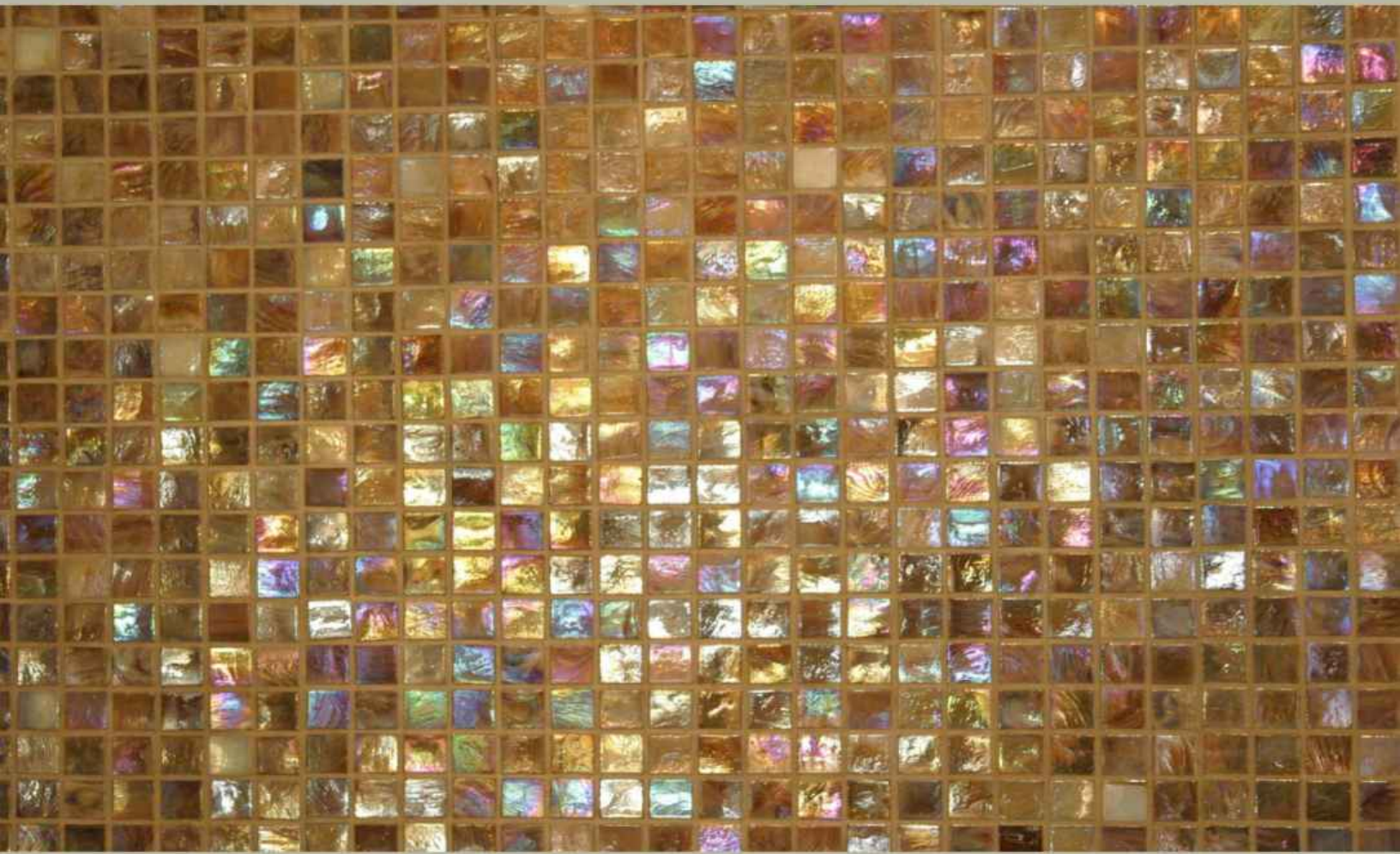
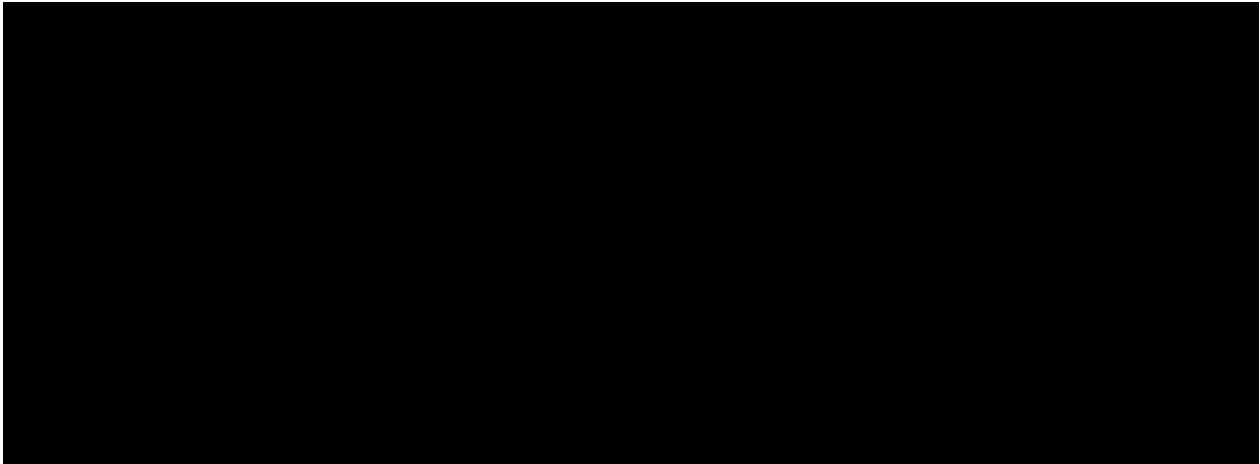


EACH IS BOTH



(THE JOURNAL OF A
PILGRIM ON THE WAY)

WEI WU WEI



Each is Both
(The Journal of a Pilgrim on the Way)

by Wei Wu Wei
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PREFACE

Some have been known to assert in a witty way that “No one exists in ‘Reality’ but does so in concept.”

I would rather if it be said: “No one exists otherwise than in ‘reality’ (thing-ness) and thereby does so in concept.”

‘Relativity’ being the only reality (thing-ness) we can know, ‘existing’ is both relative and real, i.e. merely conceptual. Being on the contrary, is Absolute and therefore relatively neither is nor is-not.

But when we know that relativity is only the relative aspect of ‘absolute’, as absolute is only the totality of its own ‘relativity’ such questions hardly arise.

Then all ‘things’ being relative, neither being nor not-being Absolutely, little remains about which there can be disagreement.

Which may apply to anyone taking the trouble to read these few lines.

W.W.W.

Who is Aware
that I-me thinks
that I-me perceives
whatever he seems to perceive,
and knows whatever he seems to know?
Who is eternally Aware
of whatever I-me thinks
that I-me does,
asleep or awake,
from his ‘birth’ to his ‘death’?
Who is Aware that I-me thinks that I-me is Aware?

Note: The finding is the seeking.

+++++

A body can be bound with chains, a psyche can be bound by complexes, a conceptualised phenomenon can be bound, i.e. can consider itself bound, and all can be freed — for 'bondage' and 'liberation' are relative concepts also.

But nothing conceptual could bind anything but a concept. I cannot be anything, for cannot be conceived, so how could I be bound? The 'proposition' cannot even be posed — since it cannot make sense.

No relative qualification whatever can be posited of the purely nominative I.

People think, and even maintain, that they can regard 'I' as a concept, but they are mistaken: the error is due to an abuse of language. I cannot be a concept because I cannot conceive what is conceiving. What people conceive is 'me', just as they conceive 'you', both objects, and in both cases they confuse the object with the subject, but subject cannot conceive subject except as an object — which it is not and can never be.

This simple example explains the mechanism of the false notion which is conceived as 'bondage' and which is nothing less than mistaking a conceptual and relative object, a phenomenal 'me', for noumenal and absolute I.

I am notoriously invulnerable simply because nothing in conceptual phenomenality can reach what-I-am since I am already all that it is! There are no two objects involved which could affect one another.

Moreover how could phenomenal objects extended in conceptual space-time achieve any kind of contact with what is space-less and in-temporal? In order to make contact two objects are necessary, and only objects are extended in space-time.

Objects are phenomenal manifestations in mind of what noumenally I am: therefore all they can ever be is what I am, and they cannot, and have no need to, make contact with all they already are, ever were, and ever could be. 'Contact' is a relative concept which, like all relative concepts, is inapplicable to the absolute.

The notion of 'me' and 'you' being in any way different or separated from what they are, which I am, is untenable even in the logic of relativity within the limitations of which 'we' are confined in these discussions.

Therefore a conceptualised 'I' is not I at all! And that is so because I am the source and origin of everything which appears to be, including the process itself of conceptualising. Therefore I cannot be conceptualised, since I cannot conceptualise what is conceptualising which ultimately I am.

What is there even apparently 'mysterious' about all this, all this so simple and obvious is-ness? Indeed and surely, how and indeed however, could it possibly be otherwise?

Let me quote the great Huang Po:

question—“ Does the Buddha really liberate sentient-beings?”

answer—“ Factually there are no sentient-beings to be delivered by the Thatha-gata. If even 'self' has no objective existence, how much less has 'other-than-self'!

Thus neither 'Buddha' nor 'sentient-beings' exist objectively.... I assure you that all things have been free from bondage since the very beginning.”

There is no one to be 'delivered for only an object could appear to be 'bound'.

And 'liberation' is liberation from the notion of there being anything to be 'liberated' — which is the notion of being 'me' instead of being I.

Every gesture, conscious or unconscious, must necessarily be a relative expression in spatio-temporality, of what-I-am-as-I, whoever or whatever sentient-being is making it.

But when a dividual 'me' appears to say it or to make it, such 'me' thinks it is doing it — and such 'me' is thereby psychically in bondage to relativity.

Only I 'act' [\[1\]](#): there is no actor.

Note : “There being no two such things as ' action ' and ' performer of action if one seeks the 'performer of action' and no performer of action be found anywhere, thereupon the goal of all fruit-obtaining is reached, and also the final consummation itself”. (Padma Sambhava).

If I look from where 'looking' looks instead of from where I-me thinks it 'sees'; then I will apperceive instead of just 'perceiving'.

IT is only that which is apparent (phenomenal), extended in space time, which can dis-appear, apparently dis-solve, as a result of the spatio-temporal process called 'dying'.

'That' which is objective (objectivised) dis-appears, "dies"; but in 'this' which is subjective there cannot be anything objective which could incur the process of disappearance or 'dying'.

The contrary established illusion is due to the almost universal identification of individual subjectivity with a 'physical' appearance spatio-temporally extended, whereby 'personal subjectivity' is objectivised. The widespread and very ancient notion of 'a soul' represents an attempt to objectivise subjectivity in a form which can be supposed to survive physical 'death'. Whether some such psychic complex, developed in space-time, can experience some degree of survival in space-time, represented by the appearance of ghost belongs to the domain of metapsychology.

Metaphysically, subjectivity, represented by the vocable 'I' cannot possibly disappear — since it has never appeared — so that the notion of its being subjected to the process of 'dying' is out of the question and should never have been posed or entertained.

Whatever is represented objectively, cognised as 'me' or 'you', must necessarily disappear or 'die' in space-time, but the subjectivity represented by the vocable 'I' cannot in any manner or degree be subjected to dissolution, since it can never have possessed any characteristic which is material or soluble.

It follows also that 'subjectivity' ' can never have 'lived' either, since it can never have been subjected to space-time extension.

The removal of the contrary primary and very obvious error should perhaps clarify apprehension of what we are as I and which, as has so often been stated, cannot ever be conceived — since the process, or act, of conceiving is necessarily a process of dualist objectivisation.

What dies? Every thing objectivised disappears in space-time extension. Who dies? There has never been any 'who' either to appear or to disappear — since the word 'who' indicates subjectivity — so that there cannot be such a thing as a who — object to 'die' (dissolve or disappear). Living and dying are phenomenal and objective: subjectivity is noumenal and can neither 'live' nor 'die', since subjectivity is not extended in conceptual 'space' and in conceptual 'time'.

Is that not why the physically-dying Sri Ramana Maharshi on his death-bed asked why people were weeping, and then enquired "But to where do they think 'I' could go?"

Note: Only objects could 'die'! In whatever is devoid of objectivity there cannot be anything to dis-appear. Subjectively, therefore, whatever is 'I' cannot experience death — for there is nothing present to experience dissolution!

All this verbiage to say anything so simple and obvious? Alas, it is supposed to be necessary. Is it?

We give here below the fundamental tenets of an ancient Chinese Meditation Sect — Ch'an Tsung — from The Path to Sudden Attainment.

1. Phenomena of any kind whatever exist only in what—for want of a better term—is called the mind.

2. The mind is synonymous with the ultimate reality underlying the appearances of phenomena. This ultimate reality is no other than the Bodhi-mind, or mind of the Buddha. We are therefore identical with the Buddhas in their highest aspect as the supreme and universal Body of the Law (Dharmakaya).

3. Thus there is no such thing as attaining the state of Buddhahood: we have but to understand what we really are.

4. It follows that it is useless to look outwards to the Buddhas for Enlightenment. We must look into our own minds and try to discern their true nature. If we are able to perceive this, we perceive the nature of the Buddhas and of the universe, for they are all one.

5. Since all phenomena exist only in the mind, it follows that distinctions between this and that, including distinctions between 'I' and 'you' are false, except in a relative sense, because my mind and your mind are identical with the universal mind.

6. Ultimate reality is something entirely beyond description, and cannot be thought of in terms of existence and non-existence. For convenience sake it has been identified with mind, but in fact even mind is a relative term and cannot be said to have any absolute existence.

7. We should, therefore, try to visualise everything as mind and then rid ourselves of even that concept. In this way we shall approach an understanding of the nature of ultimate reality.

I am the Absence of all presence, and the Presence of all absence.

May it not be otiose merely to ask 'Who, What, or Whence AM I?', for any answer becomes a concept, and no word, even 'TAO' or 'God' or 'Zero' could ever be anything else, and any concept must represent an object in a psyche, which what-I-am could never be.

Nor can any term, cypher, or symbol ever be other than objective, even 'unicity', 'absolute', 'noumenon', 'subjectivity' itself, which seek to represent by description the ultimate origin of all relative phenomena; subjectivity remains 'subject', noumenality remains noumenon, and 'unicity' remains a unity, for no grammatical form, by adding '-ness' or '-ity' can do more than generalise the concept to which it is added.

Sri Ramana Maharshi, who used the term 'I-I' as an indication, also said that in posing the question 'who am I?' it is necessary to abandon the 'I' when apperceiving. The reason for this is sufficiently obvious.

Yet without a verbal, which is relative, which is conceptual, motive how can attention be directed? It would be presumptuous to seek to do more than to see how far it may be possible to go in seeking to resolve an insoluble problem, which is to find a solution-of-continuity to that continuity of relativity itself. However, may we not at least do that?

If I pose the question, the eternal question, 'Who, what, where, whence am I?' may I not reply:

'I am the Absence of all presence, and the Presence of all absence'.

Two concepts are employed herein, interdependent counterparts, each of which mutually negates the other, leaving what I AM in absolute conceptual negation — negation of all phenomenal, which is conceptual, Relativity. 'I' cannot hereby be conceived. Revealed I cannot be, conceptually. But at least I remain in absolute isolation as I.

Good morning, Mr. Wu!

Good morning, Madame! To what do I owe the pleasure?

I thought you might be lonely, Mr. Wu. Lonely, Madame, but how could that be?

You are by yourself, Mr. Wu!

By myself, Madame, when every 'thing' is what I AM?

In that way, of course, Mr. Wu, but you might need company!

Alas, Madame, there is none such!

But am I not even 'company' Mr. Wu? Indeed no, Madame!

Then what can I be, Mr. Wu?

Madame, I have the honour to Be what you ARE.

THERE must be 'death' before 're-birth', 'failure' before 'achievement'. That is why 'negation' must precede fulfilment.

Even Ramana Maharshi had to experience 'death' before his true 'living' could begin.

A 'positive' way is a doomed beginning, for it must fail in order that the 'negative' way to fulfilment may lie open.

It is necessary to apperceive that only Nothing IS.

This does not imply that physical 'death' must precede metaphysical living. It implies that 'death' to Relativity must precede awakening to Absolute, and then only that 'death' to the reality of Relativity must precede 'birth' to the verity of Virtuality.

The event is instantaneous in both cases, just as the preceding process may be 'long' or 'short' in a space-time context : we may start 'dying' in youth and 'die' old, but that is only incidental ; and Awakening, being Absolute, is infinite and intemporal, constituting what 'space' and 'time' Absolutely ARE.

It is neither more nor less than REINTEGRATION.

"Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for I have seen Salvation."

What is Required of us?

Being aware that we are actually present extended spatio-temporally in Buddha (whole-ness of)- Mind,

We are required to become aware that we are factually (and eternally) present, though phenomenally absent, as Wholeness of (Buddha) Mind.

Note: Of course there cannot be such 'things' as any of these verbal symbols, and what we are may be apparent as 'attention'.

We cannot "stray from Buddha-Mind", i.e. leave Integral-Mind.

We cannot "stray from Buddha-Mind", i.e. leave what we are.

All that can happen is that 'attention' is split.

Is not 'attention' synonymous with 'experiencing' in a time-context?

And are 'we' anything other than 'attention' — which is what is experience in space-time?

Which is Presence.

"Aware of Buddha-Mind, you cannot have strayed from it (Bankei) Because you are it.

I am 'present' as whole-mind, apparently 'absent', which is Presence, apparently 'absence', And TAO.

I am the Absence of which every 'thing' (object) is the presence, and without whose absence no 'presence' could appear.

In the absence of things'

I neither AM nor AM-not, and there is then no longer a presence or an absence (any 'thing' to which either could be such).

The space-time in which objects are extended is then no longer such, but is the Presence in which their extension appears.

This Presence is what I AM, and what you ARE as I.

Note: 'Presence' and 'Absence' are relative concepts.

Physically, 'time' seems to represent the horizontal dimension of length-without-breadth whereas 'space' represents both the horizontal directions of measurement of length' and 'breadth' together with the vertical dimension of 'depth' forming volume

Metaphysically, 'vectorial vision' implies apperceiving at right-angles to all the physical directions of measurements, as each is at right-angles to each other, thereby utilising an 'Nth' dimension or super-volume to which our relative minds have no access because reasoning by the comparison of opposing concepts has no mechanism by means of which a further direction of measurement could be conceived. Mathematically the limits of relativity can be exceeded, but then whatever is apprehended can only be expressed by algebraic symbols and cannot be conceptually envisaged.

Therefore 'vectorial vision', vision from this super-volume, represents all that we, objectively presented as part of our sensorially-perceived 'universe', could be. This may be regarded as the ultimate verity concerning what we are, and as such it cannot either be perceived or conceived sensorially or by rational processes, since it must be what is perceiving. Such apperceiving, however, should be ultimate apprehension, and should be invariable, no matter who apperceives and apprehends it, and no matter how variable the attempted translation into relative language may appear, such variation being due to the psychic conditioning and personal intellectual preoccupations of each phenomenon so 'in-seeing'.

'Vectorial vision' may be so-called precisely because it is not one element of a pair of opposing concepts, which represent extremes in one dimension, but represents an angle of vision at 45° to all directions of measurement. But, what is needed metaphysically is not an impossible relative accuracy but only a suggestive indication susceptible of opening the required apperceiving.

NOTE: Both 'physically' and 'metaphysically' directions of measurement connate 'direction from whatever is looking'.

Dimension however, is also used to imply a conceptual object of measurement.

It should not be possible for Mind to apperceive 'vectorially' when it is divided, since division implies the relative reasoning of 'subject' and 'object' by means of opposing concepts.

The word 'vector' (vehere) implies a 'conductor', technically a segment, originating at a fixed point directed so that its extremity can be displaced on a given curve.

'Vectorial vision', therefore, metaphysically implies a visual radius which transcends our relative tri-dimensional volume and which 'conducts' vision at right-angles to our phenomenal space-time dimensions directly from noumenality.

In discussing Determination and Free-will an essential discrimination should not be overlooked. The apparent universe is a colossal conceptual structure in mind, extended in the basic concepts of 'space' and 'duration'. Consequently all volitional reactions (yu wei), so extended, are concepts extraneous to that conceptual structure in mind. It follows, no doubt, that any effect they may appear to have must be conceptual also, but independent and in no sense integrated with what is implied by the concept of 'Determination'.

On the other hand non-volitional 'acting' (wu wei) — resulting in apparent actions in spacetime which are spontaneous and unconceived — 'act' directly within the conceptual structure in which they inhere, and in which all phenomena appear to exist and all events to occur. Such action, therefore, is valid in relativity and produces a relatively valid effect, whereas the egotic demonstration is superficial and ultimately ineffectual.

Note: That, also, is cognate with our freedom to understand what we are, which the Maharshi in particular implied, for apprehension as such is noumenal, and with our inability to express such apprehension except in the relative terms to which we are apparently in bondage. For 'freedom' correctly understood, is freedom to do as we are required to do — freedom from the imaginary constraint of 'bondage' to volition and its illusory effects.

Of course there is effort, of course it is samsarically a struggle, continuous and exhausting, but it is that of a volitional I-concept seeking to maintain its dominion. The conflict is not due to a positive effort to achieve its own extinction — as appears to be currently assumed — but to its pertinacious resistance to that threatened disaster. Only a relative 'ego' can struggle! The ego is King Canute wielding his sword: he is wielding it against the inflowing tide. And only he 'suffers'.

Since the statement 'The Chan and Zen teaching of the Mind Transmission' is liable to mislead readers it would seem to be an obligation to point out that this is erroneous. The last words of Ch. 23 of the great Huang Po's Chun Chow Record, p. 50 state "in fact, however, 'Mind is not Mind and transmission is not really transmission1 " which is emphasised by him several times elsewhere. 'Transmission' is a common and dangerous illusion, dear to publicists. Whatever could there be to 'transmit' and from 'whom' to 'what'? If any service can be rendered, may it not be in the indication of vital conceptual illusion? Nor, of course, is Truth even 'One': if 'Truth' could be any conceptual number, it must surely be 'Zero' — the basis and origin of all numeration and of all multiplicity. If Ch'an is to be understood no place remains for illusory positive concepts.

Those remarks are far indeed from implying lack of sympathy for the writer of the letter.

P.S.: The phrase 'Transmission of Mind' occurs even on the cover of an edition of Huang Po's text. Alas, it does, but Huang Po was not responsible for this!

The burden of the Heart Sutra Is not the nature of objects But the seeing of them,
Which is what they are.

In the beginning, nothing comes;

In the middle, nothing stays;

At the end, nothing goes.

Of the mind there is no arising and extinction! Thus, one remains in the Equality of
past, present and future.

Immanent, the mind, like the sky, is pure.

The red and white clouds^[2] vanish of themselves; No trace of the Four Elements
can be found. The omnipresent mind resembles Space:

It never separates from the Realm of the Unborn, It cuts the path of the Three
Worlds of Samsara. This is the conviction of Enlightenment.

A wandering thought is itself the essence of wisdom —

Immanent and intrinsic.

Cause and effect are both the same.

This is a realization of Buddha's Three Bodies^[3] Existing within oneself.

These are the consummation signs Of the Stage of Non-Practice.

When one talks about Non-Practice,

His mind is still active;

He talks about illumination,

But in fact is blind.

In the Stage of Non-Practice,

There is no such thing!

... A wise man knows how to practise

The space-like meditation.

In all he does by day He attaches himself to nothing.

With a liberated spirit,

He desires not wealth nor beauty.

One should see that all appearance Is like mist and fog;

Though one has vowed to liberate all sentient beings,

He should know that all manifestations

Are like reflections of the moon in water.

Without attachment, he knows

That the human body is but a magic spell.

So from all bindings he gains freedom.

Like the immaculate lotus growing out of mud. He attains the conviction of Practice.

The mind is omnipresent like space;
It illumines all manifestations as the Dharmakaya; It knows all and lightens all.
I see it clearly like a crystal In my palm!
The Shepherd's Search For Mind
Listen carefully, dear shepherd.
Clinging to the notion of ego is characteristic of this consciousness.
If one looks into this consciousness itself,
He sees no ego; of it nothing is seen!
... When your body is rightly posed, and your mind absorbed deep in meditation,
You may feel that thought and mind both disappear; yet this is but the surface
experience of Dhyana. By constant practice and mindfulness thereon,
One feels radiant Self-awareness shining like a brilliant lamp.
It is pure and bright as a flower,
It is like the feeling of staring
Into the vast and empty sky.
The Awareness of Voidness is limpid and transparent, yet vivid.
This Non-thought, this radiant and transparent experience Is but the feeling of
Dhyana.

Hello, what are you worried about?

How do you know I am worried?

God, or whoever it was, gave you a face for some reason or other? Birds not caught! My only 'face' is the original one that I had before my father and mother were born — and it can't look worried!

Right! And the worry?

I've come to the conclusion, and finally, that Bob what's-his-name is not only a bore, but a mean and selfish sort of bastard! Don't you agree?

Why should I? You describe your Bob what's-his-name: mine is not likely to be identical.

Damn it all, there is only one Bob in question, and we are both talking about him!

I am unable to agree! There are as many Bob what's-his-names as there are people who know him, plus one.

Metaphysically speaking perhaps, but the familiar phenomenal Bob is surely whatever he is!

Nonsense! There is no such being. What you are referring to is absolutely no thing whatever; 'he' is as devoid of objective existence as anyone else.

As you or me?

Of course.

Then what is he?

He is an image in mind. You have just described what he is according to your image. In my image he appears slightly different, and less objectionable. His own 'Bob' — as he appears to himself — is probably the hell of a fine fellow!

But there must be something that he really is!

Nothing whatever, absolutely no thing. He has, rigorously, no objective existence or being. He is only appearances in mind, interpreted diversely in a space-time context.

But whose appearances?

Ours: he appears to each of us as each of us sees him. What else is there for him to be?

Very well, but his? His own appearance to himself?

That also is a concept, nothing but a concept— his is not different in kind, but only It is not a dose of salts! Just an almost in interpretation. You are supposing that his own is something factual, but it is not.

Would anyone believe that?

Probably not — unless he saw it. Conditioning is too strong.

Then who could take it?

It is not a dose of salts! Just an almost painfully obvious fact.

To whom?

Only to whoever can see that it must be so, that so it is, that it is fundamental, the very heart of how things are.

And when he sees it, what then?

If he really sees it — for hearing it or reading it is not seeing that so it is — he surely at the same time sees through everything that needs to be seen through — for all the rest follows.

Each of us needs to see it for himself and in his own way?

Each of us knows it for himself — if he is looking from the right direction.

And what is that?

From whole-mind, always from whole-mind.

Can one always do that?

Once should be enough. Let this one be it. It is better than all the koans and conundrums that have ever been invented.

Why is that?

There is nothing artificial about it! It is just plain true-seeing.

I am not in front of you, I am not behind you,
Nor am I outside, or inside,
I am not above, nor am I below.
I am neither here nor there,
Neither near or far,
I am not anywhere, nor am I nowhere.
For where could there be any 'where'
Wherein I could be?
I have never come nor shall I ever go,
I know no before, nor any after,
I am not old, and I was never young.
For whenever could there be a 'when?'
During which I could be?
I am not any thing, nor no thing,
For what thing could there be that I could be, or not be,
Since there is no 'I'?

Note. : It is interesting to remember that when Sri Ramana Maharshi was dying, he asked why people were weeping and was told that it was because he was leaving them. He answered, in apparent surprise: "But where do they think I could go to?" Is there record of a greater 'last word'? It would seem that its supreme significance is not yet very generally understood. But to 'explain' it would reduce its stupendous import.

The Supreme Vehicle is total negation of both elements of all possible contradictories (opposites), of all concepts and their counterparts.

It negates both positive and negative: it negates negation itself. Resolutely and finally, in one completed gesture, it turns away from all statements and conclusions soever. Objectification is seen as object-fiction — and is once and for all wiped out.

This is true-seeing, whole-seeing, and liberation from all that constituted bondage, for negation is seen to be the true nature of illusory phenomena, which is void, and by means of Negation is that seen.

No elements of binding remain, for all binding is conceptual. Nor is there freedom — since there is no non-conceptual entity to be free, nor anything binding from which to be unbound. So that total phenomenal negation (absence) is found to be total noumenal affirmation (presence).

Negation is the truth by knowing which we can be aware of what-we-are in the act of knowing what we-are-not.

Maharshi said “What is eternal is not recognised as such, owing to ignorance.”[\[4\]](#)

Ignorance of what is eternal is due to the concept of time and so ignorance of eternality is a definition of that concept, since the eternal and a time-concept are interdependent counterparts, i.e. intemporality and temporality.

He continued: “Ignorance (the concept of ‘time’) is the obstruction. Get rid of it and all will be well. This ignorance (the concept of ‘time’) is identical with the ‘I’ thought. Seek its source and it will vanish.”

The ‘I’ thought” is entirely a temporal product, depending upon and exclusively appearing to exist subject to temporal extension (duration). If you apperceive what time is, it must simultaneously disappear as an object in mind. It is then revealed as the essential element in the constitution of an I-concept or conceptual I and the I-concept as an object in split-mind must go with it, for neither what ‘time’ is nor what I am can have any objective quality whatever.[\[5\]](#)

An ‘I-concept’ and the ‘time-concept’ are inseparable, neither can appear to exist without the other: they are dual aspects of what is erroneously conceived as objective, and are themselves believed to have objective existence as such. That assumed objective existence of what is a concept-of-sequence in mind is precisely the foundation of the notion of ‘bondage’. Seeking to dispose of one aspect without the other is a labour of Sisyphus, for the one that is left will inevitably bring back its fellow on which it depends.

As long as the concept of ‘time’ as an objective existence, as a continuity independent of the continuous perceiver of it, is left untouched, that object must retain its subject — and its subject, the perceiver of it, is precisely the I-concept in question. That is why the nature of ‘time’ should be revealed. In the distant past an analysis of the nature of ‘time’ was not in accordance with current modes of thought and of general knowledge, so that no tradition of it was handed down by the Masters, who certainly understood it since they refer to it obscurely but quite often, but this is not a valid reason for us to ignore it. For us it should be readily comprehensible, and its comprehension is urgent, the more so since it will hardly be denied that many of the ancient traditional approaches to the essential problem have lost much of their force through unending repetition and the autohypnosis that accompanies the repetition of all kinds of popular concepts.

If the I-concept can be disposed of for a moment, and the concept of duration remains, the latter will restore the former which is extended therein and which remains with it. This, indeed, is a familiar occurrence, but its mechanism is not recognised. On the other hand, if the concept of duration is seen as invalid, as not an objective existence to which 'we' can be bound, but as an essential part of our appearance, extended therein, being our-extension, its removal must necessarily carry away with it all that is extended in it. Then the supposed objective character of both lapses, and the process of objectification ceases, leaving 'us' as what intemporally we are.[\[6\]](#)

As long as we continue to regard 'space-time' as objectively factual we are not merely 'bound' — we are trussed!

May it not be better to forget what you are-not than to remember what you think that you are?

Is it not the former which needs forgetting?

Does the latter need remembering?

The ever-shining sun appears to you, in the absence of spatio-temporal rain-clouds, whereas memory of it does not dispel what obscures it.

The sun as such cannot be either present or absent, for it is always and only to a 'you' that it appears.

When relative phenomena are absent, the sun has no thing on which to appear to shine.

In the absence of phenomenality to what could a 'sun' be absent?

Only to phenomena is a 'you' present, and the 'sun' absent.

Noumenally, there is no 'you' to which a 'sun' could appear. Without the clouds of relative phenomenality, there is no 'you' to whom a 'sun' could be either absent or present, but only what is suggested by symbols such as 'Zero' or 'Absolute'.

There is no objective 'you' and no objective 'sun', but just Absolute 'shining' as such — sometimes termed 'Suchness'.

We are actually living in the future. What we think is the present is factually the past.

Everything said must be untrue. Truth must penetrate like an arrow and it hurts.

Who am I? I have many names, but the oldest is TAO —DHARMA.

I am, but there is no Me; I am, I experience as Me.

What you are looking for is what is looking.

What Question?

WHO AM I?

Who is asking?

I am.

Is not that also the PERFECT ANSWER.

Good morning, Mr. Wu, how happy I am to see you!
May I congratulate Madame on her absence?
My absence, Mr. Wu? But I am present!
Then may I thank Madame for noticing my absence?
I do not understand, Mr. Wu!
But Madame can only act from her absence, whereby my presence appears.
But, Mr. Wu, we are both present.
Never quite simultaneously, Madame!
Are we not both present now, Mr. Wu? Apparently, Madame, because momentarily we arrest the incidence of temporality, but not factually.
You are only present, Mr. Wu, when I see you?
How else, Madame, could presence appear?
And I am only present when you see me, Mr. Wu?
The pleasure is not exclusively mine, Madame: many of us have the good fortune to share it.
But how can that be, Mr. Wu?
How could that not be, Madame? Looking is always absent, the seen is always present.

What difference could there be between 'living' and 'dying'? 'Living' is only the elaboration in sequential duration of what otherwise is known as 'death'.

When What-we-are functions, extending in three apparent spatial dimensions and another interpreting them as duration, together known as 'space-time', there is what we know as living. When that process ceases we are no longer extended in sequential duration, we are no longer elaborated in 'space'; 'space-time' is no more and the apparent universe dis-appears.

Then we say that we are 'dead'.

But as what we are we have never 'lived' and we cannot 'die'.

Where could 'we' live? When could 'we' die? How could there be such things as 'we'? 'Living' is a spatial illusion, 'dying' is a temporal illusion, 'we' are a spatiotemporal illusion based on the serial interpretation of dimensional 'stills' or 'quanta' cognised as movement.

Only the concepts of infinity and intemporality can suggest intellectually a notion of what we are as the source and origin of appearance or manifestation.

WHAT is looking when an eye sees? An eye does not look: it is a passive receptor of light-rays. Each organ employed in the mechanism of vision is purely receptive: retina, optic nerve, cells, and grey-matter. Surely it is 'mind' — whatever that may be, and it is only a presumption, unidentifiable — which translates these impulses into form and colour. The resulting image is interpreted as such by memory, without which no form could have significance. But looking does not appear to be a part of that process: it can be a volitional impulse. Looking is not an essential or indispensable part of vision.

If we analyse 'hearing' we will find that 'listening' is not part of the mechanism of hearing, nor is 'touching' an element of the mechanics of contactual feeling. In the remaining two senses a single word covers both aspects though one sense of the term is independent of the mechanism of sensation. Thus sensorial perception itself is passive, and only the interpreting of it is active.

Therefore it must necessarily be 'mind' whatever that may be, which perceives sensorially, in the positive manner whereby objects are not only seen but are cognised, and whereby the whole phenomenal universe is re-cognised as existing in relation to what cognises it. Mind thereby is revealed as the subject of all objectivity, and all objectivity is revealed as a conceptual elaboration based on memory. What the senses perceive can never be known except as the interpretation by mind of stimuli the nature of which is otherwise not only unknowable but also unimaginable by mind itself.

It follows that to regard the conceptual universe as anything but a theoretical creation of mind, based on memory of perceptions antecedent in a time-sequence, and their previous interpretations, is entirely without justification. The Universe, based exclusively on nerve-stimuli, is a structure of imagination, of image-making in mind, itself forever unknowable, and its very existence at best a conjecture.

Note 1: There does not seem to be any reason to suppose that the visual or tactile interpretation of sensory perceptions bears any necessary relation to the assumed objects thereby 'created'. A 'table' might just as well be perceived as a complex of vibrations, a sound, a smell or flavour, what we call a 'force-field' or any other conceptual phenomenon soever. The story of the blind man asked to describe an elephant, and the result of his efforts, pertinently illustrates this point.

Note 2: Uninterpreted perceiving should be the non-volitional functioning called prajna which returns us to its static or potential aspect called dhyana (which is what-we-are). Thus pure perceptive awareness, uninterrupted (undiscriminated) would seem to be this same process, and this should be why 'sudden' — and so 'pure' (objectless and non-volitional) — sense-perceptions can open the way to awakened vision, as is often described in the records of the Masters.

It may be recalled that 'Hearing' rather than 'Seeing' was particularly recommended by the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara as the sensorial gateway to Awakening, and the one by means of which he himself had found integration with his noumenal nature. He proclaims it as the simplest and most efficacious. Pure hearing is prajna.

Lao-tzu said: "He (the Sage) looks without seeing", which Chuang-tzu confirmed in the words "(whereas) the eyes see without looking". The terms so translated may seem to be confusing, but the word 'looking' is subjective, whereas 'seeing' what is without, is objective.

'Within-seeing' is what matters: is it not 'BEING'?

Which is the best way?

From where to where?

From where I am to where I belong.

To where is that?

Let us call it 'home Blind? or blindfold?

What do you mean?

Looking for where you are by going elsewhere is a long way 'home'.

Or does it imply that there is neither any such state nor any 'entity' to experience it if there were such a state?

Each is doubtless true in itself, but is there not a further possible interpretation? Might it not imply that such a state and the experiencer of it are each inexistent as such, because in fact the conceptualised 'state' and the conceptualised 'experiencer' of it are, Absolutely, not different, each being all the other is, inseparable and objectively unnamable?

It may not be possible, subjected to the rationalisation of Relativity, to conceive this solution — for it is outside the boundaries of duality, and therefore can only be apperceived in undivided mind. But each time it was said may not the intention of the Sage who said it have been to suggest that so it is and that so it should be apperceived?

But how can I be at-home when what I am is absent?

Absence is only relative to 'presence': Absolutely I Am neither absent nor present.

So what-I-AM is never absent?

Nor present. To what could I be either?

But how can that be?

How can that not be? Can you be either absent from, or present to, what you are?

Are you enlightened, Mr. Wu?

Madame, 'Wu' is merely a shadow.

How can that be, Mr. Wu?

Madame, a shadow is only such because it is surrounded by light.

The appearance may be seen as a shadow, but what Mr. Wu IS — is the light.

Madame, I bow. Such also is a description of Madame.

As also of that crow, Mr. Wu, and of the tree from which he is crowing.

Madame, I prostrate. May we agree that there is only light and its shadows?

So it appears, Mr. Wu, but shadows are illusions which are created by light.

Alas, Madame, as 'you's we are both shadows, but as I — we are both the light-

Then, Mr. Wu, shall we both bow, for neither need prostrate?

What 'we' do, Madame, only matters to 'us': What 'we' ARE is Absolute Absence.

The Hall of Awareness is here where I am.

Wherever I look, it is around me,

It is unbounded and its ceiling is the sky.

It must needs be so, for I am alone,

And therefore all the world is in it.

It is infinite — since I am not finite,

It is intemporal — since I am not temporal,

For what 'space' and 'time' are — I am.
The Hall of Awareness cannot be seen from without:
It can only be apperceived from within,
Because I alone can look, and only you can see.
You will be welcome, enter when you will,
There is room for everyone, for all sentient beings;
You will find yourself at-home,
Truly at-home, as never before,
Because you have always been here,
Although you may never have noticed it!
You have only to remember who you are,
Which is just to stop forgetting,
For a split-second,
And you will find that you are I.

Note: This poem was sent to Sri Ganesan in response to his invitation to participate in the function of the inauguration of Sri Ramana Auditorium.

We mistake the functional centre of the phenomenal aspect of our noumenality for a "self", It has no more autonomy than a heart, a physical organ, no more volitional potentialities, and no more self-consciousness ; yet we attribute to it the sentience which represents what noumenally we are.

A psyche-soma, phenomenal as it is, must have a functional centre, without which it could not be what is seen as a "sentient being". Such centre must be psychic, just as the heart is somatic. The five senses, interpreted by the sixth, depend on this centre for their manifestation as perception and cognition; all functioning, instinctive or rational, is directed therefrom, and it is logical, therefore, that this centre should be considered as the subjective element of the objectivised phenomenon. So, phenomenally, it appears, but itself this subject" is an object, so that never could it be what we are, but only a part of the phenomenal set-up of the discriminated and separate phenomenon which we think that we are. Never could it be autonomous, never could it exercise volition, never could it be what we conceive as "us".

Moreover our sentience is essentially noumenal, and we are mistaking the switch-board for the power-station, the reservoir for the source, an electronic computer for a mind: the functional centre of a sentient being is purely cybernetic.

The identification which gives rise to a supposed “entity” that then and thereby thinks that it is in bondage, is identification of what noumenally we are, of our natural noumenality, with the functional “organ” in the psyche-soma which becomes thereby a supposed “self” or “ego” with relative, if not full, autonomy and volition. We do not even care to remember that only a small fraction of our physical movements, of our organic functioning responds in any way to the initiatives of our personalised wishes.

How does this situation arise? It arises as a result of the splitting of mind, called “dualism”, whereby the phenomenal aspect of noumenality—that is pure impersonal phenomenality—divides into negative and positive, and there appear “objects” which require a “subject”, and “others” require a “self”, each totally dependent on its counterpart for its apparent existence.

But mind, though apparently split in the process of phenomenalisation, remains whole as noumenon, and only in the becoming apparent, or in order to become apparent, is it obliged to divide into an apparent seer and an apparent seen, a cogniser and a thing cognised, which nevertheless can never be different, never two, for though in appearing it divides yet in its substratum it remains whole.

All phenomenality, therefore, is objective, that is appearance in mind, and its appearance is dependent on its division into a seer or cogniser and what is seen or cognised, that is which becomes apparent to an observer whose existence is only apparent in order that appearance may appear. It follows that in all this phenomenality there is no “ens” anywhere, for neither the apparent cogniser nor the apparently cognised is an entity in its own right, i.e. having a nature of its own. autonomy or volition.

It follows also that the substratum of “sentience” whereby all this manifestation is cognised, called prajna in Sanskrit, is an immediate expression of noumenality. Utterly impersonal, as devoid of “ens” as are phenomena, “it” is nevertheless, and “it” must necessarily be, what we are, and all that we are. In conceptualising “it” as prajna, “it” is conceptualising “itself”, via the familiar dualistic process of splitting into conceptualiser and concept or cogniser and cognised, so that in seeking for what we are—that for which we are seeking is the seeker: the seeker is the sought and the sought is the seeker, and that—as Padma Sambhava told us in plain words — is what we are.

There is no entity involved anywhere, and space-time is only a conceptual framework which accompanies events in order that events may have the necessary extension whereby they may appear to occur.

Objectively there is total negation, for the Negative Way alone abolishes the factuality of all phenomena and the existence of entity as such, but if a positive representation is to be attempted these are the elements out of which the image seems to be composed.

“By jointly discussing noumenon and phenomenon, one reaches the highest consciousness and creates right understanding among sentient beings.” (Fa-tsang, 642-712, founder of the Hua-yen Sect of Buddhism, based on the Avatamsaka Sutra).

“Positive” is not positive without “negative” and “negative” is not negative without “positive”. Therefore they can only be two halves of one whole, two conceptual aspects of one whole that as a whole cannot be conceived—precisely because it is this which seeks to conceive.

“Being” cannot be without “non-being”, and “non-being” cannot not be without being. Therefore they can only be two conceptual aspects of one whole that as such cannot be conceived—in which there is neither being nor non-being as objective existences.

“Appearance” (form) cannot appear without “void” (voidness of appearance), and “void” cannot be voidness of appearance without “appearance”. Therefore they must be two conceptual aspects of what is objectively inconceivable—as which their identity is absolute in non-objectivity.

“Subject” has no conceptual existence apart from “object”, nor “object” apart from “subject”. They, too, are twin spinning aspects of the inconceivable in which they are inevitably reunited.

Where there is neither positive nor negative, being nor non-being, appearance nor void, subject nor object, there must be identity. But identity cannot perceive itself, and that is what we are. That is why only he who does not know can speak, and why he who knows cannot speak—for what-he-is cannot be an object of what-he-is, and so cannot be perceived or described.

Positive and negative, being and non-being, appearance and void, subject and object, can be conceived by us because as “us”, mind is divided into subject-conceiving and object-conceived but, re-identified with what they are, we are their total objective absence—which is thought of as pure undivided mind.

“That alone is true Knowledge which is neither knowledge nor ignorance. What is known is not true Knowledge. Since the Self shines with nothing else to know or to make known, It, alone is Knowledge. It is not a void.”

“Space” is a static three-dimensional concept, of which “time” is the active counterpart, whose functioning constitutes a further direction of measurement. Space cannot be conceived without time (duration), nor time without space (extension). Two conceptual aspects of a unity that is inconceivable; given the name of “space-time”, their identity is absolute in non-conceptuality. Unaccompanied by them, phenomena cannot be extended in appearance, and only as their noumenal source can be assumed to be.

“Phenomena” cannot be such without “noumenon”, nor “noumenon” without “phenomena”. Therefore conceptually they also are two aspects of non-conceptuality. Phenomena, being no things in themselves (devoid of self-nature) yet are everything, and noumenon, being the source of everything, yet is no thing. Everything, then, is both, and neither is any thing: eternally separate as concepts, they are forever inseparable unconceived, and that identity is the essential understanding.

That is what the universe is in so far as its nature can be suggested in words. The universe is inconceivable because what it is is what we are, and what we are is what the universe is—and that is total absence cognitively which, uncognised, necessarily subsists as total presence.

“If it is said, that Liberation is of three kinds, with form or without form or with and without form, then let me tell you that the extinction of the three forms of Liberation is the only true Liberation. Ramana Maharshi's ' Forty Verses ', V. 40

We cannot use mind to transcend mind: therefore noumenon (which is the abstract of mind) represents the limit of possible cognition. “Noumenon” necessarily is total potentiality. If it functions, in functioning it must be subjective, and thereby inevitably objective also. That is to say, subject objectivises itself and so becomes apparent to itself as object, manifesting phenomenally “within” itself. It looks at itself and perceives the universe—which is then apparently outside itself, since objectivisation is a process of apparent exteriorisation.

Therefore the phenomenal universe is the objective aspect of noumenon.

This process comports the appearance of space and duration, without which objects could not have the necessary extension—and without their extension there could be no cognition.

Phenomena, therefore, are not something projected by noumenon: they are the appearance of noumenon—or noumenon rendered objective and apparent.

This functioning is what sentient beings are, and that extension in space-time is what we know as manifestation. In that appearance—like all phenomena, of which our appearance is an aspect we have no nature of our own, but in this functioning (which is our nature) noumenality and phenomenality are identical.

This, is why, thus manifested, we are not as such (phenomenally), and why we are as phenomenal noumenality (or noumenal phenomenality). Thus there is no duality in what we are, but only an apparent autonomous functioning which is the manifesting of non-manifestation.

No entity is involved in what we are, for “entity” is a phenomenal concept—and every object, material or conceptual, that is phenomenal, is devoid of nature (is not). When the autonomous functioning, which is all that we are in manifestation, no longer functions, i.e., when it no longer extends itself in an apparent space-time continuum, this-which-we-are remains totally integrated in noumenality.

Noumenality as such cannot be recorded. What “noumenality” represents neither is nor is not. It is necessarily incognisable, because totally devoid of objective quality, as mirroriness is, and because it is precisely what we are and absolutely all that we are, whether non-manifested or in apparent manifestation

Yet the final word be with Huang-Po: “ There is no difference between sentient beings and Buddhas, or between Samsara and Nirvana or between delusion and bodhi. When all such forms are abandoned there is the Buddha.”

ANY one thinking, as an entity, about himself, as an entity, which entity has no existence other than as a concept in 'his' mind, is wasting 'his' time no matter what 'he' may do. He is still a supposed subject regarding himself as a supposed object — and is not whole.

'Majesty' said Bodhidharma to the Emperor of China, 'there is no doctrine, and nothing holy about it'. When a monk came to Hui Hai three hundred years later and asked to be instructed in the doctrine, Hui Hai replied, 'I have no doctrine to teach '.

Why is there no doctrine?

Because there is only the understanding that there is no entity to be enlightened' or 'liberated' by a doctrine.

That is the beginning, because without that understanding any method, practice, or teaching is at least a waste of time, and only reinforces the illusion of such an entity. And it is also the end because the profound understanding of that is the only 'enlightenment' there could be.

What, then, could there be to teach, and who is there to be taught?

'I have no mouth, so how can I speak' said Hui Hai. 'The Buddha taught for forty-nine years, yet no word was spoken', said Huang Po; 'I travelled a thousand li, yet I have never taken a step', said another.

All such statements point to the same essential understanding, which is the beginning and the end.

'We' seek relative stillness in order to sleep,
but it is only when Absolute stillness supervenes
that we can Awaken

HERE! HERE!

Good morning, Mr. Wu!

Good morning, Madame.

Will you kindly tell me the time, Mr. Wu?

Yes, indeed, Madame, the time is Now. But it is always now Mr. Wu!

Madame, I bow.

That is charming, Mr. Wu, but I still do not know the time!

Madame, there is no other 'time'; any 'other' time could only be a game such as children play.

But, Mr. Wu, we have to live in time!

Then, Madame, are we not still 'children'?

To the grown-up, Mr. Wu, there should be no time?

To the mature, Madame, there is only 'Now'.

To the Awakened, Mr. Wu, all 'time' is just that?

All 'space', Madame, is Here, and all 'time' is Now — asleep or 'Awake'.

I am not extended in space, I have no duration in time,
I have neither extension nor absence of extension,
Neither presence nor absence of duration,
Because only objects can extend, only objects have duration,
And I am not an object.

But the absence

Of the presence and of the absence of 'space' and 'time'
Is what I AM.

Therefore I am Here,

Every 'here', but no where I am Now,

Every 'now', but no ever See?

What are you looking for?

There is nothing to be seen,

Either within 'mind' or reflected without.

Looking?

You can't see what is looking.

Nor can you see me,

For there isn't a 'me' to be seen.

Why?

Because I am the looking,

All looking,

And all that any thing could be.

ALL the sages of all the ages have told us, in a dozen different ways, both clearly and obscurely, that phenomenal (apparent) entities cannot attain or achieve 'enlightenment' for there is no such state or condition which is other than what such phenomena noumenally ARE. Nor has any sage stated this obvious fact so simply and lucidly as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, nor perhaps more often. But there seems to be an aspect of this eternal verity which has been left to us to clarify, a work which has been undertaken by none so patiently as by Douglas Harding, which is to point out that nothing can keep us in imaginary 'bondage' so firmly as our conditioned faculty of objectifying our phenomenal selves and thereby obscuring our vision of what we are. In illustration, let me simply refer to the professional or amateur extrapolaters represented by perfectly worthy young ladies whose personal ambition leads them to devote their youth to visualizing themselves as they imagine others see them by becoming mannequins or film-stars, in which process there are relatively few hours of a day during which their minds are engaged otherwise than in making images of themselves as seen from outside. But men do it also, both young and old, in fact do not we all do it, if less continually; indeed are we not all conditioned to do it, even trained (or mistrained) to do it from infancy to old age?

Let us now glance from one extreme to the other: it is recorded of St. John that a devotee commissioned an artist to paint his portrait, and when it was executed the Saint asked permission to see it. He looked at it in amazement and exclaimed, "Do you really mean that what you see when you look at me is like that?" He lived noumenally, i.e. from within, and had never bothered to think of how his persona, or mask appeared to others. To-day, with all our mirrors, shaving, hair-doing, etc., we cannot live quite like St. John, nor should it be necessary, however desirable, but we can perceive the problem, realize its importance, and readjust our habitual angle of vision; which is to say that we can abandon, gradually or suddenly, our conditioned habit of looking — and so of living — from the wrong direction.

This is, of course, very simple — as the truth must be and so always is, since it is what we are and therefore ‘nearer’ than conditioned falsehood. Instead of habitually extrapolating (making a fanciful picture seen from outside) of what we suppose to be ourselves, we need only desist and so be free to re-integrate what, absolutely, we must be and are. This implies, superficially, ceasing to go out of ourselves psychically in -order to make an object of what we think we are and, instead, to be satisfied to perceive from within, which is, after all, where whatever-we-may-be must be our centre.

Then, from here and not from there, we can apperceive which means ‘mind looking at itself’; and this is noumenal living and opens the door to the state of grace in which the saints and sages found that they were not different from Godhead.

To saints and sages, of course, these things could not matter, which is to say that then they no longer matter, for from whole or noumenal mind no thing matters, since no ‘thing’ can be other than an image in a mind divided into subject-and-object, neither of which dual elements has any being as such. ‘Things’ are concepts extended conceptually in space-time and each has its interdependent counterpart, forever positively apart, and forever negatively undivided in mind which is ‘whole which means healed’ as well as ‘holy’ (wholly having lost its ‘w’ in the wash).

But for us who have not yet realised, or even perhaps understood, that potentially we are, because we must be, saints-and-sages, may it not be a good idea to stop eternally extrapolating our supposed ‘selves’ and, instead, to re-integrate what quite certainly, and also quite obviously, we then remain, and which is, with equal certainty, what we ARE.

It is surely axiomatic that a phenomenon (an appearance, an object) cannot perform any action whatever on its own initiative, as an independent entity. In China this was illustrated by Chuang-tze in his story of the sow who died while suckling her piglets: the little pigs just left her because their mother was no longer there. In Europe, even at that early date, the same understanding is expressed by the word *animus* which “animates” the phenomenal aspect of sentient beings, and this forms the basis of most religious beliefs. But whereas in the West the “*animus*” was regarded as personal to each phenomenal object, being the sentience of it, in the East the “*animus*” was called “heart” or “mind” or “consciousness”, and in Buddhism and Vedanta was regarded as impersonal and universal, “Buddha-mind”, “Prajna”, “Atman” etc.

When this impersonal “mind” comes into manifestation by objectifying itself as subject and object it becomes identified with each sentient object, and the concept of “I” thereby arises in human beings, whereby the phenomenal world as we know it and live it, appears to be what we call “real”. That, incidentally, is the only “reality” (thing-ness) we can ever know, and to use the term “real” (a thing) for what is not such, for the purely subjective, is an abuse of language.

In this process of personalising “mind” and thinking of it as “I”, we thereby make it, which is subject, into an object, whereas “I” in fact can never be such, for there is nothing objective in “I”, which is essentially a direct expression of subjectivity. This objectivising of pure subjectivity, calling it “me” or calling it “mind”, is precisely what constitutes “bondage”. It is this concept, termed the I-concept or ego or self, which is the supposed bondage from which we all suffer and from which we seek “liberation”.

It should be evident, as the Buddha and a hundred other Awakened sages have sought to enable us to understand, that what we are is this “animating” mind as such, which is noumenon, and not the phenomenal object to which it gives sentience. This does not mean, however, that the phenomenal object has no kind of existence whatever, but that its existence is merely apparent, which is the meaning of the term “phenomenon”, that is to say that it is only an appearance in consciousness, an objectivisation, without any nature of its own, being entirely dependent on the mind that objectivises it, which mind is its only nature, very much as in the case of any dreamed creature, as the Buddha in the Diamond Sutra, and many others after him have so patiently explained to us.

This impersonal, universal mind or consciousness, is our true nature, our only nature, all, absolutely all, that we are, and it is completely devoid of I-ness.

This is easy enough to understand, and it would be simple indeed if it were the ultimate truth, but it is not, for the obvious reason that no such thing as an objective “mind” could exist, any more than an “I” or any other object, as a thing-in-itself. What it is, however, is totally devoid of any objective quality, and so cannot be visualised, conceptualised, or in any way referred to, for any such process would automatically render it an object of a subject—which by definition it can never be. That is because the “mind” in question is the unmanifested source of manifestation, the process of which is its division into subject and object; and antecedent to such division there can be no subject to perceive an object, and no object to be perceived by a subject. Indeed, and as revealed by sages such as Padma Sambhava, that which is seeking to conceive and to name this unmanifested source of manifestation is precisely this “whole mind” that is the “animating” or prajñatic functioning which itself is the seeking, so that the sought is the seeker thereof. Profoundly to understand this is Awakening to what is called “enlightenment”.

This reasoned visualisation, therefore, like all doctrine, is merely conceptual, devoid of factuality, a structure of theoretical imagination, a symbolical diagram devised in order to enable us to understand something immediate that can never become knowledge. Yet that ultimate “something”, which is no “thing”, is nevertheless what the universe is, and all that we are. The psychological “I-concept” has no nature of its own, is no “thing” and could not possibly create genuine “bondage”. There cannot be any such thing as bondage at all, but only the idea of such. There is no liberation, for there is no “thing” from which to be freed. If the whole conceptual structure is seen as what it is, it must necessarily collapse, and the bondage-enlightenment nonsense with it. That is called Awakening, awakening to the natural state which is that of every sentient being. Sri Ramana Maharshi taught just (that when he said that “enlightenment” is only being rid of the notion that one is not “enlightened”, and Maharshi might have been quoting the T’ang dynasty Chinese sage Hui-hai, known as the Great Pearl, when he stated that Liberation is liberation from the notion of “liberation”. He might also have been quoting Huang-po (d. 850), of whom he is unlikely ever to have heard, when they both used the same words, full of humour, to someone asking about “his” mind: each sage asked in reply, “How many minds have you?” How many minds had they, those two young men? Why, none at all. Not only not two, but not one. Nor were they themselves a “mind”, for there could not be such a thing as a “mind” for them to be. Neither “they” nor “mind” ever had, or ever could have, any objective being whatever, for never has any kind of objective being been, nor will such ever be. All that, and every “that” that ever was thought up — and “that” is the most purely objective of pronouns — is the essence of the gigantic phantasmagoria of objectivity, which we spend our lives building up, and in which we search desperately for some “truth” that could not possibly be there. The whole vast construction is a phantasy, a dream, as the Buddha (or whoever wrote it in his name/ told us in the Diamond Sutra, and the truth that a dream represents, or misrepresents, of which it is a reflection or a deflection, is the dreaming source of it which is all that it is. That source can never have a name, because a name denotes a phenomenon —I and there is no phenomenal dreamer, but a functioning that is called dreaming. Sri Bhagavan called it “I-I”: if it must be called anything, no nominal form could ever come nearer, or be less misleading as an indication, than his term.

All objectivisation is conceptual, all conceptuality is inference, and all inference is as empty of truth as a vacuum is empty of air. Moreover there is no truth, never has been and never could be; there is no thus-ness, suchness, is-ness, nor anything positive or negative whatever. There is just absolute absence of the cognisable, which is absolute presence of the unthinkable and the unknowable— which neither is nor is not. Inferentially this is said to be an immense and radiant splendour untrammelled by notions of time and space, and utterly beyond the dim, reflected sentience of temporal and finite imagination.

Every perceptible 'thing' is a product of mind. What we are as 'things' is that,
And what we are otherwise than as things' is that also.

Every manifestation, then is a product of mind. Whatever we may be as
manifestation is a product of mind.

Whatever we may be otherwise than as what is
Manifested is mind itself.

Since mind is only manifest in manifestation,
Itself is non-manifestation.

So that is what we are otherwise than as manifested. Thus we, sentient beings, are
mind itself manifesting, And, objectively, mind manifesting as 'things'.

Noumenon, as the term states, is mind. Phenomenon, as the term states, is
appearance. Unmanifested, we are noumenon,

Manifested, we are appearance (phenomenon).

They are not separate, no more separate than
substance and its form.

Their difference is in appearance, which one has
and the other has not.

Why is that?

Because, in manifesting, mind divides into
observer and observed. That which is observed is appearance,

Its observer is the counter part of appearance, Dual aspects of manifesting mind.

Knowing that the observed has no existence Apart from the observer,

Knowing that the observer has no existence Apart from the observed,

Divided mind is re-united.

Then there is no other, so there can be no self. Then there is no self, so there can no other. Without extension in space, without duration in time, in mind that is whole,
There is no being to suffer, to experience pain or pleasure,
To hate or to love.
Gone with its ego, the scourge of volition. Mind as a concept, utterly absent,
Pure noumenality, none to conceive it. Untrammelled and radiant, is all that we are.

My world is my consciousness of it,
And I am 'being-Aware of being conscious.'
Relatively regarded,
'Consciousness' is positive and present 'Awareness' is negative and absent.
Awareness, then, is absence of Consciousness, And Consciousness absence of Awareness.

How can this be?
Is not 'Consciousness' split 'Awareness'?
Does not 'Awareness' denote integrality?
'Consciousness' is relative;
'Awareness' is Absolute.
Does not 'Consciousness' imply all that we could be in Relativity?
Does not 'Awareness' imply all that we could be Absolutely?
This means that our everyday consciousness is split-Awareness of what we are, or integral 'Mind'.

It also implies that, ceasing to be split, consciousness is healed (made whole).
For, Absolutely, 'Consciousness' and 'Awareness' as such cannot be different, since Absolutely, 'difference' cannot be.

Therefore 'Consciousness' must be what 'relativity' is.
And 'Awareness' must be what 'Absolute' is.
Relatively, 'Consciousness', then, represents 'Awareness' for awareness relatively split into subject-and-object, is what 'Awareness' is, whole and entire.

Absolutely, 'Awareness' re-integrated, is what split-consciousness is relatively.
So that 'Consciousness' being split-'Awareness' i.e. awareness divided into subject-and-object, Huang Po could state that "apperceiving subject-and-object as not-different is awakening to the truth of Ch.'an."

Note: Conscious, conceptualised, I am represented by a 'me' apparently 'present' in temporal Relativity. Aware, conceptually absent, I am Presence eternally Absolute.

I could not be conscious if I were not, potentially, Aware — for 'consciousness' being split-Awareness, could not have independent existence. Which is to say that, being conscious, I am always Aware. I only have to notice it. There is no consciousness without Awareness, and Awareness is not conscious, for consciousness is relative and Awareness is Absolute.

Otherwise expressed: Absolutely they are not-different since 'being-Aware' is being aware of consciousness; relatively, 'consciousness' is the object of 'being-aware,' which, as its subject, is the Absolute Subject of all relativity.

"The consciousness 'I' is the subject of the various acts. Enquiring into the true nature of that consciousness, and remaining as oneself, is the way to understand, through Enquiry, one's true nature." —Ramana Maharshi (Ramana Jyothi, p. 56).

It is interesting to note that in these few words the perfected sage of our time confirms what is here being discussed. His phrase "remaining as oneself" (remaining as what one is) is herein referred-to as 'Awareness.'

Unliving — I am Aware, Living — 'an I-me' is being-conscious in space-time.

What sentient-beings know as consciousness' may be regarded as relative awareness which may also be cognised as what, relatively, they are, whereas, Absolutely, sentient-beings are 'absolute awareness', and nothing else whatever. Nor is there anything else for them to be, for absolute awareness, i.e. being absolutely aware, is total and ultimate subjectivity.

Therefore what every sentient-being must be, and is, can be so described, with the inevitable proviso that, absolutely, there is no such objective thing, state, or condition, that, as a concept, it is null and void, and could never in any manner be conceived, since what the verbal symbol implies would then be conceiving what is so-conceiving; which as such is inconceivable.

Whatever is subjective can only be the subject of objects, as which it becomes relative. Therefore the phrase 'absolute awareness' can only imply what objects are when they are apperceived as being their subject, whereby their relative identity or conceptual definition disappears, leaving absolute absence, which is the only Presence, which is just I-awareness as I.

All reasoning as such is relative, therefore absolute awareness cannot be cognised rationally; but when relativity is negated, such 'absolute awareness' becomes nameless, indescribable, and incognisable, remains in abstraction as 'is-ness'. We never can know what we are absolutely, for as such we are no thing to be known, and every knowable thing, by being knowable, is thereby relative.

Seeking to know what we are is therefore absurd, a contradiction in relative terms. Necessarily we must be, but not as anything, for there is no 'thing' for anything to be. There is nothing to find or to discover, guess or imagine. As I just AM. And every sentient being may know it, for such 'knowing' is Being.

All relativity is psychic and only exists mnemonically in conceptual space-time, and until this is clearly seen and profoundly understood it is difficult to know how sentient phenomena appearing in that dream could ever come to apprehend and, finally, to apperceive what absolutely they are, since relatively — as what they appear to be in relativity — they are very precisely no thing whatever but what each of them, man or monkey, bird or beetle, is as I.

Seeking, however, is finding.

Since the Sought-is-the-Seeker,

But 'finding' is precisely this apperceiving.

I can be Aware of Split-consciousness Whereby split-consciousness is healed and becomes Aware.

In phenomenal living, which is termed 'Relativity', all sentient-beings, so being are conscious, which is being conscious of sentience.

Within historical times, and perhaps for uncounted ages before, a minority of sentient-beings, principally human, has become conscious of consciousness (of being conscious), and thereby has been able to conceptualise objectively. This, though still relative, is evidently a superior degree of consciousness, comprising a suppositional 'subject' cognising suppositional phenomenal objects.

Beyond this 2nd degree of consciousness there would not seem to be reason to suppose that anything can be attained by purely relative means, since these phenomenally-identified, individuals have not transcended identification.

But a few sentient-beings throughout recorded history have, by negating their own relativity, re-discovered Absolute — which term is a verbal symbol for what Relativity, when no longer relative, is and always has been even when subjected to relative space-time, This is so because 'Absolute' connotes what is not subjected to 'space' and 'time' which are concepts defining the relative extension of objects by which they are relative to Absolute, and whereby phenomenally they appear to exist.

What then happens, or seems to happen, when this hitherto rare occurrence occurs?

It may be suggested here that sentient phenomena who have already become conscious of consciousness have recognised, or have been recognised by (which is not-different), a further, non-relative degree of consciousness to which as a verbal symbol the term 'awareness' may be applied. This ulterior and potential degree of consciousness is common to all sentient-beings, is said to be present in deep (dreamless) sleep, in fact is and must necessarily always be present, though apparently absent, since in relative terms it is 'timeless' and 'infinite'.

Therefore the 2nd degree of consciousness is not the end, the ultimate, for Absolute, if the term is to have its full meaning, requires a further degree of transcendence. It is then necessary for the sentient-being to become conscious of being Aware as he had previously become conscious of being conscious, thereby becoming able to know, and therefore to be, what he is as I — for 'knowing' in this sense is 'being' [\[7\]](#). Such 'being' is then Absolute, or Absolute Awareness, which is ultimate, unicity, wholeness, relative no-thingness, and all there could be — which is absolute absence of relative 'being' and absolute Presence as such.

People searching for the Self" are usually looking for "an entity that isn't an entity" — instead of quite simply looking for what is looking. What is looking is what "they" are looking for all the time.

Neither could ever be "found", but the latter at least is present.

When you 'look' you see Subject as objects, when I Look I see objects as Subject.
That which is seen cannot look: this which is looking cannot be seen.

When I know that, Relatively, I AM no thing, the 'me' of 'an I-me' being phenomenal,

I know that I AM Noumenality, as which I AM the noumenon of phenomenality.

Negation of relative subjectivity, sometimes termed an I-concept or 'ego' has always been recognised as the essential factor of release.

Then the negated 'ego' or 'I-concept' rejected, is replaced by what-I-AM, which Ramana Maharshi designated by the locution 'I-I'.

Only subjected to relative conditioning can such a situation appear to 'exist'. By negating an I-concept,

Relativity is no longer relative — and Absolute supervenes.

Simple — as the Sages said—but as long as we assume or believe that an I-concept is what we are as I — such 'simplicity' is hidden by our conditioning.

But 'negating' is more than wishful thinking: it implies total abstraction. 'Overboard' with every scrap of relative rubbish — including 'the board'!

Only because I AM silence, can sound be heard.

Only because I AM absence, can presence be perceived.

Only because I AM no 'thing' can objects appear.

This which I know that I AM is all and no 'thing'; relatively described as 'Noumenality' As such I abide.

As 'an I-me' I appear extended in space-time, bearing a heavy burden of what is known as 'karma'

As such, an 'I-me' must 'die' in space-time, which means disappear. Manifested spatio-temporally,

I-me is transient.

Unmanifested, there is no transience; unborn, I can neither 'live' nor 'die'. What-I-Am remains as Isness, unextended in conceptual space-time.

Whether or not an aspect of I-me should be re-born, should re-live, and should re-die in phenomenality, my Noumenality remains undefiled.

Such is all that I could be, and only in Noumenality do I inhere.

'I-me' is a phenomenal concept, whereas, noumenally, I AM.

Mr. Wu !

I have no name, Madame, but Here I Am.

Yes indeed, Mr. Wu, and it is always a pleasure to see you!

Thank you, Madame, it is indeed I Who am Looking.

But, Mr. Wu, I can see as well as you can!

All 'you's can see, Madame, but only I can Look..

At least I can hear your words, Mr. Wu, and that makes me happy.

All 'you's can "hear', Madame, but only I can Listen.

But I can do it also, Mr. Wu!

All 'you's can 'do', Madame, but only I can Act.

Could you mean, Mr. Wu, that only objects suffer?

Subject Acts, Madame, only the objectified experiences.

But when I understand, Mr. Wu, my experience is happy.

Yes, indeed, Madame. I am what 'Being' IS.

I was attempting to find a bridge between the positive way of Vedanta and the negative 'way' of Ch'an. Bhagavan stepped over the valley by teaching — as I see it — the negative 'way' in a positive context, but only he could do that because to him they were not different. Vasistha also stepped over the valley so long ago,

The real caterpillar is the question "Who is doing all the things 'we' are called upon to 'do'? No one ever answers that question in Vedanta. Yet, is it not fundamental? Metaphysically, it is essential. As long as the question is posed in a religious context, I doubt if a serious answer can be attempted?

Every question concerns you looking or not-looking, doing or not-doing, knowing or not-knowing;

Never the thing (object) looked-at, done, known; never its being or not-being.

As long as there is you doing, it makes no difference whether there is doing or not-doing — for both are doing by you.

Paravritti, metanoesis, the “180 degree turn-over”, is not a turning over by a “doing or not-doing” you, a turning from positive to negative; it is not done by “a you”. It is not done by any other “entity” either. It is not done at all. It is the timeless, unceasing prajñatic functioning of our dhyanic non-being that becomes phenomenally present when there is neither doing nor non-doing, i.e. when there is “fasting of the mind”.

It is not the object that is or is-not, but the cogniser of the thing-that-either-is-or-is not — that neither is nor is-not as a cogniser.

All looking, doing, cognising is the same process as looking for an “I” (the looker, doer, cogniser) as an object. Why? Because a you (“I”) is looking etc., and also because every object ultimately is I. The looking for an “I” as an object is the looking that is all looking for all objects; so is the not-looking for an “I” as an object the not-looking for any object whatever.

But it is the looker, rather than the object, that neither is nor is-not. Always, always, in every case and context.¹ Therefore it is only when you cease looking that the total absence of the looking-you can be present — and that is the “180 degree turn”.

Who is looking? As long as a “who” looks, objects can be seen only as objects, and a looking “who” cannot be replaced by who that neither is nor is-not, as long as he is looking.

Only in the absence of both looking and not-looking can a looking, that neither is nor is-not looking, be present. And such presence is you (“I”).

Is not that the message of the Diamond and Heart Sutras?

‘Looking’ is ‘Nirvana’, ‘the seen’ is ‘Samsara’ Looking is Subjectively being Conscious, ‘the seen’ is objective consciousness.

Subjectively, Nirvana and Samsara cannot be ‘different’.

Objectively they appear as relative counterparts, of which none could be ‘different’ Absolutely.

The interpretation, which seeks to find Nirvana and Samsara as being 'not-different' Relatively, is nonsense:

Absolutely, no 'difference' is possible.

'Looking' does not discriminate: 'seeing' does nothing else.

The misuse — due to mis-understanding — of the term 'seeing' is the cause of this calamitous confusion.

Nirvana is present whenever we 'look': Samsara appears whenever we 'see'. This is why Nirvana is never 'absent' but never appears and why Samsara always 'appears' but is always 'absent' (illusory).

Is this difficult? If so it seems, that is because we are conditioned to misunderstand what these concepts 'factually' — as opposed to 'actually' — imply.

This is not verbal jugglery: it is what the Sages knew and tried to impart. It is sometimes just termed 'Looking', occasionally — alas, alas — mistranslated as 'Seeing'.

Note: If 'mistranslated' is too strong a term, we may say 'misinterpreted' instead.

Memo: The Heart Sutra states that 'Nirvana' and 'Samsara' are not-different. It is also stated in the famous convocation in the Surangamanirdesa Sutra, when the Buddha required each of his bodhisattvas to state how they had found Enlightenment, that Manjusri and Ananda explained it was by 'Looking', and the Buddha, though agreeing that each of the senses could be used, since all were ultimately the same, declared that 'Looking' was the most propitious for sentient-beings in general.

Objects are only known as the result of reactions of the senses of sentient beings to a variety of stimuli.

These stimuli appear to derive from sources external to the reagent apparatus, but there is no evidence of this apart from the reagent apparatus itself.

Objects, therefore, are only a surmise, for they have no demonstrable existence apart from the subject that cognises them.

Since that subject itself is not sensorially cognisable except as an object, subject also is only a surmise.

Since the factual existence of neither subject nor object can be demonstrated, existence is no more than a conceptual assumption, which, metaphysically, is unacceptable.

There is, therefore, no valid evidence for the existence of a world external to the consciousness of sentient beings, which external world is therefore seen to be nothing but the cognisers of it, that is — sentient beings themselves.

But there can be no factual evidence for the existence of sentient beings, either as subject or as object, who therefore are merely a conceptual assumption on the part of the consciousness in which they are cognised.

It follows that “consciousness” also can only be a conceptual assumption without demonstrable existence.

What, then, can this assumption of consciousness denote? This question can only be answered in metaphysical terms, according to which consciousness may be regarded as the manifested aspect of the unmanifested or non-manifestation, which is the nearest it seems possible to go towards expressing in a concept that which by definition is inconceivable.

Why should this be so? It must be so because conceptuality cannot have conceptuality for source, but only the non-conceptual, because that which objectively conceives must necessarily spring from the objectively non-existent, the manifested from nonmanifestation, for conceptuality cannot conceive or objectify itself — as an eye cannot see itself as an object.

Therefore consciousness can be described as pure non-conceptuality, which is “pure” because unstained either by the conceptual or the non-conceptual, which implies that there is a total absence of both positive and negative conceptuality.

Not existing as an object, even conceptual, there can be no “it”, there is no “thing” to bear a name, no subject is possible where no object is, and total absence of being is inevitably implied.

All we can say about this which we are, which to us must be objectified as “it” in order that we may speak of it at all, is to regard “it” as the noumenon of phenomena, but, since neither of these exists objectively, phenomenally regarded it may be understood as the ultimate absence from which all presence comes to appear.

But consciousness, or “Mind”, does not “project” the phenomenal universe: “it” IS the phenomenal universe which is manifested as its self.

Metaphysics, relying on intuition or direct perception, says no more than this, and points out that no word, be it the Absolute, the Logos, God, or Tao, can be other than a concept which, as such, has no factual validity whatsoever.

This-Which-Is, then, which cannot be subject or object, which cannot be named or thought, and the realisation of which is the ultimate awakening, can only be indicated in such a phrase as that quoted above :

“I am not, but the apparent universe is my Self.”

It is commonly imagined that we are now 'bound' and may be 'liberated' by enlightenment remaining as ourselves but mysteriously 'freed' and illuminated

But we are constantly told by the Masters that it is not so, that there is nothing attainable by 'us' etc. etc. Apparently this is not adequately explained for it is still generally supposed that 'we' as such can just wake up to find that 'we' are free. So this must be nonsense — and the statements denying it cannot have been understood.

The 'do-er' suffers karma (the effect whose cause is volitional 'action') because he thinks that 'he' is the doer. When he understands that 'he' is not, that there is no doer, nor any deed done, but only a phenomenal doing, he is said to be free, 'liberated' from 'his' supposed bondage.

But the bondage is only a 'supposed' bondage because 'he' as such was never there to be bound.

His liberation is not liberation from any thing whatsoever other than from the idea of himself — is not liberation from 'responsibility' for instance — but only from the supposition that he existed to have 'responsibility'.

Liberated he is then no longer present as 'himself' to think himself 'bound'!

'He' remains as an appearance in mind as long as 'his' apparent life is being lived in space-time, but as such 'he' is entirely dreamed or 'lived' — which is bound by karma — as long as that condition appears to subsist.

'Liberation' is only liberation from the notion of himself as an autonomous individual factually existing in a veritable space-time universe.

This is why both the Maharshi (in the last three of the "Forty Verses") and the Ch'an masters of Buddhism insist that 'liberation' is liberation from the idea of liberation, i.e. of there being anybody to be liberated.

Sri Ramana Maharshi is sometimes described as a great Vedantic saint. That no doubt is true, but is it not rather like describing the Ocean as the Bay of Bengal? Of course he is called Bhagavan also, by his devotees, but did he not say “There is no Bhagavan outside yourself”? That is, perhaps, one of his great statements, those in which he said in half-a-dozen words everything that can be said in relative language. So the Ocean simile will not ‘hold water’, for if it applied it would require that we should be Land and thereby separate from what he is. In fact only one simile is applicable, only one will hold both the Maharshi and Bhagavan, and that one is Light, for then we are ‘darkness’, and there is no such thing as darkness, for ‘darkness’ is only apparent absence of light.

With Light there is no darkness, for light is universal, and what Sri Ramana Maharshi represented conflicts with no true teaching in any part of the world or at any period of suppositional time Bondage to any specific denomination, or to any particular manifestation representing a faith may obscure this fact to the blindfold, but whoever can free himself will find the light represented by Bhagavan shining also in his own vision.

His own way of seeing, be it traditional or otherwise, may suit him better, but he cannot fail to benefit by this simple and direct teaching via a Sage of our own times, whose words were recorded by our contemporaries and are accurately reported in our own tongues. To anyone who has had to deal all his life with scholarly translations from ancient languages, by specialists who understood nearly everything in question except the meaning of what they were translating, the words of a contemporary Sage are precious indeed.

It would be a mistake, however, to oversimplify the situation. In the first place the Maharshi in his manifestation — or Bhagavan via that manifestation—taught much by ‘silence’ or in the form of what has been called grace and in the second place he spoke to each devotee according to his degree of understanding, which means that to some he spoke as directly from pure noumenality as relative language permits, while to others he replied to questions in a perfectly dualistic context. Two such answers to a similar question are often contradictory, as they must necessarily be, for undivided mind needs no concepts, cognition is absolute and not relative, so that what relatively appears to be incomprehensible absolutely may be apperceived as the truth, and what absolutely is truth appears relatively as incomprehensible.

To whoever has apperceived what the difference is — there is no longer any ‘difference’. It is only when you don’t know the difference that the apparent ‘difference’ appears.

Are you Awakened, Mr. Wu?
Madame, I have never been asleep.
You were born Awakened, Mr. Wu? How wonderful!
I do not remember having been born, Madame.
Nor indeed do I, Mr. Wu!
I cannot believe that Madame was born asleep!
Then when did I cease to be Awakened, Mr. Wu?
The conditioning of Madame began when somebody took the liberty of slapping her slightly 'behind'.
Indeed, indeed, Mr. Wu, how unfortunate!
As unfortunate as indelicate, Madame, but it would have happened nevertheless:
conditioning is inevitable in Relativity,
If it began with a slap, Mr. Wu, how might it end?
I would not suggest the same method, Madame, but so must it be!
Perhaps, Mr. Wu, you might be the doctor?
In neither event would Madame be aware of the occurrence.
But why should that be, Mr. Wu?
Awareness, Madame, has neither beginning nor end.

I am absolutely Subjective,
I am subjectively Absolute.
There is nothing whatever objective, about what-I-am as I, for, as 'I', I am-not.
Subject of all I survey, of every object in the sensorial universe, nothing belongs to
me.
For there is no 'me' to which any 'thin' could belong.
Every sentient-being is what I am, for every sentient—being is I.
There are no 'others', for myself is no 'self' to know any 'other'.
Since there is no me, there is no 'you'.
Since there is no 'we', all sentient-beings are what I AM, which is what the universe
is as I.

The Maharshi's words imply "Negate every identification with 'body', 'senses' etc."

But this can only be done by what is responsible (by what is doing it), which cannot be 'discarded' — because such is what is negating.

But that — 'God', 'Self' — must go also as a 'that' (an object): Best riddance of worst rubbish!

Note: To Maharshi there could be no difference between positive and negative other than relatively: he answered each question in the manner most likely to be understood, leaving the essential 'jump' from relative to absolute, to be effected when his questioner had reached the top of the 'hundred-foot pole'.

It is what you cannot discard which is here, and it cannot discard what it is — which is discarding the rest.

Devotee: What is meant by Neti-Neti?

Maharshi: There is wrong identification of the Self with the body, senses, etc. You proceed to discard these, and that is Ned. This can only be done by holding to the one which cannot be discarded. That is it alone.

— Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, no. 366. -

I only am as all beings,
I only exist as all appearances.
I am only experienced as all sentience,
I am only cognised as all knowing.
Only visible as all seeing,
Every concept is a concept of what I am.
All that seems to be is my being.
For what I am is not any thing.
Being whatever is phenomenal,
Whatever can be conceived as appearing,
I who am conceiving cannot be conceived,
Since only I conceive,
How could I conceive what is conceiving?
What I am is what I conceive;

Is not that enough for me to be?
When could I have been born?
I who am the conceiver of time itself?
Where could I live?
I who conceive the space wherein all things extend. How could I die?
I who conceive the birth, life, and death of all things, I who, conceiving, cannot be
conceived?

I am being, unaware of being,
But my being is all being,
I neither think nor feel nor do,
But your thinking, feeling, doing, is mine only.
I am life, but it is my objects that live,
For your living is my living.
Transcending all appearance,
I am immanent therein.
For all that is — I am.

*'There is neither destiny nor free-will,
Neither path nor achievement; this is the final truth'*
— Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi, p.93.

MAHARSHI'S statement specifically negates the concepts themselves, and the application of them only by inference.

Destiny, like 'free-will', is a word that seeks to describe a concept, as also are 'path' and 'achievement'. They are not sensorial perceptions, interpreted as having objective existence, but structures in mind whose existence is inferential only, i.e. directly conceptual.

Therefore they cannot have any nature of their own, such nature as pertains to them depending entirely on an assumed 'entity' to which they as concepts can be applied. Being nothing themselves, their truth or falsehood depends upon the truth or falsehood of the 'entity' to which they are attached and whose comportment they are designed to explain.

It follows that if there is an 'entity' a question arises as to whether such entity suffers 'destiny' or not, exercises 'freewill' or not, has a 'path' to follow or not, can claim an 'achievement' or not.

There seem to be two ways of answering this question: one is by asking the awakened Masters, the other is by asking oneself. As for the former I think I am correct in stating that in all Advaita, whether Vedantic or Buddhist, the totality of great and known Masters has categorically declared that no such thing as an entity has ever existed, exists or ever could exist. The Buddha mentions the fact nineteen times in the short Diamond Sutra alone.

As for ourselves, each of us can try to locate such an entity either subjectively or objectively. The results of my own efforts, if that should have any interest, have been entirely, and in my view definitively, negative. So that it seems to me to be reasonable to declare that the explanation of Maharshi's magnificently categorical statement is that there is neither an entity to suffer destiny, nor an entity to exercise free-will, neither an entity to follow a path, nor an entity to achieve an aim.

Should it not follow that if we are lived, without attempted 'volition' on the part of a purely suppositional entity we may ask what could there be to have cares and worries, for the disappearance of a supposed 'path' can only leave what inevitably must be our normal and eternal condition here and now, in lieu or achievement?

Note: An entity requires inferences such as 'space' and 'duration', an entity is subject to limitation, an entity is an object and needs a subject.

ALL I AM, all I could possibly BE, whatever sentient-being says, acts, or knows it, is Absence of Objectivity, of any objective element whatsoever.

Such is negating the factual Presence of objectivised phenomena extended spatially in duration, and psychically experienced in Consciousness as 'living'.

This has been known by sages since the dawn of history.

May we not now apperceive it, know it, accept it, and reap the harvest of this knowledge of what, and all, we could BE?

There is no 'time' there is no 'space', there is no 'past', no 'present', no 'future' : only 'Here' infinitely, and 'Now' eternally, which is 'This' known as Nirvana, instead of 'That', known as Samsara, the Kingdom of 'Heaven' instead of 'the Earth', BEING, instead of living. HENCE THE UNIVERSE.

'UNIVERSE' is only being-aware of a universe.

If there were no consciousness of a universe, no universe could appear to be.

'A universe' is our becoming aware of its extension in conceptual space-time, and its only existence is in the consciousness in which it appears.

The supposition that the universe pre-exists as a thing-in-itself, which 'dividuals' discover by sensorial experience, is the fundamental error which produces the conditioning termed bondage.

As soon as it is apperceived that the 'universe' which is apparently objective is precisely and only consciousness-of-it as existing, it is re-cognised as being composed of phenomena whose apparent existence is psychic, for all objects, being objectivisations in mind, are sensorially perceived as objectifacts.

Phenomena may then be apperceived noumenally as what subjectively they are, and the apparent universe reappears as existing solely in consciousness of it as such ; for subjective consciousness is all which any objectification could be as the being-conscious of objective appearance in mind.

Apperceived, there is nothing but what relatively can be described as subjective consciousness, which is all 'we' could be, being it, not as anything 'been', not plural, of course, nor even singular, and then our universe is seen as our total manifestation as I.

Note: Incidentally this illustrates the famous Ch'an saying whereby mountains and rivers are first seen as existing, then as not-existing, and finally are seen as what we are.

Incidentally also, this apprehension is at least as old as the Vedas, and probably inherent in every psyche.

Contradictory experiences, such as 'joy' and 'sorrow' positive and negative, constitute the expression of divided mind.

Undivided mind, therefore, must be relatively understood as being 'experience' as such, unexpressed, i.e. neither positive nor negative.

Undivided 'Experience', then, cannot be expressed, Experience-as-such cannot be experienced.

Therefore Experience-as-such, i.e. apart from its phenomenal expression, can only be noumenal — which denotes Whole-mind.

Noumenally, then, we must be what 'Experience' is, whereas phenomenally we experience via divided mind.

Note: 'Experiencing' as 'perceiving and doing' indeed the present participle of any verb — may be regarded as the link between relative and absolute since there is no subject or object — doer or deed done. Therefore 'what' experience is may be seen as identical with what 'perceiving', 'doing' etc. are.

Being, I AM. Every sentient-phenomenon expresses it incessantly, cannot not express it, but is conditioned not to know it.

'Not-knowing' is identification as 'a me', often termed 'ignorance'.

'Knowing' is disidentification, whereby I remain as I, once termed 'gnosis'. This is why 'Knowing is Being' — as Maharshi stated.

'Being' is the 'being' of 'being-sentient', and whatever is 'being' I AM.

Extension in space-time is experience, called 'suffering' in Buddhism, called 'living' by others, and consists of identification with a phenomenal object.

This constitutes bondage to Relativity.

Disidentification is recovery of Awareness of BEING, whereby identification with a phenomenal 'me' is discarded, so that every sentient-being can say: 'Being, I AM.

Awareness implies Subjective Consciousness of which Sri Ramana spoke when he said "The world is only in Subjective Consciousness."

To 'Exist' (existere) means to stand outside.

Which implies to be the 'object' of a 'subject'.

Every phenomenon is obliged to do this by 'appearing'.

But it is not necessary to assume that it has any further meaning.

Nor is there any apparent reason to suppose that any object factually does any thing: is it not 'others' who suffer the appearance? Casting the blame upon the victim — the object which appears to 'others' — is irrational.

As objects we are inflicted on our neighbours who, thereby, become our relative subjects by perceiving us.

The theory that 'we' have objective reality therefore is far indeed from having been satisfactorily established.

Does any concept 'exist'? Does any concept 'stand outside'?

'God' is a concept: the 'existence' of concepts is only in mind.

Therefore they only 'in-sist'.

Has 'insistence' less value than 'existence'? Or greater value?

All knowledge is conceptual? Only 'I' am not conceptual.

Therefore only I can be said to 'stand inside'. For I conceive, but I cannot be conceived.

I alone am Subject — and I can never be an object.

How I wish I were you, Mr. Wu!

Alas, Madame, that is not possible.

How is that so, Mr. Wu?

Because, Madame, in saying it, 'you' are I.

But that is all I seek, Mr. Wu!

Madame, in hearing my reply you become 'you'.

How very awkward, Mr. Wu! And do you become me?

No, Madame, there is no 'me': the term is only a grammatical convenience.

Then, Mr. Wu, whoever is speaking is I, and whoever is addressed is you?

That is so, Madame, both actually and factually.

But how can that be, Mr. Wu?

Madame, every time you speak, or act, you are what you are seeking.

Is that really so, Mr. Wu? No matter what I say or do?

Whenever you speak or 'do', Madame, it is I who AM acting.

Then since there is no 'me', Mr. Wu, there are only you and I. How happy that makes me!

Alas, Madame, there is not even any 'you' either.

Then how can we converse at all, Mr. Wu?

Madame, there are no 'we' to converse!

You mean, Mr. Wu, that there is only I?

Alas, no, Madame.

But how ever can that be, Mr. Wu?

Good morning, Mr. Wu

And what a lovely view.

May I congratulate you, Madame!

On what, Mr. Wu?

On experiencing a good morning, Madame, and a lovely view.

How kind and gracious you are, Mr. Wu, but should we not rather thank the Almighty?

By all means, Madame, whichever attribution you prefer.

But, Mr. Wu, the Almighty is responsible.

Yes, indeed, Madame, as you please, A rose by any other name ...' as the great poet pointed out.

You are too kind, Mr. Wu, but I only see it!

And the Almighty is only Looking, Madame, but for a moment you were Looking also — and then there was no difference.

No difference between my looking and that of the Almighty, Mr. Wu?

None whatever, Madame; when you Look as one, no difference can be.

But how can that be so, Mr. Wu?

As the great Buddha pointed out: there is no difference between Samsara and Nirvana.

Yes, indeed, Mr. Wu, the Buddha said that, but how can it be?

There are no 'things' to be different, Madame, for they are only conceptual phenomena 'experienced' in mind.

So 'difference' lies in 'seeing', Mr. Wu, but not in 'looking'?

'Looking' directly, Madame, from Whole-Mind, needs no 'seeing': Looking indirectly, via divided and relative mind, only 'sees'.

It may be said that there is only one thing that need be profoundly understood, without which no understanding could be valid, and from which—if that is completely comprehended — all else must necessarily follow.

That understanding is the total, and final, absence of oneself, that as such I have never existed, do not now exist, and never will exist, for I can have no being subject to time.

Phenomena can have only an apparent space-time existence as concepts in mind.
Then who is there “completely to comprehend” this? Nobody, I do.
As any sentient-being may say, if he apperceives that—
Objective absence is subjective presence,
Which is absolute release.

Unless a self-supposed entity can abolish itself it cannot be liberated (since ‘liberation’ is liberation from the idea of itself), but conversely, since it is self-supposed, unless it is liberated it cannot abolish itself. Such a problem appears to be insoluble; which comes first, the acorn or the oak-tree, the egg or the hen?

This is the answer: subject to the concept of sequential duration there can be no answer to a question posed in the form of a vicious circle, whereas un-subjected to the concept of ‘time’ there can be no question,

In a time-context there can be no release, and no experienced occurrence of the liberation of a phenomenon can factually take place — since the experiencer has not any but an apparent existence and the imagined experience could only be a temporal illusion. Outside a time-context, unsubjected to any concept such as a space-time, there can be no entity to be abolished, and nothing that is not liberation to be known.

Therefore the phenomenon does not abolish itself — since what-is is not phenomenal and noumenally can have no ‘self’ to abolish — and so ‘it’ cannot be liberated, And conversely, since noumenally there can be no ‘self’ to be liberated, there cannot be any such event as ‘liberation’ to occur in intemporality.

The concept itself is at fault, for—as the T'ang-dynasty Masters knew, the said “self supposed entity” neither exists nor does not exist, never has nor ever will either exist or not-exist, so that all that ‘it’ can be noumenally is the absence of its phenomenal non-existence. Therefore nothing whatsoever can factually occur, to what is entirely phenomenal, the noumenality of which is transcendent to all concepts including those of ‘space’ and ‘time’ in which phenomena are necessarily extended.

It may be said that noumenally there is —

Neither Here nor There,

Neither Now nor Then,

Neither This nor That.

These are axiomatic, and inclusive of all phenomenal manifestation.

The first abolishes opposing positions in Space, the second abolishes opposing positions in Time, the third abolishes opposing positions of Self and Other, and all three abolish opposing positions of the Thinker or Speaker in either space or Time.

But the thinking entity as such remains intact. As subject it is removed from all three dimensions of Space, from Past, Present and Future, and from identification with Subject and Object, but it remains undisturbed as an entity, for it is affirmed as not being either of each of these pairs of inter-dependent counterparts.

In abolishing the relative positions of Space, Time, and Thinker, all remain as underlying concepts, and until these remaining objects are negated their subject remains intact.

That, no doubt, is why Shen-hui pointed out the inadequacy by the Masters’ habitual formula “neither.....nor", and imposed a further negation, which he called the double absence or the double negative, ‘the negation of neither..... nor.....’

In these inclusive examples this will be the negation or abolition of no-Space and of no time whereby their subject-entity also is negated as having conceptual being. It should here be evident that as long as any conceptual object remains, the subject thereof can never be released.

The Chinese manner of expressing this ‘double negation’, by negating the negative element of the initial negation, is apt to be confusing to us ; therefore it is preferable here just to apply the word ‘absence’ to the whole negation. In this case the formula becomes:

We are required to apprehend the absence of “neither Here nor There”, of “neither Now nor Then”, of “neither This nor That”, and thereby the absence of Space and of a conceiver of Space, of Time and of a conceiver of Time, of Self and of a conceiver of Self.’

If we shall have apperceived these absences in depth, we should thereby have apperceived our own objective absence, our total absence of one, whereby we may apprehend that we can never know what we are — since we are nothing objective that could be known. Nor can we ever be conscious of what we are — since that is no ‘thing’, and what is cognising cannot cognise what is cognising, any more than what is being conscious.

This apparent solution of continuity, speaking dialectically, between apparent events in a time-context and their intemporal noumenality should not be taken to imply separation — for there can be none; and the transcendence of the noumenal is surely the immanence of the phenomenal and vice-versa, as viewed from the one or the other standpoint.

Integration or re-integration undoubtedly occurs whereby as a result of a very rare equilibrium between normally excessive positive and normally deficient negative factors in a psyche — rendered possible by intensive negation — adjustments arise in that psyche.

Descriptions involving an access of ‘divine love’ compassion ‘ecstatic happiness’ and what-not, all effective manifestations, patently temporal and separated from their inseparable counterparts, are evidently phenomenal. What may be assumed to take place is simply that the phenomenon, suddenly relieved of its egoity, freed thereby from a burden of cares, pseudo-responsibilities, phobia and what-not, re-becomes normal, and by contrast with the worries of the living-dream feels as though gravity were no more, laughs hilariously perhaps, wishes to dance for joy and to embrace all phenomenal creation. And this is interpreted and recorded as ‘divine grace’, universal benediction, and all the characteristics attributed to a bodhisattva.

Affectively attributed to an enlightened sentient-being is a phenomenal manifestation of what sentience is, with its inevitable and inescapable counterpart, like that attributed to any 'unenlightened' sentient-being, the origin of which is noumenal also. Any direct manifestation of noumenal 'affectivity', if such were conceivable, would necessarily be intemporal and imperceptible as such in the sequence of duration. At most it could, perhaps, be represented by some impalpable 'quality', recognisable in a time-sequence as 'Grace' or 'Serenity'.

Sentience, let us not forget, is not 'something' that 'we' possess or experience, but is an indirect manifestation of what we are. If there could be any question of possession, it would surely be sentience (what-we-are) that 'possesses' what we think is us; the concept of a 'self' is that of some 'thing' which is sentient, and so 'has' sentience, and such entity is entirely suppositional. This false identification, of course, is bondage.

The apparent effectivity of an 'enlightened' phenomenon is therefore not different from that of an 'unenlightened' phenomenon since both are individualised representations in mind of the same sentience. In a temporal context it must always and inevitably be thus, the 'enlightenment' being simply the abolition of the inferential entity.

No dualistic emotion is thereby sublimated, for there is nothing in emotional counterparts to sublimate, and split effectivity (such as attraction and repulsion) remains 'whole' in the unsplit mind of the intemporal. Therefore it cannot be supposed to manifest directly in an 'enlightened' phenomenal object in a time-sequence as affectivity which as such as necessarily split. As a 'wholeness' it cannot be phenomenally experienced, since it is what is experiencing phenomenally as subject and object. This imminence might conceivably be cognisable psychically in an 'enlightened' phenomenon and be called Grace which should be the common noumenality of perceiver and perceived, and all that ultimately they are.

As so many of the greatest Masters pointed out and of which nothing is more radical:

As long as there is a 'you' to imagine that 'it' can be enlightened,
There is then a conceptual 'you' to experience a conceptual 'state' of
'enlightenment' which is only a phantasy in mind.

Whereas it is precisely the abolition of the concept of that 'you

Which reveals what-you-are and which is what is called 'enlightenment or which reveals 'enlightenment' as being what-you-are.

For there was never any 'state' such as 'enlightenment'
Nor any factual entity to experience any such 'state'.

Surely the immediate answer is very simple? We, us like I—me are concepts, and concepts cannot conceive their own conceptual absence. Should not that be the answer, for in all contexts they assume their conceptual presence?

But that fundamental inability is also an accurate definition of 'bondage' and 'knowing' being 'being', as Sri Bhagavan stated, knowing it is 'liberation' from ignorance (not knowing it). 'Glimpsing' however is not knowing, and does not suffice.

There is neither 'bondage' nor 'liberation' otherwise than as psychoses, and apperceiving that there is no 'we—us' nor 'I—me' frees those concepts from their relative shackles, by bringing them to the surface of consciousness wherein they evaporate. But as long as the psychoses are active they reassert their power.

While unresolved, do not these pronouns vitiate nearly everything said, done or written, and in technical publications such as *The Mountain Path* and *The Middle Way* are they not as regrettable as they may be inevitable? In the psychosis of 'bondage' the concept of 'we—us' may be regarded as a haemorrhage which renders the psychosis incurable until the suppuration is staunched at its source. . . .

The fact seems to remain, however, that, taken literally, the use of these terms must necessarily render whatever is being said not merely ridiculous but also a confirmation of the psychosis of 'bondage' either in writer-speaker, in reader-hearer, or in both.

May I suggest that it is unlikely that any phenomenal 'person' has ever been able to suffer the

atrocities cited in the reply, without suffering — unless under drugs or hypnosis — whereas ('I—I'), by whatever name I may be known as a phenomenon extended conceptually in space-time, am inevitably impervious to any sensorial experience so-ever.

Is not this a pertinent example of the classical misunderstanding between the two approaches, sometimes called 'positive' as opposed to 'negative', whereby the former retains relative phenomenality as its basis, which the latter negates in order thereby to apperceive directly what all phenomenality noumenally is? For such "There is no 'we' but I ('I—I')".

If we apperceived that conceptual opposites are relative and therefore illusory, would there be very much left about which to argue?

Note: Living relatively, 'we' must speak relatively? A somewhat facile reaction? If we go on speaking relatively 'we' will go on living relatively and 'we' will go on dying relatively, time out of mind, for, relatively, there will always be 'we—us'. As long as we use them, and whenever we use them, 'we' are living relatively and are psychically 'bound' as 'us'.

It should perhaps be difficult to say much that is new on the subject of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi from the point of view of his personal devotees, but there might be a passing interest in a few remarks from a point of view that is essentially independent.

Let me begin by explaining the attitude of the great Chinese Masters of the T'ang dynasty of China. When the pious Emperor sent for the 1st Patriarch, Bodhidharma, and asked him to expound the holy doctrine, Bodhidharma replied simply, "Majesty, there is no doctrine, and nothing holy about it." When a young monk arrived at his monastery, Hui-hai, known as 'The Great Pearl', asked him why he had come. He answered, "In the hope that you, Master, may be gracious enough to teach me." The reply of Hui-hai was, "I have nothing to teach anyone," and, on another occasion, "This poor monk has no teaching by which to liberate others." Not only can understanding not be transferred, but objective phenomena cannot even communicate directly, much as when you 'ring up' a friend on the telephone you can only communicate with him via the Central Exchange.

But no analogy is ever exact, and here the Exchange is separated in space from the speakers whereas in our living-dream the Exchange, or Godhead, is always here and now. We cannot teach one another anything directly, where understanding is concerned: we can only summon understanding from its source which is mutual and what we are.

Now I would like to say that whereas something like 90% of the recorded words of the great Chinese Masters summon the requisite understanding — or some approximation of it — in my own case, something like 98% of the recorded words of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi seem to do that. The reason for this need not be looked for in the speakers — for what I am obliged, with apologies for the absurdity, to call Truth is singular and not plural — but in the circumstances of the survival of their words. In the former case the 10% wastage may be attributed to misunderstanding of the words by the recorders, to errors of copyists over some twelve centuries, and to the absence of understanding on the part of modern translators.

In the case of Bhagavan, whose words were heard and recorded by our own contemporaries, and translated into modern European languages on the spot, the wastage from these causes is relatively negligible. Yet, superficially speaking, could this so-called 'Truth' be more diversely expressed? The former represented the Negative Way, the latter the Positive.

To divided phenomenal mind negative and positive are contraries, mutually exclusive, and positivity cannot be reached positively — since it lies behind the negative: to attempt it is like trying to pull oneself up by one's own shoelaces. This may sound like a condemnation of Vedanta, but I am told by advanced Advaitins that whereas some followers stop at the first, positive stage, those who are really gifted go on to the second stage, which is purely negative. Really, however, and as far as this personal narrative is concerned, this just does not matter since noumenally there can be no difference and it is not necessary or useful to notice whether what Bhagavan said was the one or the other, since the aforesaid Truth' lies in another direction of measurement to either.

From these remarks it may perhaps be clear why, whereas sectarian members of other religions tend to underrate, if not to condemn, the great teachers who do not belong to their own sect, non-sectarian pilgrims make no difference whatever between them, but judge them only, if at all, by their capacity for summoning revelation. From a slightly different point of view, did Bhagavan teach?

Did he lecture? Did not understanding come in silence in his presence, rather than in the noise of words? Does it not perhaps still come now when there are no words at all, save those recorded in print?

But there is another good reason why pilgrims who never knew Bhagavan, and who are not Vedantists, or even Advaitins — using that Sanskrit term non-sectarianally to include all followers of non-duality in any or no religion—have as absolute a regard for him as even his own devotees may have. Who else is there to whom anyone can reasonably point, of our own days, who lived for half a century, available to all at all times, in a state of as perfect identification with Godhead as would seem possible to an apparent individual manifestation?

Hundreds of us knew him personally as such, and of whom else can that be said? What a marvellous thing it is to have had such a contemporary — and to be able to compare his words and his living of life with the words, and descriptions left us by Scriptures, of past Sages? In Bhagavan alone can we test those words and those scriptures, and see for ourselves that they are not a dream or a phantasy.

I will close this commentary, these some-what diffuse remarks by an independent pilgrim, by stating why the writer is not in his own eyes a devotee, even in an honorary capacity. It might be possible to find some-one who had a more profound regard for Bhagavan, though that should be difficult indeed, but nevertheless the writer is no "devotee". This is not because he does not recognise Bhagavan as a manifestation of Godhead, but because he sees that manifestation phenomenally as any other, and as what any other phenomenon appears to be but is not.

Sri Ramana Maharshi as such was a phenomenal concept in mind like the rest of us, and phenomenal objects as such are not suitable objects of deification, however great their apparent qualities. We wish to worship him as a deity? He was Godhead? No doubt — but aren't we all? What else could we be?

And was he that kind of deity who asks for worship? Is not that the very essence of bondage — and did he not spend his living-dream in seeking to free us? Did he even care to admit that he was a Guru? Did he not say that the Guru was within; and if we knew him as such would we want to worship him as a phenomenal object? Where is he? Did he not ask — when he was dying, and his friends were lamenting — wherever did they think he could go to? Has that tremendous, yet so simple, statement been properly understood? If there could be a doctrine, and if he preached one, what could it be but what those words imply? What else could there possibly be to say — let alone to teach?

What lies

Beyond Relativity?

Beyond Relativity there is only Absence of Relativity Which is just absence,

Or Absolute Absence.

Awareness of Absence,

Being aware of Absence,

Is Absolute Being.

'T'HE Maharshi is recorded as having said "Who does not know it? You say 'I', and nevertheless you say that you do not know the 'I'. Can anyone be ignorant of himself? Is it not comically impossible. . . . In the case of this always present unavoidable, how could you be ignorant of it?"

To whoever in-sees the meaning of this it appears to be a sublimely simple and obvious statement, whereas to whoever does not, and however clever he may be, it cannot make sense. Reasoning by mind divided into subject and object, no matter how brilliant the reasoner, he must know that subject could never see or know itself as an object, any more than an eye can see itself, than hearing can hear hearing, or looking can see looking. Yet to undivided mind, directly apperceiving, short-circuiting relative reasoning, the meaning is immediately evident, as it was to the Maharshi.

Let us consider this problem in another context, for instance in Buddhism. There is a famous statement which points out that the Buddha taught for 49 years, but that no word was ever spoken by Gautama the Buddha. To-day we could say that Napoleon fought many battles, and that Shakespeare wrote many plays, but that no battle was ever fought by a Napoleon nor was any play ever written by a Shakespeare.

As in the Vedantist case, to anyone totally identified with a conceptual object (a body-mind). reasoning relatively, the statement seems to be incomprehensible, yet it is in fact such a profound and revelatory statement that it might be said that whoever cannot see its truth cannot have reached the threshold of understanding.

In both cases, however, the explanation may be evident. Relative reasoning, by mind divided into subject and object, creates a conceptual universe, a vast structure of images in mind, entirely based on relativity, conceptually extended in space-time, and spurious like any dream or hallucination, sleeping or waking. Such is our world of 'living' and 'dying' as pseudo-individual entities. Directly, immediately in-seeing, undivided mind needs no concepts in order to understand, for then cognition is absolute and not relative, so that what relatively appears to be nonsense, absolutely may be apperceived to be truth, and what absolutely is truth may appear relatively to be nonsense.

Relatively, in bondage to divided mind, no identified individual could possibly know what he is as 'I' since in order to do so he would have to see himself as an object — and what he is cannot have any objective quality whatever, but the moment he is free from such identification he remains what he is, and all that he is, which is represented by the cipher 'I', He is pure noumenality, timeless and spaceless, in which all phenomenality inheres and to which it is transcendent.

The moment I think that I am 'this' or 'that' — I am 'me' and bound. There has never been a 'one' — present or absent — so how could there be an 'other'?

Consciousness is the self of which everyone is aware. No one is ever away from his self and therefore everyone is in fact self-realised.

— SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

WHAT we normally mean by 'consciousness' is consciousness-of-self or self-consciousness. This is divided conceptually into objectivised 'subjects' and their apparent objects both psychic images, whereby and whereof the apparent universe is constructed. In this divided consciousness, the subjective element appears objectively as 'selves' and the objective element as 'others', which is other-than-self, perceived and so cognised extended in three spatial dimensions and one temporal whereby 'form' is rendered perceptible by duration.

This consciousness is relative, divided, and dependent upon the concepts of 'self' and other reasoning by the comparison of opposing qualities applied to conceptual objects by a conceptual subject.

What the Maharshi indicates is nothing conceptual, nothing objective, nothing divided, but the integrality of being-conscious, indivisible and absolute. Such being-conscious is selfless, for 'self' is an objective concept; rather may what is implied be indicated in the language of relativity by some such expression as awareness unaware of being aware 'as we may be said to experience' it relatively in deep sleep.

Divided consciousness is our personal living or 'waking' consciousness, whereas the Maharshi speaks of our impersonal, basic, and integral awareness which must be unconscious of being-conscious as of any conceptual quality or attribute whatever. And this consciousness remains what-we-are when divided consciousness is asleep, for 'life' and 'death', 'waking' and 'sleeping' as all conceptualised and relative experience, have only that relative kind of pseudo-existence which is subjected to extension in spacetime.

"Consciousness", said Schroedinger in the language of physics, "is a singular of which the plural is unknown", which in metaphysical language means that being-conscious is neither singular nor plural, since it cannot be a conceptual object relative to any other conceptual object, but is merely a sign, indication, or symbol for whatever may be supposed to cognise whatever may be supposed to be cognisable.

Note: We are only conscious in relativity. Absolutely there can not be any thing to be conscious of any other thing.

Being conscious of being conscious is not 'being conscious' at all. Which is why, Absolutely, there is absolutely no difference between the concepts of 'consciousness' and 'unconsciousness'.

To a Maharshi, as has been pointed out, who basically is absolute mind but who was obliged to communicate in the forms and language of relativity, there was no difference between positive and negative. Moreover he lived his 'life' in the positive ambiance of Vedanta, although his teaching was based on negation, as was that of the Chinese Masters.

This is why he could speak of 'Self' as though it were not relatively a positive entity objectified in split-mind, and why he could refer to the Absolute as 'That' — which is the most objective word in any language. He was conditioned so to do and, to him, it made no difference since what he spoke of in such terms was neither 'self' nor 'other' neither 'that' nor 'this'.

The positive way is traditional in Hinduism as in Hinayana Buddhism, but it is a long way round indeed, implying successive and innumerable 'incarnations compared with the negative way, of Taoist origin, termed by Ch'an Buddhists the "Sudden School", which was able to produce 'liberation' from conditioned 'bondage' at any moment in favourable circumstances and in the hands of highly qualified Masters.

It is evident also in innumerable examples of the Maharshi's statements to his more qualified devotees, that he himself regarded instantaneous 'awakening' as perfectly feasible and his words sometimes seemed to imply surprise that anything so simple and obvious should fail to be evident. Evident it may, indeed, sometimes have been, but if the devotee were still bound by positivity to his relative conditioning the desired fulfilment would still be withheld.

The Maharshi, in the passage quoted, went on to say that "Realisation consists only in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realized. It is not anything new to be acquired."

Sri Ramana's pronouncements need no confirmation from other sources, but as a matter of historical interest one may recall that an identical statement was made by Chinese Masters such as Hui Hai and Huang Po, and the Maharshi himself repeated it in slightly different words, all the Sages implying that the sole hindrance to 'enlightenment' is the notion that we could be anything but 'enlightened' already.

Such a radical approach, so widely affirmed, surely needs closer analysis than it has hitherto received?

It must surely be obvious that the 'enlightenment' referred to could not be a state of mind or any objective or relative condition whatever, for such are subjected to 'time' and are impermanent. In fact the term, as defined, could only apply to whatever basically we are. Nothing less, and nothing else, could substantiate such statements.

All, then, are equivalent to stating that what prevents us from awareness of what we are is the — inevitably absurd — notion that we could be anything else!

If none of the Sages was able to tell us what that is, there must be some good reason, some very good reason indeed, for their silence or forbearance. What could such a very good reason be? Surely there could only be one reason which fulfills these exacting conditions, and that reason must be that it cannot be expressed in, or revealed by, relative language?

So what is there that cannot be so revealed? Precisely the one 'object' the eye cannot see, the only 'knowledge' that knowing could never know, the 'awareness' of which being-aware never could be aware. In other words — This which relativity cannot express relatively because it is not relative.

Is that all we can say, as far as we can go? All we can say — no doubt, yes, but as far as we can go — no doubt at all, no. Why? Because it is only all we can 'say' or 'do' — subject to the limitations of relativity.

And that is surely the answer: relatively 'we' are 'bound' forever — by relativity. Absolutely we have never been 'bound' — for there have never been, absolutely, any 'us' to be 'bound' at all!

How could anything or nothing be bound by what it is? How could anything or nothing be freed from what it is? What could there be to be Absolute?

No wonder the Masters all seemed to wonder, to wonder why we couldn't see the obvious! Perhaps they weren't looking in the opposite direction? Perhaps they weren't looking for 'the Absolute' as something relative?

'DIFFERENCES' and 'preferences' are relative, and are applicable only to phenomena: noumenally there cannot be any such spatio-temporal notion as discrimination.

That is why 'non-objective relation' accurately defines the phenomenal situation of a Sage vis-a-vis all manifestation.

What I am — you are; what you are — I am thereby becomes the only possible 'relation' of the Sage to all phenomena.

All phenomena can only be images conceptually extended spatially and temporally in relative or divided mind. Their subjectivity is that of the Sage, subjectivity-as-such or Suchness, for phenomenal or relative 'subjectivity' is an objectivised illusion. Therefore no barrier can factually exist, nor to a Sage appear to exist, between relative 'self' and 'other'.

A Sage, therefore, cannot 'love' or 'hate' any phenomenal manifestation, nor can a Sage be 'loved' or 'hated' by another apparent Sage, whose only identity is his own and noumenal — which of course is not different from non-identity. Which is why he has nothing about which to argue, nothing to affirm and nothing to deny, why, in short, positive and negative, 'yes' and 'no' are in no manner different. Non-objective relation, therefore, is at the same time 'equanimity' in relativity.

Even 'presence' and 'absence' are meaningless to him, since whatever is present spatio-temporally is absent as such intemporally, and what is absence phenomenally is presence noumenally. This, again, is why samsara and nirvana are doctrinally "not-different", why Buddhas and the ignorant are 'identical', for in division no form of duality can be.

Is it not very simple and obvious? If we look from wholeness unicity, instead of from division, duality, what we behold is just as-it-isness, for 'acting' metaphysically, is immediate (wu wei), whereas all relative acting is re-action (yu wei).

BETWEEN the Buddha, nearly two thousand five hundred years ago, and Sri Ramana Maharshi in our own lifetime, many sages have told us that there is nothing to be attained. Since the most recent such assurance was heard and recorded by our contemporaries, and therefore its recording can scarcely be disputed, let me quote his words: "To know that there is nothing to be attained is attainment".

Is not this one of the most pregnant statements, one of the most ancient, and perhaps the most conclusive, ever recorded?

But what, exactly, does it imply?

Does it just imply that there is no factual state or condition corresponding to the concept of 'enlightenment'?

Or does it imply that there is no such thing as an 'entity' who could experience such a state?

In dualistic language "I" just stands for the Latin "ego" which is a concept without any factual existence, i.e. a complex which must be resolved because its psychological presence constitutes bondage. But, used as a metaphysical term, it implies This-which-we-are as opposed to That-which-we-think-we-are but are not.

That which is sensorially perceptible is demonstrably only an image in mind and, as such, can have no nature of its own. But the sentience of every sentient being must have a centre via which its functioning is directed, this "centre" of each sentient object being as purely phenomenal as the sentient appearance. Such centre is devoid of volition, as of autonomy of any kind; it is not, therefore, an "ego", and it cannot think self-consciously as "I".

Identification of This-which-we-are with each phenomenal object, in the process of objectifying this "functional" centre, translates it as an individual "ego-self", and so produces a suppositional "entity".

A phenomenon is a manifestation, and therefore an aspect, of noumenon. Spontaneous phenomenal action is noumenal, and so-living is noumenal living. Such, then, is non-identified living. It is identification with a spurious (imagined) autonomous entity that is supposed to be born, to suffer, and to die, that incurs the process of Causality called karma, and causes the notion of being in bondage to arise.

Phenomena as such, having no entity to be bound, cannot be bound, but neither have they an entity to be free. Always it is the "entity" that is spurious, the phenomenon being what its name states — and appearance in mind, neither bound nor free.

The apparent problem, therefore, only concerns identification: it is identification that produces the notion of bondage. Identification with a phenomenal object results in the suppositional concept of an autonomous entity, and that concept is taken to be a factual “self”, whereas nothing of the kind exists, has ever existed, or ever could exist as a thing-in-itself, or as other than a concept in what is called “mind”.

But identification with a phenomenal object as such is not ipso facto bondage, for such phenomenon has no “ens” and need not have any — as may be observed in the case of a disidentified Sage who appears to live as any other man “lives”, at any rate to a casual observer.

It is only the superimposition of the elaborated concept of an autonomous self that is responsible for the notions of “karma” and “bondage”, which are the effects of an apparent volition.

Let us develop this understanding in greater detail. Noumenality has no need to identify itself with phenomenality, any more than an egg need be identified with an egg, nor need This-which-we-are identify itself with That-which-we-are, since their differentiation is one of objective appreciation only. But an identification of noumenality, not with phenomenality but with discriminated, or separated phenomena, entails the splitting into subject and object of phenomenality and the attribution of subjectivity to what is purely objective. That pseudosubjectivity is attributed to the “functional” centre of each separate phenomenal object, and this produces the idea of an autonomous individual with an ego-self.

Otherwise expressed, phenomenality being integral in noumenality, it must be the discrimination of phenomenality into separate phenomena possessed of both subjective and objective character that produces identification. Such identification, then, is the attribution of subjective function to the objectivisation of a phenomenal or “functional” centre in each such phenomenon, thereby creating an individual with a suppositious ego-self. In short, the functional focal point of a phenomenal objectivisation has been endowed with a suppositious personal subjectivity whereas its only subjectivity is its noumenality. This suppositional subjectivity is then objectified as an entity possessing full autonomy.

Identification of This-which-we-are with separate phenomenal objects which, without such identification, are simply our phenomenality as such, involves the objectivisation of each. In this process the “functional” centre comes to be seen as the centre of a suppositional individual with an ego-self, developing thereby a supposed entity where there is merely phenomenality functioning impersonally as subject and object. That is to say, it functions subjectively and objectively in split-mind, accompanied by “space” and “time”, as “mechanically” as the ticking of a clock.

Absolute-noumenality, manifesting via every sentient being, recognises no entity in the phenomenal cosmos, has no need of such, nor any function that such could fulfil. The existence of an autonomous, volitional entity would be incompatible with the functioning of prajna, and the notion of such seems to be an aberration for which there is no place. An entity, therefore, is “a dream, an illusion, a bubble and a shadow”, as the Buddha said in the Diamond Sutra, a breeze of phantasy that troubles the calm waters of mind without any possibility of effecting anything whatever of a factual character in the dream of phenomenal living.

Note: Yes, yes, quite so. What the Buddha so lucidly and I so obscurely have just been describing is — as you suspect — that which you think that you are.

What are ‘you’ looking-for?

It is I who AM looking,

‘You’ are there but I AM ‘here’.

Note: Looking via objects only ‘sees’ objects.

Looking directly is BEING: Sometimes termed ‘Suchness’.

AS THE WIND WHISPERED TO THE WILLOW

Be still and know that ‘you’ ARE I.

[1] Since ‘action’ itself is a space-time illusion the word ‘act’ is placed within quotation-marks.

[2] Playwords: All Samsaric conceptions and ideas which have to be expressed through words and symbols are meaningless sophistries from the viewpoint of an enlightened being. The term “Playwords” also implies that all Samsaric conceptualizations and verbalizations arc on a par with children’s prattle — little more than nonsense. Realization of this is considered the initial stage of Enlightenment.

[3] Three Bodies: The Trikaya, or Three Bodies of Buddha, i.e., the Dharmakaya, the Sambhogakaya, and the Nirmanakaya.

[4] *Teachings, p. 118.*

[5] *In case there should be any misapprehension: "What 'time' is", is what split-mind tries to conceive as 'Intemporality', just as "What I am" is what split-mind tries to conceive as ' ' which respectively are only cognisable in relativity objectified as 'time' and as 'me'.*

[6] What is termed 'an I-concept' is a symbol of the splitting of whole-mind into relative duality, which consists in conceiving 'other-than-self' as a space-time entity, whereby its interdependent counterpart 'self' becomes another. This dual, or divided, functioning of mind (just termed 'mind' by the Maharshi) appears as the conceiver or functioning 'I', temporally extended as 'duration'. Therefore the Maharshi states "The mind is only the thought 'I'.

[7] That it 'knowing' is 'being' was confirmed by the enlightened sage of our times, Ramana Maharshi