

# DIVING DEEP

*into Ramana Maharshi's Teachings*

*with foreword from*

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**ZEN**  
— PUBLICATIONS —

# SVARUPA AND ARUPA

*"Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi"*

–15th Oct. 1938

**Question:** *What is svarupa (form) and arupa (formless) of the mind?*

**Maharshi:** *When you wake up from sleep a light appears, that is the light of the Self passing through Mahat Tattva. It is called cosmic consciousness. This is arupa. The light falls on the ego and is reflected therefrom. Then the body and the world are seen. This mind is svarupa. The objects appear in the light of this reflected consciousness. This light is called jyoti.*



Everything that the sage speaks the Realized person, the Enlightened one, the Liberated one are also our words to denote and distinguish the transcendental attainment of the Sage is spoken out of experience, and not out of theory, or logical extension, not from learnt and remembered knowledge. We know the words, of course, but have not attributed to them the deeper, often unsuspected, intimations that they are capable of conveying to us when structured and empowered in the idiom that lifts relativity beyond its boundaries. That "beyond" is not added space how can it be? it is Absolute. "Absolute" is not applicable to elements or elemental energies,

since they are perceivables or cognizables. That is to say they are the knowables. Knowing is the functioning of consciousness, and so they are the contents and consciousness is the container. It is this that is referred to as Total Consciousness. That is Absolute.

This brief reply from Ramana Maharshi is the answer to "How does the unmanifest manifest?" The scientist has the same question: "How did creation start?" or "What triggered the Big Bang?" On this question the mind of science, bounded by time-space-coordinates, searches in a dark room for a black cat that is not there. Absolute Consciousness (the science of mind-less-ness?), being Self-Aware in the Sage, effortlessly flows in the idiom of revelation. The answer remains present but hidden in everyone's daily life, like the car-key in your pocket that you are frantically searching for in your cluttered room (more true of professors, unkind wits have said), and not finding. The present instant contains the truth of eternity for the sage, but will deny it to him who begs Time for the gift of vision.

Here the Maharshi is focusing our attention on familiar territory, as intimate as our daily waking up from sleep. To our easy understanding, sleep is the un-manifest state of one's consciousness, and waking up is bringing the world into manifestation through sensed recognition. We have to understand the teaching in personal terms, and also extrapolate it into a pre-personal context. It will be seen then that the post-personal is also written into it.

We are told there is the first instant in the transition from sleep into awakening, when a light manifests. This is the implication in "God said : Let there be light." We can feel the acquisition of new knowledge as a new illumination, a glow of intelligence. Our mind can see that, not the eyes. Knowing that, let us correctly understand this reference to "light". This kinetic

energy (Shakti) "passes through *Mahat Tattva*" which signifies the seed potential of nascent matter and mind (cosmos). It is now called "cosmic consciousness", because it has been moded into a generative thought in Total Consciousness. The creative momentum has been generated. But creation is not yet articulated. Therefore it is "*arupa*", formless. This formlessness precedes "formed" creation. Therefore "time" has no relevance here. It is prior to time. When creation puts forth forms, and interactive play of energy moves those forms, "events" take place (in space), and time enters as a measure of speed and acceleration, and space as a measure of distances. Decide now where and why "time" is born. St. Augustine put his meditative finger on Truth when he said, "Time is a property only of the universe that God created". He was saying that the First Cause cannot, logically, be located in any time-space frame. Ramana Maharshi is saying the same. (Sages have no disputes.)

Next, the One Self assumes a plurality of nodal points, like one sun reflecting in a thousand pools of water to "become" a thousand suns. Each of these individualized focal points of consciousness is the "ego". The light of Total Consciousness "falls on the ego and is reflected therefrom". It is this reflected light that reveals "the body and the world"; and that is creation, perception, manifestation, svarupa. This sensing consciousness, with the personalized ego as its centre and support, is the "mind". Mind and time co-exist, because the content of mind is objects (things and events) and objects can only exist in time and space.

The mind is the receiver (perception) and the repository (memory) of what the senses feed it with. It is the reflected light that reveals creation to the observer. This optical light sustains the mind with objective knowledge. All this constitutes the "form-filled" universe of relativity. It is "relative" because it is integrally "related" to time-space coordinates. The Absolute must have a reality, but that cannot be formulated (equated)

on terms that define relativity. In that “otherness” which is beyond the parameters of relativity, is the Luminance that initiates the reflectivity (creativity) that manifests the visual light which in turn reveals the cosmos (forms) by its inherent nature of reflection.

The question that the disciple put to Bhagavan was “*What is svarupa (form) and arupa (formless) of the mind?*” Be it noted “*of the mind?*” not “*of Brahman?*” Appropriately, Bhagavan’s reply starts “*When you wake up from sleep . . .*” not “*when Brahman made a move*” (if He did). We have to see the event of the change of mode in ourselves personally. At the same time, the unravelling is both cosmic and personal. It has to be so. “*God*” and “*I*” are not different entities. Pure Ego is unconditioned I-ness, free of dimensions, divisions, or distinctions. It is not that God is a macro-term and Ego is a micro-term, because “*He alone is all this*” affirms the scripture. It is the wrong identification of I-ness with an adjunct (the body) that imposes a limitation and gives rise to the petty personal ego in a temporal-spatial frame of reference, and obscures the Timeless Reality from the ego.

Therefore when the highest Truth (not a relative truth, which is no truth) is expounded, the same statement holds good for the Creator and the created, which, after all, are not two facts but one. The personal mind realizes its *svarupa* when the subject in it de-links from objectivity of the world, and becomes self-focussed. The mind that has rid itself of movement, which means of thought-waves, stays as *aham vritti*, where “*I*” is both the subject and the object. Then, it is no longer a wave for it has nowhere to travel. If it is a vibration it is vertical but not horizontal. In essence it is *aham-sphurana*. The individualized ego that laid claim to the mind that started the enquiry is no longer recognizable in this state. He (or it) never had a *svarupa* apart from what was God’s, and that truth is now validated by invalidating the false ego.

What is now flashing as "I-I", an unbroken Existence Self-revealed, is Isvara, the manifested Brahman as the Creator, and that is His *svarupa*. Bhagavan comes back to us, to you and me, and reminds us "to give up many thoughts and to keep to the one thought." He assures us "your real nature (*svarupa*) is always there. Your meditation, etc., come only temporarily. Reality being your Self, there is nothing for you to realize."

The light of the Self passing through *Mahat Tattva* is called cosmic consciousness, and that is *arupa*. The Self is still It-ness without otherness, there is nothing that has to be identified by *rupa* (form) or *nama* (name). From our mental reckoning, we may read it as an intention in Brahman, as "I-will-create", and not yet as the manifestation "I-have-created". Therefore we may say (in our language) creation is still hidden in Brahman and is His secret. Bhagavan has said "*The light falls on the ego and is reflected therefrom. Then the body and the world are seen. This mind is svarupa.*" Brahman's secret is to project His singularity into a seeming plurality, then make each presence appear real as a reflection, when the ego becomes a person. This illusory ego again reflects the cosmic consciousness, and in that *jyoti* the body and the world are seen by it. Identifying itself with the body, and setting apart the world, but needing the world for possession and self-perpetuation, the ego remains ignorant of its true nature, and suffers the cycle of birth and death (*samsara*).

Thus, at journey's end, if science wants to proclaim "There is no matter, only energy", philosophy agrees and says more precisely "There is no creation of universes, only moded consciousness". But if science wants to access vistas of time and space, and chronicle the evolution of protons and molecules, of planets and galaxies, philosophy will gladly concede the relative reality and offer this sequence of creation. Ego-cognition and cosmic existence are coeval and co-terminal.

In the noble pursuit of Truth, both, scientists and philosophers, are too genuine to engage in conflict without communication or dissent without discourse. The fulfilment is not through reconciliation but through resolution, not through compromise but through clarity. The persisting dichotomy is because science is cerebral, while philosophy is mental. The dictionary will tell us that cerebral means 'of the mind'. At this level of enquiry we need to be more discriminatory. The words cerebral and cerebellum are akin, the latter being a part of the human organ called the brain. Science insists that the mind is a product of molecular activity in the brain. It definitely is not. Mind is a play of energy, as light in a bulb is a play of electricity (energy). Mind and consciousness are akin. The two words, cerebral and mental, far from being synonyms never mind if a dictionary disagrees are exactly one cosmos apart, because the cosmic world of matter is not the source of the cosmic mind.

So, may i disagree and caution the scientist: Cerebral, read brain; mental, read consciousness.

