

# **The Soul, World and God (The Path of Shri Raman - II)**

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## **1. The World, Soul and God**

The blissful silent real principle (Self or *Brahman*) alone is the true arena or base for *Maya* - who is the great power of consciousness (*maha-chit-sakti*). The world, soul and God are the three playthings handled by *Maya* in her wonderful game of delusion. Without these three playthings, which are called the three principles or *tripadartha*, the divine game or *lila* cannot continue. Every religion, which has come into existence on earth, is based upon these three principles.

Among the three entities, what is called the soul or *jiva* is 'we' the first person. This world, which we perceive in front of us through the five senses, is a second person object, while God and these objects of the world, which we do not now directly perceive through the senses, are third person objects.

Sri Ramana teaches us that the first and foremost need for us to know is ourselves, the first person. No man has ever raised any questions or doubts about himself, that is, about his knowledge (*chit*) or his own existence (*sat*), "Do I exist or not?" Since all doubts rise only about the knowledge, which man has of the existence of the world and God, all this time he has been eagerly making research only about these other two entities and not about himself.

Should we not try at least now to put an end to all evils and miseries, which have befallen mankind as a result of our 'rising' and using our intellects to make research upon the world and God, which are second and third person objects? Since we have so far made research upon the second and third persons only, we have failed up till now how to scrutinize or make research upon the first person.

## **2. How do we scrutinize or make research upon the first person?**

See the way in which we make use our power of attention when we wake up from sleep. As soon as we wake up, the first thing we know is our body and then we notice the place where we are lying, the objects which surrounds us, the outside world and so on. Knowing all these things is only a second person attention. Thus when we wake up, our power of attention springs out only towards the second and third person objects. Then, until we fall asleep again, our power of attention continues to dwell only upon the second and third persons by clinging to and experiencing the objects known through the five senses. At night, as soon as sleep overpowers us, our attention towards the second and third persons ceases. All living beings direct their power of attention only towards second and third person objects and no one ever directs it towards the first person! This great error is what is called the "original sin".

## **3. What is Self-attention?**

Turning one's attention towards one self in order to find out 'Who am I' who knows the mind alone is the correct first person attention. Any one who attends to himself in this manner, whoever he may be, will certainly attain the true Knowledge of the Self. ***This is the rule to which there is no exception.*** If any researcher, whoever he may be, had directed his power of attention towards the correct first person, he would certainly have attained Self-Knowledge. ***"All ancient Sages of India realised the truth in the end only by knowing the real nature of this first person"***.

#### 4. What is the nature of the mind?

What is called "mind" is a wondrous power residing in the Self. It causes all thoughts to arise. Apart from thoughts, there is no such thing as mind. Therefore, thought is the nature of mind. Thus the word "mind" maybe said to have two meanings. Its primary meaning is the subjective aspect of the mind, namely the first person thought "I", while its secondary meaning is the objective aspect of the mind (*the five objective senses*), namely the multitude of other thoughts, all of which exist only by depending upon the first thought "I". This multitude of thoughts is only a crowd of the second person objects.

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

When one scrutinize the form of the mind without forgetfulness, it will be found that there is no such thing as mind. When the mind is found to be ever non-existent, the world appearance seen by it will also be found to be non-existent. Hence ajata alone is the absolute truth. This is the real experience of Sri Ramana, the doctrine of no creation (ajata-siddhanta). The reason why Sri Ramana did not give His teaching according to the standpoint of 'ajata', is that in the state of ajata, there exist only the Self, the mere existence -consciousness "I am" and no other thing, no world, no mind, no bondage, no disciple and no Guru - hence in that state no teaching is either necessary or possible.

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

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

#### 6. The World and God - Example

Sri Ramana has shown us that it is only because man has not yet attained a correct knowledge of the first person that it has been impossible for him to have a correct knowledge about the truth of the second and third person objects, the world and God, that so much unnecessary confusion and strife prevails among the people of the world and that as a consequence so many misfortunes and calamities have befallen mankind.

***Being the perfect spiritual doctor that He is, Sri Raman has thus clearly and precisely diagnosed the exact nature of the dangerous disease, which exists in the mind of mankind. Moreover, He has also prescribed an entirely new method of treatment—namely taking the medicine of Self-attention & observing the diet-restriction-of completely abstaining from attending to second and third person objects—and thereby He has provided us with remedy, which will surely remove the primal disease of mankind, the disease known as 'original sin'. If we scrutinize this method of treatment more deeply, we will understand that the medicine is devotion (bhakti) and the diet-restriction is***

*desirelessness (vairagya). Sri Ramana has also clearly explained that the correct way of taking the medicine of Self- enquiry is to attend to oneself in order to find out 'Who am I'? and He has given us many clues to facilitate this practice.*

All of these things He has taught us from His own experience of Self-Knowledge, which dawned in Him all of a sudden without His having Studied any books and without His having had any other person as a Guru to teach Him. Hence the sole purpose of this exposition of **Sri Ramana's** teachings is to enable mankind to know the correct target towards which it should aim the arrow of its attention and to enable it thereby, to direct its research towards the proper goal.

*Since the eternal - Self is non-dual and since there is no other path to attain it, except to attend to and thereby to abide as Self, the goal to be attained is only Self and the path is only Self.* Know them that the goal and the path are to be non-different.

## **7. Self-attention example**

The nature of a needle lying within a magnetic field is to be attracted and pulled only when its rust has been removed. But we should not conclude from this that the magnetic power comes into existence only after the rust is removed from the needle. Is not the magnetic power naturally existing in that field? Although the needle was all the while lying in the magnetic field, it is affected by the attraction of the magnet only to the extent that it loses its rust. The giving up of the second and third person attention and clinging to Self-attention is similar to scraping off the rust. So the result of all our endeavours is to make ourselves fit to become prey to the attraction of the magnetic field of pure consciousness, the Heart, which is ever shining engulfing all (that is reducing the whole universe to non-existence) with spreading rays of Self -effulgence.

Mature aspirants will willingly and without rebelling, submit themselves to this magnetic power of the divine Grace of Self-effulgence. Others on the other hand, will become extroverted fearing the attraction of this power. Therefore we should first make ourselves fit by the intense love (bhakti) to know Self and by the tremendous detachment of having no desire to attend to any second or third person. Then since our very individuality itself is devoured by that power, even the so-called power of ours becomes nil. Thus when the I -consciousness that was spread all over the body is made to sink into the Heart, the real waking, the dawn of knowledge (jnana), our real state takes place. *(The definition of the correct waking is the state in which there is perfect Self- consciousness and singleness of Self-existence without the knowledge of the existence of anything apart from Self).*

**(The real waking is the continuous awareness of the Self, which means three things: being yourself (or being alive), being now and being here. We might ask, "Am I not myself? Who would 'I' be if not myself".)**