obstructs you from your true being. It is pointed out to you that the obstruction is the wrong identity. Eliminate the error. The patient must himself take the medicine prescribed by the doctor in order that he may be cured of his illness.

D.: “The patient is too weak to help himself and places himself unconditionally in the hands of the doctor.

M.: “The doctor must be given a free hand and the patient must only remain quiet without saying anything. Similarly keep quiet. That is effortlessness.”

It has been said that illness is one of the most potent gifts of God's grace. Such grace is a veritable medicine for the soul. It is also a known fact that those to whom illness has laid prostrate will be the last to admit it as a gift of love. Bhagavan's guidance is simple and straightforward, whether in the realm of a Guru or a Doctor. The medicine that cures our wrong perception of life can also invoke true happiness, if we would only give up trying to modify the prescription with our own muddled up habits. To give the physician a free hand can be a bitter pill, if we do not keep quiet and let be.



“Ishta Devata and Guru are aids - very powerful aids on this path. But an aid to be effective requires your effort also. Your effort is a sine qua non. It is you who should see the sun. Can spectacles and the sun see for you? You yourself have to see your true nature. Not much aid is required for doing it!”

Talk #28



Sri Ramana on Spiritual Effort

“Can the ego, which is in bondage as the mind, become the Divine Self simply because it has once glimpsed that it is the Self? Is this not impossible without the destruction of the mind? Can a beggar become a king by simply visiting a king and declaring himself one?”

“Realization takes time to steady itself. The Self is certainly within the experience of everyone but not in the way people imagine. One can only say that it is as it is... Owing to the fluctuation of the vasanas (inherent qualities). Realization takes time to steady itself. Spasmodic Realization is not enough to prevent rebirth, but it cannot become permanent as long as there are vasanas... But if this is to be established further effort is necessary.” *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi, p. 177.*

But even if effort is necessary, why a guru, some ask? Once one grants that the Sages knew what they were talking about when they said spiritual attainment is an arduous path beset with dangers, it should be obvious that it is safer to be guided on it by one who has gone before and knows the way. That is one explanation; another is that the guru is a person of power. Grace flows through him to strengthen and support his followers. This can hold true for the simple guide or teacher to the highest *jagat guru* (world teacher). The prerequisite for both is that they know the way from traveling on it, never by just talking about it. Bhagavan Ramana was no exception. The Maharshi firmly declared to one who said that he never did sadhana or had a guru, “How do you know that I did not have a guru and did great effort, whether in this life or in one previous?”

Bhagavan said that in the final sense “God and Guru are one.” This is not said to glorify and enthrone a human guru as a God. But more to firmly reiterate that the work at hand is beyond human capacity. To demonstrate this Sri Sarada Devi said, “The power of the Guru enters into the disciple and the power of the disciple enters into the Guru. That is why when I initiate and accept the sins of the disciple I fall sick. It is extremely difficult to be a Guru. But, my child, I was born for this purpose. If I do not accept others’ sins and sorrows and do not digest them who else will?”

(Some of the above is paraphrased from a writing of Arthur Osborne).



Devotee: “Bhagavan’s Grace is needed in order that meditation should become effortless.”

Bhagavan replied: “Practice is necessary, there is Grace.”

Guru Ramana p. 76



Bhagavan's first Nobel Truth – Right Awareness

Talk #27

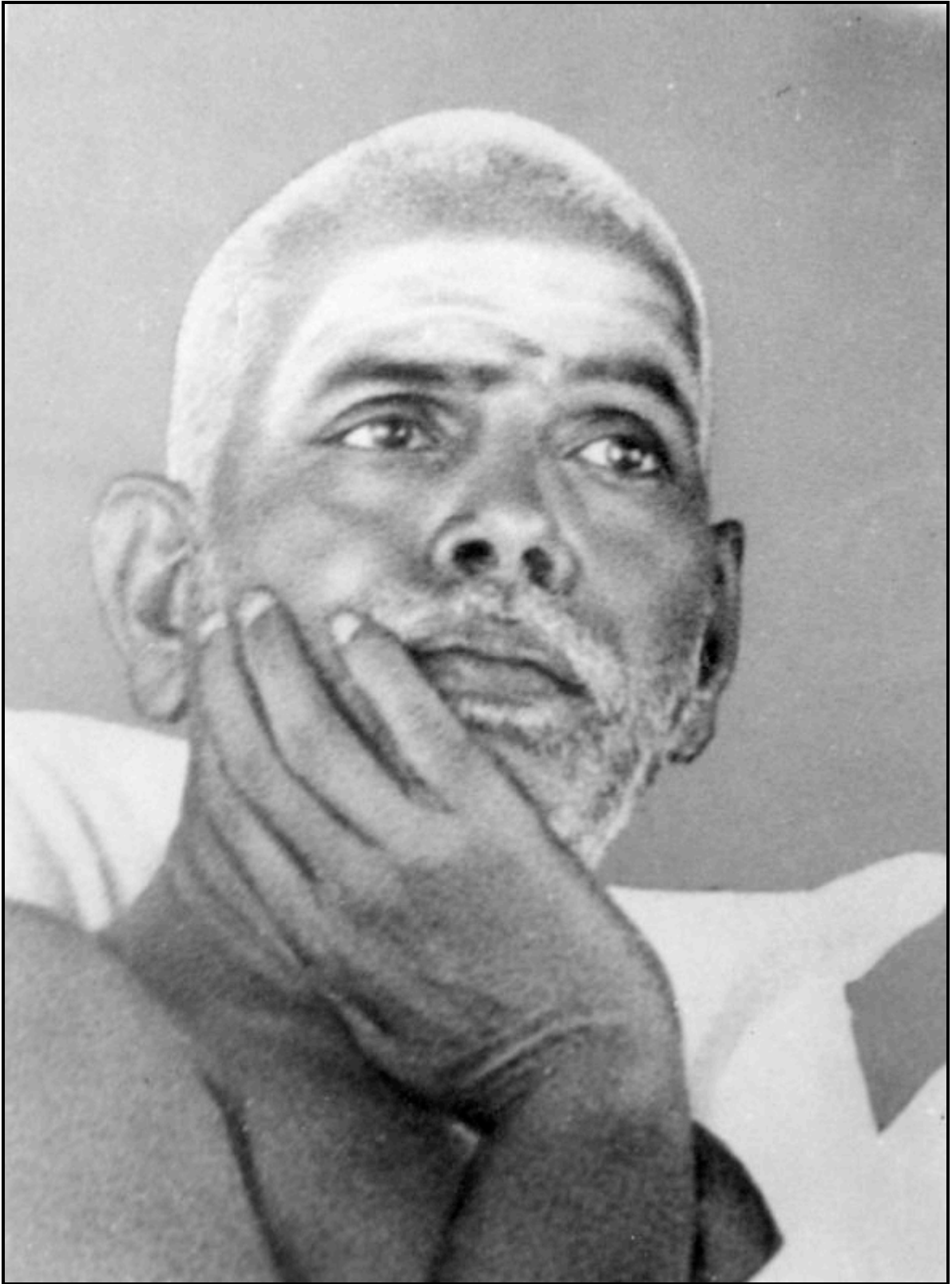
“The ebbs and flows of the consciousness, which constant practice renders increasingly perceptible to the meditator, gradually loosen the consciousness from the body and end by separating them in samadhi, so that the sadhaka (spiritual practitioner) is enabled to perceive the consciousness alone and pure. This is the Self, God the Absolute.”

A serious practitioner might surely reflect on how one can possibly become receptive to Grace. For even the Upanishads declare that Grace reveals Itself only to whom It pleases. Grace acts without provocation. It is for this reason that one of the Names of the Divine Mother is “She who is an ocean of compassion without reason”. We do not, and many Saints agree that we cannot, invoke the Grace of God by human effort.

But, in reality, acts of prayer transcend the realm of human effort, for prayers are in truth, a mutual undertaking between the human and the Divine. Prayer, and its deepest counterpart, meditation, have been defined thus: “Prayer is when we talk and God listens. Meditation is when God talks and we listen.” Once we accept this Truth, we must recognize the necessity of refining our awareness towards increasingly perceiving what God is trying to tell us. Bhagavan Ramana, in the above quote, is also trying to tell us what we must achieve. This first Nobel Truth of Bhagavan's way, is to become aware of mercurial ebbs and flows of our mind, the state of which constitutes our consciousness. By constant practice to sit out the currents of the mind within meditation, we strive to perceive That which stirs the depths of our hearts and souls - Absolute God. When we touch the depths of the Ocean of Compassion within meditation, we awaken to its embrace.

If there can be a final word on the need for us to become still within meditation, and perceive that transforming Hand of God in samadhi, let Bhagavan have the final word:

“Unless Thou extendest Thy hand of grace in mercy and embrace me,
I am lost, O Arunachala.” *Marital Garland of Letters, verse 51*



**“The thought of God is Divine Favour! He is by nature Grace (*prasad* or *arul*). It is by God’s Grace that you think of God.”
Maharshi smiles and all devotees laugh together.**

Talk #29



Bhagavan on how to see God

Talk #244

D.: Is not destiny due to past karma? M.: If one is surrendered to God, God will look to it.

D.: This being God's dispensation, how does God undo it? M.: All are in Him only.

D.: How is God to be seen? M.: Within. If the mind is turned inward God manifests as inner consciousness.

D.: God is in all - in all the objects we see around us. They say we should see God in all of them.

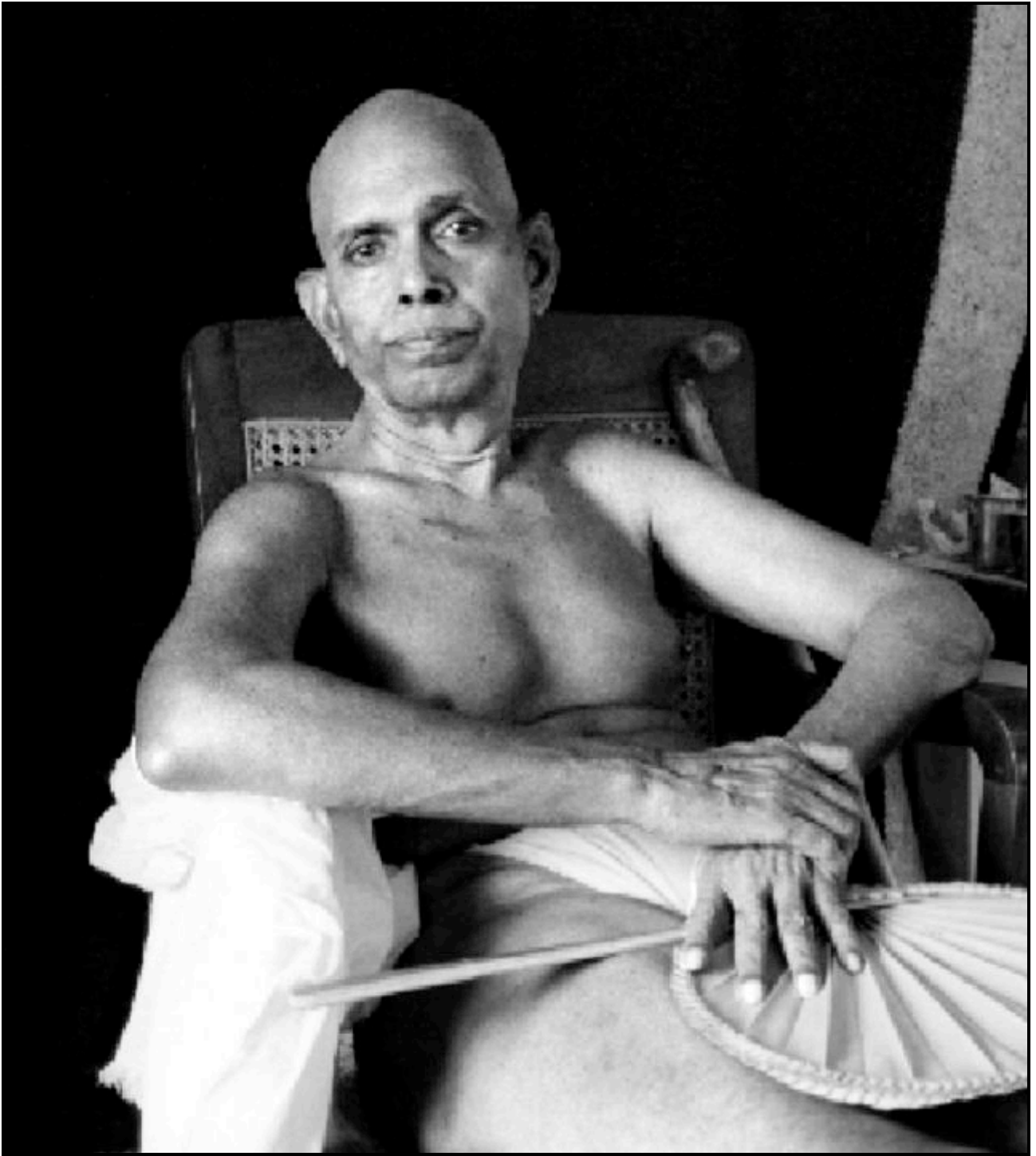
M.: God is in all and in the seer. Where else can God be seen? He cannot be found outside. He should be felt within. To see the objects, mind is necessary. To conceive God in them is a mental operation. But that is not real. The consciousness within, purged of the mind, is felt as God.

Many who have lived with Sri Ramana Maharshi said that the crown jewel of his teaching was its crystal clear simplicity. But Bhagavan never theorized, and as Arthur Osborne declared, he always turned the questioner to *sadhana* - the path to be followed. For those attracted to spirituality, this is where they must begin. The clever ego although, which attempts to insure its survival at all costs, has no problem adopting the cloak of spirituality, as Bhagavan says, "like the thief pretending to be the policeman." This human foible is deterred by a spiritual guide, and for this reason (among many others), Masters like Bhagavan Ramana have come into this world

With such a deluded mindset, the first prerequisite is to trivialize any direct implication towards *sadhana* made by Bhagavan. So bear with me if I suggest that perhaps "most" who read the above quote gave minimal thought to the fact that Bhagavan is giving clear direction to the arduous task placed before anyone who seriously attempts to "**purge** their consciousness of the mind".

If we were sitting before Bhagavan, in the Ashram's old hall, and if we had the great good fortune to have him notice that we were serious and sought his direction that would transform our lives, what might he say to us? Perhaps we can use the experience of those who did sit before him and wrote down for us what he said.

"Upon entering at the old hall where Bhagavan sat daily, he would instruct us to sit in a place where he could watch us as we meditated!"



**“If you make your outlook that of wisdom,
you will find the world to be God.
Without knowing the Supreme Spirit (*Brahman*),
how will you find His all-pervasiveness?”**

Talk #1



Bhagavan on the most essential state – A Strong and Pure Mind Talk #91

D.: “What is the meaning of the strength of the mind?

M.: Its ability to concentrate on one thought without being distracted.

D.: How is that achieved?

M.: By practice. A devotee concentrates on God; a seeker, follower of the jnana-marga, seeks the Self. The practice is equally difficult for both.

D.: Even if the mind is brought to bear on the search for the Self, after a long struggle the mind begins to elude him and the man is not aware of the mischief until after some time.

M.: So it would be. In the earlier stages the mind reverts to the search at long intervals; with continued practice it reverts at shorter intervals until finally it does not wander at all. It is then that the dormant sakti manifests. The satvic mind is free from thoughts whereas the rajasic mind is full of them. The sattvic mind resolves itself into the Life-current.”

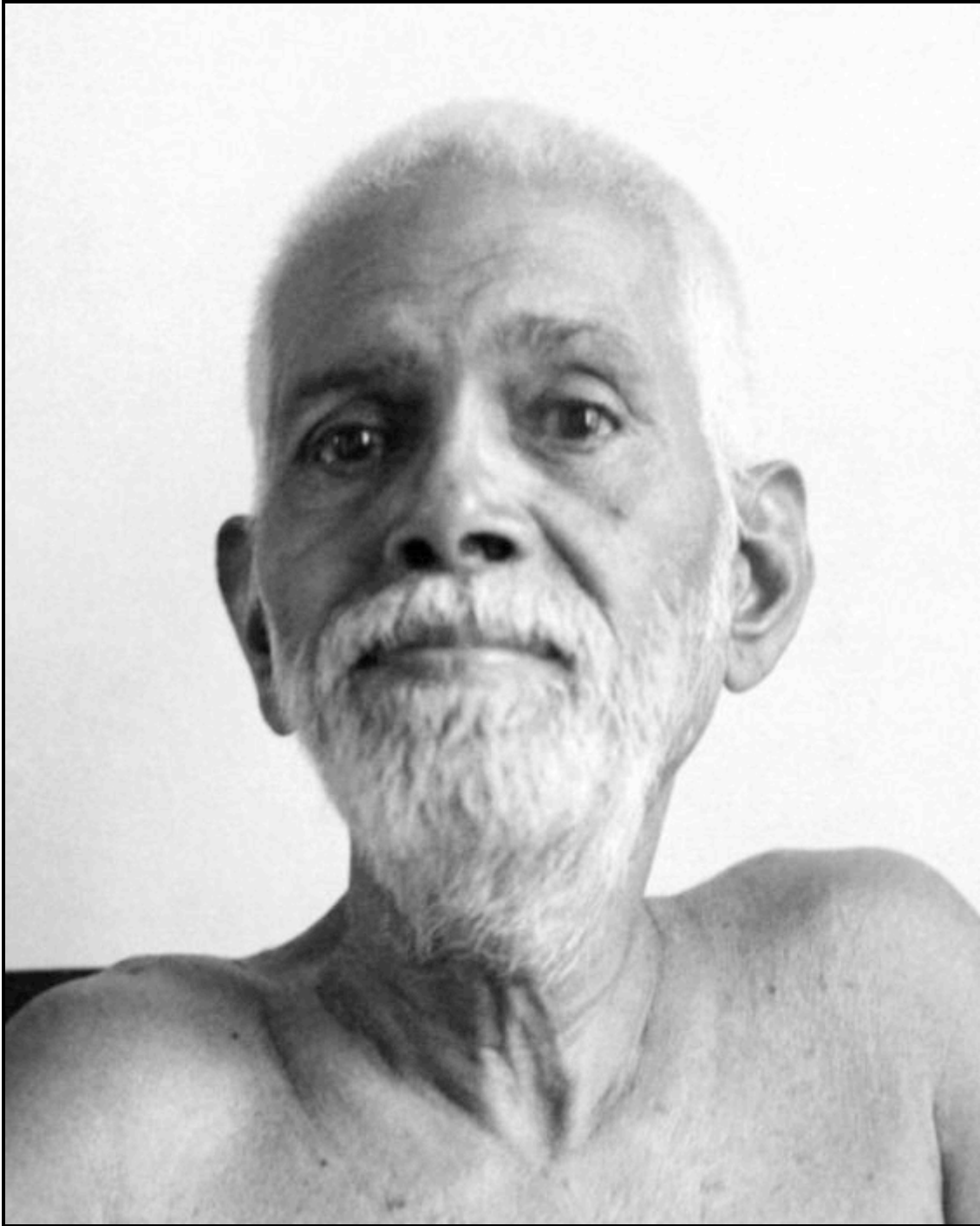
Perhaps more than any other declaration of Sri Ramana Maharshi, this one confounds the newly hatched neo-Advaitins of our “fast food” modern generation most. They glibly proclaim that the mind is an illusion and the easiest thing on earth is to just sit back and “Be”.

But how does an honest seeker after Truth reconcile this very attractive lure with Bhagavan’s assurance that “A devotee concentrates on God; a seeker, follower of the jnana-marga, seeks the Self. *The practice is equally difficult for both.*”

And even more confounding is the statement from the Maharshi that practice, continued practice, can resolve the mind into the pure state where the manifestation of the Divine Mother (Sakti) aspect, from which originates the very Life-current of our existence, is revealed. This achievement is not a mere feeling of “going deep” into nothingness. Bhagavan declares It to be a manifestation, a Presence!

Can it be that we are offered the most sacred gift, the most precious communion of Grace - to really “Be” in the Presence of the Mother of All.

All we are asked to do is to “Seek so we may find”. For those who persevere to the glorious end, their voice resounds in unison to declare the Truth that to “Be” means to live and move within the wisdom of True Being - an all-pervasive living God.



“The obstacles that hinder realization are habits of the mind (*vasanas*), and the aids to realization are the teachings of the scriptures and of realized souls.”

Talk #13



Seeking and Finding the Kingdom of Heaven

Talk #609

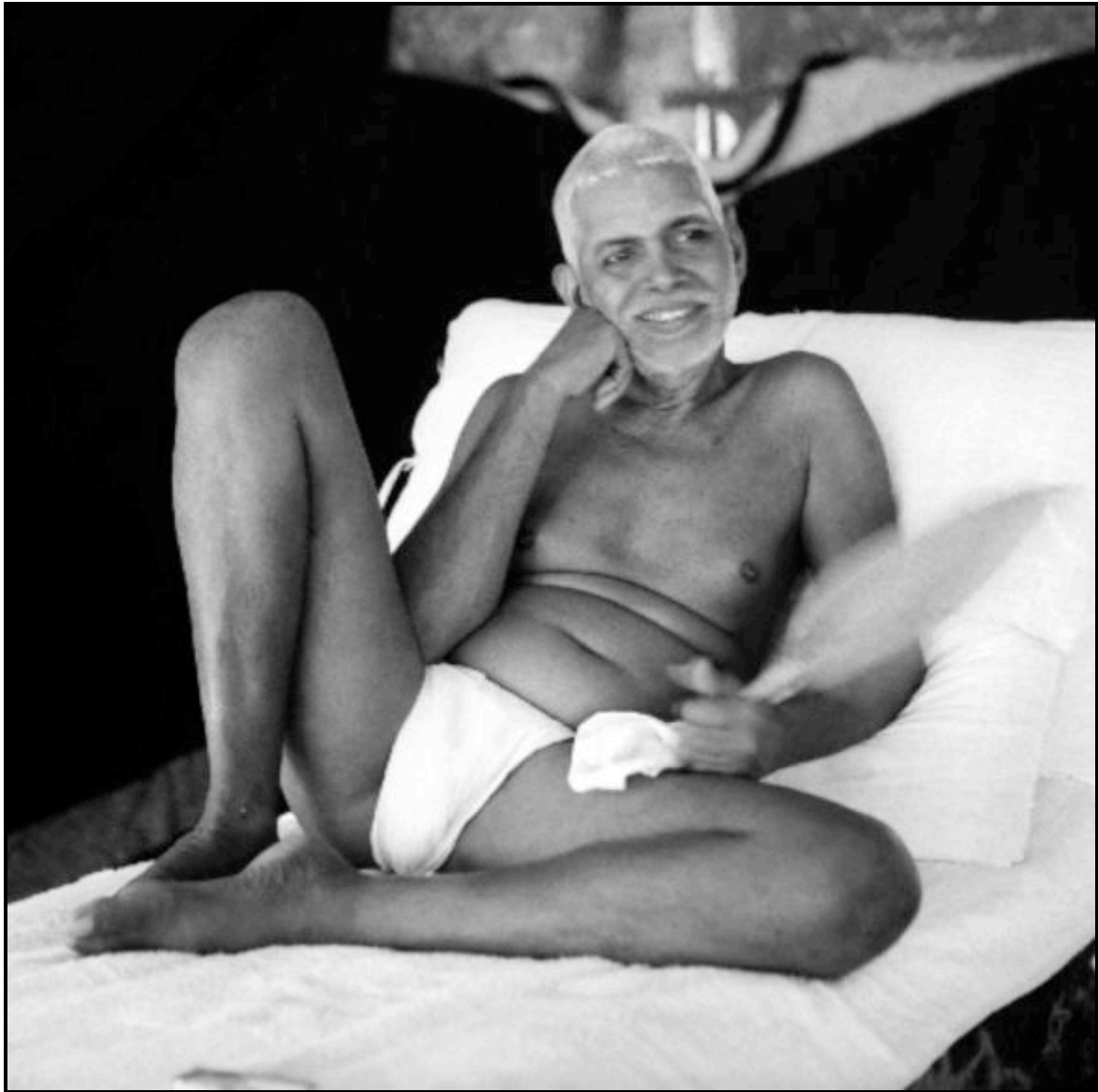
D.: I feel that I am transplanted into some other land than the Earth.

Sri Bhagavan, while looking into some correspondence, heard it, smiled and said: “This is the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven mentioned in the Bible, and this world, are not two different regions. ‘The Kingdom is within you,’ says the Bible. So it is. The realized being sees this as the Kingdom of Heaven whereas the others see it as ‘this world’. The difference lies only in the angles of vision.”

The close disciples of Sri Bhagavan said that he shunned theoretical explanations and kept turning the questioner back to consideration of sadhana, the path to be followed. Furthermore it was said of him “It was sadhana, and sadhana alone, that he came to teach.

His efforts in teaching those who came to him can be summed up in guidance toward transforming their lives to abandon the old (ages old) habits, both physically and mentally. Many who found themselves in his presence were satisfied in just hearing “the Kingdom of Heaven is within you”. They would glibly smile with self-confidence and then return to their old ways without even a glimmer of introspection regarding the condition of their minds and hearts. But some wanted more. And to them Bhagavan gave more, and is still giving much more! He would watch them as they meditated and would notice every detail of their lives, both within and without. To those who sought change Bhagavan was relentless in keeping not a single stone unturned. His success was not just changing their angles of vision; he changed *them*.

The root definition of the Sanskrit word “sadhana” means the method by which the instrument of transformation is applied. The Saints speak of sadhana being like a chisel carving rough stone into a work of perfection. We should take this simile to heart, and begin our spiritual ‘realization’ from the ground up, in order to secure a strong mind able to grasp the subtle and merge into it. To this end Sri Bhagavan’s teaching is ready and waiting: “Physically the digestive and other organs are kept free from irritation. Therefore food is regulated both in quantity and quality. Non-irritants are eaten, avoiding chillies, excess of salt, onions, wine, opium, etc. Avoid constipation, drowsiness and excitement, and all foods that induce them. Mentally take interest in one thing and fix the mind on it. Let such interest be all-absorbing to the exclusion of everything else. This is dispassion (vairagya) and concentration. God or mantra may be chosen. The mind gains strength to grasp the subtle and merge into it.” Talk #2



“If you are firm in your belief in the guidance of God, stick to it, and do not concern yourself with what happens around you.

Furthermore, there may be happiness or misery. Be equally indifferent to both and abide in the faith of God.

That will be so only when one’s faith is strong that God looks after all of us.”

Talk #596



Knowledge that is more secret than all that is secret

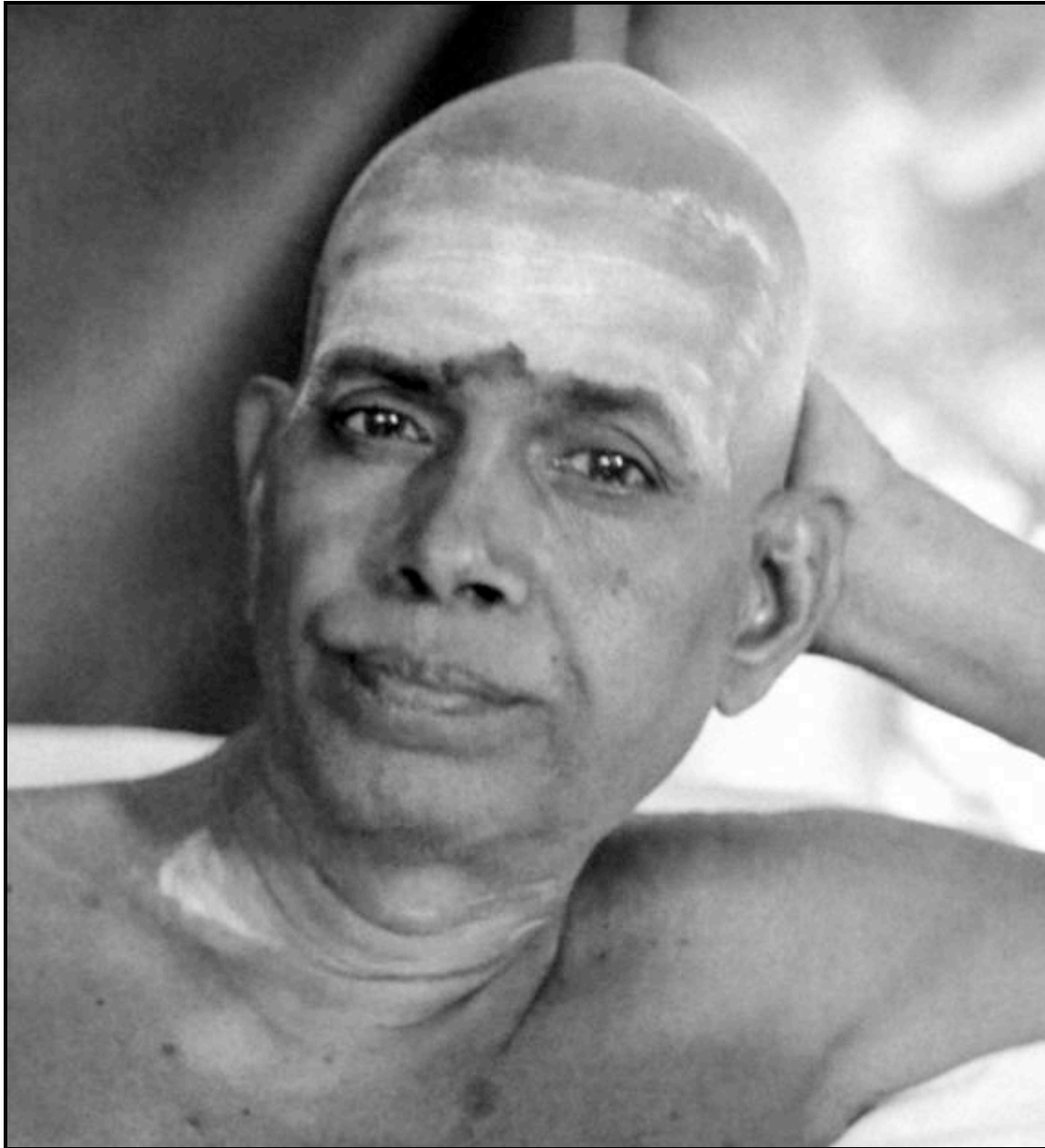
Talk #28

Master: Ishta Devata and Guru are aids - very powerful aids on this path. But an aid to be effective requires your effort also. Your effort is a sine qua non. It is you who should see the sun. Can spectacles and the sun see for you? You yourself have to see your true nature. Not much aid is required for doing it!

Sri Ramana Maharshi was once asked to describe the meaning of the word "Guru". As was his custom, he shunned theoretical explanations, as well as root meanings of Sanskrit words, which usually give little help to aspirants on the spiritual path. So in profound simplicity he declared: "The Guru is the spirit of guidance." In another instance he said that the Guru points the way to the further shore of liberation (understanding that the ocean in question is the mind). The Guru may even provide you with a steady boat. But ultimately he must set you on your own course, to choose your tact and speed. In such a grace filled dilemma, the wise disciple's first choice should be the solemn prayer: "O Lord, my ship is so small, and Your Ocean is so great." Although Bhagavan did seem to be "all things to all men", his guidance followed the declaration of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita: "Thus the knowledge that is more secret than all that is secret has been expounded to you by Me. Having reflected on it fully, do as you please." (18:63) Upholding this truth, the Maharshi's spirit of guidance urges us to put forth effort, long protracted effort: "Protracted practice ripens into an intuitive approximation of the Self, otherwise the Self remains but an imaginary conception even for sadhakas." *Padamalai, Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, p.156.*

Even so, many sadhakas claim that the Maharshi's guidance was beyond effort, and the goal was reached by simply "Letting go, and remain being as you are." The secret that was revealed in the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna (symbolically all of us) encompassed 18 chapters of the ways and means of "letting go". But with Supreme Grace, the Lord summed it up by urging us to, "Fix your mind on me, and worship Me, sacrificing to Me, bowing down to Me; In this way you shall come to know Me, I promise, for you are dear to Me." (*Gita 18:65*)

Sri Ramana Maharshi echoed this very same truth, to those who had ears to hear: "Know that the wondrous jnana vichara is only for those who have attained purity of mind by softening and melting within. Without this softening and melting away of the mind, brought about by thinking of the feet of the Lord, the attachment to the "I" that adheres to the body will not cease to be." *Padamalai, p. 186.*



**“The practice (fixing the gaze)
gives work for the eye right enough;
but where is the work for the mind in the process?”**

D.: What should I do for it?

M.: Thought of God, certainly.

Talk #528



Certainly!

4th October, 1938 - Talk #527

A group of respectable Coorg ladies was in the hall. One of them asked:

I have received a mantra. People frighten me saying that it may have unforeseen results if repeated. It is only Pranava. So I seek advice. May I repeat it? I have considerable faith in it.

M.: Certainly, it should be repeated with faith.

D.: Will it do by itself? Or can you kindly give me any further instructions?

M.: The object of mantra japa is to realise that the same japa is already going on in oneself even without effort. The oral japa becomes mental and the mental japa finally reveals itself as being eternal. That mantra is the person's real nature. That is also the state of realization.

D.: Can the bliss of samadhi be gained thus?

M.: The japa becomes mental and finally reveals itself as the Self. That is samadhi.

In the above quote Sri Ramana Maharshi exemplifies the eternal truths echoed by the ancient Seers of India. Further discussion of the meaning and intent of the Maharshi might only "muddy the waters" of what remains to this day as crystal clear.

His words might be distilled down to the essential, for those who still find his words confounding.

Devotee: What should one do spiritual practice for?

Maharshi: Thought of God, certainly.

Devotee: Should I have faith in such practice?

Maharshi: Certainly!



Devotee: Is not destiny due to past karma?

Maharshi: If one is surrendered to God, God will look to it.

D.: This being God's dispensation, how does God undo it?

M.: All are in Him only.

Talk #244



The Lord is my Helper, I shall not want

Talk #244

“If we perform sadhana to the limit of our abilities, the Lord will accomplish for us that which is beyond our capabilities.”

D.: How is God to be seen? M.: Within. If the mind is turned inward God manifests as inner consciousness.

D.: God is in all - in all the objects we see around us. They say we should see God in all of them.

M.: God is in all and in the seer. Where else can God be seen?

He cannot be found outside. He *should* be felt within.

To see the objects, mind is necessary. To conceive God in them is a mental operation. But that is not real. The consciousness within, purged of the mind, is felt as God.

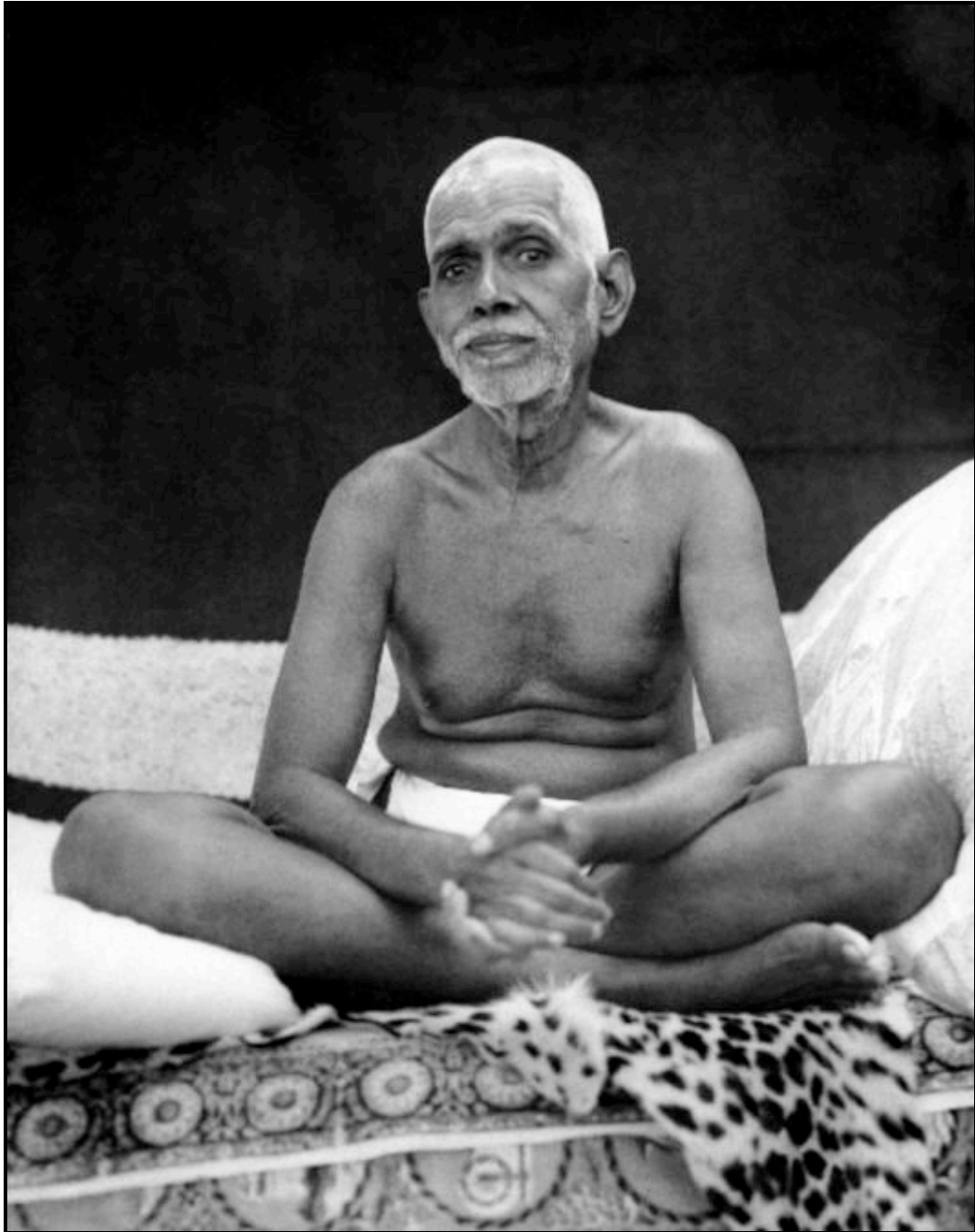
Those who were with Bhagavan Ramana while he was in the body, as well as many who followed after, declare with one voice that the Maharshi was and is the embodiment of Vedic tradition. The scriptures of this most ancient tradition of God realization, whether of the Bhakti or the Jnani approach, also speak with one voice. Concerning the unique teaching of Sri Ramana, or that of Sri Ramakrishna nearly a half century before, the message still remains one.

Sri Ramakrishna declared, “The mind is everything.” The implication was that the mind, and the mind alone, was the instrument (the tool of sadhana) by which the mind is transcended (purged) into a higher consciousness that perceives God. In the above quote, Bhagavan is echoing this same fundamental truth. The means to this attainment is an inner journey. The goal is found within, and must “Be *felt* within”. The ancient Seers declared “meditate and realize”. The Maharshi, incarnating within the age heralded by the Bhagavad Gita, added a little something more to the ancient wisdom. Knowing the plight of mankind in our “modern” age, depicted in the battle of the Gita as “pretty bad odds” (11 dark legions to 7 of the light), Sri Bhagavan declares:

“Meditate, surrender and realize,”
since we may not have the capability to transcend ourselves,
“If one is surrendered to God, God will look to it.”

“If we perform *sadhana* to the limit of our abilities, the Lord will accomplish for us that which is beyond our capabilities. If we fail to do even that which is within our capabilities, there is not the slightest fault in the grace of the Lord.” *

*Padamalai, *Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi Recorded by Muruganar*, p. 186.
(Reference is to *Sri Ramana Jnana Bodham*, vol. 8, verse 192).



Devotee: How should *dhyana* (meditation) be practiced?

Maharshi: *Dhyana* serves to concentrate the mind.

The predominant idea keeps off all others.

***Dhyana* varies according to the individual.**

It may be on an aspect of God, on a *mantra*, or on the Self, etc.

Talk #52



Meditation for the Mind, the Breath and the Self

Talk #223

Dr. Lohara: Why does the mind not sink into the Heart even while meditating?

Maharshi: “A floating body does not readily sink unless some means are adopted for making it do so. Breath-control makes the mind quiescent. The mind must be alert and meditation pursued unremittingly even when it is at peace. Then it sinks into the heart. Or the floating body might be loaded with weights and made to sink. So also association with the wise will make the mind sink into the Heart.”

“Such association is both mental and physical. The extremely visible being (of the Guru) pushes the mind inward. He is also in the heart of the seeker and so he draws the latter’s inward-bent mind into the Heart.”

“This question is asked only when the man begins to meditate and finds it difficult. Let him practice breath-control just a little and the mind will be purified. It does not now sink into the heart because the latent tendencies stand as obstacles. They are removed by breath-control or association with the wise. In fact the mind is always in the Heart. But it is restive and moves about on account of latent tendencies. When the tendencies are made ineffective it will be restful and at peace.

By breath-control the mind will be only temporarily quiescent, because the tendencies are still there. If the mind is transformed into the Self it will no longer give trouble. That is done by meditation.”

Let those who have ears to hear, *hear!*

[To be continued in the upcoming volume two]



“The specious theory that Bhagavan was not a Guru had simply evaporated in the radiance of his Grace. Moreover, I now perceived that, far from his teaching not being practical guidance, it was exclusively that. I observed that he shunned theoretical explanations and kept turning the questioner to practical considerations of sadhana, of the path to be followed. It was that and only that he was here to teach!”

- from My Life and Quest by Arthur Osborne, p.92

