

All Available Biographical Information about Robert Adams from People who Knew Him

Collected from the Internet

May, 2021

It is obvious from listening to Robert's satsangs and reading the transcripts that he is speaking from a consistent and deep experience of the truth. This expression is articulate, witty and wide-ranging. However, if one ventures to know who Robert was as a person, it immediately becomes difficult. He hardly seems to have spoken or written anything about his biography, and what little he did has been limited from spreading by well-known threats of litigation and take-down orders.

What reportage is available ranges from the hagiographical to the defamatory. Which presentation of Robert is "true?" One answer could be that it does not matter as much as the deeper truth pointed to in his teachings. Another answer could be that aspects of all the reports are true, insofar as the people sharing them believe and stand by them, and they help to convey aspects of what Robert may have been like as a teacher and person, while the "whole picture" is about as clear or reliable as anything in the ephemeral manifestation of this world.

At the very least it is important to have all these accounts of Robert from individuals who knew him collected in one document from the shifting landscape of the Internet, for the historical record.

Matthew Brown

May, 2021

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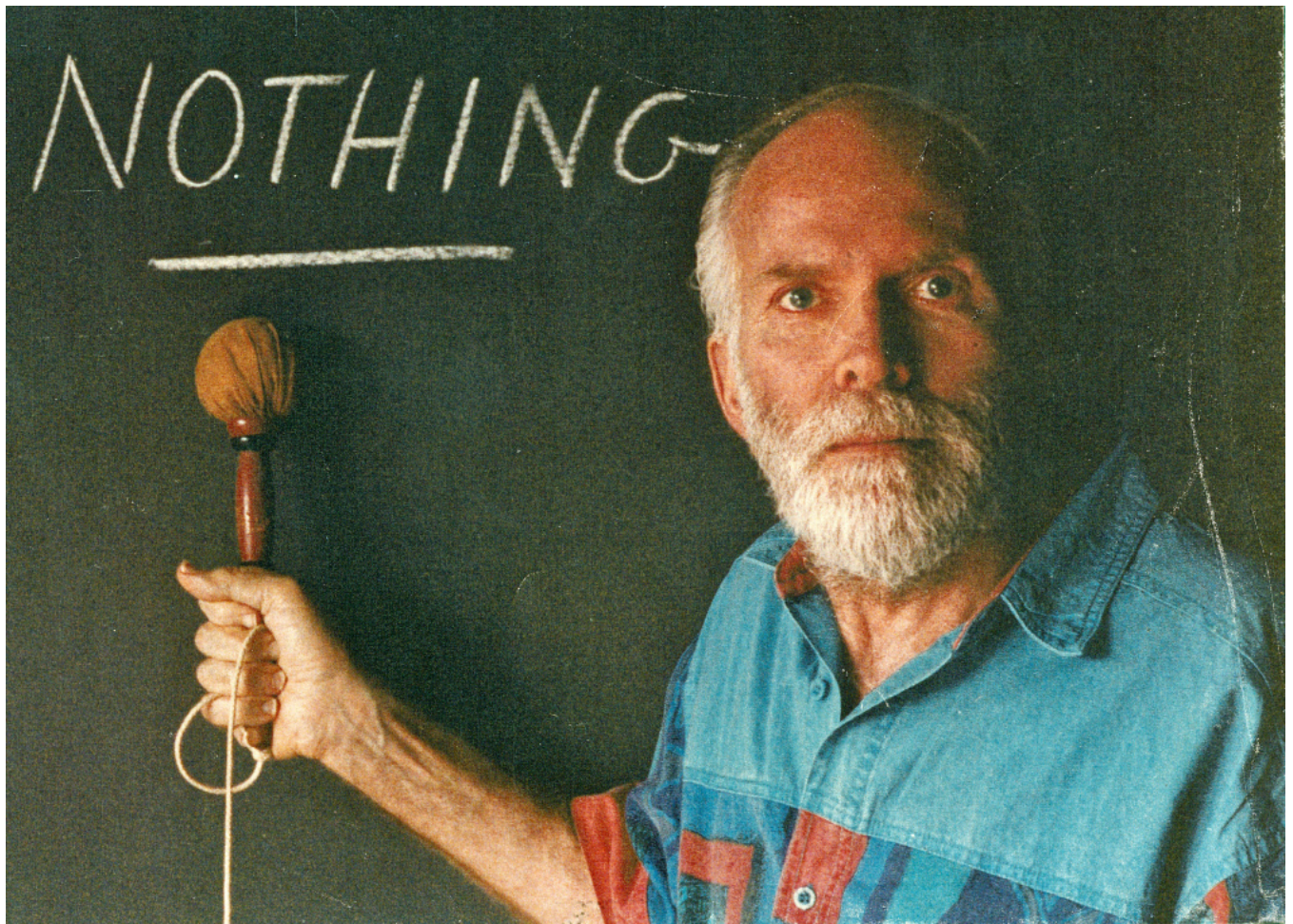
To Robert, a Sage in Arizona – Part One

Posted on June 25, 2012 by janeadamsart

<http://janeadamsart.wordpress.com/2012/06/>

This is the story of a pilgrimage in 1996 to Robert Adams. He died the following year. Born in New York, he “woke” into the atoms at 14, during a school math class. Then he met Yogananda. In early 1950, still in his teens, he went to India, sat with Ramana Maharshi (December 1879-April 1950) and ran wild on Arunachala for a while. Back home, he became a silent and reclusive wanderer, but people always found him again, so he taught them Self-enquiry. The drawings and portraits in this memoir, are all posthumous – done shortly after his *mahasamadhi*. People were very generous, and gave me photos – around Robert, these were rare.

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A JOURNEY TO SEDONA IN ARIZONA, APRIL 1996

The elephant in his dream beholds

the lion that wakes him up from sleep.

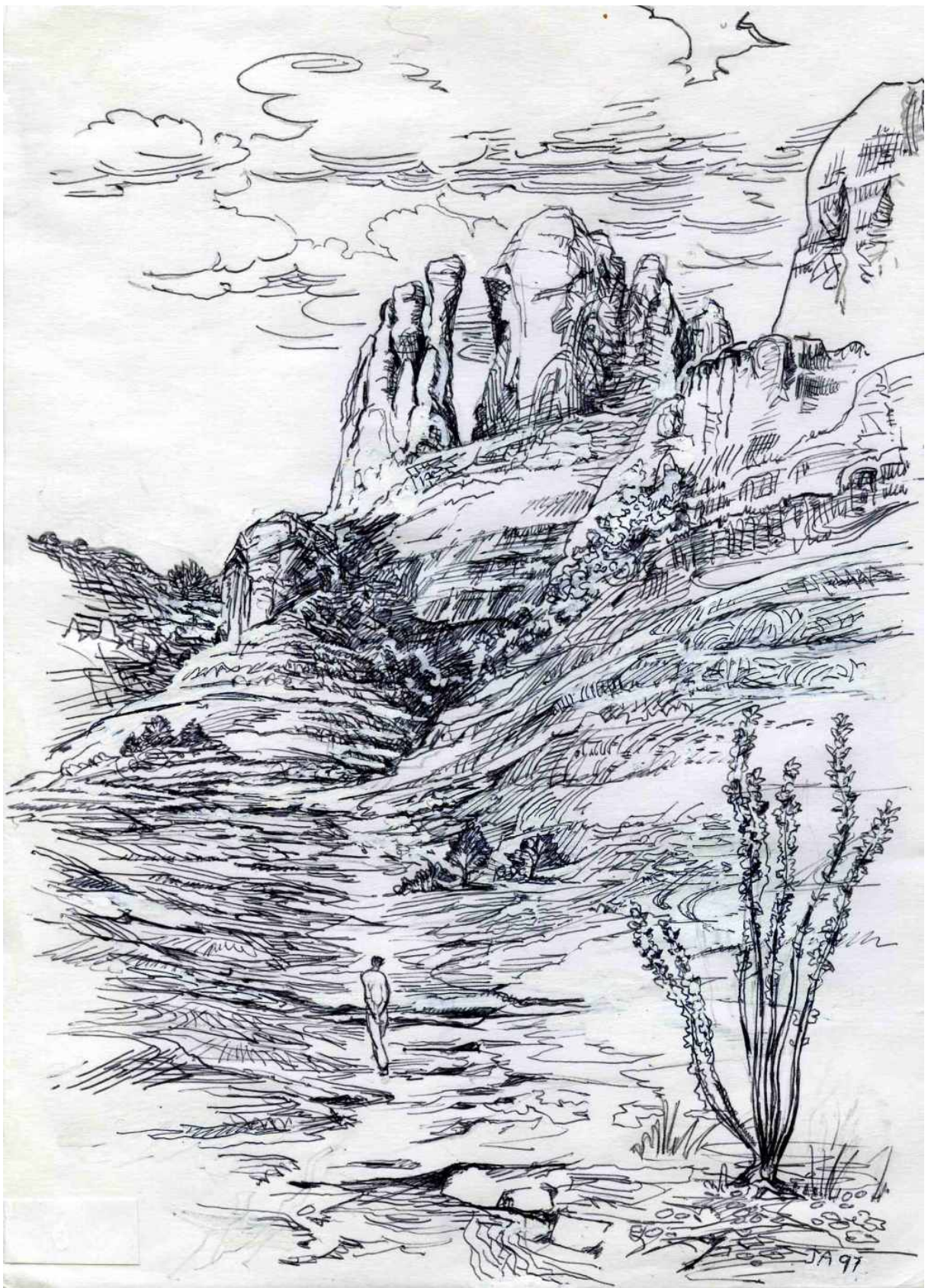
Even so, the seeker in his dream-like

waking life of ignorance sees

the Guru, and wakes from slumber dark.

Garland of Guru's Sayings 28, by Muruganar

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In Phoenix, we picked up our hired car without too much disorientation, and resisted Alamo's businesslike attempts to persuade us to take a larger, more powerful model for the 4,000 foot climb to Sedona. Our vehicle was the smallest car in all America; we christened him "Mr Swiftie". We had no trouble, except in getting out of it; for the doors were electronically calibrated to seat belt fastenings and the foot-brake, and often baffled us. Presently, on a high mountain road of uncertain camber, Mr Swiftie met a Big Bad Guy, chewing gum, real mean. Finally the confrontation allowed some passage.. The hummer jeep shot by with a scrunch of stones, splattering a spray of dust. Mr Swiftie's beautiful green skin was baptized powdery red all over.

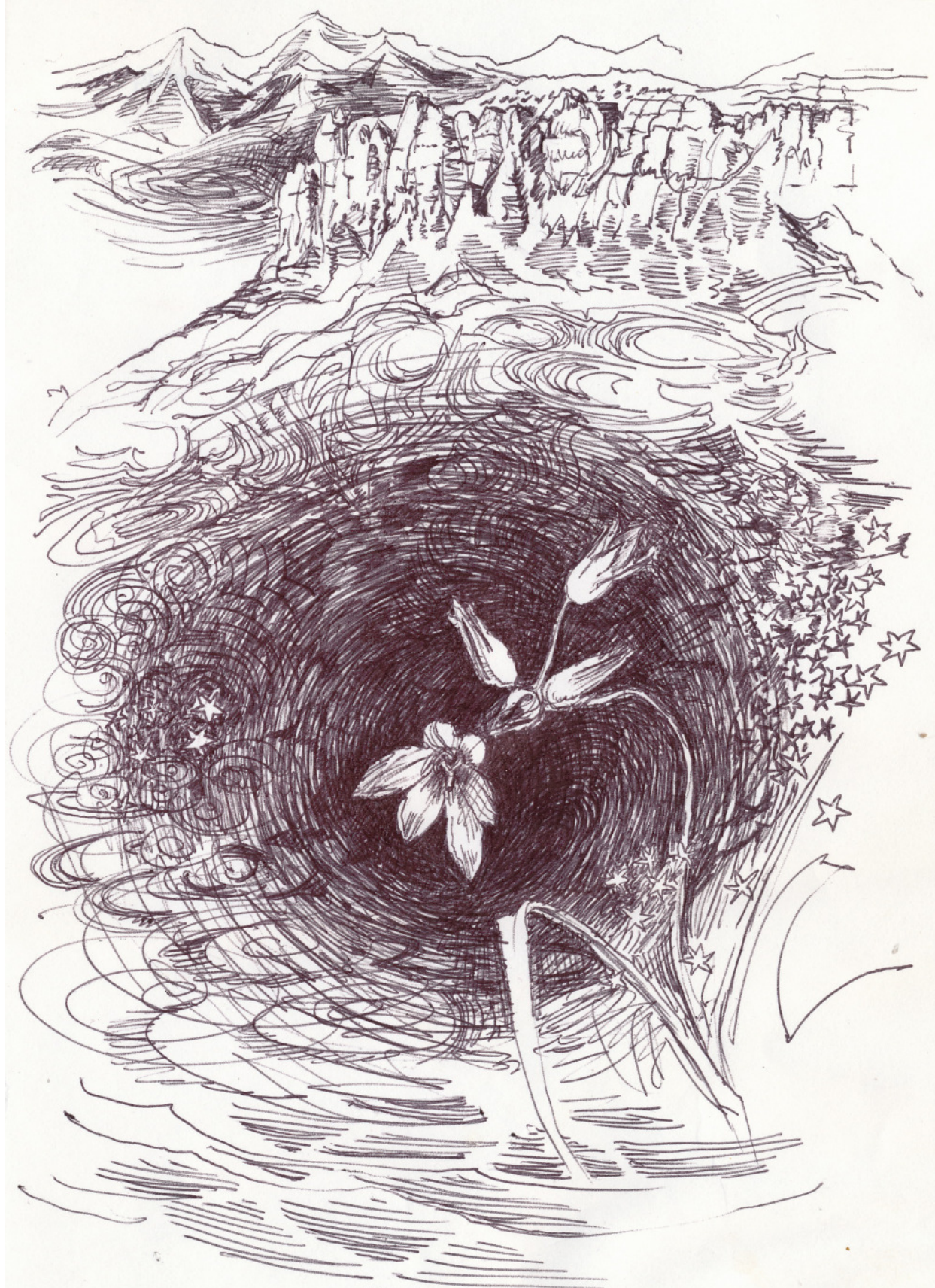
In Sedona, vastly girt with red rock Gothic cathedrals, we pitched our tent on a hill behind Keren's house. The bright stars were our canopy. One of them looked brilliantly fuzzy and strange. Was it a comet? A long misty tail followed a cloudy cluster of tiny stars at great speed; thoughts of strange lands and sages. Slept surprisingly well.

In the morning, Mr Swiftie took us to a millionaire's paradise settlement called Enchantment, at the mouth of Boynton Canyon. We walked far into the canyon, under the noble red and silver cliffs; deep in its heart of peace, tall pine forests grew, like a marital garland of Arunachala with mid-Wales. In the godlike majesty of the rocks overhead, the silent breath has carved everywhere the **elephant Ganapati**, seed of speech and poetry. Every hiker and tourist we met on the path, lit up with total and untiring pleasure in greeting another human. We decided Sedona is a truly ethical town, as no one locks their doors. Is this red cavern of angels a spiritual antipodes to Arunachala?

We were too tired to find a Gaz canister for cooking, after all this. We returned to the tent to rest, and then went to Satsang with Robert at Mountain Shadows Drive in the town – our first meeting with him. His speech has become completely indistinct, but I could hear "be still". He wore smart white trainers, a US general's baseball cap embossed with a golden quail bird, and shades. His movements are slow, casual and careful, rather stooped. As he enters, he turns and gives a direct, unreadable glance towards the visitors from England through the dark glasses. He sits down, looks around the room quietly, and jokes with his intimates. He mouths the Siva *bhajans*, and others join in and chant. A gentle devotional fervour is engendered.

For a first time visitor who has traveled a long way, Robert's fast slurred whisper is bewildering. The mind wants words and forms. It does its best, hearing "be still", "no fear", "be free" to open into the heart of this authority. It feels shut out of understanding. After fifteen or twenty minutes, Robert puts away the microphone and we all listen to a live three-piece traveling band; a blend of Oriental and native-American instruments perform a couple of Sivaic *bhajans* ...

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JA APRIL 7 97

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Robert is father to a large family. He keeps a sort of eye open, and came up and gave Aj and me a hug. The *Jnani* comes gently towards, a bit at a time, comes through the people to meet and to whisper. His tongue is stricken by Parkinsons disease. This protects him. There are other ways of speech. Since he came to roost in Sedona, his curvy wife Nicole has turned into Queen Shakti, and makes his appointments. "I do just love to hear an English voice," she said, with warmth ...

We went to recuperate in Red Rock State Park – silver white cottonwoods, red earth, wild blue sky, a serpentine vortex stroll to Gray Fox, and the stunning surrealism of it all. Then we came back to Sedona and had a gigantic slice of cream pie and tea. The "recalcitrant ego" is in a state of culture shock. Finely tuned to the ancient gentle landscape of the Welsh hills, Devon and the Chilterns, it is disorientated by the deluge of red rock rivers in this millionaire's Shangri-la of endless elemental grandeur.

Learn to turn the red rock angels inside out to percept the colour which floats them. Turn points into cavities. Crimson inner light, wings, wide landscapes, corn gold.

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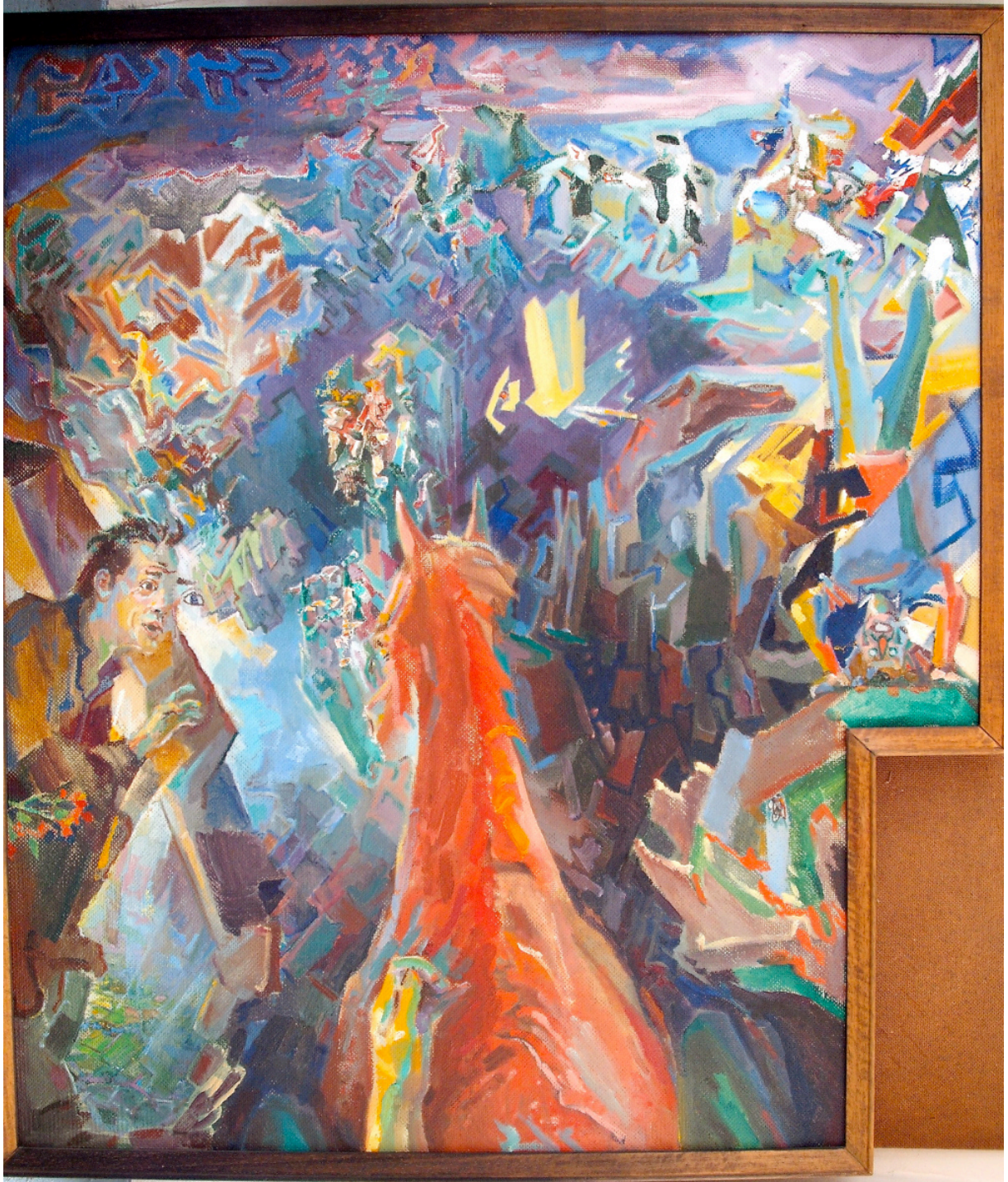


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Look at this elderly man in a grand restaurant, with a big family party around a table; the vivacity of his brood of youngsters! I see sometimes, in the interplay, the gleam of the eyes. They shine, empty, rimmed dark with the night, bright and searching. A young child comes impishly out of them, clean like a light.. This makes his close friends love him desperately. They laugh and kiss and play with him. He plays fool with the food and cocks his baseball hat to a rakish angle over his ear, but cannot speak; yet he is their realized Master. An alchemy shines from his eye to the opened soul which tries to hear beyond the words it cannot hear, the Unknown. A secret personal alchemy works from this *jnani* to each of our openings. It is love, our Self. Beware of statements too often used, which enclose! I am baffled, bewildered, rebuffed. He takes his time to come through when we are ready, not when we think.

In the evening, we couldn't get our act together to cook al fresco. It was cold and windy, and I couldn't understand the little stove – a new one since the old one got stolen last year at Chartres – and I was neurotically afraid of spilling Gaz. It was not to be, and everything was rather overwhelming. Desert of failed doership and tears, then early and exhausted retirement for the night. Aj dined imperturbably on cornflakes.

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White limestone strata in the beds of sandstone, outcrop an uninterrupted line of faery castle battlements along the fluted flanks of the red peaks. I cannot believe it is not built by man. Walking on great tablelands of rock within the ravine, I found myself inside this painting, done about 10 years ago; it is called *Ravine* ... an adventure (I knew not what to paint next, it emerged

as I traveled) of coloured rock forms, huge interior abysses of fallen sky, a green complementary horse-head mirror, a “netzach” man I loved, flipped upside down, a white bird flying. The range of rocky peaks are carnival mounts of a merry-go-round; each tells a story. The “hod” man with an eye floating away is called Adam Kops. When he saw the painting he said, “*Hey, look at the dancing rabbis!*” Another visitor to this painting at my home, called it a *furnace of life*. Beyond the dancing rabbi peaks, is a wide, pure land, from whence blue-winged raven messengers fly.

No photograph or picture can encompass the Arizona landscape. Kumar the eternal potter of the gods, fashioned this terracotta crucible on the wheel of *Sanatana Dharma*. The all of it is an altar: *Jnana Advaita*. It is fitting that the *jnani* makes his home in such a landscape.

“Take down the flagpole before the gate, and fly awareness!”

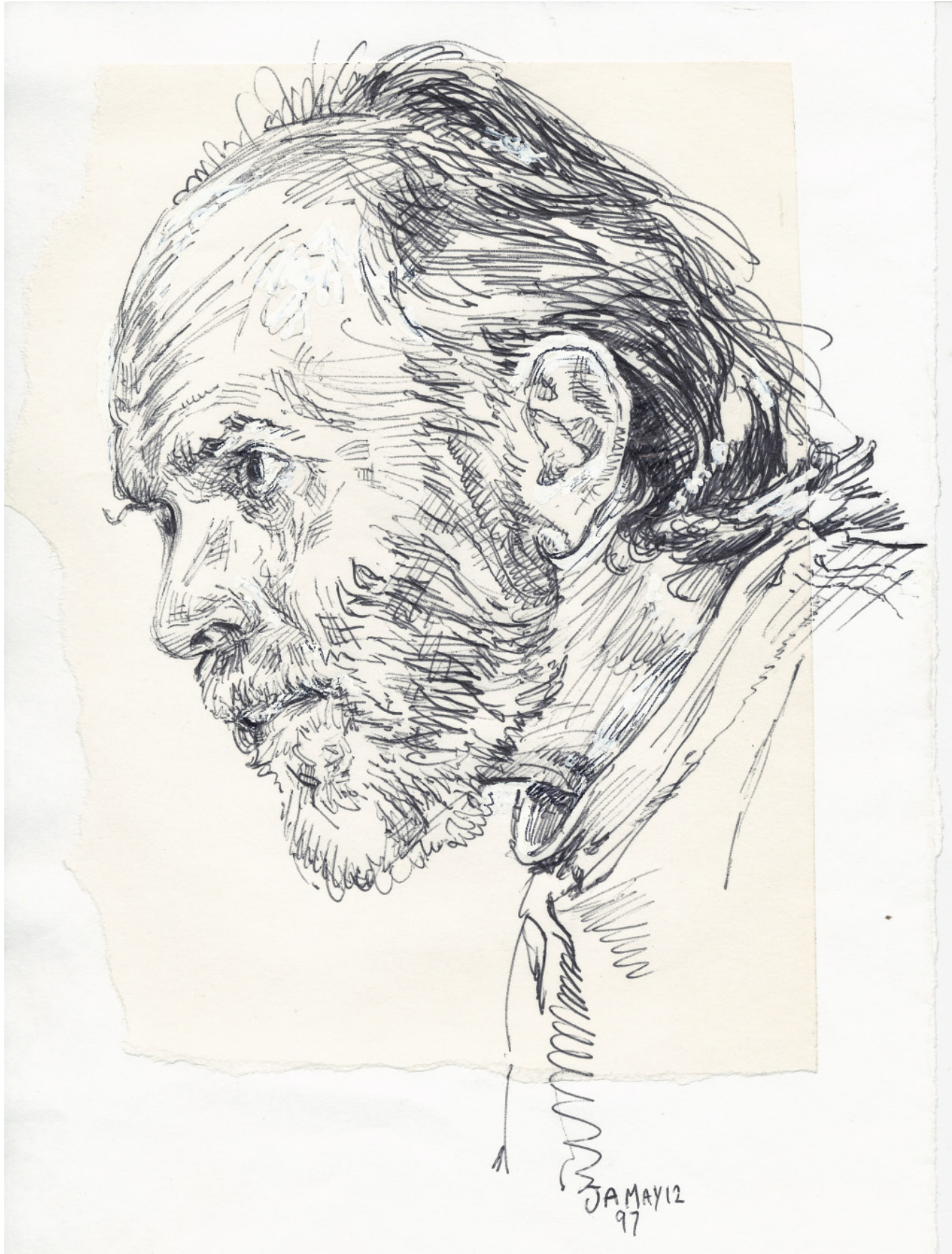
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Robert spoke in sibilant streams like a river in flow, with pauses in between; a murmuring on the water. Very few words came out, but some people seemed able to follow, as they laughed and mmmm'd in the right places.

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The comet is at its closest now – as bright to see as the Moon, and 9.3 million miles away, transiting the pole star. Aj said it is a ‘little engine’ 1 X 10 miles, whose 10 million mile trail sprays our solar system right now. It moves unknown materials across the temporal arcs and orbs of solar systems. What a thought. The weather is getting cold. We discovered on Friday night that nothing is open in the evening – no place to have a coffee. A friendly and far-sighted (looking for business) hotel gave us some in the foyer for nothing, and told us there are no discos here either, and no crime. Mad Cow Disease rampages in England.

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Reaching the Grand Canyon, we began in the widening of that crack, that smile in earth whose silence only a raven’s wing of night may cross, to take as usual our humble photographic record. At first one thinks, No pictures, or maybe just one. After a relatively short time, the film is finished and another one being put in. It were better to in silence receive each breathtaking impact unrecorded. But wouldn’t it be nice to show them at home!

We recalled the account of our brother Ganesan who was taken here, who walked to the rim with his dear friends absorbed in spiritual discourse, the river of his voice and eyes; then all of a sudden they told him to look at his feet, and there was ... nothing!

The vegetation along the rim of the Grand Canyon is uninterrupted pine forest. But if you descend a little way into the *akashic chamber* – a golden geology speckled like thrush's breast, in roseate strata – and look up, those tall, gracious pines are now but a thin dark skin along the summits of the open cliffs of Mother Earth. The same goes for the road, the bubbles of human destiny, the museums and hotels within that skin. They are gone.

Climbed back to the rim, drove on to a Visitors centre, snacked on outsize fast food, and caught sight in the carpark of the friends who played music to God in Robert's Friday Satsang. They were on the road again, in an eye-catching rainbow-ecology wigwam on wheels. They'd come in to use the phone.

Aj is as happy as a child in heaven. Here he is at sunset, walking in an exquisite forest along a resin scented path, and there in mystic splendour, is revealed to him his Vedic City – the dwellings of the gods that gleam with fire – Brahma Temple, Buddha Temple, Zoroastria Temple, et al. I looked down into the alluring cleft of the Bright Angel canyon trail and decided I must return, and stay longer, and go deeper. (The next year, I did, twice I reached the deep green Colorado River to wash my feet, and back the same day – a round hike of 18 miles, a mountain a mile high, inside out: a climate spectrum from snow on the rim, to sub-tropical Africa in the cleft.)

As the sun sank to the rim, we watched the god Agni at work. The gift of transformation subtly, softly rose-glowed the celestial strata of Earth's open womb: the fiery sacrifice. Even His creatures, His radiant bulls, kine and cattle, became visible, illumined in worship. Agni is the Lamb of God. As the sun's daytime colour dissolves, all turns misty grey. Imperceptibly, another light kindles, warming to immensity. When even this light fades, the subtle body of the Canyon dances. Great angel dervishes whirl in gossamer twilight, powder-violet.

Then we got back into the warmth of Mr Swiftie and drove back to our tent, 130 miles of untowned, unbending, desert darkness. Glen Gould played Bach piano concertos with geological precision. We stopped at Flagstaff to dine at Denny's under Orion.

There is no time across the time. It is unborn. And yet it dines at table.

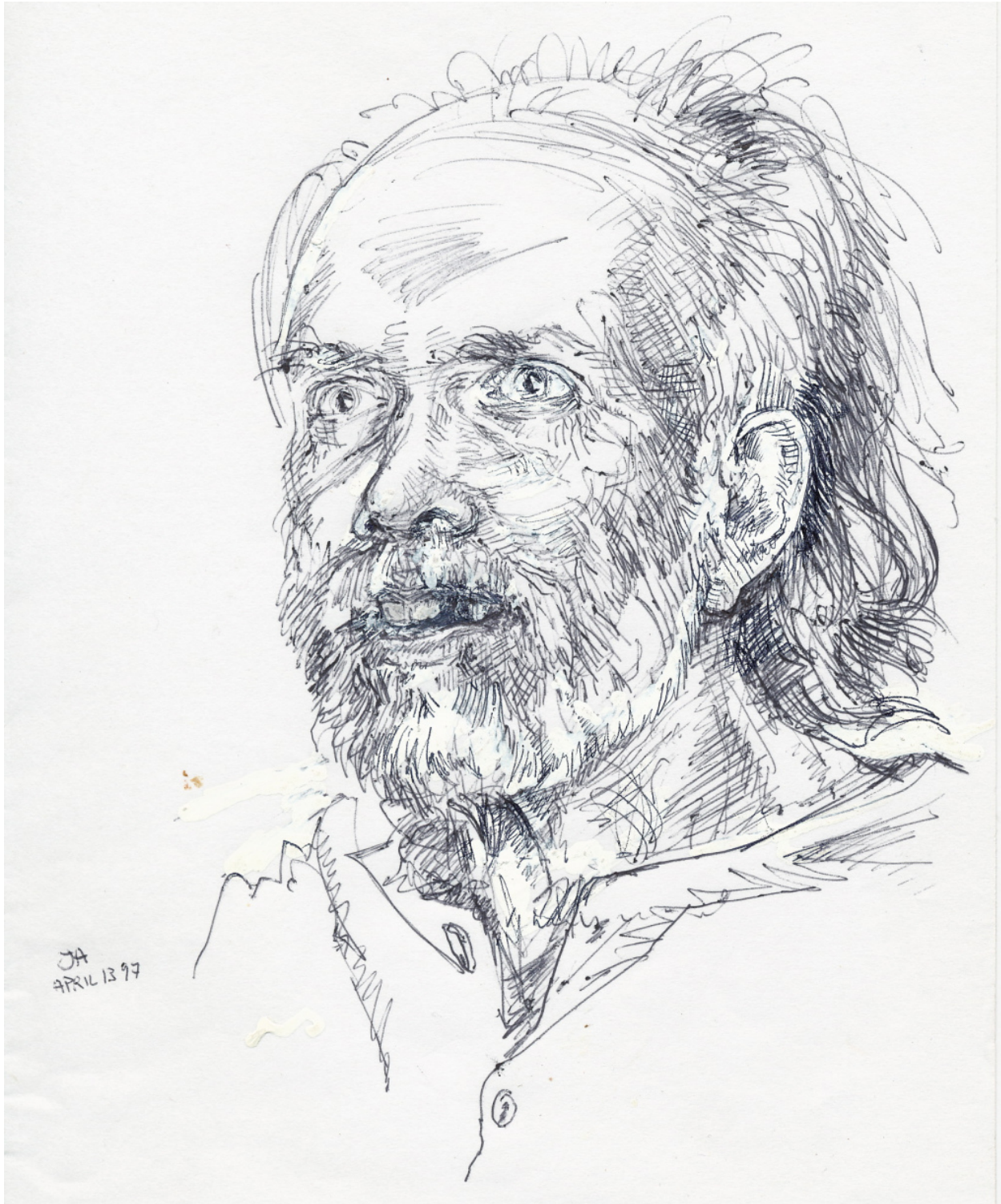
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The Self has access to all memory, and to all that is needed. Robert plays with his food and when he laughs his face lights up and two long yellowish fangs appear, because nearly all his upper teeth have been pulled out... they are making him a set of new choppers. He takes (in slow moments of opening or hearing) your heart right out, tears it out and bathes it simply in innocence and beauty.

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After our trip to the Grand Canyon, we took him out to lunch ... Robert's white T shirt was emblazoned with the slogan VISUALIZE WHIRLED PEAS. After greetings, we sat down at a round table semi-out of doors, and Robert took off his dark glasses, put his baseball cap on the

table, and after some pondering, ordered soup of the day, veggie burger and a herbal tea, and then inquired, “How’re things in London?”

Aj wrote, “*He gave me a piercing look with his eyes and held me in his gaze for some long seconds until I could bear it no longer, and looked down. I felt an intangible gratitude to be in the presence of this holy man, sage or jnani. He told me to Be still and know I am God. If the mind wanders, ask Whose mind? But as there is no mind anyway, the problem dissolves. Any obstacle was an illusion. I am free Now. Who took away that freedom?*”

Robert asked about the Ramana Foundation – Mitzi joined us, to interpret – and said our *Self Enquiry* is “a wunnerful magazine.”

I plucked up courage to tell him about my father’s path to the silence, through his chest of drawers: Zen, Krishnamurti, Gurdjieff, planting potatoes, and playing the violin. Robert took in every word, wide open, to know my parent’s age and state of health, and said firmly, “Give him my *warmest best* regards.” He held me in his radiant look, wide open, absurd, unborn, unending, a mirror to no thing, his mouth a big dark cave. This made me so happy, I needed to talk about it to him, out of the sea, and couldn’t. He is a bent, elderly fair skinned man with delicate features, white beard, small lean hands with little fingernails, a childish gentle nose, and a hearty appetite for his food. He kindles my heart, like a match. “If you go inside,” he hissed, wide open - “there is no end! No end! It never ends! Be still, be still, be still.” At the end of the lunch he announced “so there’s nothing more to be said.” We could now humbly request a photo – to put in the album at home, next to the Grand Canyon? Robert obligingly sat down again outside, took off his cap and glasses, then stood up, put his arms around us both for Mitzi to take one, and said “Give Nicole a ring tomorrow at 9.30 – and have a *wonderful* afternoon!” He came to inspect the diminutively green and somewhat dusty Mr Swiftie, laughed and was driven off in John’s red station wagon.

Aj and Ja got into Mr Swiftie and pointed his snub nose up Oak Creek Canyon, for Aj required a nice picnic table near some water and trees, for Virgo-Sagittarius to sit down and write up the notes. Capricorn-Cancer went for a paddle in the crystal clear cottonwood river, in the red rock ampitheatre, to potter on the stones and goatishly digest the input. Sweet music, nut-brown water. Robert is NO THING! My mind opens wide with delight, then shuts like a snapdragon. But it doesn’t matter: be still.

Aj and I think his speech is a divine affliction. He said years ago, “to continue speaking is a waste of time.” Contrast his cavernous mischievous laugh, with the glossy and eloquent Gurus of this world. I can hardly bear it when his light shines in. *Saint*.

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The next morning, Nicole on the phone arranged a time for tea on Saturday at their house – “I’ll draw you a map, we’re near Safeway darling, just around behind Macdonalds, but it’s rather hard to find” – and said again she couldn’t sleep for the thought of us in our tent in the freezing night, and we might like to stay with them next time, if their daughter isn’t using the spare room? This felt very encouraging: her southern voice is a comfort and an “earthing” here. We struggled through the giant supermarkets. But the cashiers are as cosy as a Holsworthy grocer back home. Mr Swiftie has a strong personality, and is always easy to spot in the car park, among his large and glittering companions.

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I wrote: "At this stage in our adventure, I feel the small-town of my psyche, its aridity. This makes sense for the moment, I guess. With the jnani at the end of the road, I feel in various ways my emptiness. Sometimes it is awareness and beauty, full of light and love and song. But sometimes it is just dense and tired, non-relating, the hard metalled road waits for the sun to break through again, like it does with his unearthly smile. I feel shy, with nothing to say or ask, and not knowing how to negotiate this end and birth of all relationship. The beggars in the basement are scared perhaps. Tears somewhere. Funny – I just noticed the word 'sacred' is also 'scared'. I envy the other people, their intimacy with him."

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JA APRIL 9. 97

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Give the gift to Him. As soon as I fall to silence, love comes.

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END OF PART ONE

Drawings, text & pictures copyright (c) Jane Adams 1996-2012

To Robert, a Sage in Arizona – PART TWO

Posted on June 25, 2012 by janeadamsart

<http://janeadamsart.wordpress.com/2012/06/>

This is the story of a pilgrimage in 1996 to Robert Adams – PART TWO. He died the following year. Born in New York, he “woke” into the atoms at 14, during a school math class. Then he met Yogananda. In early 1950, still in his teens, he went to India, sat with Ramana Maharshi (December 1879-April 1950) and ran wild on Arunachala for a while. Back home, he became a silent and reclusive wanderer, but people always found him again, so he taught them Self-enquiry. The drawings and portraits in this memoire, are all posthumous – done shortly after his *mahasamadhi*. People were very generous, and gave me photos – around Robert, these were rare.

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JA APRIL 9. 97

Robert and Friend

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Give the gift to Him. As soon as I fall to silence, love comes.

Mr Swiftie took his passengers along a long and very bumpy road around the mountain fringes of the Secret Wilderness. We would not have time on this visit to explore the Secret Trail itself, which is quite long. We walked up instead through a pine forested dry valley trail to Vultee Arch, a single web strand of sandstone stretched by the wind over a precipitous gully. Ja clambered up the steep hillside to sit on it and take a photograph. Aj lay down comfortably at the foot of a tree to sleep.

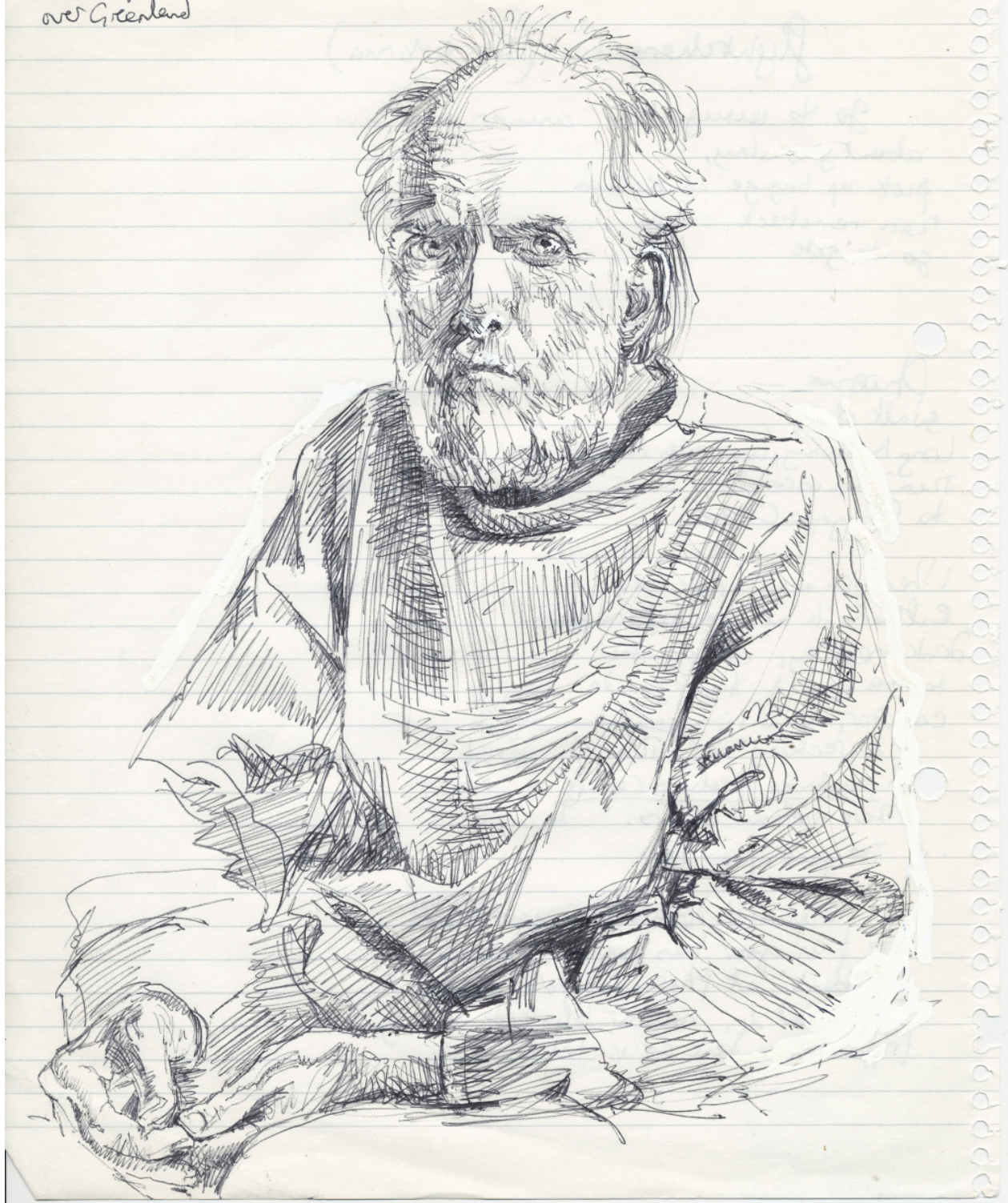
Returning to Sedona, Aj and Mr Swiftie dropped Ja off at the end of Soldiers Pass Road so she could go for an adventure on the “Coffee Pot Vortex”, and then prospect a better way back to the tent from there, than she’d managed the day before. This rock, which is more like an Indian eagle, is spectacular, leading a row of terracotta pinnacles out from the “Thunder Mountain” like giant molars set in a landscaped jaw bone. At first it seemed very difficult to reach. Ja had not consulted the map, and was set down at the wrong place, and had to negotiate a settlement of pretty painted villas.

But then I sat quiet for a bit, and *gave in*. Just as I was about to walk home, I spotted some small friendly stone signals which, when followed one to another, some of them difficult to find, led me back, up and through to the wonderful high place with the setting sun glowing through it. The terrain everywhere is a mixture of stony red earth and hills, with a varying density of green juniper and impoverished conifers, and you have to watch out for cacti. It is navigable in the cross-country sense, but the strong ecological consciousness of the region makes me want to keep to the paths, wherever there are any.

The earth is red, dry and gritty, but looks and feels as if it recently received the dew. It is hard to tell in places like this, which are human paths, and which were made by a coyote or mountain lion, which follow no human sense of purpose. But a gentle pilgrim had left, to blaze the trail, a small pile of two or three stones in every doubtful place, to beckon and direct. It uplifted me, like finding an angel, to come upon this, and lean upon the enchanting guidance. The adventure around and along the contour of the glorious great rock at twilight, was secret, privileged and beautiful. The cross country hike back to our tent, encountering some deep feline footprints, was lit by a silver splendour of shredded storm. In the night there was strong wind, rain and sleety ice. It was noisy in the tent.

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In clouds
35,000 feet
over Greenland



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Every morning, just before sunup, we hear the coyotes in dawn chorus, a haunting cacophony of little shrill barks and howls. It is rather a wonderful sound, as soon as I know it is not a kennel. We saw a coyote at night, lean and grey, crossing the suburban road. Nobody worries about rattlesnakes, as they are very shy, and so are the mountain lion and bobcat. The ring of bright mountains is no limit to the wilderness. All the Arizona desert is there. Solid birds of bright plumage chaff one another solemnly in the juniper, and large rabbits go about their business.

We explored many long trails. We visited Cathedral Rock. I enjoyed another long and arduous rocky climb, while Aj snoozed gently with *Gems from Bhagavan* near the waters in the shade. Cathedral Rock is much bigger than it looks: the ascent up the massive rugged shoulders to where the pillars begin to soar like organ pipes, was guided by discreet cairns from place to space. The sunshine blossomed bright with birdsong, and melted pockets of snow. One night as we turned in – the comet is moving away now – I noticed the exceptional brilliance of the evening star. Her gloaming brightness shone greater than Jupiter. She catches a spark of the hidden Sun in her web.

Starlight points to Self-light, and at moments among my sleep I saw this Star on a clear and soft blue radiance, like that which falls among the hills at twilight. The Star and hint of elven blue – like the **moon blue lotus** of Ramana's look in *Ramana Gita* – help me to Self remember. Aj is astonished at himself. He has not read one of the dozen or so books he brought with him, and they are still tied up in a bundle in the tent. He wrote, "*As everybody starts early here, in Robert's Kingdom of Sedonia, where even the ordinary citizens behave like hobbits in a childrens' picture book, greeting all and everyone whenever they pass, we landed outside the Satsang house at 6pm, to get a place upfront ...*"

They played a wordless voice to God, like a bird and a cello, a Yogananda song. There were readings, pointedly, from Arthur Osborne, Lex Hickson on Zen, and Rumi. Robert entered the room in a white tracksuit, shades and no cap, reached for the mike and began his bird song: the *sphurana* began to glow... At the end of Satsang, Robert announced – through Richard – “a special warm welcome for Ja and Aj, our visitors from Ramana Foundation in England, they are the editors of the quarterly journal Self Enquiry, and it is a wunnerful magazine” – Richard held up a copy of the Winter issue. I was in no condition to deal with the sudden stampede for new Subs – had come to Robert's Satsang without address book, receipt or pen ...

At Dennys, which is open all night, we enjoyed the company of Mrs Rich, an old flame of Robert's from LA. She came and sat with us affectionately, dressed all in white, with white hair, white straw hat, face like an old apple, and round blue eyes. She seems to be a lady of some mobility and means, and said she is a Desert Person really. She is not fond of valleys or water, and needs to build her new house high up on the mesa. As a visit to Poonjaji is on our vague agenda, Mrs Rich beamed at us, opened her purse, and gave us ten dollars. Aj contorted into a polite British “No please, really.” “Go on, go on honey, take it, it's a Present!”

We retired to our tent behind Keren's, much refreshed by the Sedona Night Life.

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We saw some art in the local galleries. The standard varied, but helped me to perceive more clearly how holy these rocks and sky are, in the native-American spiritual culture, as subtle intermediaries, half creature, half angel. Eagles, coyotes and legendary medicine men soar out of the “crack between the worlds.” These rocks have homely and banal domestic-American names, but a hundred years ago they were cryptic messengers and gods in the wild wilderness – no houses, roads or Safeways – and I review the *Mystery*. The script is written by the wind in the stone. Sedona is a place of power, now settled by affluent New Age soothsayers. Any settlement here, breathes in the colour of the land, its geology and colliding frames of the Dream Time consciousness. As I read all the Carlos Castaneda books at an early stage in my *sadhana*, I recognize the Sonora desert resonances of **not-doing** and **seeing the space between the leaves**. Any sensitive sojourn here, involves a great deal more than just looking at the view.

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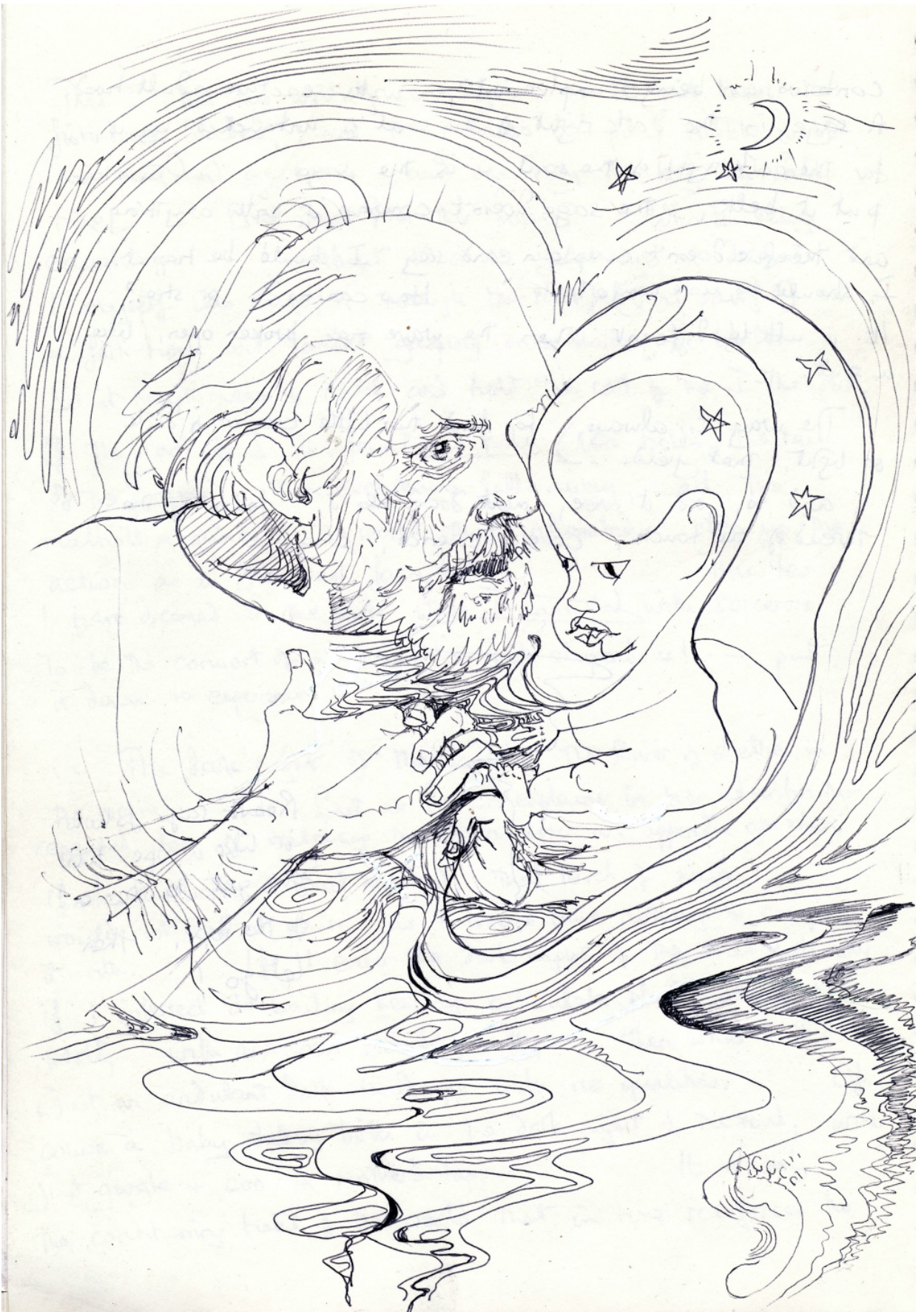


JA APRIL 7 97

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At supper, someone took my camera and kindly snapped me trying to understand Robert's whisper in my ear, through the jolly voices all around. Robert said *Don't publish pictures of him in our Journal*; then the words from him began to fade, to run together indistinct, like the rain, and I couldn't hear. Could it possibly be "*you can camp in our garden next time*"? Again and again the words, the husky, rapid whispered sound from wide eyes of a fearless child who has all the time, urgency and endless patience in the world to make me understand, a word at a time, but *I still can't understand, I'm so sorry*. Is this physically painful for him? Then he smiles and lets it go for now. Some things translate *only with pain and difficulty* into the crude cradle of speech or writing. The universe has something to spell, and I am distracted by the sounds of the table.

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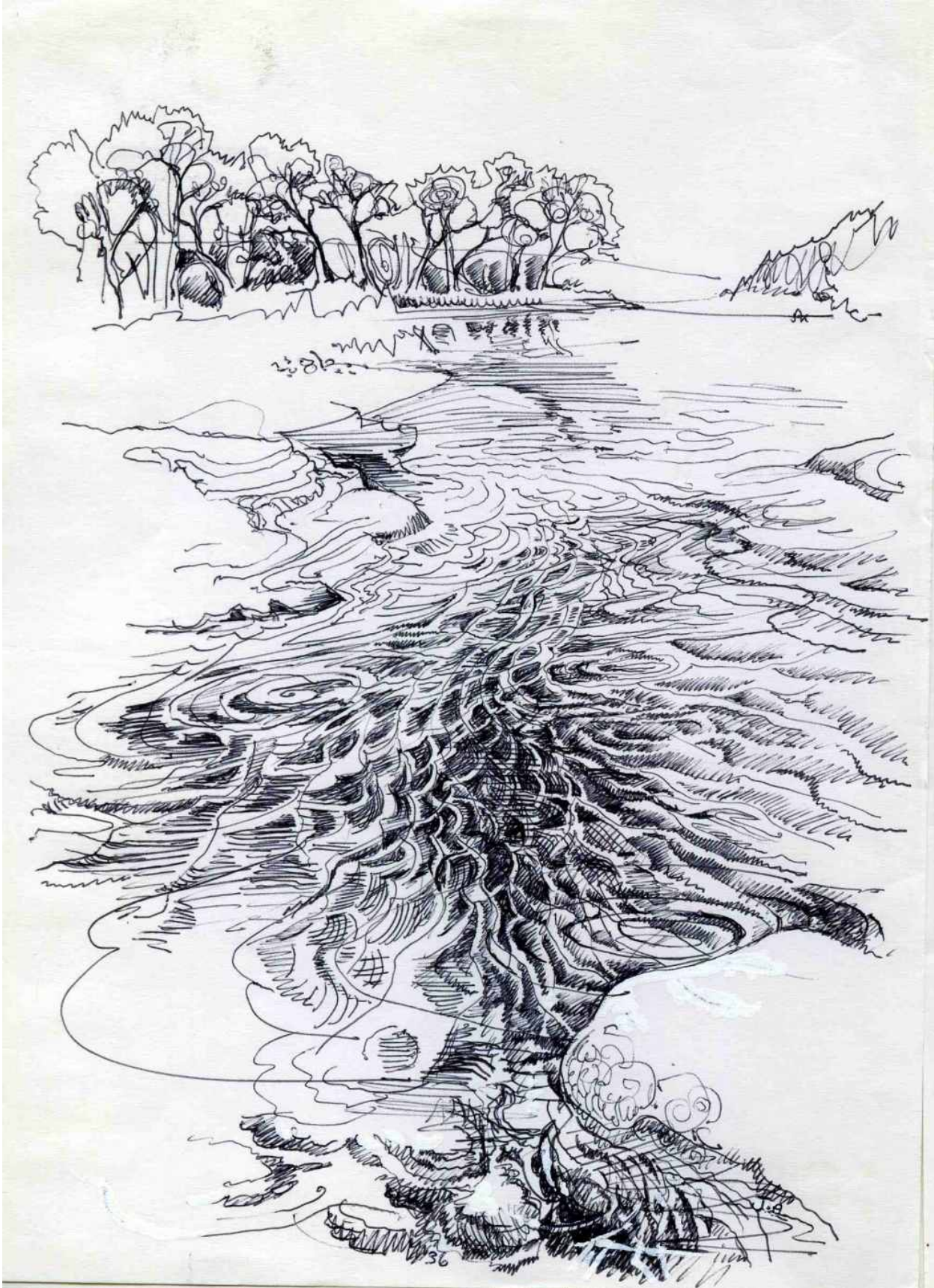
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There was some lively discussion around Robert, that with “I-am-no-body”, the preordained idea of our physicality disappears. Everything is preordained, and set up so long as we are identified with our mind-body’s Karma. As soon as this identification discontinues, *then there is no preordination, nothing*. This moment changes everything.

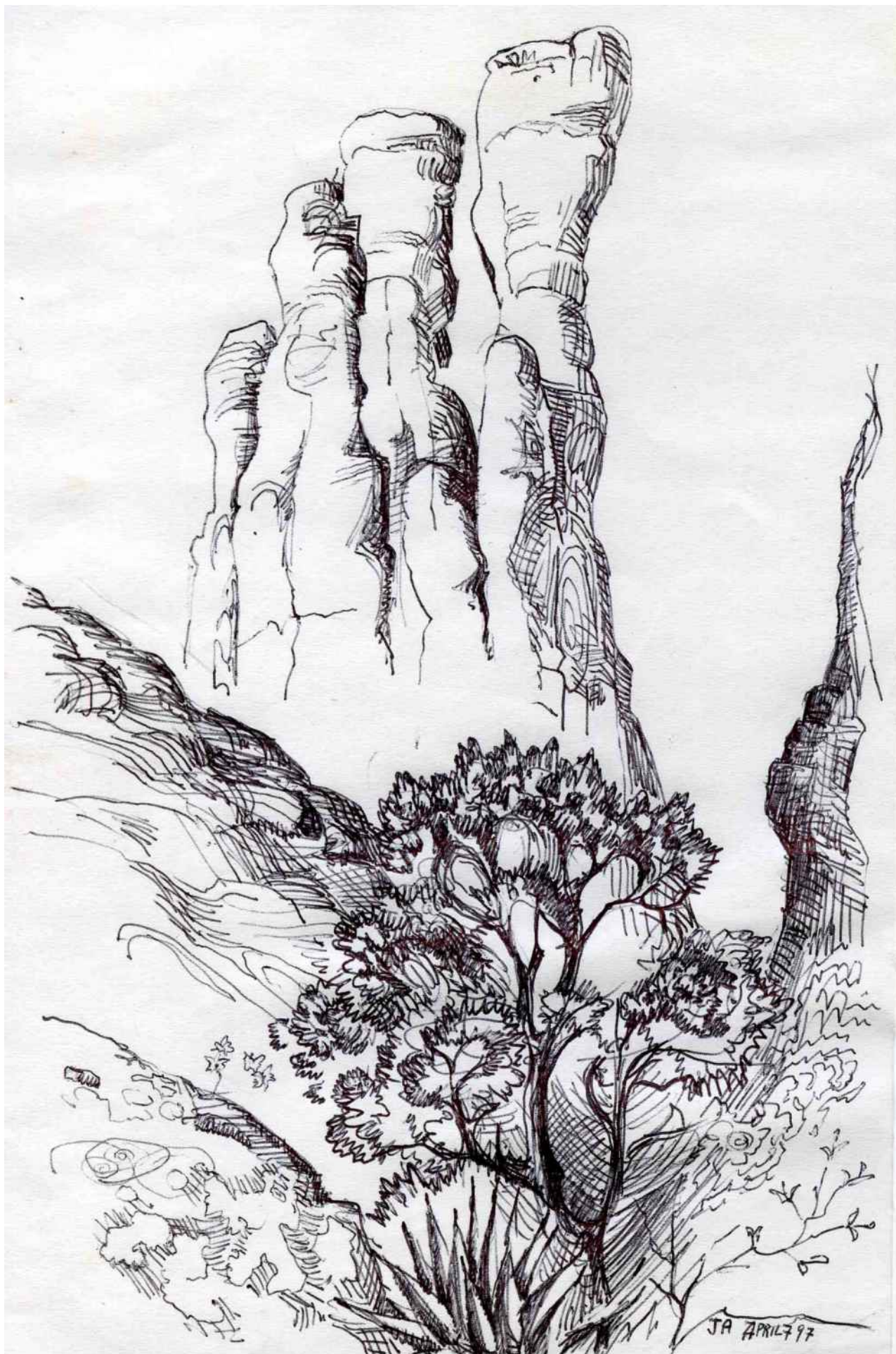
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One of our new friends – Rolfing Rob – invited us to come for a hike with him and his dog Wolfie. We followed him to his rented house for him to change into his blue baseball hat, bumbag, clean socks and sneakers. He emerged like an angel, carrying water. We left the cars in Dry Creek wilderness, and climbed a very steep and little used trail towards Lost Canyon. We never saw Lost Canyon, because we had a wonderful time on the path, doing Douglas Harding experiments. Only a star can perceive a star. Atoms. Every word we say comes straight from the Sun – think of that! The Sun speaks through the food-chain hierarchy. He that is in you ... now feel in here the endless, bottomless no-centre of His radiance. We also practiced Forest walking – attending to the seer who smooths out the bumps – and Upside-down-ness on the precipitous path. Aj fell down and sprained his wrist. Rob held and completely healed it with a Rolf technique of concentration and pressure. The Rolf massage “reinvents” the landscape of the inner body, and dissolves structural tensions. It is a scientific manipulation of the collagen *fascia*, or connective tissue, and the body’s innate ability to let go of protective armouring.

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JA APRIL 97

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We looked out from our highest point over the vast basin of the mountain-ringed Secret Wilderness, and *didn't complete the trail*. I found this a useful exercise in dispassion.

“Our way becomes clear, and what we need to do becomes apparent. We no longer exult in our personal darkness, but accept the Divine Will in life, and its orientation of our life towards the light. We learn to shine in the presence rather than to dwell in the darkness of our personal thoughts and emotions based on memory. We learn to have faith in life, to love and to accept the truth, to be open and humble and giving to a reality that is pure grace.”

Vamadeva Shastri (David Frawley), *Wisdom of the Ancient Seers*

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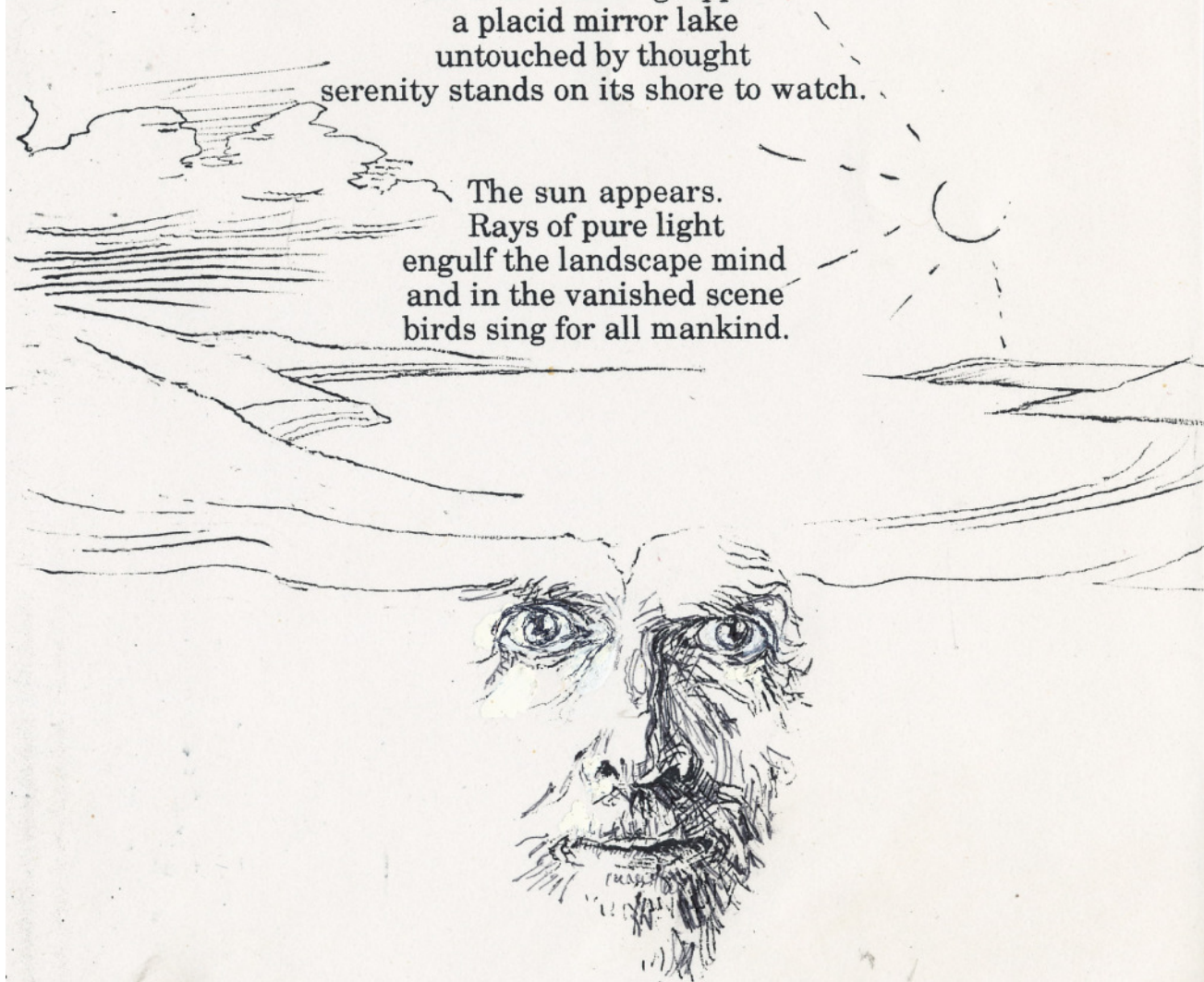
Awakening

by Robert Adams

Daylight breaks
the mind is stilled
silent, at peace
movement nil.

No pebble drops into its pool
no ever widening ripple
a placid mirror lake
untouched by thought
serenity stands on its shore to watch.

The sun appears.
Rays of pure light
engulf the landscape mind
and in the vanished scene
birds sing for all mankind.



**

I have pre-conceptions about the simple and unworldly nature of the *Jnani's* residence, within walking distance of the supermarket – no doubt based on Annamalai Swami's little ashram in Tiru. Perhaps I imagined a relaxed and scruffy sort of place, like one of those outback bungalows in Phoenix.

The famous Tea for the English visitors was at Robert's house... We gasped and entered his living-space, Vogue-interior designed, white-washed, teak timbered, booming with New Age quadraphonic sounds, plump blue furnishings on a cool expanse of powder-blue carpet. We saw pairs of gold swans, giant posters of Robert and Ramana, candles, vast plants and framed family snapshots on glass shelves: Nicole welcomed us: 'It looks much larger than it is'. The model English tea party laid out on the dining table, with the famous cucumber sandwiches, a mountainous strawberry cream cake, two big round hedgehogs of cheese and fruit bits on cocktail sticks, and an array of gold rimmed cups, saucers, knives and spoons, with a special little jar of marmalade placed right at the edge for our "English taste", would put Fortnams to shame. I thought Robert was an old hippy like me – he's lived in the jungle - and visualized comfy stuffed old chairs and dog hairs. It bemused me almost to tears, and a painful shyness. "You see, I didn't forget the marmalade!" cried Nicole joyously. "What do you think of the cucumber sandwiches?" said Adele, who always glows – "I put chilli in them!" I couldn't eat a thing, and was terrified of breaking something. With everyone swanning around and effortlessly at ease with the *jnani*, I sat paralysed on the carpet and let Robert's fluffy dog Dmitri wash my hands.

In shock, I managed to join a girly chit chat at the table, with their daughters. Nicole said she was born in Grand Cayman – I thought she said "I was born in the Grand Canyon" – and she got a work permit for two years to the States. The permit was inexplicably renewed – "*do you think a certain Indian gentleman with a white beard and a walking stick had anything to do with it?*" – and then she dreamed about Robert three times, and met him a day or two later. This was 42 years ago. "*It was enormous love, darling, not just romantic,*" she said, "*since then, I've been learning to become less selfish.*"

Don't try to prevent your thoughts. There'll always be thoughts, just watch and let them pass, and do not belong to them. Presently you'll discover none of them have anything to do with YOU. Let the beggars be. Robert, like the sea, is a private mirror to everyone. Mine – after he hugged us – is a childlike sharing of a happy secret. When he turns to Aj his manner re-shapes to something more solid and man to man; they could be talking football.

There are no EGGOS, not even a recalcitrant one. As the Self never moves, and as you have taken the Jnani into consciousness, and he has taken you into his, he never leaves you, wherever you are. Step behind your spine. Let the body walk and move and be touching ground in This.

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Sedona town was named in 1908 by a Dutch settler after his wife, the fair Sedona Schnebly. They built their house down by the Oak Creek. We went a little way up towards Schnebly Hill, but not as far as the wonderful Ravine. In an otherwise unremarkable spot, I met a young black New Yorker with cultured dreadlocks who desperately needed a pair of tweezers. A big chunky wood splinter had gone in by his thumb nail. Surprisingly, I had one in my bag, and I sat with him during the operation which, after about ten minutes or so of intense pain, patient curses and stoic bravery, was successful. It is nice when time and place are precise for a need to be met. Our Sedona adventure politely claimed its due.

Robert arrived at Satsang dressed in blue like the sea, with cassettes from his piles of sounds and love-songs to the Lord. I wept, like a well running over, because we were leaving tomorrow. Robert's speech was clearer today, and he played with us and made us repeat after him: *I am Brahman. I am That. I am awareness. You're not what you think you are. Feel free. Be quiet. All is well.* Rivers joined – the Los Angeles students with the Sedona people. A lady asked, "How to deal with fear?" "You don't," he said shortly. "You don't deal with fear." Much laughter from those at the end of the road, who are pushed by him in the chest, straight into silence ... the silence between the words, from which they arise, into which they vanish.

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“Supper” was at Enchantment, the rich little resort at the mouth of Boynton Canyon – a very swish bar with a panoramic view of the roseate cliffs, sheer and glowing, and twin pinnacles high above, which like *Ardhanarishvara* – the Lord whose half is Woman – focus the *shakti* energy. I longed to go for a walk. The loving-kindness of our new friends eased a place for us next to Robert. I couldn’t manage small talk, but fortunately Nicole was there, telling us how she spent all morning yesterday cleaning that fine blue carpet for the tea party, because Robert’s small dog Dmitri is very old, and chronically incontinent. As soon as Aj moved into *his* chair next to Robert, I found it easier to converse, my block diminished; we ate yet another fine feast with the gods, and discussed the difficulties of the British Royal Family, whom Nicole and Robert adore. Nicole is essence-exuberant: Robert said he married her “because she looked like Rita Hayworth”. Aj got to talk with her, and I love her. What a couple.

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The mountains as we said goodbye, were like wild flowers in sunset. It spilled the well again. All you can do with Advaita is eat it, taste and enjoy. Perhaps the British stiff upper lip makes it difficult to talk of Love, but the heart is being it, all the time.

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There is nothing I have to do right now; I am helpless.

*Wide, slow, in-singing song of the heart is planted here
of its own accord.*

There is nothing I have to do right now.

Right now I am everything I ever want to be.

Right now I am the Self, right now this moment.

Let it all go.

Let this fill my helplessness.

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“It’s like paper and the print on the paper. When you read a newspaper, you look at the print, you do not think of the paper the print is on. You were concentrating on the print only, the words. Yet, without the paper, there would not be any print, don’t you see?”

“So it is with the Self, with REALITY. REALITY is like the paper; the print is like the people, places and things on the paper. Only, you are the paper, and you identify with the paper, and you KNOW you’re the paper, and the print has nothing to do with you. It cannot influence you or do anything to you, for you know that without you, there’s no Universe. There’s no ink, there are no words, there is no alphabet, no alphabetical letters. You have become free.”

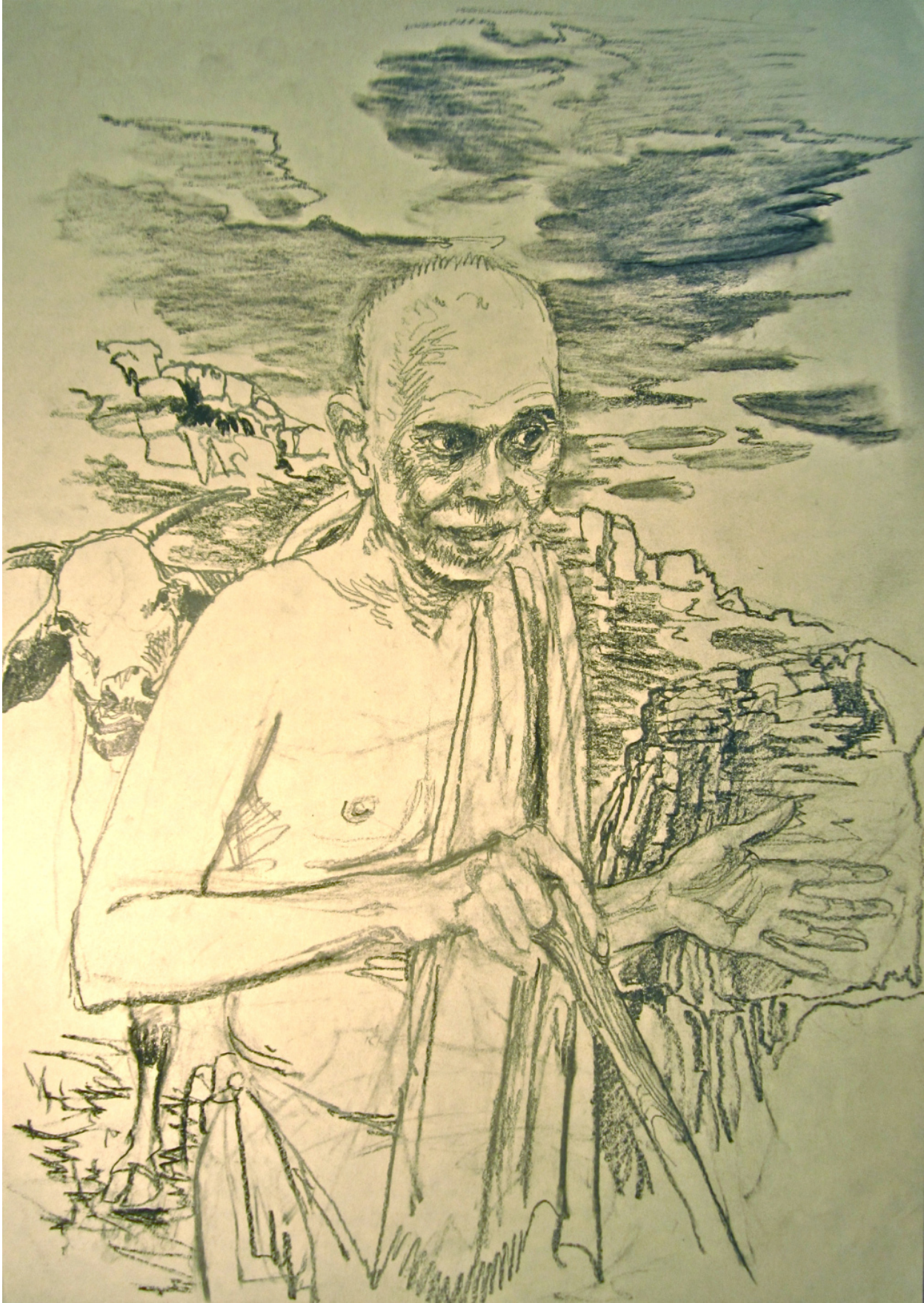
Robert Adams 1928-1997

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photo by Hale Dwoskin

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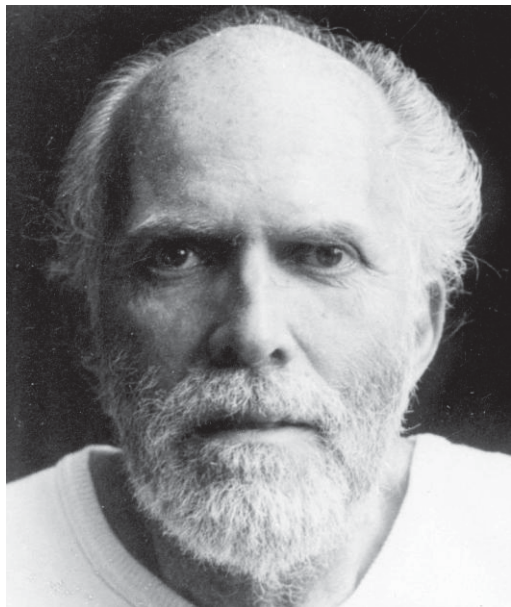


Ramana Maharshi with cow Lakshmi on Arunachala

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Robert Adams



The year was 1992, and I was travelling from San Diego to Phoenix via Los Angeles. At the crowded transit airport in Los Angeles, an elderly American lady approached me and asked, “Are you from India?” When I said, “Yes”, she very affectionately added, “This evening, a very pious man is giving a talk on Hindu spirituality in a friend’s house. I am going and I would like to take you there.” I asked, “What is the name of this pious person?” and she answered, “Robert Adams.” I said, “This evening, I am giving a talk at Phoenix. So I cannot come. Please accept my apologies.” She was disappointed, but being a beautiful person she said, “I am sorry that you will not be able to come. Will you permit me to give you the transcripts of some of his talks? Could you go through them?” She handed over a bunch of print outs which I started reading on my flight to Phoenix. The very first page caught my rapt attention. Glued to the transcripts, I completed reading them in a state of ecstasy.

I was the editor of *The Mountain Path*. The editorial team at that time was keenly interested in focusing on those blessed devotees who had realized the Self in Sri Bhagavan’s presence. We were planning to base all the issues of 1993 and 1994 on them. The entire team had devoted their time to this cause and we had collected quite a few articles on the subject, albeit with stiff opposition from certain quarters. I felt that young and new seekers who pursued Self Enquiry would be highly motivated if they read such accounts, as most people feel that the path of wisdom, *jnana marga*, is very difficult and suited only for a chosen few. Whereas the truth is that it is a simple, direct and natural path meant for all. Finding the address of Robert Adams in the transcript, I wrote to him requesting the details of how he attained Self realization in the presence of Bhagavan. I received a long letter: “I am Robert Adams. I was born in New York in 1928. As far back as I can remember, even when I was in the crib, I recollect that a man about two feet tall, with white hair and a grey beard would always appear at the foot of the crib and speak gibberish to me. Being a child, I could not understand anything that he said. When I was about five or six years old, I told my parents about it, but they thought I was playing games. I told my friends. They also laughed at me. I stopped talking about it. These visits by the small man stopped when I was around seven.”

Robert Adams also added that he did not know what to do. He could not share what was happening with anyone. Then, something strange took place. Whenever he wanted anything, whether it was a pencil, a chocolate or a violin, it would appear through someone when he uttered the word ‘God’ three times. If he found that someone needed a pencil in class, he would utter ‘God’ three times and the pencil would be there and he would hand over the pencil to the person who needed it. It happened during his exams too. He was not interested in studying. During his exams, he would utter ‘God’ three times, and the answers would appear before him and he would write them down. This is how he passed the exams.

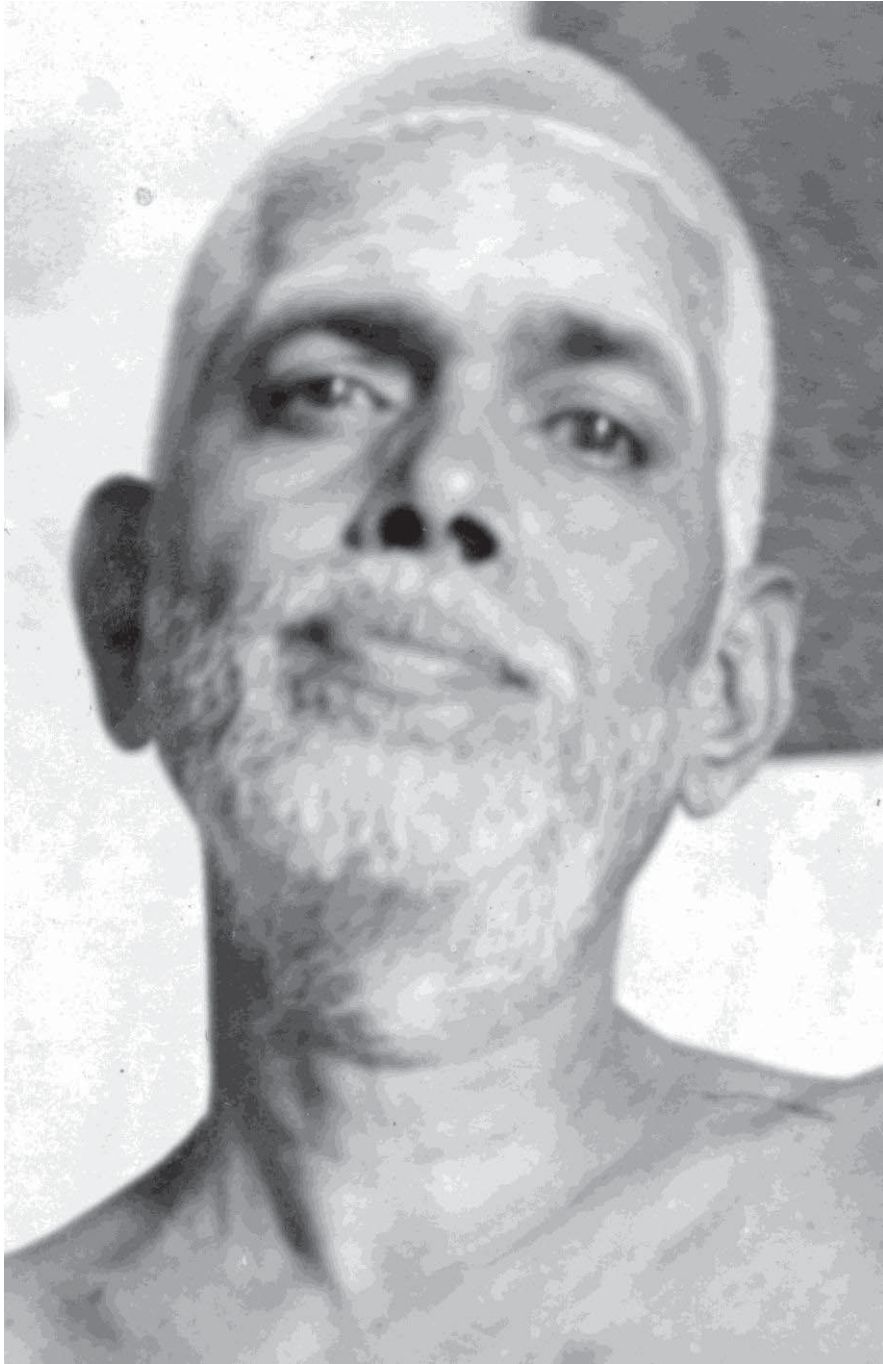
When writing a mathematics paper for which he was not prepared, he did the same thing. He held before him the question paper and uttered ‘God’ three times. He expected the answers to appear as always, but what happened was something entirely different: “The whole room was filled with a light a thousand times more brilliant than the sun. It was a beautiful, warm and shining glow. Everything and everyone in the room was immersed in the light. All the children seemed to be mere particles of light, and I found myself melting into a radiant being of consciousness. I then merged into consciousness. It was not an out of the body experience. This was a completely different experience. I realized that I was not my body. What appeared to be my body was not real. I went beyond the light into pure radiant consciousness. I became consciousness and my individuality merged into pure and absolute bliss. I expanded and became the universe. The feeling was indescribable. It was total bliss and total joy.”

After this experience, Robert Adams could no longer carry on all his activities as usual. Being a teenager, he wanted someone to guide him. At that time, people regarded Joel Goldsmith as a true Christian mystic. Many people suggested that he approach Joel Goldsmith and therefore he went there. (Years later, Joel Goldsmith kept constant contact with Arthur Osborne and me. He contributed some original and brilliant articles to almost every issue of *The Mountain Path*.) Joel Goldsmith listened to Robert Adams and suggested, “Go to Paramahansa Yogananda in Encinitas. He will guide you.” Robert Adams went to Encinitas in a state of excitement and ecstasy. A strange thing happened. There were many people in the presence of Paramahansa Yogananda. Robert, however, was standing outside. Paramahansa told his secretary, “There is a boy outside. Call him in.” Robert Adams prostrated before the great man and said, “You are my guru.” Paramahansa answered, “No, I am not your guru. Your guru is Sri Ramana Maharshi. The Maharshi is not well, go to him immediately.” After coming out, Robert felt the need to read a book in the library. He was browsing through the philosophy section, when the book, *Who am I?*, caught his attention. When he saw the picture of Ramana Maharshi on the book, his hair stood on end, because this was the very person who used to appear before his crib and speak to him. So, with the strong recommendation of Paramahansa Yogananda, he reached Arunachala in 1947.

Here is an account of what happened in the presence of Ramana Maharshi: “I arrived in Arunachala at the age of eighteen. I took with me some flowers and a bag full of fruits and offered them at the feet of the Maharshi. He looked at me and smiled; I returned the smile. The very first look of the Maharshi engulfed me in a flood of light, peace, quietude and bliss and it opened my inner eye and I instantly recognized the meaning and purpose of all my experiences - that I was never the body and that I was ever the unborn Self, the eternal silence. The Maharshi exuded compassion, love and bliss on the very first day. He looked at me and asked whether I had eaten breakfast, and when I said, ‘No’, he asked the attendant to bring fruits and porridge and told me to eat. I lay down and went to sleep in the Old Hall itself, and when I woke up, the Maharshi guided me to a shack and asked me to take rest. In the evening too, he sent me food. I ate and again went to sleep. The Maharshi himself paid great attention to what was needed for my body to rest and relax.”



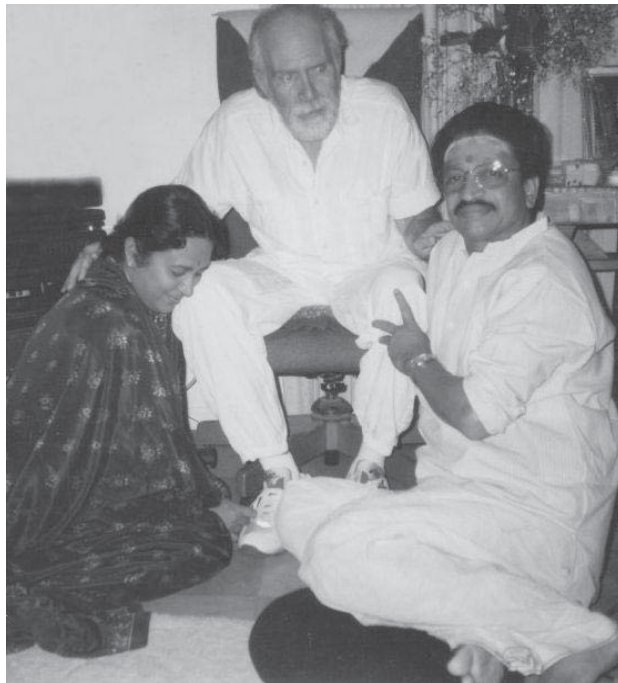
“ The Maharshi guided me to a shack...”



*“The very first look of the Maharshi engulfed me
in a flood of light, peace, quietude and bliss...”*

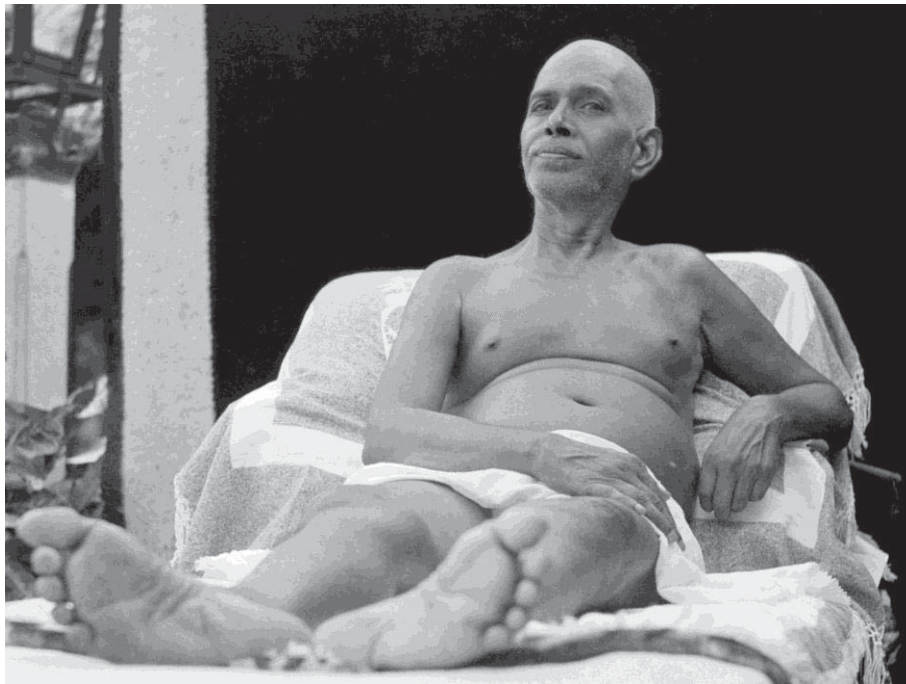
The next morning, Robert went to the Old Hall to meet Bhagavan. What happened in the presence of the Maharshi guided him deep within, while the silence and quietude of Bhagavan engulfed him. When he entered the hall, he saw Bhagavan's attendant, Krishnaswami, approaching Bhagavan again and again to complain about some people. After some time, Bhagavan looked sternly at Krishnaswami and said, "Remember the purpose for which you have come here. Attend to it. Keep quiet!" Robert took this as his very first *upadesa*, or instruction, from Bhagavan. He did not take it as an instruction given to Krishnaswami. From then on, every moment of the three years he stayed there was precious. He dived within, and remained in a state of silence; he neither interfered in anyone's personal affairs, nor in the ashram management. Inwardly, he was established in truth and outwardly he was a recluse. There was no need for him to talk to anyone, not even to Bhagavan. This is why nobody knew Robert Adams, even though he stayed for three years in Arunachala. Later, when I went to verify, one or two old devotees said that there was a young fellow who was possibly mad. His name was, perhaps, Robert Adams. They also said that he followed Bhagavan's teachings and did not have anything to do with others. He never spoke, for all the time he was doing *sadhana*, remaining in that state. Robert himself shared with me the fact that even Bhagavan dropping his body did not affect him because he saw Bhagavan only as the Self. Even when Bhagavan was present physically, he experienced Bhagavan only as the Self. So, he felt no sorrow or loss now as he plunged deeper and deeper into the Self.

Once, Bhagavan appeared in Robert Adam's dream and said, "Go to Benares. There is an old *swami* there. Stay with him." The *swami* was ninety years old. Robert went to Benares and sat in his presence every day. No conversation was necessary. One day, the *swami* informed people who had gathered before him, "I know my end is approaching in three days. I have not completed my mission. The moment I drop my body, a youth on the road will also die for no reason whatsoever. I will reside in his body and continue my mission." On the third day, just after the *swami* dropped his body, a young boy around fourteen or fifteen years of age was crossing the road. He suddenly had fits and died. After around twenty minutes, the boy woke up and disappeared into the forest. This gave further meaning to Robert's belief in the Self. The appearance or the disappearance of the body did not in any way concern him.



Anuradha and Ganesan with Robert Adams

Robert wandered around India, meeting with sages and saints. He did this for a few years. Then, Bhagavan appeared once again in his dream and said, "Go back to your country and spread the teaching



“The Maharshi exuded compassion, love...”

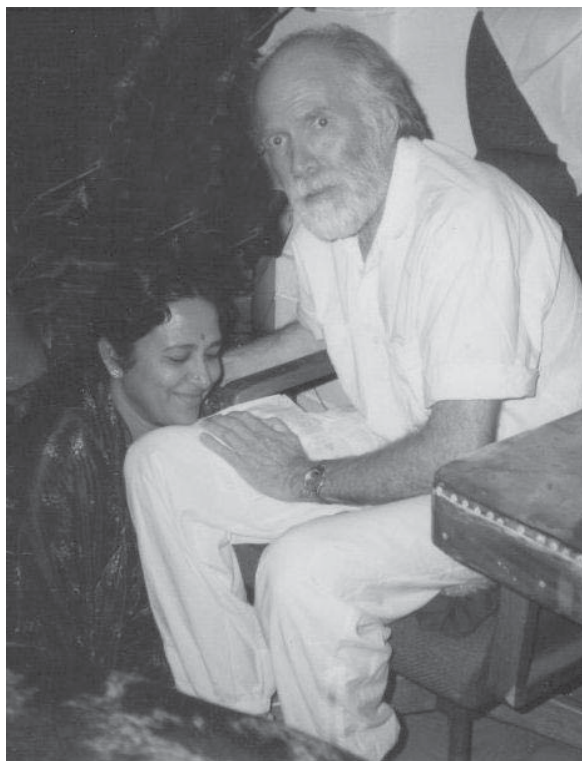
of Self Enquiry, how to attain Self realization and how to stay in the state of ‘I AM’ to seekers in America.” Bhagavan very specifically stated, “Do not start an institution. Do not be a guru. No publicity! If more than fifteen people gather around you, go away from that town and continue to spread the teaching elsewhere.” Robert Adams travelled, but there were no articles about him and no publicity. None except a select few knew about him. On reaching Hollywood, he was afflicted by Parkinson’s disease and was forced to remain there. A beautiful woman named Mary, along with her friends, attended on him. They also helped him disseminate the teachings of Bhagavan’s Self Enquiry. He conducted *satsangs* and had small gatherings. His presence was very powerful. He would sit in the hall in silence for twenty minutes and everyone around him would become absolutely silent. It did not matter how many people were gathered there, or who was there. Ultimately, after the period of silence, Robert would speak for a few minutes.

When I wrote to Robert Adams asking for permission to meet him, he replied, “You can meet me in Los Angeles.” At the time, the president of the Course of Miracles, Dr. Tara Singh, was at Ramanasramam and he invited Anuradha and me to stay in their headquarters in Los Angeles. “I will arrange for you to meet Robert Adams,” he said. He arranged the meeting with Robert in a restaurant. We met there because the master had no institution, not even a house to call his own. I was thrilled, because he had called us for a lunch meeting. It reminded me of Bhagavan, who not only imparted wisdom but insisted on anyone visiting the ashram to partake of the food. As we approached the table we could only see Robert’s back, but that was more than enough. The spiritual aura, the peace, the friendliness and the vibrations were palpable even from a distance. Robert had a great sense of humour. I requested him again and again to tell us about Bhagavan for I wanted to hear it from his own lips. He recounted all the incidents that he had earlier written to me - of how he saw Bhagavan at the foot of his crib and the other incidents - and concluded by saying, “In the evening, we are having a *satsang* in Mary’s house. Please do come.”

Seventy people had already gathered when I reached there. There was such a profound and serene silence! A special seat had been arranged for Robert since he had Parkinson’s. Behind him was a picture of Bhagavan. I too was given a special chair. After Robert sat down, he looked at everyone for about twenty minutes and in those twenty minutes he silenced everyone’s minds and put them in a complete state of *samadhi*. Afterwards, he took the mike and spoke. He announced, “I welcome my master Ramana Maharshi’s grand nephew, Ganesan, and his secretary, Anuradha. I would like Ganesan to

“speak.” I spoke for nearly half an hour, at the end of which he happily said, “I entirely agree with every word that Ganesan has spoken today.”

I would like to share an incident of great significance that took place when I was there. After the speeches, I sat at Robert’s feet. Another person was also there, a John Wilkins, I think, who had been Robert’s friend for more than twenty years. Out of the blue, John suddenly asked, “Robert, I want you to tell me: what is the truth and what is untruth? What is reality and unreality? I do not want you to quote from the scriptures or use any philosophical jargon. You must make me experience these right now at your feet.” I was thrilled because I wanted to know how Robert was going to answer these amazingly difficult questions. Robert looked happy for some time and then became very serious. He looked at John and asked, “Who are you?” John thought that Robert had forgotten him because of the disease he had. He replied, “I am John Wilkins.” Robert gave him the most gracious smile that I have ever seen and said, “I AM is the truth and John Wilkins is the untruth. I AM is the reality and John Wilkins is the unreality.” Everyone went into a state of *samadhi*. This was not a mere answer; it was a statement that transported everyone into a state of silence and *samadhi*.



Anuradha: “Robert, please tell me what service I can render.”

Robert Adams invited me to come again the next year, but said that he might shift to Sedona since Bhagavan had selected the place. He invited me over saying that everything had been arranged. Accommodation was given to Anuradha and me in a couple’s house. I attended his *satsangs* and he always made me speak. He used to listen to my sharings with great appreciation. One day, Anuradha felt so grateful that she held Robert’s hands and said, “I want to do something for you. Please tell me what service I can render.” He replied, “Yes, you can give Ramanasramam food. I am very fond of the food there and I will eat it if you make it for me.” Anuradha happily agreed. There were not enough vessels to make South Indian food, so we had to look for these vessels. When someone lent us a vessel, they also said, “We too will come for the lunch.” Robert had said that only six people were invited. Then, every two hours Robert would send word that six more people would be coming for lunch. It ultimately added up to sixty people! Anuradha and a few others prepared the food from very early in the morning, since Ramanasramam food meant *sambar*, *rasam*, vegetables, yogurt, *pappad* and *payasam*. Some people told us that it was enough if Robert was served; the others could take the food as *prasad*. However, Anuradha was firm that everyone be fed because she remembered that Bhagavan in his lifetime wanted himself to be served last, so that everyone else could be fed. The next day, a sumptuous

and delicious lunch was served. Anuradha herself served Robert. Everyone else helped themselves. He had three or four helpings of each and he was delighted. We were all very happy that Robert ate the food with so much relish. After lunch, Anuradha in all her innocence asked Robert, “Robert, was it like the ashram food or was something missing?” Robert answered, “Yes, it was perfectly delicious. Only one thing was missing - the banana leaf on which the food is served there!”

Everyone wanted a *satsang* after lunch. Robert said, “I am not going to talk today. Only Ganesan will talk and he should talk on the topic chosen by me. Your topic, Ganesan, is Bhagavan and the monkeys.” I must have spoken for about twenty minutes. Everyone laughed a lot and enjoyed the talk. Then, someone from the audience told Anuradha, “We have heard about Bhagavan from Ganesan. We would like to hear about Ganesan from you.” Robert intervened and said, “Anuradha, I will give you a topic. Talk about Bhagavan and Ganesan.” Anuradha gave an account of my childhood, my relationship with Bhagavan, how Bhagavan taught me to serve salt, and a few other incidents. She said, “Bhagavan was known for his ‘*thanga kai*’ or ‘golden hand’. Whatever Bhagavan touched, thrived and prospered. In Ramana Nagar, Ganesan is called ‘the funeral hand’ because he lights the funeral pyre of those old devotees who die in Ramana Nagar and in Ramanasramam.” There was a burst of laughter from the audience when they heard this. Robert pretended to become very serious and said, “All those who are afraid of death, run away from here because the funeral hands are here.” I was at his feet at the time. He bent towards me and said, “Ganesan, extend your hands. I am ready.” At that time, we all thought that he was just joking. When it was time for Robert to leave, Sharmila, who was a good singer and a great devotee, began to sing. Everyone joined in the singing; Robert got up and danced to the tune of ‘Hit the road, Jack. Don’t come back no more, no more, no more’. He was always dressed informally and he was wearing a T-shirt, jeans and a cap turned backwards. He was a simple man, natural, humourous and constantly joking - most of the jokes were at his own expense. We enjoyed ourselves thoroughly.

I want to share an important feature that repeatedly took place in the presence of Robert Adams. The moment I met him – whether it was at Hollywood or at Sedona – he would extend his hand. I always carried in my pocket two small packets of *vibhuti* and *kumkum*, taken from Sri Bhagavan’s shrine as his *Prasad* - even now I continue to do so.

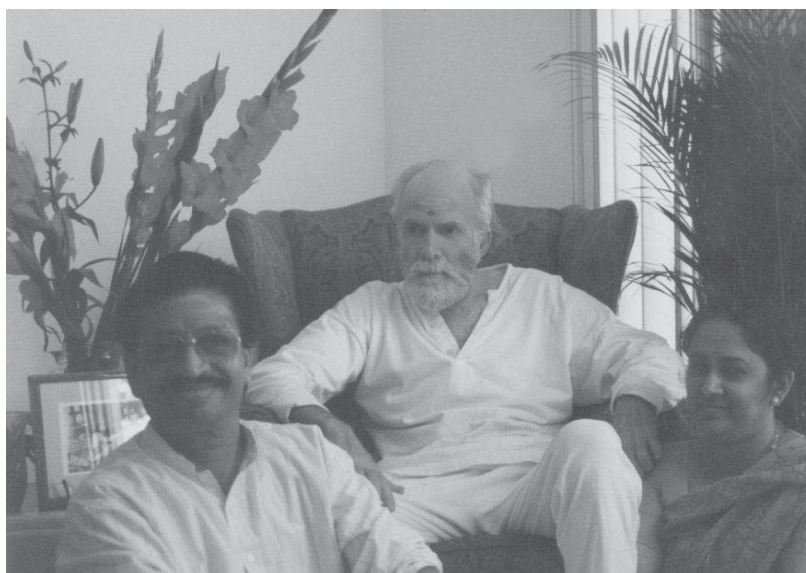
When I first met Robert Adams at Hollywood, he asked me why I was wearing the religious marks of *vibhuti* and *kumkum* on my forehead. I told him that Viswanatha Swami once told a dear friend and fellow devotee, “You have a very broad forehead. It would look appropriate if you adorn it with *vibhuti* and *kumkum*!” After some time, when this devotee met Viswanatha Swami at the ashram, he noticed that this devotee was not wearing *vibhuti* and *kumkum*. Viswanatha Swami did not say anything to him. Instead, he turned to me immediately and in my friend’s presence itself commanded me, “Start wearing them on your forehead – for my sake!” I was never a ritualist and Swami knew that very well. Yet, since such a powerful command had come from him, from that day onwards, I started wearing them - not only as *prasad* from Sri Bhagavan but also as a blessing from Viswanatha Swami. Instantly, Robert Adams said, “Whenever you meet me, please put Sri Bhagavan’s *prasad* on my forehead too!”. I did it and received the added blessings of the “American *Siddha Purusha*”, Robert Adams!

Soon, we were back in India and staying at the Krishnamurti Foundation in Benares. One day, I was told that there was an international call for me. It was Robert Adams. He addressed me by my name, but he could continue no further. His assistant, Richard, spoke to me. He said, “Robert invites you to come to Sedona and spend three months in spring with him. He is very insistent. He would like Anuradha also to come with you since he understands that you cannot travel alone. He will make all the arrangements. Sharmila will pick you up. The other devotees will take care of your needs. Please come for the spring.” Back at the ashram there was a letter for me in Robert’s own handwriting, “Ganesan, please come and spend the whole of spring with me.” I was very moved by the invitation. Anuradha and I landed in San Francisco - exactly at the time that Robert dropped his body in Sedona. Was it one of his practical jokes? I recalled the time when he said, “Take me in your funeral hands!” It was literally true now. There was something that Robert definitely wanted to convey to me. Anuradha and I continued our journey to Sedona where we met Sharmila, a wonderful and beautiful lady. She did not have a house of her own. We stayed with her in three or four different places as she was ‘house-sitting’. The old devotees of Robert wanted me to participate in their *satsangs*. I talked about Self Enquiry, and how by

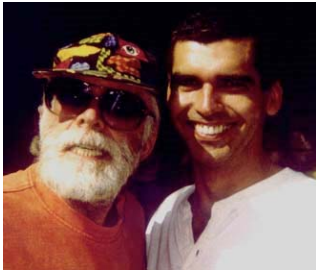
practicing this we can attain that state of quietude and silence - the silence that Bhagavan had given Robert and the silence that Robert had given to all the devotees. This was to be carried on. This is why Robert had asked me to come there for three months. I too learnt a lesson from Robert. I understood that one has to look on all the happenings outside of oneself to be a mere dream. This was the knowledge that Robert directly and indirectly imparted to me.

Even during his last days, Robert retained his sense of humour. When he was bedridden, a young man named John attended on him. John knew fully well that he was serving a realized soul. Robert's wife was not happy with the situation of John serving her husband. She was constantly driving him away; but John had to attend on Robert since Robert was bedridden. One day, Robert wanted hot water and John had to go into the kitchen to get it. Robert's wife was frying something in a big pan at the time. She became so angry that she was ready to hurl the pan at John. John became so alarmed that he shouted for help, "Robert! Robert! She is trying to hit me with a big pan. What should I do? Please help me." Robert, who was lying down, said, "Duck!" This was the kind of person Robert was - he was always half serious and half humorous.

By way of paying homage to Robert, I quote a few passages from Robert's teachings: "The highest teaching in the world is silence - there is nothing higher than this. A devotee who sits in the company of the sage purifies his mind just by being with him. The mind automatically becomes quieter. No words are necessary. Silence is the ultimate reality and everything in this world exists through silence. This means, literally, going deep inside yourself to the dwelling where nothing is happening; this place transcends time and space. This is a brand new dimension of nothingness. That is our real home and the place to which we actually belong. In this state, there is only deep silence - there is no good, no bad and no state of trying to achieve anything. It is a state of pure being. The ultimate freedom is to reach this state of deep silence in which you transcend your body, your affairs and the universe. The other lesson to be learnt is that you are real. What you appear to be is false. Identify yourself with the real you and not the false you. Do not accept everything that you see as reality. The only freedom that you have is to turn within. One day, you will awaken from this dream, for this is also a dream, and you will be free, liberated. There is no such thing as birth or death. Nobody is born, nobody dies and nobody prevails in between. Nothing that appears exists. Only the Self exists. All this is the Self and I am that. You are the absolute reality. You are consciousness, emptiness, and *sat-chit-ananda* - existence, consciousness, bliss - that is your true nature. Why not abide in it and be free? Empty your mind and become still; everything will happen of its own accord. There is really nothing that you have to do - just be still. Be still and know that 'I AM', God. 'I AM' is the Self. Accept that and be free." Salutations to Robert Adams, the great master!



***"Ganesan, extend your hands. I am ready."
(Notice the vibhuti and kumkum on Robert's forehead)***



On how Ramana and Robert Adams found me

Luis de Santiago

www.facebook.com/groups/235181366605957/

I remember a time, I was about 12 years old and reading an encyclopedia that day (I was a weird kid). Suddenly I have the impression that the world I was reading about and living on was not real but something created by my mind. It was not a thought, it was a deep feeling inside my body. I got scared and try to dismiss that insight, thinking that something was wrong with me. That feeling went away but my life change.

Years later, I was 18 and after a couple of years involved in politics, I felt very dissatisfied. I started looking for ways to understand, rather than try to change the world. I was living in Caracas at the time. A friend told me about a house, close to my school, where a youth group was starting. There were activities: theater, photography, serigraphy, etc. And most important for me at the time... beautiful young girls. This group called "Sintesis" had an older man that acted as a leader, rumors have it that he has been in India. He often talk about a saint call Ramana Maharshi. Several weeks later a book by Ramana got on my hands, I do not remember the name of the book, but on reading his rather complicated (at the time) prose I got the feeling that Ramana was talking to me about the insight that I have when I was 12.

Several months later I found out that the old man, the group leader, was having sex with some of the young girls as an initiation ritual. One of his prey was the young girl that I was platonically in love with. I got very angry, left the group, and dismiss everything I learn in those months as a hoax, including Ramana's teachings.

Many years went by, I was concentrating in learning my profession, I am a film maker and photographer, and starting my career. Lived in England, Sweden, Spain and ended in California. Married, later divorced, with two great kids and a very successful film production company that gave me abundance. But inside me that insight I have as a kid was starting to move and threatening to change my life again.

In 1992 I was dating a beautiful actress that was involved in a practice call the "Sedona Method". I got interested when I learn that the founder and creator of the "Sedona Method", Lester Levenson, based his teachings in Ramana's. Here we go again, Ramana is knocking at my door. I got involved in this group, went to seminars, retreats and all kind of activities hoping to meet this Lester Levenson, considered to be a realized person. I did not know what a "realized person" was, but I felt that meeting him was important. Lester's health was declining and he stayed in his house in Fenix and never came to Sedona so I never meet him, to my frustration.

In 1994 Lester died and was buried in a very humble and unmarked grave in the grounds of the Sedona institute. I was very frustrated, the Sedona method was working but I wanted more and felt

that meeting Lester was the key. Now he was gone, the only realized person, that I heard of, was gone and frustration was mounting on me. One day, I do not know how, found my self, driving my car towards Sedona, got on the Sedona Institute grounds and walk to Lester's grave, it was just a shallow mound in an unkempt patch of dirt. In a very angry voice I told him something like this "You got me into this quest and you are not leaving me, I demand you do something". Nothing happen so I got on my car and drove back to Los Angeles not in the best of moods.

Two weeks later I was in my office working and got a very strange call. A lady that I have met at the Sedona seminars, call me to ask for the address of my guru Robert Adams. I told her that I did not have a guru and did not know who Robert Adams was. She insisted that somebody has told her that Robert was my guru and wanted his address or telephone. I convince her that I have not idea who he was, I apologize to her and was about to finish the call when something came to me, I said – keep looking for him, and when you find him please call me, I want to meet him too-

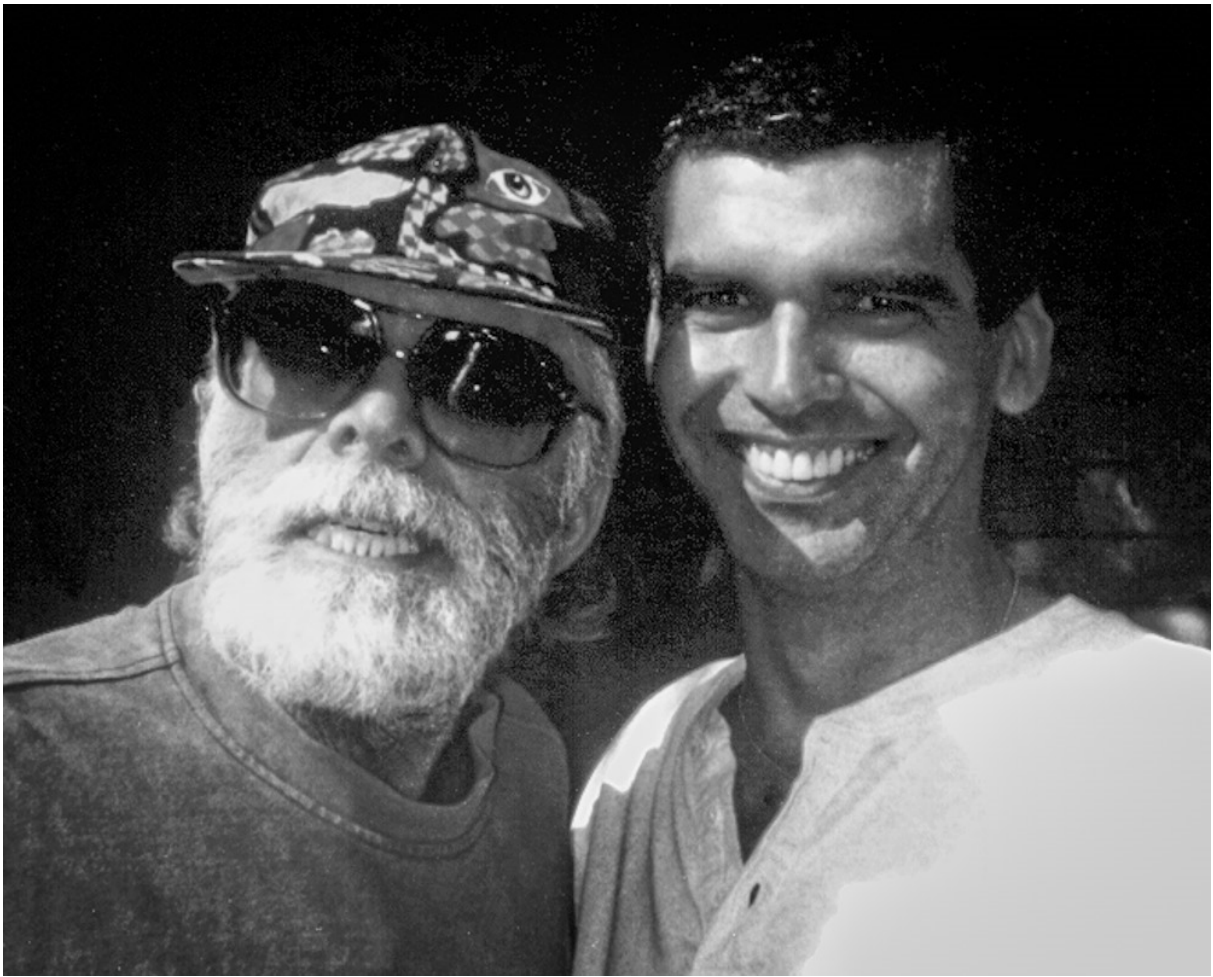
Two or three days later she call again with the address of the place where Robert was giving satsang every Thursday and Sunday. Next Sunday I was there, not knowing what satsang was or what to expect. That is how Robert Adams found me. I never saw her at satsang.

As it happens the place where satsang was held was about 15 minutes from my house in Sherman Oaks. How convenient. When I got to the place and sat on the floor there were about 25 devotees listening to beautiful music (Robert love music I learn). Then Robert started to talk and I could not understand anything he said. I was very relax but no knowledge was been transmitted to me, but I was not disappointed at all. After about 20 minutes it was time for the devotees to ask questions that Robert answer but again I did not understand, there was laughing and enjoyment in everybody, then we share food that the devotees have brought. Everybody seem to know everyone and I was feeling accepted and I believed Robert look straight at me a couple of times. When satsang was officially over I stud up but stay in place, Robert came out of the bathroom and walk straight to me, look at me with his beautiful blue ayes for a long time (it seem to me), then he hug me and walk towards the door.

It was a very pleasant experience but nothing out of the ordinary happened, except maybe, that he notice me. I went about my life in a normal way for about two or three days. Then I was at my girlfriend's house watching a soccer world cup semifinal, when a wave of joy and love overcame me. I never felt such happiness and joy for no reason at all, it was coming from me and no given to me by any event or pleasure. Pure, unadulterated, unmotivated Bliss was overcoming me and it felt normal and natural.

I started going to satsang every Thursday and Sunday from then on, Robert's presence – his emanations, as Ed Muzica put it- will multiply the joy and bliss in my daily life. I was a little bit concerned about not understanding what Robert was telling everybody. At the end of a satsang I kneel in front of him and told him – Robert, I cannot understand anything you said- He looked at me smiling lovingly and said -gooooood- after that, my concern was gone, I just sat at his feet every satsang in silence until he left to Sedona in 1996.

I saw him last when he came to Los Angeles to have his teeth done. We have satsang at a different place, at the end he came to me touch my heart with his finger and said- I will never leave you- I knew I will never see his body again. The picture included is from that day, he was very proud of his new teeth.



These pages are excerpted with permission from the eBook, Real Enlightenment and the Energy Body: Kundalini Kindling in OKC/ Zen in Dallas/ Tao in Texas/ Advaita California Style/ The Gnani Robert Adams by Kym Chaffin, a student who corresponded with Robert Adams and met with him in the early 1990's.

The book outlines Kym Chaffin's life, spiritual quest and experiences with different teachers and teachings.

These chapters comprise Kym's memories of Robert and the effects of their relationship on his spiritual understanding.

The full book is currently available for about \$1 USD at this URL:

<https://www.amazon.ca/Real-Enlightenment-Energy-Body-California-ebook/dp/B07QZDT8QS#customerReviews>

The Lion's Mouth

While I was at Joshua Tree, walking with a friend I'd made there, I wished out loud we could find someone like Ramana Maharshi.

He stopped and said, "There is someone like that. He's a direct disciple of Ramana who they say is a jnani himself. He's an American who lives in L.A. but doesn't want publicity. He only accepts people who come to him by word of mouth. He has Parkinson's disease but sits by the phone all day taking calls from anyone who wants to talk to him. He never charges money but may take donations. I have his phone number if you want it."

Little did I know, I was about to finally meet a real enlightened being with all that goes with that. This was no poser or partially-enlightened member of the intelligentsia. This was the *Real Thing*.

I'd been swimming so long that I'd finally managed to paddle myself into the deep end of the pool, I just didn't know it yet.

Ramana Maharshi once said, after you get involved with a real Jnani, there's no escape, you are destined for enlightenment. "Your head," he said, "is in the lion's mouth."

Little did I dream the lion was silently approaching.

"Here's the phone number," the guy said handing me a tiny slip of white paper. "His name is Robert Adams."

On such chance meetings does our destiny change in ways beyond all comprehension.

Ramana Maharshi's Backstory

So, I left Ramesh Balsekar's retreat with the phone number of a direct disciple of Ramana Maharshi's named Robert Adams tucked into my billfold.

I only knew he was said to be enlightened, didn't charge money, had Parkinson's disease and spent each day sitting by the phone taking calls from all over the world from anyone who called.

To understand Robert Adams, you have to understand his teacher, Ramana Maharshi. (This is brief.)

The boy who later became known as Ramana Maharshi was born in 1880. A normal school boy, he was home one day at age sixteen when he was suddenly gripped by an overwhelming fear of death.

Lying down on the floor, he pretended to die.

When he did this, his consciousness retracted from his senses into his "spiritual heart" and he saw that he was not body or mind, but in reality, the consciousness that lies beneath the entire universe.

The universe itself, he realized, is not ultimately real but only exists because of this substratum of consciousness. And that baseline awareness existed independently before the universe came into being and would still exist, unharmed, after its demise.

After that, he no longer identified with his body or mind and that proved to be permanent. From then on, going to school and leading a normal life proved intolerable.

As these stories often go, it gets stranger.

For some reason, he always had the notion that there was a heavenly realm beyond the material world called Arunachala. Then, one day, he was shocked to learn there really was a place called Arunachala, but it wasn't a heavenly realm after all, but a place in the real world. It was a hill in South India said to be a kind of holy place where Shiva (the god) resides.

In India there are places that are powerful energy centers and Arunachala is one of them.

The boy immediately left home and set out for Arunachala.

His enlightenment seems baffling and mysterious but years later, I read something relevant. Even before his enlightenment, Ramana apparently had the natural ability to go into the twilight (hypnagogic) state between waking and sleeping and hang-out there for hours.

This sounds surprisingly like a modern-day practice called "Yoga Nidra".

It's a method for learning to sleep consciously. And, while the practice of Yoga Nidra was codified, structured, and named in the 20th century by a yogi named Swami Satyananda, yogis have been experimenting with conscious sleep for hundreds of years. Based on what we know of Ramana's youth, Yoga Nidra sounds promising.

I also thought the following bit of conversation with Ramana Maharshi worth sharing.

Questioner: "Such consciousness [Ramana's enlightenment] could be found by seeking the consciousness as it was in sleep? Should I remain as if in sleep and be watchful at the same time?"

Ramana: "Yes. Watchfulness is the waking state. Therefore, the state will not [really] be one of sleep. [But] If you go the way of your thoughts, you will be carried away by them and you will find yourself in an endless maze."

So, it seems he's saying to sleep consciously.

Even stranger, as a boy Ramana slept so soundly that, as a prank, other school boys could pick him up, carry him somewhere, put him down, and he not would wake up till later, bewildered to find himself in a strange place.

Another interesting thing was Ramana's description of the "Spiritual Heart."

He said at night, during sleep, the mind submerges into the heart and you become unconscious. The following morning, when you wake up, the mind emerges from the heart and goes back up into the brain and you become aware of the outer world.

He said that when, in deep sleep, your mind is in the heart and you are unconscious, *you are also one with the highest reality*. But its unconscious. The highest reality is not far away, we go into it every night, but with only a trace of awareness.

Enlightenment, he said, is when the mind sinks into the heart *without losing consciousness* and you re-identify with your true Self--the consciousness that lies beneath everything.

Spiritual Heart is not the Heart Chakra?

Oddly, he didn't identify this "spiritual heart" with the "heart chakra." He said the true spiritual heart lies a few inches to the right of the physical heart.

On the internet, someone speculated that his insistence that the real spiritual heart lay on the right side of the chest may indicate he had a brain anomaly.

Obviously, I don't know but that's interesting.

Someone else claimed he said it was on the right side of the chest so people wouldn't concentrate on the physical heart because it might interfere with its functioning.

I never read or heard Robert Adams say anything like that.

Anyway, after enlightenment, Ramana traveled to Arunachala and lived there under a cliff wearing only a loin cloth and eating whatever nearby villagers brought him. At the same time, he emitted a powerful force, (probably some version of prana-chi), that profoundly affected all who came close. Soon, a group had gathered around him. They began having glimpses of enlightenment just from proximity to Ramana. People who use someone like Ramana to facilitate their own enlightenment are called, "devotees."

In that era, while Ramana was still living in the open air under a cliff, a British army officer hiked up there to see what the fuss was about and sat near him for a few hours. When he climbed back down, he said, "All I can tell you is he's not his body. His body is just an appendage and the power of God flows through him."

This had been communicated in total silence. Ramana said his real teachings were the silent force he exuded. He only gave spoken teachings to those who couldn't grasp the silent ones.

Self-Enquiry (Sanskrit—Atma Vichara).

His primary spoken teaching was called, “Self-Enquiry.” (“Atma Vichara” in Sanskrit). Like the Buddhist idea of no-self, Self-Enquiry or Atma Vichara directs you to constantly search for this solid entity you assume yourself to be.

“I don’t get what he means by that?”

Turn your awareness inside and try to find the person who doesn’t get it.

When you turn inside, you find thoughts coming and going but, as you watch, they slow down, maybe even stop. If they do stop, rest in that and cognize who it is that’s watching.

Who is it that thinks this practice is going pretty well or not?

This tends to break down the notion that you’re a solid entity, a notion put together through time, thought and memory. Atma Vichara delivers you back into a state of just being. It may not last long--to just be--but they say it’s a place from where real enlightenment, (or awakening), can happen.

It’s understandable that you would assume yourself to be a solid, permanent identity.

After all, Mom, Dad, school teachers, and everyone else treated you as a static, unchanging entity and demanded that “you” be responsible for yourself. It’s only much later that you began to long for freedom and wanted to untie all the knots. Maybe Ramesh was right and evolution evolves a few people who must search for ultimate truth, like prospectors panning for gold.

I think, in our culture, it’s also absolutely necessary to understand that this is not some kind of perfect atheism, they’re not saying you’re just nothing and that, after your body is dead, nothing in your mind or body continues. That is definitely *not* what they’re saying. Anybody who tells you that has completely misunderstood. You are not nothing. You’re a kind of something, but a something that exists in a category of one and can’t be compared to anything else.

Because what you really are was here before the Universe and will be here after the Universe is over, there’s nothing outside to compare to you.

The Paradox of Now

Have you ever considered that--if time exists infinitely into the past without end, and time also exists infinitely into the future without end—then *the odds against us being alive Just Now are astronomically insurmountable?*

But here we are.

Look, the likelihood that we would be alive Just Now, at this particular moment—instead of at literally an infinite number of other possible moments—is preposterously small...but here we are, smack in middle of Just Now.

How can this be?

If the odds are so against us being here, now, as to make it insurmountably unlikely, how can it be that we *are* here now?

Could it be that part of us is always here now?

And maybe that's the part of us that can't accept death as real. Well, death isn't real. But the funny part is, Robert Adams told me neither was birth.

Traditional Advaita says, "You weren't born. You just think you were. You were always here and at some point-in-time a body appeared in front of you and you identified with it. Later it will go away, but you'll still be here."

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

If you want to read more about the life of Ramana Maharshi there are a number of good books available, one by David Godman, "Be as You Are: The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi." I would also recommend a DVD called, "Arunachala Shiva" available, as of this writing, on a website called "arunachalashiva.org".

Robert Adams Early Life

Robert Adams' life was as unusual as Ramana's.

He was born on January 21, 1928, in the Bronx, New York. His mother was Jewish and his father Catholic. Later he paraphrased comedian Bill Maher and joked that, being half Jewish but raised Catholic, he always took a lawyer to Catholic confession.

Apparently, even as a youth, he questioned authority.

He watched his mother kill chickens one Sunday for dinner and was horrified by the process. As a result, he quit eating meat but was still deeply troubled by the cruelty and brutality of the world.

Then, when he was eleven, it occurred to him that the world wasn't real but an illusion. This was a forefeeling of his enlightenment which was only three years away.

At about the same age, he developed a siddhi—a beyond ordinary human ability that yogic theory theorizes is the result of intense spiritual disciplines done in a previous life. The power he developed was that if there was anything he needed or wanted, all he had to do was say the name "God" three times and, within a few hours, it would come to him.

Once it occurred to him that it would be fun to take violin lessons but he had no violin, so he said, "God, God, God," and within a few hours his uncle brought him a violin.

Robert said he felt as if the entire world was his.

(Ironically, the famous Yogananda also developed a siddhi at this age; he could have anyone put their hand, palm-flat, against a wall and he would concentrate on it. Then they would be unable to take their hand down until he willed it. It's ironic because Robert later crossed paths with Yogananda). [The story of Yogananda's siddhi is from, "Paramahansa Yogananda: Life Portrait and Reminiscences by Sri Sailendra Bejoy Dasgupta."]

Robert Adams was Born with a Siddhi

Robert's siddhi, saying "God, God, God," worked on tests, too.

Supposedly, there are psychics, like Edgar Cayce who can sleep with their text books under their pillow and, the next day, know everything in the book.

For Robert, it was even easier. While taking a test at school, all he had to do was think, "God, God, God" and the answer would appear in his mind.

Then, one afternoon during an algebra test, something totally unexpected happened.

He dutifully read the test question, then thought: "God, God, God."

But, instead of receiving the answer, his consciousness began expanding, beyond his body, beyond the classroom, beyond the school building, the neighborhood, North America, planet earth, the solar system, the galaxy, the Universe... beyond it all.

He experienced complete enlightenment revealing life, death, what was completely real and how much of it was totally illusion.

When he regained normal awareness, the classroom was empty, the test was over, and his teacher was gently shaking him back to bodily consciousness.

This happened in 1942.

After that, he withdrew, no longer involved with school or friends. He didn't want to eat, either. Alarmed, his mother sent him to a psychiatrist who said it was a phase he would outgrow.

Robert Adams' Early Connections

Robert had no cultural context to explain what had happened to him. But somehow, he intuitively knew that Eastern spirituality held the key, so he began exploring.

The first really helpful person he found was early twentieth century spiritual teacher, Joel Goldsmith. He began riding the bus into New York City to see Goldsmith. At some point, he got to tell him about his experience. Goldsmith knew Yogananda, so he suggested that's where Robert should go.

During this same period, at the public library, he found two important books: "Autobiography of a Yogi" by Swami Yogananda. And, more importantly, "A Search in Secret India," by Paul Brunton.

Paul Brunton was the pen name of a British journalist named Raphael Hurst who went to India seeking enlightenment. The culmination of his search was finding Ramana Maharshi and staying in his ashram on Arunachala. Finding that book was important because Ramana Maharshi later played a huge role in the life of Robert Adams.

Initially, though, Yogananda had a huge advantage over Ramana because he was actually in the United States. So, at age sixteen, Robert set out for California to find him.

I read once that a young American came to Yogananda who had a siddhi. Yogananda told him, "You already have a conscious connection to God."

Now, I believe that was Robert Adams. How many young guys like that can there be? (Although, I admit, it's an amazing world.)

Robert stayed with Yogananda long enough to be initiated as a Swami. At the ceremony, Yogananda whispered to him, "Will you always love me no matter what I do?"

Robert's response was thoroughly American. Instantly, he thought, "What is this guy planning to do?" But his outward response was, "Of course!"

Yankee Iconoclast

Robert's Yankee iconoclasm was strengthened by his enlightenment. He was disturbed that he knew much of what Yogananda taught-- mantras, affirmations, visualizations--couldn't lead to enlightenment. So, he questioned their value.

As an inherently honest person, he naively marched forward asking questions he assumed Yogananda found helpful.

It made Yogananda angry.

In 1993, I asked Robert what Yogananda was like and he said, "He was loud when I knew him."

I was surprised. His public image was totally different.

Robert added, "Well, he was a middle-aged man trying to run this big organization with young boys, so he yelled a lot."

Robert told me, "When Yogananda was in India, he went to see Ramana. He was told that if he would give up traveling around and starting all these organizations and just stay there, he could experience real awakening. But he wouldn't do it."

"Maybe he was too invested in what he'd already done," I said.

"There are people who get into this third-eye business and literally waste centuries," Robert added.

Yogananda would not allow Robert Adams to stay with him.

"I was a trouble-maker" Robert laughed. "I asked too many questions."

I thought, and still believe, it's important for Westerners to question these ancient traditions deeply. Too much blind reverence for the past results in truth being handed down along with a lot of cultural stuff we don't need.

Robert laughed and added, "Yogananda couldn't wait to get rid of me!"

Years later, a close disciple of Robert's, Ed Muzika, just laughed and said, "I think Yogananda's reaction to Robert was, 'I've done pretty well with this, I don't need your input.'"

I'm in no way denigrating Yogananda. He was an interesting and important person in Twentieth Century spirituality in North America. If two people don't hit it off, it doesn't have to mean something bad about either one, it's just the way life is.

A Projection of the Mind

Once Robert said, “Awakening is like the cartoon where the light bulb goes on above your head. Suddenly, you see the truth and you wonder why it took so long.”

Another time he said, “First came the realization that the body was just a projection of the mind.”

Advaita says the body is in you, you aren't in the body.

Maybe, if he was identified with the subtlest level of consciousness, then like the army officer who spent an afternoon with Ramana, he no longer felt he was the body but experienced it as an appendage.

But that was just the beginning.

He continued, “Next came the realization that the whole universe was like the body--just a projection of the mind. Then bondage began to seriously break up.”

Your perception of the world is through the bodily senses--the body which really is in you—but you are independent of body and world. You were here before the body-world, and you'll be here after.

Yogananda knew Robert's enlightenment was real.

He told him there was someone else who'd experienced spontaneous awakening as a boy and that was who he should go to. His name was Ramana Maharshi.

Early Visions

Robert already knew about Ramana.

In fact, once when he was a baby, he'd had a visionary experience of Ramana. He'd seen him as a homunculus--a perfectly proportioned tiny person--(there's actually a Sanskrit word for this weird phenomenon, but I couldn't locate it.)

Later, in the New York City library, when he saw Ramana's picture in Paul Brunton's book, he felt a frisson of awe climb up the back of his neck. Instantly, he recognized Ramana from his childhood visions.

But somehow, it never occurred to him to go to Ramana in India.

I can understand that.

America is a vast place and, if you're from here, you're certain you can find anything between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It must be here somewhere. Leaving the country, especially in the 1940's, seemed like a wildly out-of-the-box thing to do. Also, in those days, flying to India cost a fortune.

Meeting Ramana

So, apparently Yogananda's advice was the push he needed. In the meantime, he experienced a tragedy. His mother died but left him enough money for the trip. Everything fell into place. A door closed, a door opened. The universe extended an airline ticket and a destination.

So, off he went.

In those days, planes were slow, propeller-driven snails. It took forever to get to India. Finally arriving, he took a train to the town of Tiruvannamalai, very near Arunachala and Ramana's ashram. From the train station, he hired a bullock cart.

He was almost there.

By then, he was in the grip of powerful devotion. Approaching the ashram, he saw Ramana walking towards him so he took off all of his clothes and prostrated on the ground in a symbolic gesture of leaving it all behind. Ramana reached down and helped him up.

Ramana asked some questions, for example: are the buildings in New York City as tall as they say?

Robert was physically and mentally drained from the trip.

Later, in a talk to some devotees, he said at that first meeting Ramana took him by the hand and led him to a room where he could stay. In the room, he almost fainted from exhaustion. Many hours later, he awakened to a gentle tapping at the door. It was Ramana himself bringing him a meal on a banana leaf in the traditional manner. Ramana then sat down, like a good dad, and made sure he ate it all.

That's understandable, Robert was barely twenty years old.

He stayed in Ramana Maharshi's ashram for slightly over three years, even remaining on for another year after Ramana died from cancer.

During cancer treatments, Ramana seemed somewhat impervious to pain. He had skin cancer and they cut pieces of his arm away without anesthetic and all he said was, "I feel some pulling."

When it became clear he was going to die and all the devotees were crying, Ramana said, "Some people put too much importance on having or not having a physical body."

Getting Robert Adams on the Phone

I knew none of this the first time I dialed Robert's phone number.

I'd just returned from Joshua Tree, California with the piece of paper my friend had given me. I dialed the number and waited.

A voice answered.

He was from New York City and then about sixty. He sounded a little like Marlon Brando in the movie, "The Godfather."

Of course, he wasn't Marlon Brando. He was really a fully-enlightened Jnani who wanted nothing from this world but to have loving relationships with the people who came to him. Why would an enlightened person want that?

If you'll allow me to repeat, it's because love is built into the ground floor of the universe. It's the way the Divine relates to itself.

That's why everybody wants it.

Even people stuck in primitive mind-states, who still want adulation and admiration, really want love, they just aren't mature enough to know it. It's fundamental to who we are. That's why everyone from Buddha and Jesus Christ to Neem Karoli Baba talks about it. Whether you call it devotion, friendship or just hero-worship, love is the coin of the realm.

I told Robert who I was, that I was calling from Dallas.

But he had Parkinson's disease and kept dropping the phone. Later, I learned he could take medicine that would briefly make his symptoms disappear. How much control he had over his body depended on when he'd taken the medicine.

I had a question for him, something that really bothered me.

Recently, an oral surgeon had taken out my wisdom teeth. For the operation, they knocked me out and, between the anesthetic and waking up, there was nothing.

They said: "Kym, count backwards starting at one hundred."

I said: "One hundred, ninety-nine, ninety-eight--"

They said: "Kym, wake up!"

Anesthetic, Ka-pow, wake up.

In between, I didn't exist!

How can any part of me be eternal if a syringe of medicine can erase me?

Robert listened to this and said, "Yes, but my question back to you is who was there to witness the fact of no-time?"

Huh?

Duh?

Say what?

"I dunno'," I said.

"Write me a letter and tell me all about it," he said.

We hung up.

Was this the brush off? Or was he just aware that his Parkinson's was too much right then? I didn't know but--and this was unusual for me back then--I wasn't annoyed.

Then it happened. A weird feeling crept over me. “He’s real,” I thought. “He’s the real thing.”

I knew it.

I knew it with total certainty.

It was no big deal, no wave of bliss or anything, just knowing.

I wrote him a letter and he sent me back a pre-printed page explaining how to practice “Atma Vichara.” In English that means, “Self-Enquiry.” A better description might be, “Searching for a Self.”

Strangely, the lack of personal attention didn’t disenchant me. I knew he was an enlightened person, a “Jnani,” but I had things to do.

“There is no teaching higher than silence.”
Robert Adams

A year came and went: sun, rain, wind, snow.

My wife and I moved back to Oklahoma for another promotion and she began managing a local office. We wanted a child.

All this moving made sense logically, it’s what people do in North America, but this last transfer began the loneliest period of my life. There was really nothing in Oklahoma for me. And my wife was always gone, absorbed in work.

I planned to write paperback books, so-called pot-boilers.

Really completely alone now, I was on my own resources. I wasn’t a happy person. I tried to adjust to what there was to adjust to, which was nothing.

However, talking to Robert Adams had given me an uncanny feeling.

Remember that old conundrum, “If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?”

Only, in this case, it would be--if Robert Adams is alone in a room is there any individual there? He felt like he was ninety-nine per cent silence, and that the silence only manifested a “person” when needed.

There is no teaching higher than silence.

It’s as if when you talk to someone, you unconsciously send out a sonar ping that bounces back to you reassuringly; ping-pong, ping-pong.

Only with Robert Adams my sonar ping didn’t bounce back, just disappeared into infinity: piiiinnnnng-- Then silence. No pong.

I was intrigued but baffled.

We rented a house in an extremely conservative university town, a house I swear to God had no insulation. Insulation is something you take for granted until you don’t have it, like shoes that fit.

The owner was a retired NFL player, a big, hulking bear that, years later, I was shocked to learn was a year *younger* than me—he looked at least ten years *older*. People then didn’t realize what American football does to the players.

That winter, when the heat clicked off, I could feel four walls of cold instantly press back in from all sides. All winter our cat-- a striped tabby named Burt--huddled with me under a blanket.

Finally, spring arrived in Oklahoma as it always does, like the SWAT team battering down your door.

Life meandered onward like a winding river.

Living Simply

First thing every morning, I did Mantak Chia's energy practices, including Iron Shirt Chi Gong, followed by the Calm Abiding meditation I learned from Tenzin Wangyal, Rinpoche.

Months earlier, I'd attended a retreat with him at a place called Katy Ranch, Texas. I mentioned how doing zazen, I evolved into anchoring my vision to a spot on the floor. Tenzin Wangyal gave me a fantastic refinement.

He handed out little round pieces of paper with a target right in the center.

You put the target on a wooden stick a few inches from your nose, sit on a cushion and stare at it, drill a hole through it with your gaze.

Start off with five-minute intervals, he said, then gradually work up to three hours. This seemed like the new, improved Zen 2.0

It took the staring strategy and gave something great to stare at.

Tenzin Wangyal said using this, you could actually defeat the mind and be free from unwanted thoughts. In a few weeks, I was up to an hour and a half.

I did this practice all through the period with Robert Adams.

Tenzin Wangyal mentioned something else relevant—he said there are energy channels, (“wisdom channels” he called them), that connect the eyes to the heart.

The heart again.

The heart.

4-24

Feeling Fantastique

Energy channels open, mind focused, I felt not just good but the best I'd ever felt in my adult life. It's a by-product of the Taoist energy practices, (at least Chia's), that you feel fantastique. I continued trying to write thrillers.

Meanwhile, A Year Later

One relaxed afternoon, puttering around, I thought, “I wonder what the enlightened guy is doing today?” I decided to give him a call.

He answered right away.

I reminded him who I was and that I’d called him a year earlier.

“You called me?” he asked. No dropping the phone today. He didn’t sound like he had Parkinson’s any more than I did.

“Yeah, then I wrote you,” I said.

He seemed surprised. “Why didn’t you call me back?”

This time he seemed genuinely interested in me. I assumed my persistence snagged his attention.

So, why hadn’t I called him back?

“I suppose cause I’m so far away,” I said. “I’m in Oklahoma.”

“It won’t make any difference,” he said, “the guru’s grace transcends space and time.”

He then told me I should write his secretary and, for some unbelievably minimal fee, once a month I’d receive transcripts of his talks. His “secretary”, a volunteer, was a sweet little old lady who could play “granny” in any movie. I got to know all these people over the next few years, though not well, since I lived in Oklahoma and they were in LA.

Various students transcribed his talks, as I remember, and simple photocopies were mailed out. Usually, they’d send several a month.

During that phone call, he told me something important. “Listen,” he said, “to become a doctor or lawyer there are certain things you must do. Becoming a gnani is no different, there are certain things you must do.”

I don’t know if you’re familiar with, “neo-advaita,” the idea that if you get it straight intellectually, you’re already there—that any attempts at self-discipline, or to practice anything, will strengthen the ego, (like Ramesh Balsekar and his “nothing you can do” schtick).

Robert Adams wasn’t teaching that.

I think neo-advaita is just a well-meaning but useless modern aberration. The problem with neo-advaita is it’s just conceptual and gives rise to a kind of enlightenment that is also just conceptual, (“I can imagine being enlightened, therefore, I must be”).

Real enlightenment has a strong bodily component. It affects your energy body.

For example, in the book “No Mind, I Am the Self” by David Godman, one of Ramana Maharshi’s disciples, Sri Lakshmana Swamy, describes his enlightenment. He mentions that the day after it happened, his legs were still shaking and he had trouble getting around. [Published by Sri Lakshmana Ashram, 1986].

Similarly, the person I know of who became enlightened through Robert Adams, Ed Muzika, said it stressed his body.

Robert Adams Shunned Publicity

Robert taught in the style of Ramana Maharshi, the central teaching being “Self-enquiry,” which persistently directs you back to search for this solid entity you take yourself to be.

Who is reading these words? Look and find that person.

His talks had a quality of mellowness and being filled with light. Sometimes he took questions and he seemed authoritative but also possessed a clearly discernible sense of...well...fun...a sense of humor.

Once he asked if there were any questions. Someone finally raised their hand and he said, “Good...I was worried there for a second. I could be home watching, “Tales from the Crypt.” (An exceedingly melodramatic horror TV show from the early nineties.)

But clearly, he was on a different wave-length than us. Once he mentioned his family was away for the weekend so he sat down in front of a picture of Ramana and lit a stick of incense. The next time he looked at his watch, several hours had passed.

Apparently, his consciousness was constantly trying to dial outward into omnipresence.

I heard stories from people near him about his behavior. He would spend hours staring out a window into his backyard, barely blinking.

His children were grown, as he told me when I was with him. He and his wife owned a small dog they loved. Every day he would take the dog to a nearby park and walk it. Afterwards, he would sit on a park bench. Sitting there, he became acquainted with a guy who was fascinated by his life story. Robert had spent 16 years in India, all told, sometimes living in caves and being fed by villagers in the traditional manner.

The guy he met on the park bench was a “producer” from a nationwide talk show done in LA. He wanted Robert to come on the air, a prospect most spiritual leaders would jump at.

Robert said, “Why would I want to do that?”

“To spread your teaching. You could reach millions of people.”

“Millions of people aren’t ready for this, only a few are.”

He rejected all publicity. He wasn’t trying to reach the masses. There definitely were people who followed him. He always referred to them as “devotees,” a traditional Indian notion.

Why am I telling this when I said we shouldn’t have gurus in the West? I said we should have teachers, not gurus. By gurus, I specifically mean the notion that any human being is infallible in all they say and do, that they should be given carte blanche.

One helpful thing, I later heard from the Tibetan tradition, was that even after enlightenment, the “relative mind” stays intact and keeps functioning. In other words, even after the understanding has dawned, you are still just a person and fallible.

Robert Adams, and his teacher Ramana Maharshi, were unique in being so sweet-natured. Many others aren’t. Robert Adams knew Nisargadatta, “Maharaj,” whom he considered authentic. But he would admit that Nisargadatta was “extremely rude” as a person. If you are a grump who attains awakening, you will likely be an enlightened grump.

As you will see, someone who’s had that kind of breakthrough can be hugely helpful, but they have to know who you are. You must have a real relationship with them. They must hold you in their mind at least occasionally.

He Didn't Act Like a Guru

I sometimes speak out against gurus because, while Robert functioned as one, he didn't act like one—he didn't tell me what to do, what to wear, lay down rigid rules.

I'm not against teachers at all—they can help. I'm against the concept of "Guru" and all it entails for the West. No teacher in the West should ever be considered infallible or expect you to grovel at their feet or require total devotion.

If someone begins trying to degrade you, becomes ridiculously unreasonable, if they think they have the right to punish you, demand sex, or do anything you wouldn't tolerate from a friend, then leave and don't look back. You now know how to cultivate your energy. You know how to meditate and unify your mind. All these people really do is help remove obstacles to realizing what you already are. Since you already are that, there's no need to degrade yourself or let anyone else degrade you. It's already there! *You couldn't lose your basic indestructability if you wanted to!*

So, just move on if need be.

It's already in the bank.

If all else fails, practice Soto Zen. At least you'll have tranquility.

“It Keeps Me Human.”

The usual way you get connected with one of these evolved people is through love. Robert Adams told Ed Muzika, a close disciple of his, that he liked to have loving relationships with devotees because, “It keeps me human.” Apparently, after enlightenment, you can seriously start drifting away from your human identity.

But how can I “love” a stranger? It needn’t start in such a sappy way. What I always felt toward these guys (or ladies) was admiration. When I was in the fourth-grade I carried a baseball bat around and idolized Mickey Mantle (a famous baseball player from Oklahoma). When I was a man, I felt that way about some spiritually developed people.

In their view of things, that kind of admiration is devotion, pure and simple. You say, “I really admire what you’ve done with your life.”

They say, “I love you back.” It’s all the same thing.

A Gentle Fog of Knowingness

I got involved slowly.

First, I talked to him on the phone and a strange feeling crept over me, like a summer fog. I knew he was real. Then I began receiving and reading the talks he gave at “Satsang,” a Sanskrit word for a gathering that means “association with truth.”

Life continued.

As I said, we’d moved to northern Oklahoma, a place I found crushingly boring and lonely. I received his talks and read them. A year passed.

After reading Robert’s talks for a year, something strange happened. It began with a visit from my only living uncle, whom I barely knew. He didn’t come to my house but to the home of my brother, who lived two hours away.

My wife and I were driving there to see him and, for the first time, I noticed something odd—a feeling right in the middle of my chest like a pressure, an aching, a feeling of fullness. And though it ached, it was blissful.

With that blissful ache came the strange knowledge that this odd physical sensation had something to do with Robert Adams.

I didn’t mention it to my wife as we drove.

My uncle was the last surviving brother of my deceased dad. Often these stories of spiritual matters are completely weird and this is one of them. Weird because this uncle, whom I’d never met as an adult, lived in Canoga Park, California, only ten minutes from the front door of Robert Adams!

We arrived and the whole event went kaput because my mother arrived uninvited and, as it turned out, my Uncle was extremely angry with her for something she did, (get this), forty-four years earlier, in 1948, (it was now 1992). He was still angry forty years later. Ah, yes, only in my family.

And it was all because of something my mother swore was merely a misunderstanding, a misperception...from forty-four years earlier. America forgave Japan for Pearl Harbor since then but my uncle couldn’t forgive this.

(Later, when I did go to Canoga Park and hung out with Robert, I told him about this and he found it hilarious.)

As I said, my mother assured me the whole thing wasn’t even real but was just a misperception on my uncle’s part, which added the final little touch of the ridiculous to the proceedings. Consider, though, this is what the human mind can be like if not tended carefully--clinging, easily wounded and angry.

The whole human condition is either sad or funny, depending on how hard you squint when you look at it.

My interpretation of this weird coincidence--having my long-lost uncle show up out of the blue who was Robert’s neighbor--was that the universe was trying to give me a place to stay when I went to see him.

That night, back home, reading one of his talks, someone actually brought up these intense crimping feelings in the chest, the blissful aching and chi pressure I had first noticed that very day.

The questioner said she was having them "...and sometimes," she said, "it just aches."

There's a technical explanation for this but the short answer is, it's caused by "the guru's grace." You'll remember Robert told me, "The guru's grace transcends space and time."

Little did I dream, it was a semi-physical force that reaches out to the receptive.

The more technical explanation for this phenomenon is this.

As already mentioned, Ramana Maharshi said the highest truth, which in Advaita Vedanta is called, "The Self," resides in the heart. At night, in dreamless sleep, your consciousness sinks into the heart where it experiences maximum happiness. Only later, when you're awake, you don't really remember it.

The following morning, your personal consciousness, which Sri Ramana called the "I-thought," comes out of the heart and rises into the brain where it peers out through the senses and sees the world.

The "Guru's grace" starts to pull the "I-thought" back into the heart while you are awake, hence the aching in the heart. Eventually, the culmination of this process is when the I-thought sinks into the heart--while you're awake-- and enlightenment takes place.

You finally realize what you really are--not a body, not a mind, but the awareness that transcends all.

Once Robert Adams asked Ramana Maharshi, "What is the best way, the easiest way, to practice Self-Inquiry?"

Ramana told him, "To always be aware consciously, in all situations, of the I-Am. *No matter where you are or what you're doing—be aware of the I-Am in your heart.*"

Yes, be aware of the I-Am feeling-- the feeling of pure existence--in your heart.

I had stumbled into a relationship with this lineage and they were showing me, first-hand, the feeling of I-Am.

This is the function of a "Guru" in this tradition.

Then why did I say we can't have gurus in the West?

Robert Adams acted more like a friend to me than even a teacher.

He never wanted to be a guru. My understanding is that wherever he lived throughout his life, people spontaneously gravitated into his orbit and the whole scene that often surrounds someone who is a "Great Soul" would start-up.

He had no ego.

If you meet someone like that, who basically asks nothing inappropriate of you, has no ego, and can help you, then of course you should take the help that's offered. You'd be a fool not to.

My problem with the whole myth around the Eastern idea of a guru is that they are infallible, that they always know everything about everything, that you should worship them uncritically and they should never be questioned.

Even someone as great as Robert Adams, (and if you keep reading this, you'll see how mind-bendingly great he was), was not infallible. He once said that he thought people studied things like nutrition and health-care too much, that you could just go open the fridge and your intuition would tell you what to put in your body.

I didn't buy that at all.

So even though, in my lifetime, meeting him was the greatest single event, I didn't accept everything he said uncritically. And if the teacher is real, they won't care.

Unfortunately, most gurus are fake. And, IMHO, all who practice “crazy wisdom” are frauds. That’s just my opinion and naturally, you are free to make your own mistakes.

I remember Cameron Eastman who told me so long ago, with that southern twang, “You can’t get so high that you can’t fall.”

Tantric Buddhism and the Spiritual Heart

The notion that your mind recedes into your heart has an interesting tie-in with something already discussed. Remember the Tibetan “POWHA” in Albuquerque taught by a Lama named Ole Nydahl?

The energy channel we opened connected the heart and the top of the head.

Tantric Buddhists say when you die, your mind recedes into your heart, stays there a while, then exits through one of the energy channels of the body. So, they open the path from the heart to head because they believe, if you exit that way, you’ll stay more aware and have less confusion.

So, they, too, say the mind recedes into the heart--whether they believe it does that every night when you sleep, I don’t know.

Testing the Taoist Formulas

Life went on.

My wife got pregnant.

I wanted a child for the simple reason that my mother told me to do it. “A child will give you more real happiness than anything else could,” she said.

So, here I was, back in Oklahoma, a place I never dreamed of ending up. I thought I’d made a horrible mistake by returning. Robert Adams was the one thing in my life that seemed right. Is misery good for spiritual practice? Maybe.

Time passed.

We were pregnant. The baby grew inside my wife.

At one point, her job sent her back to Dallas for five days and she invited me to tag along and stay with her in the hotel. Returning to Dallas, a place I loved more than any other, was bitter-sweet. Like Moses, I could see the Promised Land but could not enter.

Our first night there, I drove North to see the Rudra teacher.

No one was in class that night but the teacher, his wife and me. Afterwards, he mentioned he needed help building a small roof on their sprawling property.

“Sure, I’ll come,” I said. I always admired him and knowing him was an asset. Besides, he was funny, which made him easy to hang-out with.

I showed up the following morning.

It turned out he was an expert carpenter. He laid the lumber out on their parking lot then tutored me on how to use a nail gun, which was a mind-boggling improvement over a hammer. We worked on the roof for two or three days. My reward was four full Rudra classes with only me and him, eye-to-eye.

I got an elephant-sized dose of prana-chi.

During one session, the world fell away and we floated in a blue void. Afterwards, he said, “That’s the first time you and I got cosmic together.”

After the final class, I drove back to my wife in the hotel room.

After all that one-on-one Rudra, I had more heat coursing through my body than ever before. As an experiment, I sat down and did Mantak Chia’s “Lesser Kan and Li” meditation—a “formula,” where you mix two different kinds of energy in the “cauldron” and, theoretically, a third kind of chi emerges.

“Kan and Li” is classified as a “water” practice, so the new energy should be noticeably different than the fire-energy I was feeling when I sat down.

My thought was if all prana-chi is truly the same—as some say—the new energy should all feel the same, homogenous, uniform. And though Lesser Kan and Li is a “water” practice, more heat should come from the cauldron.

But, if there really is some validity to saying one type of chi is “Water” and another is “Fire,” then what comes out should feel clearly different.

To my genuine surprise, what came from the cauldron was an undeniably different energy which, for lack of a better comparison, felt like lotion.

So, maybe the Taoist idea of mixing different energies together inside the body using, “formulas” is valid. Based on one subjective experience, I can’t be certain, but when I tried this, it surprised me.

Wait, wait, you say, I seem to be practicing a lot of different pathways, simultaneously.

Yes, I was syncretic. I was eclectic.

I believe in the traditional Chinese approach of using whatever works for spiritual growth. I’m stuck out in the middle of the endless North American prairie and I use what I have, regardless of conceptual boundaries, or demarcation lines dreamed up by people a world away.

I don’t color between the lines.

This is called religious syncretism.

I call this eclectic spirituality.

And if you have a problem with that, come live out here and live for a while in the vacuous sky-dome of the spiritual badlands with me.

Lamaze Class

It didn't take me long to realize child-birth was going to be a medical emergency. A baby is huge and it's gotta' come out.

I began dreading the event.

One evening, during that time, we went to a Lamaze class in the basement of the local hospital to watch a film on childbirth with other first-time parents.

I don't know if you're familiar with the Hollywood heartthrob Warren Beatty. When he was young, I'm told, he was incredibly good looking and a notorious ladies' man in the movie business. Singer-songwriter Carly Simon wrote the song, "You're so Vain" about him.

Before the childbirth film started, a middle-aged female nurse got up and said, "Two weeks ago, in Los Angeles the actor Warren Beatty saw this movie and fainted. We certainly hope that doesn't happen here tonight." She mispronounced his name, "Beety."

I don't know if it's true, but that's what she said.

The movie rolled.

It showed, not just one child being born, but several, in unflinching graphic detail, up-close, blood gushing, babies squeezing out, mucous flipping off little heads as they popped free.

Watching it made me realize that all the millions of references to romance, all of the emphasis in our society on physical beauty, it's all nature's little confidence trick to get us to undertake this horrendous responsibility of having children and to lure us into the valley of the shadow of biological realities we would gladly avoid.

I didn't faint, but I never looked at sex the same way again. I could see why Warren Beatty, the Great Lover, might feel the sheet had been yanked down a little too soon and he'd seen something on the gurney he'd rather not know, (like the complete pointlessness of recreational sex, for example).

Wringing Out the Heart Muscle

That tiny baby inside my wife kept getting bigger.

Ultra-sound technology is commonplace today but back then, I'd never heard of it. One day, we drove to a medical building where my wife laid down on a table. They smoothed gel onto her bare, pregnant stomach and took something like a computer mouse attached to a screen and scrolled it around on her. A ghostly form appeared on the screen amidst a blizzard of electronic snow—a shadowy baby faded into view.

The technician said, "It's a girl."

So far, the only thing I'd felt about this baby was dread, dread of the danger it posed to my sweet wife, dread because soon after childbirth, she'd return to work and I would assume its care.

I'd barely cared for myself much less a baby. So, here I was, living in a place I hated, feeling as alone as a man marooned in the Pacific, poised to shoulder the crushing weight of newborn baby-care.

I prayed for the strength to lift this additional weight.

After the ultra-sound, we went to a nearby theater for a matinee performance of "Annie," a play about a small depression-era orphan. A girl no more than eight, with a head of curly hair that encircled her head like a halo, played Annie.

At one point, in an angelic voice, she sang the most famous song from the play, "The sun will come out tomorrow, so you've got to hang on till tomorrow--"

Suddenly, I became aware of a most unexpected feeling-- a sensation like my heart was being wrung like a wet dish rag, squeezing out self-sacrificing love. It was the deepest love I'd ever felt. Suddenly, I knew finding strength to care for this baby would not be a problem. It had been there all along, hidden in a secret cave in my heart.

Thus, was I introduced to parental love.

The Only Two Things *Really* Worth Doing

That was literally the first time I'd ever felt it.

I don't think women are as clueless about this as men. I've talked to other guys-- my cousin Kurt, for one--who were genuinely shocked by the emotion having a child arouses. It's like your soul makes an agreement with their soul, a major emotional awakening. Abraham Lincoln, for example, (as I understand), was just kind of a cold, computer-like genius until he had a child. Only after parenthood did he deepen into the poignant poet of the Republic we remember.

Later, I told my wife, "Seeing that little girl I had these feelings I've never felt before--"

"Me, too," she agreed.

Now I tell people—there are only two things in life really worth doing, one is having a child and the other is traveling the spiritual pathway.

If you don't do one, you definitely want to do the other.

Ideally, you could do both.

Life Initiations

In life, there are many different initiations.

Some are formal, like being zapped by the Sixteenth Karmapa.

Some informal, imbedded in the fabric of life. Often the informal ones are the most powerful.

For example, there's the initiation into the practice of energy yoga, which is what we're doing in this little book. That's a formal one.

Having a child and becoming a parent is a gargantuan informal one. Unless you're a real insensitive clod, becoming a parent makes you a deeper, more understanding, more compassionate person.

Becoming a parent, you see birth up-close. Every human you've ever known, or even heard of, came into the world a little lump of squalling humanity, knowing nothing, expected to learn enough in six short years to start school.

We can talk glibly of past lives, but even if those are real, they are at best impressions stored deep in your subconscious mind to which you have little access. Past lives aren't much good when your math teacher is standing over you waiting for an answer and every eye in the classroom is on you.

The human life is a hard life, which I'm sure you know very well if you've read this far.

First, you see your children born then, in a few years, you see your parents die.

After that, you've seen the whole show--birth and death—the beginning and the end--both of which are exceedingly hard—up close and personal, as we say in the USA.

Just Don't Do A Warren Beatty

Having a baby in the 1990's was vastly different than when I was born in the early 1950's. Back then, the man waited in the "waiting room" until a nurse came and told him if it was a boy or a girl. Then he passed out cigars.

By the time our two children were born in the 1990's, I was actually in the delivery room wearing a cap and gown like a doctor. Our first child was born by Caesarian section.

So, there I was at the birth of our first child, in medical gear.

They slit my wife open and laid the flap of skin aside.

I wouldn't let myself look at the opening lest I pull a Warren Beatty, faint, do a header onto the floor, and require medical attention myself. (That would have been really helpful.)

They lifted the baby out.

What struck me first was that it was a *specific baby*.

Until then, it was abstract, a generalized baby. This was a specific child. They gently laid her on a table. In my cap and gown, I went over and carefully placed my giant finger in her tiny palm. Her eyes, I noticed, were looking in two different directions. Not much seemingly going on there yet--she wasn't seeing anything.

Three short years later this same child crawled up into my lap and asked me, "Before I was born, where was I?" At that moment, I was dumbstruck with awe. This tiny child had just asked me life's most important question.

That was in the future, though.

It appeared she was born without much self-awareness.

Maybe classical Advaita Vedanta was right and the whole thing hadn't really started yet. Maybe only later does consciousness identify with a body, which suddenly seems to appear in front of it.

Trapped with Seven Pounds of Tiny Human

Six weeks after having the baby, my wife returned to work.

In those days, in North America, there was no guaranteed maternal leave granted by law. In our situation, how much time she could take for childbirth depended on how much “leave” she’d saved. And in the USA, if something isn’t guaranteed by law, it’s not going to happen. Ever.

We thought it would be better for our baby to be cared for by kin and I was elected through attrition.

In other words, there was no one else.

As I said, after leaving Dallas, I was extremely lonely and thrown totally onto my own emotional resources.

It might not have been such a bad thing for me spiritually.

As lonely and depressed as I often was, it removed outer distractions and I began a distance relationship with Robert Adams, a direct disciple of legendary Indian holy man, Ramana Maharshi, which proved to be the luckiest connection of my life.

He’d originally told me that the “Guru’s Grace” transcends space and time and after about a year with him, I began clearly feeling it--an energetic pressure in the center of my chest that was blissfully poignant. It was a force that knew no distance. It found you from within.

Becoming involved with Robert Adams was like meeting Neem Karoli Baba, the legendary holy man written about in the book, “Be Here Now.” Robert came across as the most unassuming of guys. To talk to him on the phone, to read his lectures, you would never dream he possessed the yogic powers called siddhis.

Even some of the people with him geographically may not have known, (I don’t know). Possibly, I was more the recipient of these abilities because I was so far away. Many years after he’d “died” his wife Nicole called me on the phone.

I told her, “You know, I think he had siddhis.”

She said, “Oh, he did!”

I’m getting ahead of the story.

“In Dzogchen it is considered that one of the best states in which to have important experiences is in the exhaustion of something... At the end of any experience there’s a place of recognition if the individual has the ability. We call it the place of exhaustion... In those moments of exhaustion, there can be powerful experiences.”

Tenzin Wangyal, Rinpoche
Teachings on the A-Khrid

I began caring for our wee small baby girl.

Right away, I noticed something totally unexpected--when I was with her, I wasn’t lonely anymore. It genuinely surprised me. If you look into the eyes of a baby, no matter how tiny, there’s definitely someone there looking back.

My daughter’s eyes were twin pools of watchful intelligence. A baby laughs and you laugh. It’s another person.

I’d found a friend.

After a few more weeks, she developed colic. If you have kids, you are now nodding. If you don’t have kids, you have no clue.

Colic is something some babies get that makes their stomach hurt, so they cry all the time, day and night. If they’re not sleeping, they’re crying. I always took care of the baby till my wife got home from work, at which point I would exercise, jog, do something to relieve stress.

Only, at the time of the baby’s colic, an unbelievably bad piece of luck came our way.

My wife had to go into the hospital for four days, leaving me alone with a colicky baby! As a guy, I wasn’t equipped for this. Neither of the two grandmothers could come and the only baby sitter we ever used went back to Indonesia.

So, it was me, alone, twenty-four/seven!

The crying went on around the clock until I could somehow get her to sleep. When she slept, I slept.

I was hard-pressed for things to distract her. Of course, she was also upset cause her mommy was gone. If I could keep her engaged, she would sometimes quit crying. So, one afternoon, I took her to Wal-Mart, put her in a shopping cart and we had a fine time, wandering all over the store. I bought her a See-and-Say toy then bought myself some old TV shows to watch when, God willing, she fell asleep.

A see-and-say toy is a brightly colored plastic toy with an arrow like the hands of a clock and pictures of animals encircling it, like the numbers of the clock. You point the arrow at an animal, then pull down the handle and a recording says, “I’m a rooster” followed by the sound of a rooster crowing. The only problem was, in those days, the handle was too hard for a baby to pull down. In fact, it was years before she could do it.

Interestingly, five years later, we had a boy.

One day, hanging out with him when he was nine months old, he saw that very same See-and-Say toy lying nearby. Wearing only his diaper, he crawled over, got it upright, then pulled the handle down with one powerful, Herculean motion, “I’m a rooster...cock-a-doodle-doo.”

I was in awe of how much stronger boys are than girls. He was tougher, too. Once, barely a year old, he tore full-speed up the hallway, tripped and fell right on his face. I braced for the nerve-piercing scream of pain but...nothing. He just got up as if nothing had happened, dusted himself off.

“Did that hurt?” I asked him.

“Yes,” he said matter-of-factly, in a baby baritone.

I’m way ahead of my story.

Sorry. I’m telling this story for a reason.

Back to the week my wife was in the hospital leaving me alone with our colicky baby. I’d taken my daughter to Walmart to distract us from our problems.

What a huge mistake! It stimulated her and I had to drive her in the car for hours that night until the vibrations of the road finally lulled her to sleep. Back home, I lifted her out of her car-seat ever-so-carefully, then gently lowered her into her baby bed, like the little bundle of nitroglycerin she was

She kept snoozing.

An ocean of relief washed over me.

I totally let go.

My mind slowed, stopped briefly.

The idea is, within your consciousness are its contents—thoughts, feelings, memories etc. The usual comparison is to a pool of water. In the pool floats sediment from the bottom, representing thoughts, feelings, the contents of consciousness. The goal is to get the sediment to settle, leaving the water clear.

Then, you can experience pure awareness, without all the stuff that normally clouds it. In other words, try to rest in pure awareness unclouded by the contents of the mind.

According to the ancient tradition, one of the best times to accomplish this is when exhausted, with thoughts and feelings spent, so you can just be.

And in my state, totally wiped-out, I was there.

Just being.

Resting in that effortless state, exhausted.

Later, I heard a Tibetan master say this state of exhaustion, where you can effortlessly rest your mind and just be there, was the state to be sought, the golden time for which we wait. If you can train your mind to rest like that, it’s a place from where real enlightenment can happen.

So, finally, the baby was asleep and my life was my own.

I remember thinking, “This makes those Zen retreats look like a vacation.”

At some point, I noticed thoughts drifting through my mind, like: “*When you’re totally exhausted, you’re more likely to experience the pure nature of mind.*”

I wasn’t sure where those thoughts came from. I’d really never heard that before—that exhaustion could be an entry point to a profound experience of your own mind, unimpeded by all the busyness that normally blocks us.

Another thought I remember was, “When you’re tired and the thoughts slow down, and there’s a little silent place between thoughts, rest in that as long as you can.”

There were others as well.

Right before this, I'd been to that Katy Ranch retreat with Tenzin Wangyal, Rinpoche, the Tibetan who gave me the great concentration practice with the little target, but he didn't say any of this there.

I didn't encounter these thoughts again till years later at a teaching he gave in a formal Dzogchen retreat called A-Khrid. I couldn't believe it. When I looked back, it was almost like, in my extreme distress, I was pulling these thoughts from that Bon Dzogchen lineage.

And that's exactly what I think happened. And that's what one of these ancient lineages can do for you, you can sort of tune-in during moments of great need.

It's All a Doorway

Anyway, I was home caring for our colicky baby, whom I'd just gotten to sleep after a beyond-exhausting day.

She was asleep and I finally had a few moments of freedom. What a delicious feeling, to just be alive with a bit of time of my own, the weight lifted off me. I'd bought some old TV shows that afternoon so I slid them into the player. They started. I luxuriated in a rare sense of complete ease and freedom.

"That's funny," I said out loud. "If I didn't know better, I'd swear it sounded like someone just pulled into our driveway. But that's impossible because we don't even know anyone in town." Then I heard footsteps, big, heavy, stupid footsteps clomping up the sidewalk to our front door. And then, unbelievably, the doorbell rang!

The baby started crying!

"Noooooo!" I screamed.

It was a pizza delivery guy coming to the wrong house! "I'll kill you!" I raved through the closed door. The footsteps beat a hasty retreat.

Now I was three-times screwed! The baby was awake again!

I got her into the baby harness I used for toting her around and we plopped down together in the rocking chair and I rocked...and rocked...and rocked. Never even once had I been able to rock her to sleep. In fact, the only one who could do that was my mother, who used some mysterious grandmother mojo to which I had no access.

Now I must rock her to sleep, somehow.

Normally, I'm an excruciatingly light sleeper. Everything keeps me awake. But this time, miraculously, we both fell asleep sitting up in the rocking chair! That's how exhausted I was.

As I drifted away, I heard a voice from long ago, Cameron Eastman, telling me, "*Anyone can do anything...if they're willing to pay the price.*"

I did it, I got us both to sleep, in the rocker, but it was a price I wouldn't care to pay again.

Even the most difficult, darkest moments in our lives can be turned into the spiritual path. They can actually be opportune moments to work with. Exhausting moments can be turned into an ally, a chance to experience the mind without its distracting contents.

As Tenzin Wangyal, Rinpoche told me years later, "Even the darkest times can be a doorway."

Also, for the record, nothing impacted on my parenting more than getting baked in the kiln of Zen for three years. I recently read where someone said Zen meditation was as interesting as watching paint dry. I don't disagree, but it gave me patience as a super-power when I needed it. Rightly or wrongly, I always gave small children the space to wind-down. I didn't get angry, I could out-wait them.

My attention span was elongated.

Robert Adams Shows Me the Spiritual Heart

My relationship with Robert Adams grew.

Our baby was three months old. It was a year since I'd first felt the energetic pressure in my chest, "the guru's grace." Intuitively, I knew next I should find a way to get closer to him.

Sometimes an idea comes winging in from the ether.

I decided to write him a letter. I could type, I was a writer of sorts, (I'd sold some magazine articles), I had no shortage of envelopes and stamps to mail out "query" letters. My connection with him was there but what if it got stronger?

I knew there were people who called him on the phone regularly but, honestly, I didn't trust my social skills. So, I decided to write him a short, one-page letter every month. I always included a ten-dollar bill for a couple of reasons. First, I was grateful. I knew I was onto something the likes of which I never dreamed.

Secondly, I wanted to add something concrete to his earthly existence. I explained in the letter, "Ten bucks may seem like a wimpy contribution but it would buy a meal for one at a Denny's or coffee for two." Probably not true now but twenty-plus years ago, it was more money.

I made it clear he needn't write me back but this way we could have a small, personal connection.

I mailed the letter on Tuesday.

The following Saturday night, sitting in my house in Oklahoma, I was watching an old sci-fi movie in the same chair I'd used to rock the baby." Suddenly, the nerve that is generally referred to as, "the heart center," dialed all the way open and a steady river of energy began gushing forth.

I was amazed. Was this temporary?

No, it kept going.

I went to bed and slept eight hours. When I woke up, it was still going. That was Sunday. Sunday evening around seven o'clock, I told my wife, "You're not going to believe this but the man in California has done something to me."

And, boy, was it was a good thing. Holy crap.

The energy from my heart center kept pouring for five days.

“Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Jesus Christ, John 4:14

4-41

Robert’s Letters

Our daughter was only a few months old. She would only nap by if I slid her into a baby harness, which held her against my chest, then trudged around the neighborhood until she dozed off.

Then, I’d bring her back home and carefully lower her into bed.

Only now the harness held her right in the river of energy gushing from my chest. It was affecting her, too. She was quieter, more aware, less fussy, more mellow.

I was beyond mellow.

I was ecstatic.

It was Spring. One day, baby in harness, I strolled around the green grass neighborhood till she fell asleep, then ambled back home. My sweet little daughter was sleeping against my chest. The river of energy was going, going, going. When we got to the house the garage door was up and a single folding chair waited just inside it. I gently lowered us into the chair and rested.

The river of energy in my chest was at full flow. The warmth of the baby pressed against me as she breathed peacefully.

Across the street a giant tree, beautiful and dark green with new Spring leaves, stood shifting in the breeze. It was a Silver Maple with leaves that were silver on one side, green on the other, so when the wind rippled across it, the whole tree changed colors, green to silver, then back again.

I sat and watched it, feeling as much joy as humanly possible.

It was the happiest moment of my life.

The energy from my heart kept flowing day after day.

It finally ended the next time I had sex.

What started it? I assumed my letter pleased Robert Adams, pure and simple. Did I run tell him about it? No, I assumed he knew. I didn’t tell anyone but my wife and I didn’t make it a big thing to her.

I received a letter from him shortly thereafter saying, sure, write me once a month, good idea.

And that’s what I did. I wrote him a one-page letter, (I didn’t want to become a pain; he had Parkinson’s, remember).

This went on for years.

I saved twenty of the letters he wrote me, (there were more but they were chewed up by the crazed dog of Time). Many years later, I transcribed them into emails and sent them to another student of his, Arunachala Goldsmith. As of now, they are available on his website as a zipped file.

These are Robert Adams’ letters to me. They’re not anything I wrote. All of them were written by him.

Here is a direct URL link to the pdf of Robert's collected letters.

<http://www.robert-adams.info/Robert%20Adams%20-%20Kym%20Chaffin%20letters%20-%201992-1996.pdf><http://www.robert-adams.info/Robert%20Adams%20-%20Kym%20Chaffin%20letters%20-%201992-1996.pdf>

Here is a link to the Robert Adams information web site.

<http://www.robert-adams.info/>

Or, if you're like me, stuck in the simple-minded approach, baffled by any technology more complicated than a potato peeler, google: "Robert Adams Dear Kym" (this is the only reason I used my real name on this book, by the way. I'm not seeking attention or money, which is why I'm selling it for ninety-nine cents. I would have given it away, but I was afraid if it cost nothing, people would think it was worth nothing).

I see skies of blue and clouds of white
The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world

[“What a Wonderful World”
By Bob Thiele and George David Weiss,
Robert Adams’ favorite song.]

Twenty or more years is a long time to remember back, so some of my chronology may be wrong. I’ve never managed to keep a journal, so I only have memory.

At some point in the early nineties, I experienced a series of unfortunate events and became profoundly depressed, disappointed. Putting it mildly, I felt under-appreciated by the world, living in a place I hated, no friends. To paraphrase Kathryn Hepburn from a movie, “If appreciation were syrup, I’d be a mighty dry waffle.”

Have you ever had the feeling that your human life is an endless series of crushing disappointments?

Oh, yes, I was feeling sorry for myself, (not an attractive quality, I realize). I thought-- I should just end it. I considered how to do it. First, I’d drive my car outside town so no one I cared about would find my body.

Next, I’d leave a note with a map taped to my steering wheel showing where to find my body.

I’d walk away from the road, lie down on a blanket, then cap myself with the revolver my late father had left.

I would spare the interior of the car so the family could still use it.

Was I serious?

Only half-serious. Maybe not even half, just angry. With all the spiritual good fortune I’d experienced, how could I feel so hopeless? I can’t explain it.

Depression, (IMHO), involves a loss of perspective. If I could talk to the 1992 version of me, I’d tell myself--go to the burn unit of your local hospital and look at the hideous suffering there, then go gaze at your reflection in the nearest mirror- and your good situation should shine out at you.

The actor Kirk Douglas, (yes, Spartacus), said after his stroke, he tried to put a gun in his mouth but bumped the barrel against his front teeth. The sudden pain made him realize the stupidity of what he was doing. He put the gun away.

He regained his perspective.

Lama Ole Nydahl, (as psychic a human being as you’d ever want to meet), said after people kill themselves, they always regret it, “Because they had a nice warm body to hang out in and now all they have is space.”

When you get involved with someone light years more evolved than you, it’s easy to forget that your thoughts are not as private as they feel.

That night, after all these thoughts, I went to bed and fell asleep.

Around two a.m. I was having a dream. In the dream, a friend and I were running up a staircase in a Swiss chalet. Somewhere nearby a phone began ringing.

I had the vague feeling, “That’s funny, I didn’t order a phone call----”

I found the ringing phone on the front desk of the hotel/chalet and answered it. “Hello?” I said curiously.

There was only one voice that sounded like that, Robert Adams. “Kym, this is Robert. I have something very important to tell you. All is well. All is exceedingly well. There are no mistakes and none are being made. Everything is happening exactly the way it’s supposed to. All... is... well.”

Not only did I wake up, I bolted upright in bed! It was like being electrocuted. THAT WAS REAL! I thought. He had just contacted me in a freaking dream, I had no doubt!

What did I feel?

Well, shame.

I was ashamed I couldn’t manage myself better than that. That I couldn’t be a better self-soothing baby than that. That this person who was light years more evolved than me had to take time out of his life to contact me because I couldn’t tend to myself better than that.

It snapped me right out of it.

And he was right, of course.

The universe, and the life in it, are headed in the right direction even if it’s hard to remember that when we pass through the shadowy valleys. We don’t know the purpose for which our lives have evolved.

Some people in Advaita Vedanta say there is no purpose for all this, but they don’t know that.

Why not trust that the universe knows what it’s doing? Even if Jesus gets nailed to a cross, Socrates is forced to drink poison and Robert Adams dies of liver cancer, the universe will arrive at its own glorious ends in due time and we will all be there to share in it.

You are contributing to the whole in a way as important as any other person, whether the mundane world appreciates you or treats you like a total failure. Ultimately, all parts, no matter how seemingly unimportant, are as necessary as all other parts.

That’s likely what Jesus Christ meant by saying God cared about the death of every bird.

It’s all happening the way it’s supposed to.

In closing, I’d like to say to anyone thinking about suicide, that your ultimate problem is the same problem as that of every other human being--you don’t know what you are. Human beings are eternal, spiritual beings with a huge potential. But what good is it if you have no knowledge of how to actualize it.

It’s like having ten million bucks in a bank account with no way to draw any of it out. What good is it?

The best way to start actualizing it is what we’re discussing in this book, developing your energy-body. It’s a long process, but even one step in the right direction will create more hope than money, sex, ego expansion or anything else taught in our still-primitive culture.

My life continued sans self-pity

We Are All on a Continuum

Then, six months later, I had another dream contact from Robert, only this one was extremely positive, as if to balance the scales.

In this one Robert and I were floating in a blue space—meaning the background was royal blue.

Our faces were close together. He said, “I want you to know something, I will never judge you because where I end and you begin, no one can say. So why would I judge myself?”

Then our foreheads melted together and I experienced the most extreme love I’d ever felt.

The truth is, I think Cameron Eastman visited me in a dream way back in the 1970’s. I was living in OKC by then and was asleep in my apartment. It was right before one of those retreats where he dusted me off with peacock feathers.

Suddenly, he flew into my dream and did some energy thing to me. I excitedly babbled some nonsense at him. He said *nothing*, just flew away. I never told anybody about it because, at that time, it seemed so far-fetched. I didn’t know how possible this was then. When they show up unexpectedly, do what they came to do, then leave, it’s a clue that it’s real, in my humble opinion.

Another time I heard Cameron telling a middle-aged guy, “I came to you in a dream the other night and tried to get your attention. Man, I couldn’t wake you up for nothin’.”

A swami told me once that conscious (lucid) dreams overlap with the lowest part of the astral plane (Cameron’s “Second Physical). Is that true. I don’t know but it would explain some strange events.)

Meeting Robert Adams in LA

A year later, in 1993, I decided the time had come-- I put my natural shyness in a safe deposit box downtown and flew to LA to spend some time with Robert Adams.

Jet plane out of OKC, (Oklahoma City), followed by the LA airport, then a rental car. My years in Dallas helped because I found I was not intimidated by LA traffic and located the Best Western in Canoga Park.

That night, I called Robert and he told me to meet him at a sidewalk café at eleven the next morning.

I was there on time and, boom, there he was! He was wearing black slacks and a black tee shirt. He hugged me. I'm tall, six-three, and so was he, (and so was Ramana Maharshi, or so I've read).

Of course, he had Parkinson's disease but he must have taken his medicine because there was no trace of the disease and I instantly forgot about it. He had lived for years in caves in India and he looked a little beat-up around the edges. He had a beard that was iron gray, (I also had a beard but, in those days, it was black). I've wondered more than once if enlightenment--real enlightenment--is hard on the body. Or, maybe if you know you're not the body, you don't work hard to care for it. I still wonder about that.

Robert always emphasized enlightenment doesn't mean losing anything.

It's an expansion of consciousness so you only gain.

Another student was with him, a guy my age. I was exactly forty years old as I calculate now, (twenty-two years later).

We sat down at a table at the sidewalk café. I bought breakfast for them. I felt an overwhelming need to repay him for all he had done.

I said, "It's so great to see you, I've been feeling your vibes for so long."

Years later his wife, Nicole, a kind person, called me. She mentioned he could make whoever was in front of him feel like they were his best friend. And, so it was that day. His caring was palpable. He started asking me all about myself.

He seemed curious about me. Who was this person who'd managed to find him and forge a bond from half a continent away? "Do you have any brothers or sisters?" he asked.

This was literally the first time in my life anybody asked me that.

"I have an older brother," I said, "but we're nothing alike. He's a lawyer who doesn't know any of this exists."

"I have an older brother, too," he said, "he owns a hardware store."

We both started laughing.

I thought: The Buddha's brother owns a hardware store. Only in America.

He added, "The last time I called him he said, "Are you still good for nothing?"

I was appalled. "I'm sure he has no clue," I said.

I meant it. How could his brother have a clue? The brother he thought was good for nothing was so spiritually evolved he effortlessly attained complete enlightenment.

I said, "But an enlightened person is the highest thing any culture can produce." It's the summit of human evolution, I have no doubt of that.

I asked him about his childhood. He told me when he was tiny, his mother, out of necessity, left him alone all day in their apartment in New York City to go to work.

Now, it was his other student who was appalled. “You mean your mother just left you there?” “She had to go to work or we’d starve,” he said.

I wondered if that early isolation set up a relationship with silence that resulted in his enlightenment. I’d already noticed the energy in the heart center became strong and blissful when I was *not* doing, or even being, anything.

If I just dropped all human, adult stuff, got down on the floor with the baby and hung out with her, appreciating a wedge of sunlight on the carpet, then the energy in the heart ached. “Meditation” seemed a little too pre-canned, too effortful. But if I could just drop all my compulsive crap and just be, just abide, the energy in the heart really throbbed. I pictured Robert as a baby, or little kid, sitting on the floor of his apartment ...simply being.

But there must be more involved than that or more enlightened people would exist.

One of the things I’d heard about Robert was that he never slept. And on the rare occasion he did nod off, he never dreamed. If dreams are your mind doing mental house-cleaning, his mind apparently had no house-cleaning to do. They said he would lie down for about three hours a night but was never, “out.”

I said, “They say you never sleep, how can that be?”

He said, “That’s just the way it is with me now.”

I was young and concerned about what I should and shouldn’t be doing. I asked him about the Indian notion of rejecting sex completely, was that necessary.

He said, “I do everything you do.”

I laughed and said, “Well, maybe not *everything*.”

At one point, I asked him point blank, “Why you?” Meaning-- why did this just happen to him?

He said, “I have no idea.”

He in turn wondered why I would be so interested in this that I could beam in on him, like a bat in the dark, clear from Oklahoma.

I told him about some weird things that happened in my childhood, (not that I’m comparing myself with him, which would be ridiculous), but maybe they meant something.

One day, when I was five, I was playing on scraps of broken sidewalk in our front yard, jumping from one fragment of cement to another. The memory is so vivid, I remember my Mom was baking a chocolate cake and the smell floated out through the screen door.

Suddenly, an odd thought popped into my mind: What is it that makes me speak and think? What is behind my thoughts? “Is it God?” I said out loud, “Did God just make me say that?”

I tried to ferret out the origin of doer-ship.

Then a second question popped up, related to the first.

If I could magically cut pieces off of myself—first arms, legs, torso, neck-- then cut pieces away from my disembodied head--at what point would I arrive at the critical part that was “Me”?

Where am “I” inside this body?

Of course, at the age of five, I didn’t know this was a Buddhist meditation which I only read about decades later in a book titled, “Buddhahood Without Meditation.” [By Dudjom Lingpa, Padma Publishing, 2002].

Then, when I was thirteen, something even stranger happened.

I told Robert, “I was getting into a car with my father and brother when all time ended.”

Robert nodded yes at me, as if to say, “I know what you’re talking about.”

I said, “It wasn’t a thought. It was an event, as if the sky turned inside-out. I saw that there was only Now, and there never *could* have been anything but Now.” Years later I read the phrase, “The Eternal Now” and instantly realized it was a very clever description of that event. So, I thought, other people know it, too.

You’re never the only one.

If you’ve read this far, you’ve probably had strange experiences like this yourself.

Robert said, “I think you’ve worked on this before.”

“Past lives?” I said, remembering Ramesh Balsekar, the arch-debunker, “I thought we didn’t believe in past lives.” I thought Advaita rejected past lives. I found out later that was only “neo-advaita.”

“That’s just the only reason I can imagine anything like that happening,” he said.

Years ago, I wrote some of this on an internet site and was set-upon by people identifying themselves as Robert’s “old devotees” who claimed I was acting above myself, (Robert had passed away by then), and that I was trying to set myself up as his successor.

Let me say something very clearly—I’m not enlightened.

Robert did have a student who became enlightened, a guy slightly older than me named Ed Muzika. I’m going to talk about that in a bit. I have no ties to Ed Muzika other than good will. I’ve never met him. I was only Robert’s student-at-a-distance. This one weekend was the only time I spent with him on the physical level of putting our bodies in close proximity. Ed Muzika was a close disciple who spent countless hours with him.

Continuing the story, I told Robert that even though this end-of-time event didn’t result in enlightenment, it did show me there could be such a thing as an enlightened person. He smiled at me and nodded again.

Then I asked him about his time in India. My understanding is that he made two or three separate trips and remained there for a total of sixteen years. He met everyone. He met Ramesh Balsekar’s teacher, Nisargadatta Maharaj.

He met Neem Karoli Baba.

I asked him about Neem Karoli and he looked deep into my eyes and said strongly, “They’re guys! They’re all just guys. That’s all they are!” He didn’t want me to wander too far down the road of guru worship. That’s an important fact to remember at all times on your journey. No matter who they are or how enlightened, they are still bounded by their humanness to some extent. There are no supermen or women. They’re all just guys, or girls.

Then he said, “Let’s go over to my place.”

We went to his apartment and watched a video about Ramana Maharshi. At some point that weekend we went and walked his little dog at the park across the street from his apartment building.

I reminded him of my uncle who lived very near.

I said I thought the universe was trying to give me a place to stay when I came here. And I still believe that.

Privately, I had doubts about my uncle. I’d heard from family that he was a part-time fundamentalist preacher. That worried me. I couldn’t relate to that at all. If he was some sort of Shi’ite Baptist, this would never work.

The nearest my father ever came to church was knocking down a pint of Jack Daniels and then getting laid-back and dreamy.

Also, I remembered my uncle behaved strangely when he was in Oklahoma, throwing a kind of conniption fit about something my mother did in 1948.

Outwardly, though, I told Robert I'd go see him to find out for certain. Then I added, "You're my real uncle."

He laughed.

"Go see your uncle," he said.

Battling Hobos of the Great Depression

That night, after telephoning I was coming, I went to see my aunt and uncle. Driving over, I mentally replayed the last time we'd met, at my grandma's wake fourteen years earlier, in Modesto, California.

My uncle and I didn't really talk then, because my dad and my other uncle were there. My dad and his second brother, Melvin, were only a year apart in age, so growing up they were The Team.

Willard, the uncle I was now visiting, was several years younger and didn't have to do the things the Dust Bowl forced on my dad and Melvin.

My dad's family were fun to hang out with.

They were from a place called Okemah, Oklahoma, and knew folksinger Woody Guthrie when they were all boys. Then came the depression, and in Oklahoma the "Dust Bowl," a gut punch that forced them--and thousands of others--to follow migrating farm jobs to keep from starving. It was exactly like "The Grapes of Wrath", the novel by John Steinbeck about the Joad family.

I once asked my dad if they were as poor as the Joads.

He said, "Hell, they had a truck."

The two brothers, plus their dad and uncle Shorty, spent the depression "riding the rails", which means climbing into empty freight train boxcars without buying a ticket. It was a cruel era and sometimes, when they managed to crawl into a train car, as many as sixty people were already there in the dark. Not just men, but whole families.

The problem with this was the railroads had teams of thuggish guards patrolling the train yards just to keep people from riding for free.

Imagine, climbing into a dark boxcar with dozens of strangers on a freezing night, rain plastering against the outside walls.

One boxcar was so full my dad and another guy crawled into the big tool box on the outside of the car. When the train finally hit full speed, it drove right into freezing rain and they almost froze to death.

At my grandmother's wake, they entertained me for two days with stories of Dust Bowl life.

Once the police rounded them up with 80 other guys. Always deeply suspicious of cops, they all bunched tightly together for protection. Assuming they were about to be arrested and body-searched, they divested themselves of their contraband.

So, when the police led them away from the spot where they'd huddled, an awesome arsenal of weaponry lay on the ground: brass knuckles, knives, pistols, pipes, chains. But to their collective amazement, the cops didn't take them to jail, but to the Salvation Army for a hot meal and a warm place to sleep.

That was the exception.

Every other confrontation with the club-wielding guards ignited a massive gang fight. Sitting at my grandma's wake, I was totally transported by these stories. Over and over, one name jumped out--Shorty, their extremely combative and feisty uncle.

My uncle Melvin told me that once he, my dad, my grandpa and the irrepressible Shorty were slipping into a railroad yard when up popped five huge guards bristling with clubs.

“What are you doing here?!” a huge guard demanded.

Before anyone could answer, the inimitable Shorty snarled, “What the hell business is it of yours?”

My uncle looked at me, shook his head wearily and laughed, “I thought to myself, you stupid son of a bitch, can’t we just *once* try and *talk* our way out of one of these?”

Apparently, the answer was no, because the fight instantly started. The giant railroad guard had my grandpa--a little guy-- literally by the back of the collar, like you’d hold a puppy by the scruff of the neck, and grandpa was swinging wide, arcing, roundhouse punches that couldn’t reach the guard who simply held him at bay.

My dad and uncle laid down in hysterics remembering this--but my uncle Willard, who was too young for any of this, sat neutrally nearby smoking menthol cigarettes.

I wanted to meet this family legend, Shorty, my great uncle, who started and finished every fight, the terror of railroad guards throughout the depression-era South.

Finally, he appeared, a sweet, little old man of at least ninety, pushing a walker--a tiny person: step, push-the-walker, step, push-the-walker, step, push-the-walker.

He stopped and absolutely beamed love at us, “Hi, boys!” he said to my brother and me.

I replayed all this in my mind as I drove over to see my last living uncle.

Dearest Uncle and Auntie

The uncle I came to see on this night in 1993 was, unfortunately for me, a fundamentalist minister. You know how they are. To Christian fundamentalists every spiritual reality unknown to them is straight from Satan.

My dad dwelled in a religion-free zone.

(My dogged search for truth obviously wasn't because of any early religious indoctrination.)

My uncle and aunt lived in a typical LA suburban house.

The garage-house arrangement was L-shaped, the garage the short part of the L, the house the long.

They seemed genuinely glad to see me and I them. I assumed any problem they had with my mother didn't apply to me, and I was right. We had a nice visit. I love them and all my relatives.

The universe tried to give me a place to stay, but this would never do. Talking to him, I saw the same fiery, angry temperament my dad had but without the open-mindedness. I ended up telling them I was just here to see an old college pal. He'd choke if he knew the truth.

He told me more about the old days.

During the depression the family had to pick cotton. Only, they never called it picking cotton. It was called, "Pulling bolls." (Like the old Leadbelly song, "When those cotton bolls get rotten, you can't pick very much cotton.)

As I left my uncle looked into my eyes and said, "Always remember, once your daddy pulled a thousand pounds of bolls in a single day."

It was considered a beyond-human feat.

That was my dad.

Bored with picking cotton, he decided to pull more bolls than humanly possible.

During my Zen years, more than once I thought, if he ever got interested in Zen, he'd probably be enlightened in a few years. He'd be like Buddha—sit here and either die or become enlightened.

No wonder he did so well later in life.

I bid them farewell but abandoned any notion of staying there.

I could tell they were glad our relationship didn't end on a sour note. That was the last time I ever saw them.

Satsang

The next day, Sunday, I drove to Robert's apartment. He was there with an Indian lady who drove us to Satsang, (the meeting where Robert would speak). I sat in the backseat with her young son and got him to laugh.

Robert gave an excellent talk, interspersing it with music he played on a portable player. In hindsight, the music may have simply given him a chance to rest, though he didn't seem tired. As on the day before, I totally forgot he had Parkinson's disease.

I'd read transcripts from so many talks that it felt normal to be there.

I saw Mary, the sweet little old lady who was my contact. She said a famous actress recently dropped by, then added, "She'll be back; new-age people don't have anything, you know."

I agreed.

Afterwards, I talked to a guy my age who explained some people in LA made five or six such events in a Sunday, seeking an energy high. I thought that might be frustrating for Robert, who was the real thing. Not that I believed anything could really frustrate him. He seemed blown-out by his enlightenment, like someone who took nothing personally or seriously. Those are just my impressions.

The same lady who brought us to Satsang drove us back. I thought, is this authentic enough? Indians are facilitating it.

Sitting in the back seat, driving back to Robert's place, as usual I felt my social skills were inadequate. I wondered what to say when we parted.

We passed a post office and he turned to me and said, "That's where I pick up your letters."

I decided to tell him, "Thanks for everything," and meant it from the heart.

We got out. I walked behind him up to his door. He spun around and hugged me, really hugged me, (I felt the stubble of his cheek). "Thanks for everything, Kym" he said to *me*. Then added, "Listen—always remember, no matter what happens, there is something inside of you that knows the way."

The true implication of that sailed right over my head.

"I'll write you!" I said.

That was it.

I never saw him in person again but our relationship was far from over.

What the Heart Energy Becomes

The next day, I flew home and resumed ordinary life. I continued writing him once a month and he wrote me back. I knew the exact minute he picked up the letter because the energetic throbbing in my chest tripled its aching.

Was it like the river of energy?

No, just a compressed, crimping sensation. I told my wife, “It feels like I’ve been shot in the heart with a nail gun and the place around the nail is leaking bliss.” It was more a seep than a flow.

Did everyone with him feel this? No, but many did.

I should emphasize that I was still doing energy practices every day, not Kriya but the things I’d learned from Mantak Chia. Also, the concentration practice I’d acquired from Tenzin Wangyal--the target on a stick.

Here’s something you should know. If you develop your energy-body in the ways we’ve discussed, in time you will come to experience things most people know nothing about.

For example, the heart energy feelings I had when Robert received my letters elaborated through time.

Later, it got so that if anybody, anywhere, known or unknown to me, felt love or affection for me, I felt glowing energy in the chest. Possibly hard to believe, but true. Rather than dismiss it, I challenge you to practice as I did and prove it to yourself. I’m certainly far from being the only person who’s experienced this. All you need is patience and enough perseverance to continue practicing through the tough and boring patches and, in time, you’ll see that I’ve told you God’s own truth with no exaggeration.

And when you begin to have these perceptions, if you are ever with someone who’s highly developed, you’ll feel their energy.

And someday, you’ll get a real surprise—you’ll be visited by energetic presences that have no physical body but will be as apparent to you as when you’re standing next to another person.

And some of those presences will share their energy with you. After this happens enough times to remove any doubt, it will show you that the end of the body is definitely not the end of the mind.

You will even begin to suspect that the hard, material part of the universe may just be the crust on the pie, that most life in the universe is possibly of the non-physical variety. This will be known to you personally, if you just keep practicing, marching forward, putting one foot stubbornly in front of the other.

Of course, when you actually feel love coming to you from faraway, the real question is what is it that joins us all together, what makes it possible to feel other people’s reactions at a distance?

In Advaita Vedanta they call it, “The Self” because it’s the Self of all.

In Tibetan Mahamudra they call it “the space-nature of mind,” because awareness and space are joined together and that’s what connects us all.

The point is, it’s real and you can have your own proof, but you must keep working.

“If you want a mantra there’s one that’s sometimes given in this lineage: when you breathe in say, “I” and when you breathe out say, “Am.””

Robert Adams

Later, I learned that after my visit, Robert’s Parkinson’s worsened and he had more trouble speaking. He became a bit like the physicist Stephen Hawking, a close student had to listen, then translate what he said.

At some point, he moved to Sedona, Arizona and I lost contact with him. According to Ed Muzika in his book, “Self-Realization and Other Awakenings,” Robert’s wife Nicole later said she believed Robert knew something was wrong with his body besides the Parkinson’s and moving to Arizona was an attempt to cope with it.

It turned out to be liver cancer.

The crux of Advaita Vedanta, as I understand it, is as follows.

You are awareness.

You are not the objects that appear in awareness.

Thoughts and feelings are both objects that appear in awareness.

Try not to get involved with them, try not to get carried away by them.

But the body is also an object that appears in awareness.

You are not in the body; the body is actually in you.

You think you were born and began when the body began but according to the sages who founded Advaita, that’s not really what happened. That’s just a story you were told. What really happened is that you were awareness and at some point, the body appeared in you. As time went on, you got so involved with the body and its thoughts that you completely forgot what you really were and began believing you were the body, its thoughts, its feelings.

Meditation is remembering you are awareness and not getting lost in thoughts and feelings.

Meditation is discriminating between awareness, which is you, and the thoughts and feelings that appear in awareness.

Formal meditation would just be a way to slow down the thoughts and feelings so that the discrimination could become easier.

This is very much like the two highest methods in Tibetan Buddhism, Dzogchen and Mahamudra. They say you must have “The View” (correct psychological orientation), only instead of calling it discrimination between awareness and thoughts, they sometimes call it, “Separating Samsara from Nirvana.” Nirvana would mean pure awareness and samsara the thoughts and feelings appearing in awareness.

“It became a Buddhist heresy to maintain that an enlightened person would cease to exist after death.”

“Buddha” by Karen Armstrong

Thorndike Press, Large Print Biography Series p. 152 (quoting “The Buddha” by Hermann Oldenberg p.279-282)

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Robert’s Devotee, Ed Muzika, Experiences Enlightenment

After some time in Sedona, Robert Adams passed away surrounded by family and students. His dying words were, “I love you All.” (Self Realization and Other Awakenings, by Ed Muzika).

I remember the time I had lunch with him. He ordered hot tea but only drank the hot water.

“Aren’t you gonna’ have the tea?” I asked.

“Caffeine? No.”

He lived an ascetic lifestyle. Later, Mary his close and trusted devotee, told me he instructed her at the end, “No matter how much pain I’m in, don’t let them give me heavy pain killers.”

Obviously, he wanted clarity at the end.

I thought of Jesus Christ who refused to drink the pain-deadening drug the Romans offered him. Or Muktananda’s teacher, Nityananda, who had all of his teeth pulled but refused any pain medication.

Almost all of what I know about Robert’s last days in Sedona, I learned from his close disciple Ed Muzika. Ed has a web site called, “We Are Sentience.” If you go there and scroll down you will find a copy of his book, “Self-Realization and Other Awakenings.” It contains the story of his years with Robert until his death. It also contains the major awakenings Ed had through associating with Robert.

As I said, Robert mainly taught “Self-inquiry” in Sanskrit, “Atma Vichara.” You simply try to cognize who it is behind your eyes doing the knowing.

Practicing Atma Vichara reminds me of something I once read.

In 1946, a physicist at Los Alamos in New Mexico, (the place where they developed the A-bomb), was in the habit of playfully manipulating two “live spheres” (two substances which, if brought together just-so, could ignite the first steps in a fission reaction—a nuclear explosion).

The physicist, Louis Stotin, was engaged in a kind of scientific Russian roulette and, eventually, the laws of probability would likely catch up and he wouldn’t be able to pull the two halves apart in time. According to the book “The Glory and the Dream” by William Manchester, “It [finally] happened one day, a screwdriver, (which was separating the two halves), slipped.”

For a few seconds the lab lit up with a blinding blue glare.

Louis Stotin was rushed to the hospital with a lethal dose of radiation. On the way, he calmly observed that he was a dead man. (“The Glory and the Dream” Manchester. Rosetta books, 2013)

This could be a metaphor for Atma Vichara.

Self-inquiry will eventually work. It has to. The laws of probability will catch up. You'll perform Atma Vichara for the millionth time and, instead of a flash of blinding blue light, a flash of expanded consciousness will illuminate your mind. But instead of saying, "I'm dead," you'll simply lose the illusion of an "I" or a permanent entity behind your eyes that's running your life.

By enquiring "Who Am I?", we're pushing the two hemispheres together and eventually the flash will occur.

As Robert once said, "It has to."

Consider the experience of Ed Muzika, Robert's friend and disciple.

In his book, he said one morning he returned from a walk, got in the shower and, standing in the warm spray, performed Atma Vichara for the umpteenth time, only this time, "I looked within, into the inner emptiness of consciousness, trying to see if I could find 'who' it was that experienced the water's touch— "

Only this time something happened, the flash, "the reality of 'no-one-there' sank in!"

At first, he was afraid, realizing there was no one to hold the many threads of his life together, but then he relaxed.

This ignited a process of awakening with many physical manifestations. All the things within him that depended on belief in an "I" started cranking to a stop.

A whole series of realizations began--like dominoes falling--one after the other.

The idea of 'I' died.

Robert Adams once said his enlightenment began with the realization that his body and, by extension the universe, were both emanations of his mind. Now Ed Muzika's began with the realization there is no 'I.'

Ed's body developed various physical tics, as if Realization was stressing it. He went and told Robert all about them.

Robert, who could be quite funny, responded, "Maybe your body is rejecting you!"

Ed realized that he was not real-- and therefore neither was the world real. A kind of depression settled over him. Again, he called Robert and said he was depressed because, "Nothing is real, I'm not real."

Robert yelled at him over the phone, "Of course you're real! You're on the phone with me!"

A few days later, it resolved itself when it occurred to him that the feeling of unreality was also not real--like an eraser that erases itself.

He began to have strange experiences-- he would see things out of the corner of his eye and only part of the object would be there, like half of a car.

Again, he asked Robert if this was part of the awakening, or only insanity.

Once more, Robert joked, "They go hand-in-hand."

Ed asked Robert if seeing the world as a dream was a temporary state.

Robert responded, "It's always like this." He waved his hand around to include everything. Then he added, "In the end, fundamentally nothing has ever existed, nothing has ever happened." (Self-Realization and Other Awakenings, Ed Muzika, p. 28. Available on his web site: We are sentience).

Finally, Ed's enlightenment climaxed.

You may remember how Ramana Maharshi talked a lot about the deep sleep state. One morning, Ed awakened and knew something great had happened.

"I discovered in one instant who I was--"

It was all clear. Final enlightenment.

He was beyond everything.

He was not touched either by the waking world or the dreaming world. They were just states added onto him.

“Even the nothingness of deep sleep was a superimposition on me-” (Muzika, p.45). (So, Ed Muzika finally answered my age-old question: where was I when the oral surgeon knocked me out—the unconsciousness was only a super-imposition on me.)

Later, he described this development to Robert Adams.

Robert responded, “Congratulations, you are Self-Realized.”

So That's the Way it is, Was, and Shall Be

So, there you have it, so far as I know, at least one person was enlightened through Robert Adams, the great unknown Sage of the twentieth century. There may be others.

I've talked before about how wary I am of westerners as gurus. How can I say that after knowing this? I do believe the fastest way to real enlightenment is friendship with someone already there.

My problem is the exaggerations attached to the guru tradition, the infallibility and the tendency of Asian culture to exaggerate. Add to that the number of westerners all too willing to coronate themselves either out of self-delusion, ignorance or ego-aggrandizement, then we wind up with the things that have happened here in the West.

The human urge for spiritual growth may be instinctual which makes taking advantage of it easy. "Seekers" are nice, trusting, want to believe. They long for something great and beautiful in their lives. They don't realize they are that great and beautiful thing for which they long.

It's a gift to have people who function as a guru if they don't take on the trappings, at least not in the West. Robert Adams was a sweet, unassuming soul who would never dream of taking advantage of anyone. He was a reluctant guru.

It's just too bad for me he died.

Or did he?

Do Enlightened People Really Die? Does Anyone?

Robert Adams always said that if you have a guru and he dies, he will still function as a guru. I didn't know what to make of that.

It was like, "The Self resides in the heart." I didn't understand that, either, until he showed me what it meant. Robert died in 1997 in Sedona, Arizona of liver cancer. I was sad for about nine months but I got on with my life. I practiced, I saw various teachers. None manifested what he did.

Now what the hell do I do? I wondered.

Always remember, there is something inside you that knows the way.

I continued doing energy practices, as I'd always done, mainly the ones I'd learned from Mantak Chia and his certified teachers. Not that I never did Kriya. I would do it if I had no time for anything else because, as I've said ad nauseum, you must keep the main energy channel open.

Years later, exploring the internet, I discovered a web site devoted to the memory of Robert Adams run by a student of his named Arunachala Goldsmith.

I'd bound the transcripts of Robert Adams' teaching into three-ring binders. Inside those were also twenty letters he wrote me over the years. I contacted Arunachala Goldsmith by email and offered to send him copies of Robert's letters, each one as an individual email, and he could post them on his web site if he liked.

None of what I offered Arunachala Goldsmith was anything I'd written, only stuff written by Robert Adams.

Surprisingly, he seemed to really like the idea. So, I began transcribing one letter a day and emailing it to him. I continued without interruption until about two-thirds of the way through, when I drifted a little.

He quickly fired off an email asking me what happened.

Ah, nothing, my mind just drifted--I wandered into a cotton patch, so to speak (my dad once told me a funny story about a relative who got overheated picking cotton and wandered senselessly into a nearby cotton patch).

Quickly, I started up again.

Three weeks later, it was finished.

That night, I received an email from Arunachala saying Robert's letters had been posted on his web site in a zipped file.

Little did I suspect I was about to receive the biggest surprise of my entire life.

No more than ten minutes after Arunachala contacted me, something so surprising happened that--if it hadn't happened to me--I might not believe it myself. However, it did happen and just this way with no exaggeration or imagination added.

While sitting in my living room, an energetic presence, (for lack of a better term, an energy-being), not only approached me but entered me, merged with me, entered my body. Obviously, I was utterly dumbfounded with amazement.

Intense energy waves flowed through me.

After many minutes of this, I decided to go sit by my wife in a back bedroom, tell her nothing, and see if she could feel it. How could she *not* feel it? It was overpowering!

She was sitting in the back of the house, in a small room, where she would go to read. She was reclining on a daybed that was pushed against a wall, a pillow behind her back.

I sat down and pressed against her to increase the likelihood she would feel this overpowering energy radiating through me.

“What are you doing?” she asked, amused.

“I’m meditating,” I said, not giving anything away. Well, if I wasn’t meditating, I was definitely having a spiritual experience!

“You’re...meditating?” she asked, clearly entertained by my sudden weirdness.

“Yes.”

She couldn’t feel it!

As you become more developed, this is the most frustrating thing of all. You have developed your energy-body, a completely new organ of perception, but other people have no idea what you’re talking about. It’s no different than being the only one with eyes. Not only can they not see, they don’t really believe you can.

I suppose you can’t blame them.

I’d been doing energy practices devotedly for thirty-five years.

[If you’re reading this and suddenly think, “I’m already old. I don’t have thirty-five years to practice. I can’t do this.” I want to tell you something really important. It says in the tradition that even if you just open the Microcosmic Orbit or the Shushumna, it gives you a “vibration” (energy activation) that will definitely help you after you die. So, don’t be pessimistic. You can still do yourself a world of good even if you only practice intensely for a little while.]

This vibratory presence lasted at least twenty minutes then departed as suddenly as it arrived. How could I tell? Well, how do you know someone has left when they wave by-by and walk away? He left!

It was Mr. Robert Adams, in person, I had no doubt of that.

Lest you think this is some kind of psychotic delusion, about four years after this happened, I heard that a close disciple of Rudi’s (Swami Rudrananda who has already been mentioned), said that after Rudi died, he came and “entered” him. So, I’m not the only person who has experienced this overwhelming phenomenon. I think it is part of the tradition, though one possibly known to only a tiny percentage people.

(You’re never the only one.)

In the book, “Holy Hell, a memoir of faith devotion and pure madness by Gail Tredwell” she describes how she visited Ramana Maharshi’s ashram at Arunachala. She asked how she could learn to meditate. They told her to go into the meditation room and sit and Sri Ramana would instruct her. She said that he was dead

and was informed it didn’t matter, he was there and would instruct her if she just went in and sat quietly.

In the book, “When a Goddess Dies: Worshipping Ma Anandamayi After Her Death,” the author, Orienne Aymard, notes that modern Indians report they believe they are having encounters with the living presence of Anandamayi Ma even though she died in 1982.

I also remembered how important the tombs of the saints were in Sufism and wondered if I now knew why.

What better way to show someone that it’s you, beyond any doubt, and establish a bond that can’t be broken?

Dear unknown reader, you are a product of modern industrial culture. So, it's hard to believe death isn't the end. Our culture of science tells us that, our deepest fears and sense of bereavement at the loss of a loved one tell us that, even half-baked spiritual teachers, like Ramesh Balsekar, tell us that.

But it turns out to be completely wrong.

Sometime, when it's convenient, I want you to do a small mind-exercise for me. Go up onto a tall building, or tower, higher than trees and buildings. Then turn slowly around a full 360 degrees, looking.

Notice you can actually see the roundness of the earth.

Why do I want you to do that? To demonstrate, in a concrete way, that this is a tiny planet. You, an even tinier being, can actually see it's a ball.

Human-kind evolved on this planet and have slowly, over unimaginable time, pulled themselves up from an animal-like existence to where we are now. Human beings are proud of that and they should be. They've come so far.

Now imagine all known human knowledge--that which has been approved by cultural authorities and so is considered mainstream--imagine it all in one library.

Now listen--if something hasn't yet been discovered by human beings and vetted in such a way that is acceptable to the majority of current cultural authorities—it doesn't get into that library called, "all human knowledge."

But there are still gargantuan, Grand Canyon-like unknowns in the universe that are not yet in that library. This is absolutely the truth. I promise you this.

What human beings don't yet know, or even suspect, about the universe, and about themselves, is truly mind-boggling.

Consider the very real possibility that the hard, material-world-environment is only one realm in a universe that has vast areas not yet detected by science.

Also, realize that personal knowledge tends to be limited by the shortness of human life. It took me thirty-five years of energy practice to discover what I now know, so the shortness of the human lifespan works against this knowledge becoming widespread.

The best chance for this knowledge to become commonplace is for more people to start practicing--beginning with Kriya pranayama. That's why I've publicly given this method.

I ask you this—what's more important, that the human race become more evolved or that some sect retain their power? You tell me.

If life beyond death seems too good to be true, I'm here to tell you, death will not end you.

It's a horrendous amount of change, I know, but it is not extinction.

I'm in no hurry to go myself. Like you, I like it well enough here, everyone does. But we are all going.

It's the next step for everyone.

This visit from Mr. Adams wasn't the culmination of anything but the beginning. Years earlier, I'd talked to some students of his who believed he was visiting them. And also, one of Ed Muzika's students, a very spiritual lady who works with hospice patients, who never knew Robert in the flesh, also said She'd been visited by him.

Now it was my turn.

My working hypothesis now is this--how clearly you feel his presence may rely on how much you've developed your energy-body.

In the early 1990's, I suspected that how clearly you felt the "crunch" in the chest, the guru's grace, depended on having enough surplus prana-chi in the energy channels that could be pulled into your chest under his influence.

Now, this "Energy Being" began visiting me regularly.

In the beginning, many times close together, as if I'd slipped his mind, (I'd been geographically distant, in Oklahoma), and now he was making up for it. Sometimes he'd really juice me! After one such visit, I felt wonderful for days, not unlike the time Cameron Eastman did the snoring breath for me.

I was massively grateful.

But eventually something else strange began happening.

Let me preface this by mentioning an excellent book I read by a Tibetan doctor about the Tibetan Buddhist version of Tantric sex called, "Karmamudra: The Yoga of Bliss." He says when two people do this practice together, they are really growing their energy together. Then, at some point, even when they are physically far away from each other, they can feel each other's emotional reactions. "So, that's why sometimes, even if you're far apart from each other, if the other person is thinking of you...you can feel each other..." [Karmamudra: The Yoga of Bliss by Dr. Nida Chenagtsang, Sky Press, 2018

p. 54]

(I bring this up because, as I already mentioned, after so many years developing my energy, (and with the help of some great people), when anyone, anywhere, known to me or unknown to me feels love or friendliness towards me, I can feel it in my energy-body. I know that's hard to believe if you've never experienced it, but it's true.)

Then something even more otherworldly began happening,

I began to be visited by ordinary people I knew who'd just died.

I could clearly feel their presence, their energy, with me. It was always a complete surprise. I don't want to talk in detail about those things because it's so private for the people involved. If I've managed to be of service to those people in their time of greatest need, I only hope someone will do the same for me.

What does a newly dead person feel like?

Like a thick cloud of prana-chi.

To borrow an expression that's been used before, I think of the cloud as "a Surround." The Surround becomes weaker over time—the longer they're out--and harder to detect. I have felt the presence of individuals quite some time later, but it's harder to detect.

Is it possible I'm mistaking some electro-magnetic field from a known source, like a generator, at these times?

No, it's alive and can't be mistaken for anything else, at least not by me. It's as easily discernible as a summer rain falling on you. I should also mention my belief that we are all visited by the newly dead, but I can feel them and, therefore, be of some service to them.

On the other hand, as already mentioned, it's possible to be visited by very evolved spiritual people who are being of service to you, for the purpose of sharing their energy.

They are more over-powering. But I don't want to get off-topic.

I'm talking about clearly feeling the presence of the newly-dead by being able to feel their energy-body.

The Tibetans call the body you live in after you die the "Bardo Body" and say that after you die, you will be aware of the thoughts of others-- so when someone thinks of you, you know it. (Which is why it's a good idea to practice some form of meditation before you die, to get some

control over your mind, so when it's your turn, you won't get taken on a roller coaster ride by your own mind).

You think of them with emotion, they feel it and come to you. Only with me, they know I'm aware of their presence so they stay longer.

Unfortunately, I'm no Great Soul, so while I do feel their presence, I can't perceive their thoughts. I just encourage them to stay calm. I assume they are in a state of fear and panic, which is understandable, especially in a culture that tells you there is no life after death or, alternatively, that it's the wholly owned subsidiary of one religion or another.

There is life after death but IMHO, it's an extension of nature, not owned by any group or religion.

It may be hard to believe that human beings can be aware of huge realities that aren't perceived by the finest scientific instruments. Developing the energy-body is like having a completely different instrument of perception. Scientific instruments were developed by people who didn't have that instrument of perception.

I'm only asking people to develop themselves.

I'm not putting myself forward as anything but a source of valid information about the energy-body and how to develop it. Please note I'm not trying to make any money from this at all. I offer it for 99 cents because, people being as they are, I was concerned that if it was free, people would treat it as garbage. So, I thought it best to charge something--hopefully 99 cents is a price anyone can afford.

Cameron Eastman, Thich Tri Hien, Neem Karoli Baba, Jesus Christ, Buddha, Robert Adams, Ramana Maharshi—none of these people cared about money. And I'm not trying to make money. Spiritual things should be offered freely or as close to free as possible. There are too many people in spirituality who want to be paid like doctors and lawyers. Spirituality belongs to a different realm.

You can't get so high that you can't fall.

What I know for certain is death doesn't end you. You'll go on.

Understand, I'm absolutely not asking you to take my word for this. The whole purpose of sharing these things is to try and get people to do the energy work themselves and acquire their own first-hand knowledge.

The ultimate irony of this is, it doesn't matter if no one believes in life beyond physical death, because everyone finds out when they die. I just think it would be better for life here on the earth if more people learned the truth while here.

So, practice.

It won't be any quick fix, but even if it takes a while, you're going to still be in existence, (one way or another), years from now; wouldn't it be better to be here with a highly developed spiritual life than to just go through life with the vibration of a speed bump?

Of course, it would.

And you can.

Remember, something within you knows the way.

If you're thinking that maybe all this happened because I have some rare natural talent, I don't agree.

A talent would be something you are born with whereas I came into this quite slowly. And, so can you. I didn't expect any of the surprises coming my way, I just kept practicing out of some spiritual compulsion. So, can you.

In closing, not long ago I heard a talk online by an American Buddhist teacher who was also a “therapist” who spoke against all energy practices. “Too dangerous,” he said. And besides, he added, even if you could generate ecstasy, you’re just enjoying it with “your ego.”

Besides the fact that “the ego” is just a set of ideas built out of memory with no real existence, I wanted to ask him, if these things are not important, then why do highly developed spiritual beings who return share their energy with us? Why would they do that if it’s not important?

They wouldn’t.

It is important.

Overpowering energy experiences help you transcend your ego.

Don’t be afraid to develop your energy-body, you won’t regret it.

And now, dear unknown reader, if you’ve read this far, I thank you from deep in my heart for sharing the journey. I wish you only happiness as you explore your spiritual nature. In closing, I’d like to quote from the greatest speech I’ve heard in my adult life, given by the Reverend Jesse Jackson at the Democratic Convention in 1984. Though the eloquence is unmistakably his, it expresses my feelings better than I can.

Ahem, Reverend Jackson:

“If, in my high moments, I have done some good, offered some service, shed some light, healed some wounds, rekindled some hope, or stirred someone from apathy and indifference, or in any way along the way helped somebody, then this campaign has not been in vain.

“If, in my low moments, in word, deed or attitude, through some error of temper, taste, or tone, if I have caused anyone discomfort, created pain, or revived someone’s fears, that was not my truest self... Please forgive me. Charge it to my head and not my heart. My head—so limited in its finitude, my heart, boundless in its love for the human family--”

Lastly, I’d be remiss if I closed with anything other than the words of Robert Adams himself, the greatest person I met on my trip through life. These are his words, not mine:

“There is really nothing to say. Words are superfluous. I only use words so you can detect the silence in the words.

Silence is truth.

You cannot explain truth in words.

The words become meaningless, redundant.

The truth comes to you of its own free will when you prepare yourself, through deep surrender, through giving up all attachment, giving up your body, your mind and everything that’s important to you, surrendering it all to the Self. As long as you’re holding onto anything, the reality will evade you.

“The reality only comes when you give up yourself, when you give up your ego, when you give up your needs, your wants, give up trying to make something happen, give up desires, when you give up trying to become self-realized, when you just give up. Then something wonderful happens. You begin to expand.”

“Not your body, but the consciousness which you are.”

“You become all-pervading, absolute reality.”

“It happens by itself.”

There is no teaching higher than silence.

-Robert Adams

The below is directly copied and pasted from:

<http://www.peter.ca/spirit/robert-adams.html>

Robert Adams

Went to a satsang with Robert Adams. Robert has fairly advanced Parkinson's disease so speaking is difficult for him. Hence his satsang was a mix of him struggling to talk and playing of (rather loud and to my ear somewhat unpleasant) Indian music. About 30 people were in attendance, most of them having been there before.

To my delight Robert lacked the affectations of so many of the current satsang crowd. He was simple, direct, and profoundly ordinary in the best possible sense of that term. He spoke of freedom from his own direct experience, rather than from some imagined image or pseudo-understanding. His words were direct, and pure without artifice. He was open and welcoming.

Unfortunately the people claiming to speak for him seemed to be rather a different story. Much like the bunch of miscreants surrounding 'Gangaji', they seemed to cast something of a pall over some of the attendees - a couple of whom were clearly quite upset with their machinations. Edward Muzika seems to be one of the *very* few who had some real understanding of what Robert was pointing toward. In my opinion (and it is only that) the rest should be eschewed by rapidly running feet in the opposite direction 😞

But Robert was very different. A nice quiet presence in the midst of it all. Although he said little, what little he said was not from some text or script, but from the heart. It seemed to me that he had nothing to gain or lose. I liked it very much that although his body and brain were in distress he was not. Robert's attention never wavered - pure and still. Very lovely, and a fine example of what is possible.

Robert Adams: Highly recommended 😊

The below is directly copied and pasted from:

<http://www.you-are-that.com/about.html>

(The author's name is not recorded on his own site, other than a reference to him as "Jean-Pierre", apparently by 'Sailor' Bob Adamson. It is worth noting that his review of Robert's satsang is negative, yet also that his realization, once he had it, is expressed in language identical to Robert's. In addition, his "beef" that Robert is taking on the role of the Western guru seems to apply to him as well... his website is full of declarations about how easy it is to attain wisdom (without precise instructions), many quotations from Nisargadatta Maharaj, Ramana Maharshi and biblical figures, and, finally, audio clips from a 2006 satsang given in Sedona, Arizona, the same town where Robert "left the body" nine years previous.

I am including this article in the interest of complete reportage. It also fills out the picture (from what I can gather) of the satsang-and-seekers scene so often disparaged by Robert Adams in his satsangs and Ed Muzika on his website, who describes this crowd as "California Advaitins." Yet, finally, who's to say Jean-Pierre isn't realized?)

HERE and NOW YOU ARE THAT

I had not been a long time Seeker but an earnest one with the will and desire to know myself. I started my search in 1996 with a western spiritual teacher called Robert Adams that I visited for about a year. From far away, he looked like he was sharing similar pointers and associated himself with Ramana Maharshi like so many.

He also like to play the holy Western spiritual Sage like so many others and be worshipped as a special enlightened being to be taken care of financially and physically by his closest devotees and believers as a Jnani or Guru transmitting Grace. This guy had Parkinson disease therefore he wasn't speaking very clearly most of the time.

Most of his pointers were contradictory and very confusing. Paradoxically he was pointing Seekers toward silence and therefore away from the simple Truth and ever-present Reality and kept Seekers deeper into confusion and into ignorance. He wanted his disciples and devotees to believe what he say he was to be true but it was all crap. Pretending to be a holy being, a Saint,

a enlightened Sage or Jnani, but that was all false and misleading. Just all for show to entice the ignorant Seekers, just this and nothing else.

I now laugh to how foolish I was in believing the false to be true, all because of ignorance. I guess I had to start my search somewhere anyhow and even though I was been fooled by the false and by the greatest illusion of all, the so called special enlightened being pretending to be transmitting holy Grace.

By understanding and seeing the false as false and the dream as a dream, it all got me to where I am today. Now I know that any Buddha that can be found on the Road, no matter how holy it may appear to be, is only the greatest illusion. Wisdom is not to worship it, not to fall for it and believe it to be true, but wisdom is to kill it, to destroy the greatest illusion. It is all a lie. There are no special enlightened beings or holy Sages and Buddhas, just people that like the smell of their own farts and like to pretend to be.

I found myself two years later in 1999 spending two weeks with Ranjit an Indian co-disciple of Nisargadatta from Bombay that was sharing his understanding or the 'Bird's way' as he liked to call it. Complete opposite of keeping quiet and silent. Simply that only direct understanding was required for Freedom, no practice of any kind was necessary at all. Not to keep quiet or silent for Freedom, but that understanding was the short cut and most direct way.

This was the same simple message of direct understanding shared by Siddharameshwar to Nisargadatta, Ranjit and many others that ended their search, to simply remove the 'veil' of ignorance with understanding only. Nothing else.

He was a pretty old man that liked to play his part as the Indian Master to his Indian disciples for entertainment, seemingly very rooted in Indian traditions and even though he kept telling everybody that only understanding was necessary for Freedom. That understanding alone was itself the Key to Freedom. Paradoxically I couldn't understand much about what he was saying. One day I heard that He died also and that was the end of that.

Most of these people disciples and devotees are still waiting for Freedom to show up some day. Good luck. I totally disagree with these people's so called teaching and do not recommend them to anyone. It is all false and only bondage. Unless of course you are a Guru lover and like to blindly worship other people believing them to be holy and special enlightened beings and want to hold on to the pointer and foolishly worship the finger pointing at the moon and miss the moon or the Reality completely. If you do not want to know what is real and the Reality for yourself then you can go on and always worship illusion. That is always your choice.

Everybody has a story about being kept on the Seeking path to nowhere by some holy Guru wanna be. Wisely without holding on to any dead fingers or pointers pointing at the moon and with the strong desire to know the Reality. I forget all these transient spiritual people playing the holy Gurus and kept moving on steadily toward knowing the Reality and Freedom. Standing on my own I was strongly determined to know my true nature at all cost. The burning desire in my heart to know myself was so strong.

After going up and down like a yo-yo for several more years, I was still confused between silence or understanding and having no clue whatsoever to what the Self, He or awareness was truly all about, desperately trying to know which is the Truth that would end all paths for Freedom. The search for my real self and strive to discover my unchanging true nature finally ended in 2004 by having a short phone conversation with Bob Adamson from Melbourne Australia.

Over the phone I asked Bob if he could directly point out to me my unchanging true nature. He asked me to look around the room where I was sitting and to ask myself if the thought I see could see, and then to also ask myself if the thought I hear could hear, I pondered the question and answer no!

Then he simply stated, that is it. I didn't understand at first what he was talking about. After the short conversation, I went back to my business and I simply pondered these direct pointers he shared with me and I finally saw, realized and understood for myself the simple Truth about the 'I', the simple Truth about me, myself and 'I'. That there is no individual self, there is no personal individual 'me' or an independent entity or 'ego' present.

The dualistic concept of a 'mind' is revealed as being a false illusory concept and disappears altogether just like a mirage of water in the desert upon investigation is revealed to have never existed whatsoever and the 'veil' of ignorance and separation or the false notion and illusion of duality dropped all by itself.

By having a look for myself by myself and inquiring, by questioning and investigating for myself by myself my true Self was revealed. It all finally clicked. It all dawned on me all by itself naturally. Investigating myself or self-inquiry was simply seeing the false as false, then only Oneness remains present self-revealed as the 'I'. The 'I' is the Real-'I'-ty and the Oneness itself. The 'I' is non duality.

The simple Truth about my true nature or about the 'I' is effortlessly self-revealed as being true consciousness. Now 'I' know the simple Truth, that me, myself and 'I' am eternally Free. No separation, no duality. No dual-'I'-ty but only Real-'I'-ty. The 'I' is the imperishable eternal Self itself.

I do not endorse any so called Guru simply because there is no such thing. The Self is truly yourself. God is Life itself and this consciousness is always undeniably present within your own dwelling as plain ordinary existence. Your own undeniable immutable existence is the Divine. God is 'I' am. Know that 'I' am is consciousness, that is all that needs to be realized. Look at yourself here and now. You know that you are present because you are conscious. That is the Reality being pointed to as one's true nature.

Consciousness is one's true nature. Present as plain ordinary everyday awareness of being or 'I' am. That is the Reality and destination one has never left. The final conclusion is to forget any holy and all religious concepts, person, place and things and look at your own self instead. You already are the Reality or consciousness this very instant that you Seek to know, you simply

don't know and realize it. Ignorance is the only obstacle to Freedom. Remove ignorance, that is the only 'veil' to get rid of. That is all that needs to be done.

Consciousness is simply being and always present naturally with oneself as one's unchanging true nature, that is why it is called the Reality. To know one's ever-present true nature is very easy, no time or effort is required, only understanding is necessary to remove ignorance. Paradoxically people Seeking this true consciousness or one's ever-present unchanging true nature, do not want this Reality to be that plain, that common and that ordinary, what to do! After all, how far away, can one's ever-present true nature be? Closer than close of course.

Consciousness is indeed always with us. Everybody knows 'I' am.
No one can deny his own being.
~ Ramana Maharshi ~

The below is directly copied and pasted from:

<http://luthar.com/satsang-with-robert-adams-by-kheyala>

Satsang with Robert Adams: By Kheyala

One of the first stops after leaving Colorado that my best friend and I took in our new home-on-wheels ("Lakshmi") was in Sedona, AZ to go to satsang with Robert Adams. Many of you may know that Robert Adams (whose body died a few years ago) sat before Ramana for years in Tiruvannamalai.

We knew that Robert Adams was aging and that a special opportunity awaited us. Now, keep in mind that my conscious spiritual journey was rather new and I had previously immersed myself in the Satsang Mecca called Boulder.

I had really gotten a feeling for what satsang was "supposed to" look like and went to Robert Adams' place fully armed with my finest "spiritual" clothing, "spiritual" face, "spiritual" voice, and "spiritual" sitting posture.

When we arrived, spiritually carrying our zaphus behind our hips in silence, heads held humbly down, we were quite surprised to find a room full of relaxed people hanging around, just acting normal. In fact, they were so talkative with each other and easy-going and animated that it made me wonder if we were really at the right house.

I came prepared for silence and holiness and the scene was unsettling being so ordinary. There was nothing spiritual about the place, like decorations or altars or anything that I recall. There may have been a small photo of Ramana. So I sat down and prepared to "meditate."

Needless to say, I simply couldn't keep my eyes closed. There was too much fun going on in the room. I struggled with it for a while, but that became so darned uncomfortable. Eventually, I just sat there figuring it would get holy, maybe, after Robert came in.

You can imagine my surprise when he did come in. While I was expecting a spiritual-looking man dressed in Indian garb, what he was actually wearing was a pair of baggy, silky jogging pants and a tee-shirt and he had on a hot pink ruffled-up baseball cap that was on crooked!

Because Robert had Parkinson's Disease, he kind of made his way across the living room in a slow-motion shuffle and sat himself in the chair reserved for him. Everyone made room for him as he passed by and with great affection touched their palms together in reverence.

Robert sat on the chair for some time. It was real quiet in the room, but not an "it's-time-to-be-quiet" kind of quiet. It was just naturally quiet. And no one said anything. So, trained as I was to recognize a jnani, well.... no way. This guy was plainly sitting there with his mouth open and his eyes half closed. He was hunched over with his skin just hanging on his face. There was nothing that I could "read." And boy, did I try. I looked for some kind of radiant glow, some kind of visible wisdom, some hint of Ramana, and nothing! I looked into his eyes and it was as if no one was home. My mind was just struck dumb.

Eventually, Robert jerked his arm up, sort of pointing a finger. That was the cue for the person holding the boombox to hit "play." I thought, "Oh. THIS must be the holy part." I closed my eyes in full expectation of sacred words or ethereal music or at least some Sanskrit bhajans. To my utter shock, the thin and twangy voice of Willie Nelson's "Always on my mind" came singing out!

The whole room went into an uproar. Everyone was laughing and swaying from side to side in enjoyment, singing dramatic crescendos at each chorus: "Telll meeeee. Tell me that your sweet love hasn't died...etc."

Robert? He just sat there, expressionless, his body unmoving, hunched in his chair. No sparkling eyes, no nothing. By then, my mouth was dangling open as well. My mind had completely come to a halt. It could not make sense of this at all. It didn't know and could not begin to interpret what it was seeing.

The next musical selection was Kenny Rogers singing really sentimental love songs. These were no Sanskrit Bhajans about Enlightenment or God or anything. These were love songs riddled with illusion and duality. Rather than condemning them or spiritually correcting them, Robert Adams was just sitting there. Everyone was laughing so hard that tears were coming out. It was so infectious that before I knew it, I was singing along and laughing too. My sides were aching when we were through.

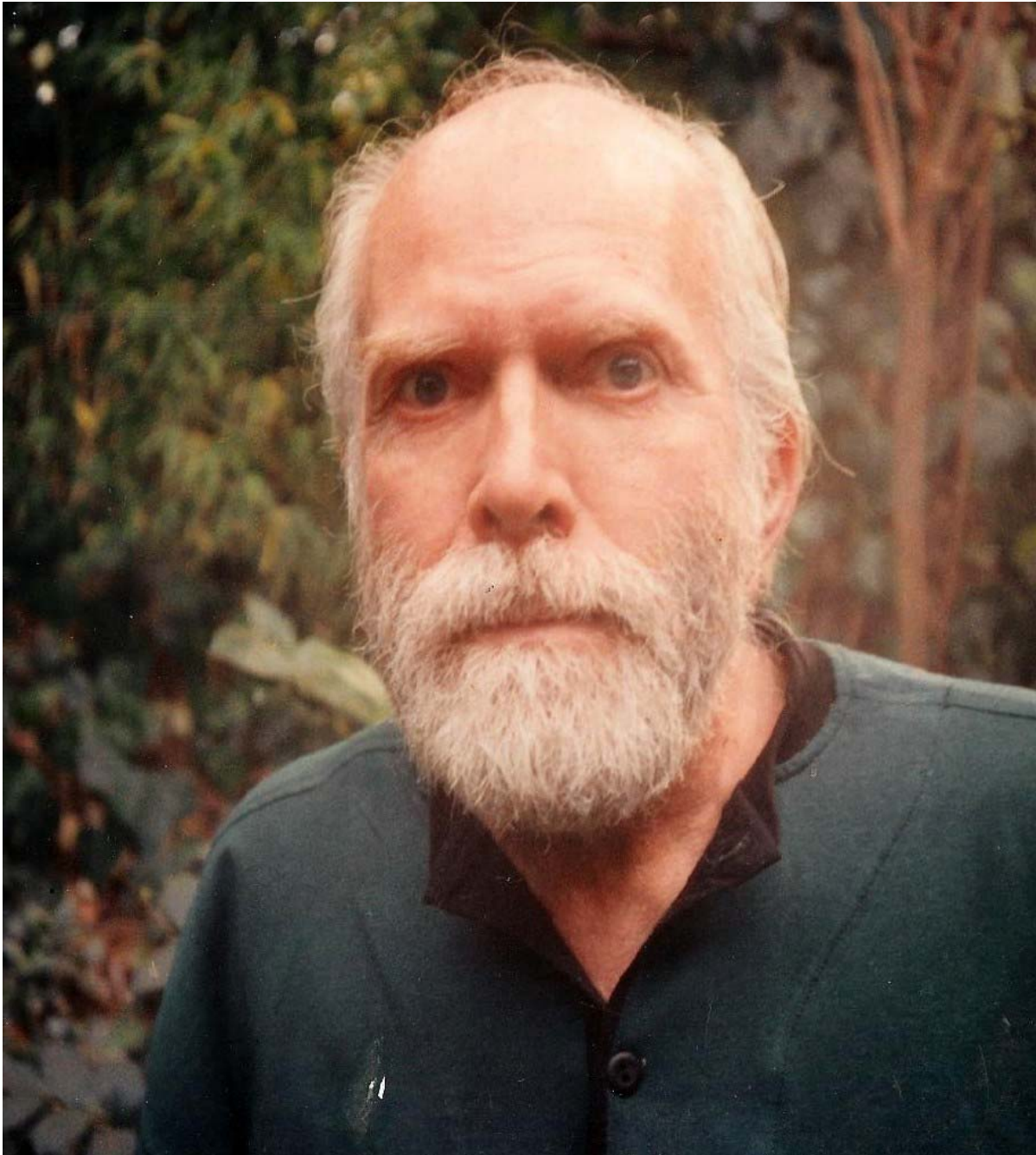
Afterwards, with everyone returning to normal breathing and with some sighs and residual giggles here and there, I had the thought, "Well, maybe now it will get serious." There was a moment of silence. Then suddenly, someone said, "Hey! How about Mexican?!" This was met by an outburst of cheering! Soon everyone got up and grouped together in cars to go to a local Mexican restaurant.

Bewildered but happy to go along I arrived at a scene that I was dismayed to find rather loud and crowded and chaotic. Shortly after we were seated, I looked over at Robert. He had a bright green margarita in front of him.

Before leaving, I didn't want to miss the opportunity to speak with Robert even though at the time I sure didn't know what to make of him...but all that came out was something like, "I like your hat." And he said something like, "Thanks."

The sweet, natural happiness that I experienced in his presence was so very thick and blatant. All the ideas I had picked up about what it is to be in the presence of Truth were permanently cracked. The mind just couldn't get around the chasm between what it thought holiness was supposed to be like and what it had actually met that day with Robert Adams. In its attempt to cross that chasm, it had fallen into it, giving rise to an absolutely undeniable experience of joyfulness and peace.

Editor's note: Kheyala is a long term member of the HarshaSatsangh list. Her account of the Satsang with Robert Adams first appeared in Spring 2002 of the original HS-Ezine.



Biography of a Sage

I call Robert Adams the mysterious sage because we knew so little about him. He rarely talked about his past and hardly ever revealed his own feelings or thoughts about any personal matter, even when asked. It was as if he did not exist as a person. After being with him constantly for nearly eight years, all the stories he told me about his life might total three dozen pages. He almost always talked in the present. He always shunned publicity and avoided any publications about himself in all but a few Indian Journals such as the Mountain Path published by Ramana Ashram, and [Inner Directions](#). He told me that the greatest teachers were unknown, and that he only wanted ten close disciples onto which to pass his understanding.

Of course, the things he did tell me about his life or about what or whom he saw, are extraordinary, and I refer to these throughout this site.

More than that, I do not think he wanted to be bothered with the duties and publicity that fall on public gurus. Years earlier, he had turned down the dauntless Muktananda, who wanted Robert to help him build Ashrams all over the world. He told Baba, "What's the point?" A little later, he parted company with Yogi Bhajan after their seminars began attracting too much attention in Houston.

He was also mysterious because he was so silent; he never stood out in a crowd and rarely ever expressed or demonstrated emotions. I never saw him angry, and I only heard him criticize people twice (Once me!). Once he cried when I cried after one of my cats died. He cried softly and very silently a few times at Satsang in Sedona when a few of us visited him there. We thought he was missing Los Angeles and us. He cried openly when watching a video of Ananda Mayi Ma, who he had known well. Mostly, he was free of emotion, and had been criticized by his family for expressing no emotion at his mother's funeral, which he attended some years after he first returned to America. Without expressed emotional cues, it was always hard to 'read' Robert and sometimes his quietness and withdrawal felt somewhat cold to me. But there was no coldness there; there was a lack of presence. He was not there. Someone who was not there cannot be expected to be there in a human-emotional sort of way. He did not even pretend to be there in a socially acceptable way.

Usually he remained quiet, sitting in the background, taking everything in. At lunch or dinner, everyone else would talk about all kinds of things, and Robert was mostly ignored, quietly eating while everyone else entertained each other in animated conversation. Robert only became the Guru at Satsang, when after sitting quietly for a long period, and after looking around the room, 'feeling' the vibrations, he would start speaking. After the talk, he would grow silent, and then ask for questions. Silence is the best description for Robert. Silence was his home, his source, his being, his teaching.

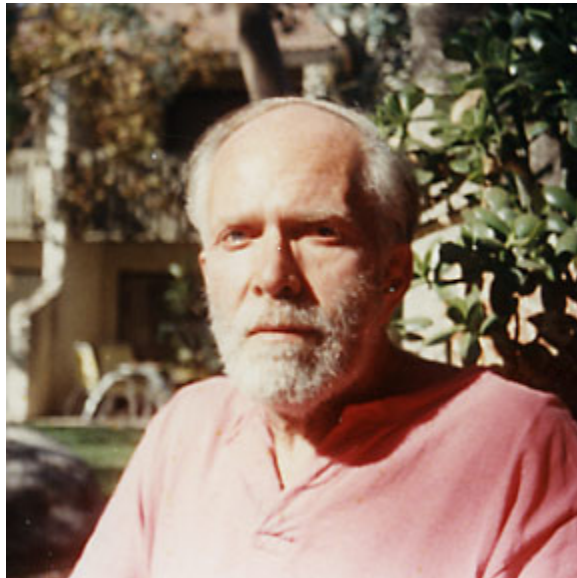
Very soon after meeting Robert, he told me that even his wife of forty years thought he was strange. She truly believed that Robert was from another planet, and some day a flying saucer was going to land and take him away to his home. Years later, I joked about it with her, and she

said, "Yes, I believe that!" Maybe, in a way, so did I. Robert was a remarkable and strange, strange man.

He once joked that in order to be taken seriously when getting a loan at a bank, he put on a suit and "acted normally." He said they kicked him out anyway. Robert's "normal" would be considered bizarre for most. Imagine, not being a catatonic and sitting hours in a chair looking out into his backyard, not blinking an eyelash, for hours.

Rarely did anyone ask him about his previous life at Satsang. Mostly even then he avoided questions about his life and experiences, especially during the early years when I knew him, before he gained wide fame as a teacher. Infrequently though, he would reveal some incident about his past, such as his meeting with Ramana, his awakening experience, or some jobs he had in the past.

To the best of my recollection, what follows is a sketch of his spiritual biography gathered from what he told me, reading his own few publications and what he said at Satsang.



Robert was born on January 21, 1928 in the Bronx. His mother was Jewish and his father Catholic. He once joked he took a lawyer with him when he went to Confession. He was a rebellious youth, always on the verge of getting into trouble. He questioned the practices of those around him, such as eating meat. His mother would sometimes kill chickens for the Sunday meal. Robert could not bear to watch or eat the meat. He was hounded by the question of how there can be a world where people ate animals, which was filled with suffering and death, and yet there supposedly was a God allowing all this. Of course, many people are tormented by that

same doubt. He wrestled with this question until he was eleven, when one day, there came a sudden and overwhelming realization that there was no such world, it was an illusion! It did not exist. This is a very different kind of resolution indeed. Most people hounded by this question resolve it by dropping the question or turning to faith in some religious system. This eleven year-old's resolution was an adumbration of his future enlightenment.

Robert's earliest memory was of a small, two-foot high dwarf with white hair and a white beard that would stand at the foot of his crib and jabber at him in a language he could not understand. He said the man was quite animated, and constantly 'lectured' him. This little man finally disappeared when Robert was seven. Years later, after his awakening experience, he was looking through a book on the teachings of Ramana Maharshi when he saw that sage's picture. "I was shocked!" he said, "The hair on my head and neck stood straight up. The little man who had lectured me all those years was Ramana!"

After the little man disappeared, Robert developed a Siddhi, a power. He felt the world belonged to him. Whenever he wanted something, he just repeated God's name three times and within minutes or hours, it would be given to him. Once, after he thought he would enjoy taking violin lessons and doing the God's name mantra, his uncle showed up with a violin saying he thought Robert might enjoy learning.

By the time Robert was 14, he hardly studied any school subjects at all. Whenever a test came up, he would again just say, "God! God! God!" and the correct answers would come. One day, just before taking an algebra test in Mrs. O'Reilly's classroom, he repeated God's name three times. Rather than the algebra answers, something else came to him, a total complete enlightenment experience wherein was revealed the transcendent knowledge of life and death, of reality and illusion. The nature of this experience is expressed in one of his talks on this site.

Robert withdrew even more completely from the world. He stopped eating, stopped going to school, stopped hanging around with friends. His mother was quite concerned of course, and, which was quite unusual at that time (1942) sent him to see a psychiatrist. Apparently the psychiatrist told his mother he would grow out of it.

Robert had no idea what had happened to him, and began exploring Eastern religious books to find some meaning for the experience. He began attending meetings with Joel Goldsmith, taking a bus miles away in the City.

One day, in a library, he spotted the book about Ramana Maharshi, which contained the photograph mentioned above. He also found the book, *The Autobiography of a Yogi*, by Paramhansa Yogananda, and made up his mind to stay with him. Curiously, those were two of the books I also discovered at a very early age. Therefore, at age 16, he left home to stay with Yogananda at the Self-Realization Fellowship campus in Encinitas, California.

Robert always had a few Yogananda stories to tell, including one about his initiation into Yogananda's order of swamis. After the initiation, Yogananda whispered into Robert's ear, "Will you always love me, no matter what I do?" Robert, somewhat taken aback by the question, and thinking to himself, "What is this guy planning to do?" just responded, "Of course!"

To make a long story short, Yogananda would not allow Robert to become a monk at SRF. As Robert confides, "He couldn't wait to get rid of me. I kept asking why he taught all the practices, mantras, affirmations and healing techniques, when all of them missed the point of Self-realization." Yogananda's expressed attitude was along the lines of, "I've done very well, thank you, doing things this way!" Because of the nature of Robert's own spontaneous awakening, his connection to the little white haired dwarf, and Yogananda's own devotional relationship with Ramana Maharshi, he told Robert to go to Ramana.

During the Fall of 1946, Robert arrived by train to the town of Tiruvannamalai, a few miles from Arunachala Mountain, where lay Ramanashram and his future teacher, Ramana Maharshi. He took a bullock cart to the Ashram, was admitted, and stayed the night. Early the next day while walking back from the mountain, towards the Ashram, he spotted Ramana walking down the path towards him. An electrifying energy coursed through his body, and the last of what men call an ego left him. He felt completely surrendered, completely open. As Ramana got closer, Robert stripped off his clothes, approached Ramana and dropped to his guru's feet. Ramana reached down grabbing Robert by his shoulder, and looked into Robert's eyes with complete love and said, "I have been waiting for you. Get up! Get up!" Robert said had Ramana asked him to leap over a cliff at that moment, he would have done so gladly.

Robert became different when he told this story. Most of the time he never talked about his past, and when he did, it was said more for entertainment than for teaching purposes. When he told this story he was sitting erect, almost standing out of his chair, and he looked outwards, above the crowd before him, almost as if he were seeing Ramana again. Tears came from his eyes as stated he would have jumped off the cliff for Ramana, and he added finally, "This is how you have to be, completely naked before God, completely surrendered!"

Robert stayed at Ramana Ashram for a little over three years. Visitors then were not allowed to stay long, so he lived in caves above the Ashram. During his time there, he bought a jeep for the Ashram to bring supplies from town, and helped build a large hospital at the Ashram using money from an inheritance. [Note: I found independent verification of this latter gift of Robert's in a book written by David Godman entitled *Living by the Words of Bhagavan*, published in India in 1993. Although the donor was not named in the book, the situation Godman described was identical to what Robert told me.]

During the late 1940's, Ramana was almost constantly ill with severe arthritis and other ailments, including the cancer that eventually killed him. Few visitors were allowed to stay for more than a

few weeks at the Ashram, so Robert lived mostly in the caves above, which also allowed him to avoid the crowds.

After Ramana died, Robert had wanted to visit several other saints in India, but had no money left. The famed Ramana biographer, Arthur Osborne, heard about Robert's situation and deeds and gave him \$7,000 to continue his travels and spiritual education. In the strange way these things happen, which is my own experience; this was precisely the amount he had spent for the jeep and hospital. (I once gave Robert \$7,000 in 1990, when I still had money. He said it was an investment in his wife's business of sewing clothes for sale to retailers and at swapmeets. However, deep in my heart, I knew this was my first donation towards his support. \$7,000 seems to be a significant figure in our lineage. However, inflation-adjusted, in case anyone cares, that 1942 amount would be about \$70,000 in 2006 dollars.)

Robert wandered across India and around the world off and on during the next 35 years, having married in 1954, and raised, often in absentia, two daughters. He said when he married Nicole, she looked like Rita Hayworth. After he developed Parkinson's during the 1980's, he settled down in Los Angeles with his family, where he began teaching, first to small groups at student's homes, then to larger and larger crowds. He always felt he owed something to his youngest daughter for spending so little time with her as she was growing up.

He also told me that the Parkinson's was a gift, because it grounded him, ending his world travels. When he first knew he had the disease, he moved back to Los Angeles where his wife and daughter lived. He worked as handyman in a large apartment complex. His wife made clothes, which she sold, at swap meets and to various retail outlets. Eventually, because of the disease, he was no longer capable of the physical work involved and started teaching in earnest and gathering students. I do not think he ever wanted to teach again, but, as he told me, he had no other choice.

He told me he had been living in a cabin in Oregon when he first noticed his hands trembling and some feeling of heaviness when moving. Eventually, he had a neurological evaluation, where, as he stated, "The doctor told me there was good news and bad news. The good news was that it was Parkinson's Disease and the bad news it was Parkinson's," meaning he did not have a brain tumor. Over the years, Robert's symptoms worsened. When I first knew him, the disease had already made speaking difficult for him and he was difficult to understand. By the time he left LA, it was extremely difficult to understand him because of his soft voice and his lack of control over his mouth and breathing. Often he would motion me during Satsang and whisper into my ear what he was trying to say. Near the end of his days in Los Angeles, it was anybody's guess as to what he was saying. I think he felt I could guess better what he was saying than the others at Satsang because I had known him so long, and had transcribed so many of his talks. One time he joked in Satsang that, "There are many teachers who give long lectures; there are many who are silent, but there is only one who mumbles."

One of his students that only met him once in Sedona said that near the end, Robert was all but inaudible. This person said that all that Robert said, over and over, was "Freedom! Freedom! Freedom," which had a profound and lasting effect on this person.

His whereabouts during his periods of wandering and with whom he stayed are unclear. His daughter is currently writing a biography, which might better illuminate those hidden years. My recollection of what he told me was that when he was in India, he met most of the well known and many not well-known saints and sages that are India's most valued export. He stayed about six months with Nisargadatta, about whom he said was very rude. When I asked him what he thought of Nisargadatta's teachings, he said something to the effect that Maharaj had added his own personal, and unnecessary interpretation of Advaita.

He stayed with or met many other sages such as Krishnamurti and many more I never heard of. He lived in Hawaii for a time, where he led workshops on weight reduction and stopping smoking. He told me he taught attendees self-hypnosis and took them running on the beach every morning, which made them feel more alive and strong.

He led a spiritual group in Santa Fe known as the Jnana Marga Society for a few years before coming to Los Angeles, but abandoned it, he said, in the middle of one night because all of the trustees were preoccupied with the money brought in at Satsang, and voting themselves large salaries. He gave me many of the newsletters he had written at that time under the Nom de Plum of M. T. Mind, to be included in anything I wrote about him later, which I have yet to do.

Robert said he always had his seven league boots on to make sure he had not missed anything. Only advancing Parkinson's Disease could bring his traveling to a halt. However, the sheer mystery of his past, led some of his skeptical sarcastic students, such as me, thinking he might have those seven league boots because someone with ten league boots was after him.

Dancing With God

This section is what this website is all about: my relationship with Robert and how he pointed me towards the reality behind all concepts, not only spiritual concepts, but all concepts. It is part spiritual autobiography, part an exposition of discovery, and part a personal story of my relationship to my teacher, Robert Adams.

Up until I met Robert, my spirituality manifested as a thrashing about in Zen for many years, psychoanalytic self-psychology, Transpersonal Psychology and messing around with my friends in Siddha Yoga. But there was the certain realization I had gotten nowhere. In fact, I had been much closer to correct understanding the nature of consciousness and self before I met my first

Zen master, when my only practice was self-inquiry in the form of "Who Am I," which I had gotten from reading Ramana Maharshi, and which is the most prominent practice mentioned in Kapleau's Three Pillars of Zen. Going to various Zen masters and taking up their practices got me lost and confused. Each had a different practice and different understanding expressed very differently.

I went to these various teachers, not because I doubted my practice, but because of unending, frightening and sometimes painful Kundalini experiences, about which I could find no one to explain them or teach me how to end them.

But after 22 years I had looked everywhere outside and inside. I had looked into the Void--the self-illuminated emptiness--within myself year after year to no avail. All that I knew was emptiness and awe. But I knew that emptiness was not the end. I had perceived it and immersed in it for many, many years with no awakening. I eventually realized I was observing the Void. There was a duality of I and the Void. The Void was still an object, and I was an "apparent" witnessing and acting subject. The I and the That were the two primary concepts that created and maintained my dual world. If either of these two pillars of "reality" would fail, the whole of my world and my being would be shattered, and this is what happened.

What I discovered was that there is no I at all. When there is no I, there is no world, because the duality disappears. Our human existence depends on having a subjective I opposed to an objective world, which is often characterized in spatial terms of inner and outer.

My discovery was that there is no subject witnessing or perceiving an apparent objective world. There is no inner nor outer; no Void nor lack of Void; no God nor Godlessness. All that remains when the duality of thought is exploded is the experience of consciousness within which phenomenality, including the I-fantasy, floats. The world and I are just appearances within an apparent unity consciousness. One might also say both are artifacts of consciousness or the play of consciousness.

Yet, I discovered further that I was beyond even this unity consciousness. None of the plays and appearances of consciousness touch me. Consciousness is added onto me, but it is not me. The "I" of consciousness was not me.

Nisargadatta talks about the two understandings of unity consciousness vs. transcending consciousness altogether. It is difficult to understand him in this way because of the confusing expositions of some of his editors. As Nisargadatta said, there were many translators and editors about him, and each will teach and edit according to their own level of understanding.

Unless you have the experience of awakening to the phantasm material of the world, any understanding is just book learning and will always be subject to doubt. You have to have the experience of the total destruction of your world in a catastrophic, mind exploding turning of consciousness before you can really say you understand.

Robert never revealed the second teaching, transcending consciousness, to his listeners at Satsang. He said there was no one there who would understand this final teaching. He jokingly said that if he told it, people would beat him to death.

I wrote a book about all of this entitled "Dancing With God," several hundred pages long. This is the redacted version, absent much philosophical speculation.

The Dance Begins

During the early 1980's I stopped being a Zen monk. I stopped seeking to know who I was, stopped studying koans and Buddhist texts, and stopped seeking teachers. I had experienced countless samadhis, no-mind, and no-body states, but I felt little different after a dozen years of arduous practice. I felt as if these meditation-induced states hadn't touched 'me' at all. Though I found no-one, no thing, no presence at all when I looked inside, I still felt like a 'me' most of the time, and I was not happy.

That is, there had been no enlightenment after 15 years of intense practices and study under many Zen masters and a few gurus.

I dropped out of spiritual seeking, and studied the emotional aspects of being a person. I studied psychology, received a doctorate, became a psychological assistant, and a few years later, had my own practice, so to speak, under someone else's license.

Introspecting my emotions made me even more aware of my 'unhappiness', which really wasn't unhappiness, so much as a growing indifference that had spread to all levels of my life. I couldn't get interested in anything for long. I just wanted to be by myself, and look inward into a pervasive emptiness that was growing and gradually consuming my being. Here I felt comfortable and at peace. Here too, occasionally, I felt an overwhelming awe, as if I were looking into the presence of God. There was no rushing, no confusion, no agitation here, only a quiet, peaceful indifference and awe.

As a psychologist, externally looking at me, I would interpret my subjectivity and behaviors as vegetative symptoms of depression. The major difference was that I was in the continuous experience of an inner emptiness, a mental space that contained all inner phenomena, which was gradually expanding, eating away any interest in the world. My fixation was on this emptiness, or better, a sense of presence or the absence of presence.

During late 1987 that I happened on a book about a Hindu spiritual teacher that turned my world upside down: *Pointers from Nisargadatta Maharaj*. In this book Maharaj states, "You are not whom you think you are, you are God Himself." I was stunned. For days, I wandered around as if I had been hit over the head. These words awoke something deep within. He told me I was not the body, not the mind, not a human and I was not mortal, subject to death. How utterly freeing and wonderful was this, and despite the seeming absurd content of his message, I believed him! I knew he was telling the truth.

After 20 years of searching, I found words that stunned rather than perplexed me. Zen was confounding, perplexing, and impenetrable. These teachings talked instead to my soul. You see, Zen Lacked an expression of who one is and the practices of different teachers widely varied, and the goal—enlightenment, Kensho, Satori—were never explained or described. So if it hasn't happened to you, you can't have a clue as to what the experience was like or what one discovered or how it changed you,

'Miraculously' (and everything becomes a miracle once launched on this path), a few weeks later the author of that book, Ramesh Balsekar, came to Los Angeles to explain his own understanding of what he had learned from being with Maharaj.

I was even more stunned. Ramesh said everything I knew or believed was illusion, a mere image or sensation in consciousness. This experience of Ramesh and Nisargadatta was very shortly followed by my meeting my own guru, Robert Adams. Ramesh's teachings propelled me like an arrow to Robert, who comes from a similar Advaita Vedanta tradition. In that tradition, the masters are called Jnani's, those who have become self-realized—whatever that meant.

Therefore, I finally met Robert, who had lived with the great Hindu teacher, Ramana Maharshi during the late 1940's. Ramana is one of the greatest master of a spiritual tradition known as Advaita Vedanta to have lived during the past few hundred years, or at least one of the best known. Advaita (Not-Two), is a philosophy of non-dualism, which is essentially the same understanding expressed with different language and different examples by Nisargadatta Maharaj and by Ramana.

Being with Robert gave me full access to the totally confounding teachings of Advaita, and the equally confounding effect of his personality and actions. It also gave me the opportunity to observe someone who lived in our world, but was not of it. Robert was not touched by the world. He would always say, "Don't get excited; whatever you see, touch, hear or feel is not real. Look within and find who you really are." Sometimes he would say, "What is the worst that can happen to you? You can die, and what's so bad about that?"

Over the next few years I would hear Robert say the most perplexing things: "Nothing is as it appears to be. The world is not real. You are not your body, you are not a human being, you are God, the Absolute, omniscient, immortal, all-loving perfection." However, a day later he would say: "Nothing exists, not the world, not your mind or body, not the Absolute nor God. These are

all just words." I never knew how to take his words. They flew in the face of the evidence of my senses which constantly showed me the external world. I thought to myself, "How can he say these things?" How could Ramana, Nisargadatta and Shankara all say essentially the same thing and yet be so out of reach or normality?"

Still I trusted that there was something to what they said. I trusted that the world was not real and that I was not a human being trapped in a body. I just had no idea at all of what they were talking about or what those phrases meant, or what my all encompassing experience of the Void meant as experienced from the inside. They were speaking gibberish to me. So, I lived in an apparently real world listening to all of them tell me the world was not real and to wake up from the illusion.

But, how to do this? As a monk I had struggled for years to wake up by meditation, koan study, austerities, seeking masters, Self-enquiry, etc., and I could not. I had tried everything and had given up, knowing there was nothing I had left undone. Nothing. I knew enlightenment was beyond my ability to create or allow and gave up, knowing I could not get this understanding by my own devices. I surrendered my spiritual future and progress to Robert, and to the teachings to let them do the work the end I could not complete.

My single remaining 'practice' after being with Robert for a while, was just to continue what I had always done before: to look within into the emptiness that contained everything, and which seemed to be growing ever deeper and more silent. The effect of this practice on my outer life manifested as an intensifying indifference to everything that I had thought important before. I became more acutely aware of the suffering in the world and began to withdraw even more from it. I recognized my very small ability to change things and therefore stepped out of political activism, to just set boundaries around a much smaller world and try my best to give that world and all the beings therein, comfort.

According to Vedanta, Consciousness, which supports and is all experience, has three attributes: existence, knowledge and bliss (Sat-chit-ananda).

After that surrender, and after years of staring into that growing Void and listening to Indian Bhajans (Described in the Bliss of Chanting section on this site) my mind became ever more silent, which led to a sense of growing blissfulness, an intense state of quasi-sexual (Kundalini) tension that vibrated every particle of my beingness in a state of ecstasy.

After a long time, I felt that I knew bliss (Ananda) well. However, after this first year with Robert, I began to ask myself, "Where is the knowingness (Chit) and the feeling of existence (Sat), of I-Am?" I did not feel as if I knew anything. I had felt like a complete idiot, having lost any practical knowledge of the world, and having no spiritual knowledge.

Therefore, one day I tried the tactic of following the experience of bliss, which was a stable and concrete 'feeling', to its experiential root. That is, I felt the bliss, looked within it for its core, and

felt within that core for its feeling source. I discovered one day, for the first time, a sense of pure knowingness, the root kernel of knowing without any specific object or understanding being known. It was not a big experience, but I felt I knew what pure knowing was. After years of knowing nothing, I felt completed by knowing, knowing nothing.

This may not sound like much, nor was the experience that shattering at all. Yet, it was a completion. When I first started my real practice in the late 1960s, I felt that the essence of my search would be in finding the basic particle, so to speak, of knowing and knowledge. I thought it was like an ultimate predicate calculus, where one sought the various and most primitive ways of combining concepts into knowledge and how those concepts were related to the sense of experiencing knowing or knowledge. It is one thing to know. It is another to know that you know and how you know. I was now experiencing just knowing without knowing anything about anything. There was just pure knowing without an object.

After a few weeks of feeling this sense of knowing, I said to myself, "I now know Chit and Ananda, where is the sense of existence? A week or so later, I took a seminar offered by a friend who taught a unique technique of letting go of emotions and desires. I had practiced this technique for a few weeks and had many experiences of 'energy' releases in the area of my heart. This particular day, while looking into 'my' inner emptiness, and attempting to let go of some desire or another, I felt a great energy flowing upward through my body, in continuous torrents that, so to speak, blew my heart away. I could no longer experience anything special in the area of my heart; there was no longer any hindrance to the flow of energy within. I became completely blissful everywhere, inside and outside, and the vast emptiness that had for years been only still and silent, now moved with incredible speed and energy. It was a little like observing a tornado of thought fragments, images, energy spinning around, and also moving upward through my being. The emptiness was now filled with a sense of presence and energy moving far too rapidly to be caught and studied by mind. I felt I had finally understood what Robert meant by the experience of I-Am. Boy, was I wrong.

When I told Robert of my discovery of the three-fold attributes of consciousness in my own experience, he just smiled and said, "There are not three, there is only one!" I now knew that I had to stay immersed in the I-Am experience, which felt like the basic sense of existence, of being embodied and alive—the Sat. As another friend, Jean Dunn, said, "...by doing so, consciousness will reveal all its secrets."

One day while looking inward into that energy maelstrom that filled my being, and which I now regarded as the presence of I-Am, I recognized that I, whoever that was, was watching I-Am; that is, I, as subject, was knowing myself as consciousness in motion. The duality of subject and object separation in consciousness began to be repaired. I now felt I was knowing consciousness, and it was I. Thus was established the link between knowing and being.

I felt that if I continued this practice for another million years or so, I would finally understand what Robert and Ramana were saying, because what they said was far, far beyond even this experience of all-permeating bliss, knowingness and existence. I understood nothingness well, and now bliss, knowing and being, but I did not understand what they meant when they said that nothing is real, not the world, not the body, not anything. I felt completely stupid about the nature of reality, about my own self, and about the ultimate nature of consciousness, until one day, I took a shower...

The First Awakening

One morning, I returned from my morning walk, which today seemed especially invigorating, and took a shower. I felt unusually relaxed; the warm water was incredibly inviting. Feeling the water's delightful touch on my back, I looked within, into the inner emptiness of consciousness, trying to see if I could find whom it was who experienced the water's touch. I had done this observation thousands of times before, in thousands of different circumstances, seeking the 'I' who was the experiencer, and never finding it, yet clinging still to the notion I was an I, a person.

This time, like all the others, there was nothing there, only a vast inner emptiness that contained everything: the kinesthetic sensations of moving arms, back and neck muscles, the touch of the water, the sound of its spray, and a few thoughts, but mostly there was a silent emptiness that felt inviting and full. I saw no one there at all for the ten thousandth time, but this time, God knows why, it was different. The reality of 'no-one' sank in! There was no person, no one experiencing the water's touch. There was no one home, so to speak. There was just the touch of water, the feeling of my feet against the bottom of the shower. My hands were touching my back and neck, putting on soap, but there was no one experiencing any of this. There was just experience happening in awareness.

Briefly, I felt fear. The fear was, "Who is watching the store?" I felt, or better, there was a feeling of insecurity, because no one was there to protect and control. All that there was, was experiencing, happening in consciousness. All the air left my lungs, almost as if it had been knocked out of me, and I relaxed. Years of tension drained out of me. I did not breathe for what seemed like minutes. There was no need to breathe. There was no me, no I to pump up anymore, so my body just relaxed and deflated.

My mind (actually, the mind since there was no I) became utterly still. No thoughts, no special attention to any one thing, just the grand, silent, all-pervading emptiness, illuminated by the inner light of consciousness, and which contained all experience. My mind was gone.

I felt too weak to stand up, so I dried myself off and laid down on a couch to explore the innerness from the viewpoint of the discovery that I had no I, no me, no personal self. With the utter mental silence, 'my' consciousness expanded to fill up the emptiness which was everywhere, rather than remain affixed to the mental chatter that normally exists in the service of the I.

This is what I discovered: The I was not there. There was no central kernel that gave illusory life to me as a person. There never was an I. There had never even been an idea that there was an I, the doer and experiencer; even that was gone. What I had thought to be I, was really I-Am, the sense of presence, of being-ness. But that I-Amness, the presence, the consciousness contained no point of I, and it never had. 'I' had only been a belief, an idea held tenaciously, that created an apparent experience of I as a person.

When the idea of I died, the whole realm of conceptualization changed and became clear. All other ideas depended on the belief in a separate I, set apart from the rest of the experienced world, and when this duality was exposed as fantasy, so were all other concepts that depended on the I-Other duality.

Looking within, the I-Am-ness, the presence I had called consciousness, seemed to have a center or source near the heart (of my apparent body); it appeared that consciousness arose and flowed from this center. *Yet that heart center was only a happening in consciousness and had nothing to do with the belief in an I as the doer and experiencer.* The I-Am, the sense of presence that pervades all inner and outer emptiness and experience has no I as a central core. It really is an Am-ness, not an I-Am-ness. Without an I, there is no not-I within consciousness. *There is only consciousness, only One.* The One contains all experience. All experiences are only modifications of that one consciousness.

I turned my attention to thoughts, and saw that thoughts just float through Am-ness, as if from outside the body. There is no mind as such, just thoughts passing through Am-ness, beingness. Without an I, the illusory personal center, there is no one to take possession of a thought or desire and to act on it or make it real. The Am-ness has no inclination to participate in the thoughts, and is free of their tyranny. The Am-ness is free to take delivery of a thought *briefly*, and make it real, such as an idea that I need to do some chore, which may be transformed into action, or it can let the thought or desire pass through, unaccepted.

Thoughts, forms, and imaginations are infinitely changing and moving. They have no permanent existence. They are just modifications within the overflowing process of I-Am. The only reality was Am-ness, which contained all experience, and which was being witnessed. So, I then asked myself, "Who witnesses all this?" The answer came as an inner voice: "No one at all!" I realized there is only witnessing, but with no witness! Just like there was no I to take possession of a desire or thought, there is no witness to take possession of any experience. The idea of the witness, and the apparent experience of the witness, arises from the apparent duality the I-idea creates. When this fundamental duality disappears, so do all the others, including the imagined duality of the witness and the witnessed, the observer and the observed.

However, if there is no witness, then there are no objects to be witnessed. If the I is unreal, everything observed by the I is unreal. You can't have only one half of a duality. If half is unreal, so is its opposite, or else the duality was only apparent. The objects, the body, the mind, the world, are all unreal, only mindstuff, dreams in consciousness. With no I, and no observed world, there are only happenings within consciousness, and consciousness is all that there is-- Oneness.

A few moments later came the feeling that even this consciousness, the sense of presence, of Am-ness is unreal, a kind of visual-auditory-tactile illusion added onto pure silence, pure emptiness. About this time, all the forms, sounds, sights and feelings and began to flow together, and I could see their temporary and evanescent nature. There was no I, no world, no body; there was only presence, and even that, I am not. Even the I-Amness, consciousness, was only mindstuff--a construct. I am that I-Am only as long as I live in the illusion of consciousness. Imagination, ideas, and all phenomenal experience were all just mind. The mind does not create the world, the mind is the world; mind is everything. With that I began laughing. What my teacher had said was true, it is all a joke, a tale told by an idiot, implying nothing. Anything said here too is only a conceptualization, mindstuff, therefore a mistake!

The whole experience lasted a few hours, and I eventually returned to a place where a chair was a chair and potato salad was a food. I was different though. I could not find an 'I' or even the belief there was an I. That core was gone, although a pseudo-core was later to return.

Aftermath and Totally Unfounded Speculation of the Collective Unconsciousness

Over the days following the shower experience, other understandings of what the experience of no-I meant became clear. First, all understanding, whatever can be said in words is untrue or misleading. Everything is mindstuff—everything! Anything said, is said in illusion about illusion. Anything said is a mistake. Mind cannot grasp anything other than itself. It cannot go beyond itself. Conceptions, phenomenality, and what we call dreams, are all made of the same illusory substance.

Second, there was no one to take delivery of 'my' life. It was just being lived. There was no one to take possession of any thought or responsibility. There was no decision maker who willed an intended end. Intentionality, the idea we can conceive of and then create an outcome, was a fraud.

Life is just lived by the illusion of existence some call 'Maya', others 'consciousness', others call it 'God' or the 'Totality of Phenomenality'. The *apparent individual mind* just creates a story for some unknown reason; it creates a pseudo existence on an apparent reality.

We don't even have an individual mind, the I-idea just makes it appear that we have. The I entertains those thoughts that yield the appearance of a consideration process, of a decider and of a decision to pursue some path.

If those thoughts had not come, the apparent body-mind would have taken on some other bundle of thought-forms and given itself a different existence. On the personal level, that meant the world I lived in was purely conceptual, and I could have led an entirely different conceptual life had that different thought complex taken possession of my I-thought.

That is, all pseudo realities are appearances in consciousness only, there was no human to take possession of that identity in a solid space-time continuum. There were just complexes of

thoughts and mental patterns—waking dreams made of the same substances as what we call dreams. Life has no solidity at all; solidity, perseverance, continuity are concepts that allow us to take the world for real and sets the stage for all apparent worldly activity.

That is, if I were meant to relocate to New York, that thought would come into my mind, otherwise some other thought would take hold, such as to become a computer consultant in Santa Fe. When the I shuts down and the ego disappears, the happenings in consciousness will do what they do, the psychosomatic apparatus walks through its paces, watched as we would watch an interesting but not too involving movie.

I also understood why the older I was the less interested I had become about anything. As the ego shriveled through constant inner observation, there was progressively less willingness by 'me', to take hold of any random thoughts or desires that passed through, and if it did, there was little energy behind manifesting them.

As Robert said, "The sage's thoughts and desires are dead thoughts, they have no strength and they pass quickly, only barely touching the apparent person." As one who watched him in action, I could attest to that. Someone might mention the idea of founding an ashram or writing a book, or moving to another city, and he would show momentary interest; but a day or a week later, the idea, and the will backing that idea, were gone. Around Robert, there was nothing to hold onto; nothing stuck.

When the first person 'I' disappears, the idea of Him, a second person, a personal God disappears too. There is no God, no power, no plan running things. God is an idea in consciousness. Things just happen in consciousness without me or God doing it. Consciousness and events appear out of nothing and disappear into nothing. If you want to call 'nothingness' or 'consciousness' God, feel free, but what is achieved by giving the illusion another name? ***There is only One, and that One is not real.***

All this became temporarily quite depressing. It was as if I were waiting for the winning lotto numbers to be announced, knowing that I would win this time, and then to wake up to discover the lottery and the certainty of winning were only a dream. The notion that a better life was just around the corner, and that I could influence its outcome was just fantasy. There is no decision maker, no doer, not even an experiencer. My career trajectory had just vanished!

There was a feeling of loss of my ordinary world and ordinary relationships, including the feeling that I was a doer. I did not exist; there was only consciousness, which was everything, but it did not exist either. For days I would sit staring at the world with a sense of wonder that neither I nor it existed.

Over the next few days and weeks strange things happened. My body felt hot all the time, 'energy' currents coursing throughout it, and strange new muscle tension patterns replaced old ones. I felt my body was trying to reject something, as if it were trying to fight off a disease. Robert laughed when I told him, and he half joked, saying "It's trying to reject you!" The sense of unreality of both I and the world persisted and deepened, along with the depression.

One day I called Robert in despair and said, "I'm depressed! I am not real; nothing is real!" Robert responded forcefully, and loudly, "Of course you are real, you are talking to me on the phone aren't you?" The sense of unreality persisted, but I felt perplexed by his answer that I was real, since he almost always said everything was unreal.

A few days later when looking at that feeling of unreality, I suddenly realized that feeling was itself taking place within that unreality; it too was merely a happening in Consciousness and no more real than that which I had formerly considered real. The thought I and the world were unreal, itself was just a concept of no more power or import than any other.

I understood Ramana's response to a devotee who asked whether the world was real or unreal. He said, "The world is as real as you are." The world appeared unreal once the I disappeared; before the I disappeared, both seemed real. The *world*, *I*, *real*, and *unreal* were all just concepts, and the world of appearance were just forms in consciousness with no I to observe them.

Forms come, forms go, they are observed, but there is no observer. The apparent depression lifted instantly. It was just another phenomenon in consciousness, not a state belonging to me as a person.

[Illusion's Realm](#)

Over the following months the experience widened and deepened. Sometimes the world appeared real, sometimes unreal, sometimes both; but, I understood that these appearances of real or unreal were just judgments added onto the basic illusion of phenomenality and of consciousness itself. When there is only One, all judgments or knowledge about qualities or parts of the One, such as 'the world was unreal,' or 'that is a car,' are themselves illusory because they are divisive, and there is only One. The sentence, and the knowledge, "That is a car," and the car itself as an object separate from the One, are all illusion. Knowledge is illusion; objects are illusion; distinguishable qualities of the One are illusion.

Days and weeks would pass where I felt I was living in a hologram. I felt as if I could see through objects in the world and my own body because my focus was on the emptiness which permeated all things, inside and out. Everything was 'hollow,' insubstantial images and sensations projected onto an underlying empty space of still silence. Sometimes too, I would see an object out of the corner of my eye, an automobile for example, and it would only be half there, like a movie set where only the front existed. Days passed into nights and then into days again with barely the feeling of the passage of time, and each afternoon, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM I would experience an involuntary withdrawal of consciousness--a 'trance,' that limited full participation in the so-called reality on any consistent basis.

The whole process was great fun--sometimes, seeing the world as empty and insubstantial images changing rapidly through time, without the personal involvement that had formerly made the world seem so real. When I told Robert about the phenomena of half disappearing objects bereft of substantiality, I jokingly asked whether this was part of the awakening process, or an entering into insanity. With wry humor he replied, "They go hand in hand."

A week later, I asked again whether seeing the world as an empty and hollow dream was a temporary state, or something one leaves behind as a passing phase. "It's always like this," he said, waving his hand around the room to include everything. Then he said, "In the end, fundamentally nothing has ever existed, nothing has ever happened."

It became more difficult to motivate myself to do anything, for when the dreamed character understands he is part of a dream, how can he take it seriously and make any effort to control outcomes of the dream? Things that had severely bothered me before had lost any ability to perturb me. I lived day to day just watching the changing manifestation, the all-permeating emptiness that made a mockery of the world and my own existence as a separate human being. Sometimes the humorous aspects of Jnana gave way to a feeling of not wanting to participate in the joke any longer. Everything is absolutely false the way it is perceived; why persist in playing the game? Sometimes it felt better to just refuse all involvement in the illusion.

A central phrase from the Buddhist Heart Sutra became very clear about this time: *Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form; feelings, thought, sensations and even consciousness are also like this.*

With the knowledge that my personal self and the world were illusion, personal qualities, such as ambition, ego, and intentionality, became empty. There is no free will because there is no willer, no willing and nothing to be willed. The world itself was only insubstantial images, ever changing--there were no things that existed, No-Things at all. With no things comes the recognition that No-Thing has ever happened, nor ever will happen. There was no World War II, no Vietnam, no Richard Nixon.

These were only memories (images) circulating in 'my' mind, or images from TV sets. There was no proof that any of these had existed in any other form than an image in mind. History never happened! Somebody might show me a history book about all this, but that was no proof because that book was part of my present waking dream, and **nothing within the dream can prove the reality or existence of another part of that dream.** Even though physics postulates the existence of time, this is still just an idea within the One Mind, which is dreamstuff. Science, like the history book, is part of the dream, creating a structure for the images. Nor did the rest of the world, out-of-sight exist: Not France, not Russian, not Cleveland. These were all ideas supported by seeing them on television, or from memories of a prior visit, which are parts of the dream too -- like the history book.

The past does not exist except as memory, which is a present happening in consciousness. The future does not exist; it is only mental speculation in the now, about what might happen in an imaginary future. Finally, and most importantly, the apparently real present does not exist either, because 'reality' is only sensations, perceptions, objects, created by mind, suspended in a mental emptiness, and in the end, neither forms nor emptiness exists. Here-and-now has the same mindstuff existence as all other happenings in mind and consciousness. Avalokiteshvara, in the Heart Sutra says further:

Thus, Sariputra, all things having the nature of emptiness have no beginning and no ending. In emptiness there is no form, no sensation, no perception, no

discrimination, no consciousness itself. There is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no skin, no mind. There is no sight, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no mental processes, no objects, no knowledge, no ignorance. There is no ending of objects, no ending of knowledge, no ending of ignorance. There is no enlightenment, nor path to enlightenment: no pain, no cause of pain, no ending of pain. There is no decay and no death. There is no knowledge of enlightenment, no obtaining of enlightenment, and no not obtaining of enlightenment.

Why is there no obtaining enlightenment? Because enlightenment is in the realm of no 'thingness,' and in No-Thingness there is no personality to obtain enlightenment. As long as a man pursues enlightenment, he is still abiding in the realm of consciousness. If he is to realize enlightenment, he must pass beyond consciousness, beyond discrimination and knowledge, beyond the reach of change or fear. The perfect understanding of this, and the patient acceptance of it, is the highest wisdom, the essential heart of wisdom. All Buddhas of the past, present and future having attained the highest Samadhi, awake to find themselves realizing the heart of wisdom.

Life is the doings of an apparent body-mind living in a dream, aware that life is a dream, but with neither the will to change it, because the personality is dead (or seriously dying), nor the power to change the dream. Dream characters have no autonomous will to change the contents and script of the dreamer's sleeping dreams, and just so, we cannot change the script of our waking dream. Each of us as apparent humans, have a part to perform, but no substantial means to direct dream outcomes. *Any control we appear to have in directing our lives is only apparent, part of the dream script.* We are supposed to believe we are directing the dream outcome, otherwise how could involvement in the illusory dream be sustained?

Robert often would respond to queries of people wanting to make changes in their lives by practicing Sadhana, meditation, positive thinking, or releasing, when he saw he couldn't talk them out of these ideas, by saying, "By all means make the effort to change; the appearance of effort goes hand in hand with the appearance of change. As long as you believe you are a human, effort is necessary."

With the coming of knowledge, my searching mind came to rest. I had tasted absolute truth for the first time, and no relative truth of the world could touch it. History, economics, and physics were all just complicated knowledge about the waking dream, and that kind of knowing was irrelevant, a joke -- part of a world viewed as a bad art movie. Absolute knowledge, Jnana, Prajna Paramita, cannot be sought or learned. It comes to you, is always with you, and is you! (However, even the taste of absolute truth passes until one tastes nothing, metaphorically.)

With the end of searching, I began to experience moments of peace beyond description, a peace so deep, so profound, that nothing mattered, nothing! All knowledge, all power, all worldly pleasures and even the experience of 'divine bliss' faded in comparison. Peace dissolved everything. Nothing penetrated it. Nothing remained to be done.

The sense of beingness, Sat, persisted even though I saw it as illusion. It felt like an energy, yet was as substantial as matter. It permeated me; it was me, my sense of my-ness. All the while emptiness pervaded everything, all objects, my body, and me as the beingness energy itself.

Underlying beingness was Nothing, experienced through a filter of being. Still, Nothing perceived from beingness, was still beingness. What lay on the other side of this perceived emptiness and consciousness, of the perceived illusion? I saw everything as the One, and that One and everything in it was illusion; but the illusion persisted. Was there an end to this illusion?

The Second Awakening

On the third morning after Robert left Los Angeles, the moment that I awakened from sleep, something wonderful happened. I discovered in one instant who I was, and that I had always known who I was. I discovered that I had always been self-realized!

Once again, for the ten thousandth time on waking up, I had transitioned from the sleep state to the waking state, but this time, there was no change in the sense of who I was. Mostly, the sense of 'I' in dreams and the sense of "I" in the waking state, were similar, yet the sleeping "I" disappeared when the waking "I" became alive. The sense of palpability and clarity were very different and I emerged into a world that was relatively constant everyday.

However, this time, there was no difference in the experience of "me." None. As I awakened, there was no transition. The same subjectivity prevailed unchanged throughout the apparent transition. I, whoever or whatever I was, was not touched by the phenomenality of the waking world or the dreaming world. I was beyond and apart from existence. Both were just mind states added onto me, whoever that was, since there was no me.

You might say the dream me and the waking me were gone but I was the same; both Me-s were merely thought forms along with the entire dream world and waking dream world. All were thoughtstuff or like thoughtstuff in a sort of mental space that pervaded all reality until one wakes up.

A poor analogy would be like watching a movie on television. Then there was a commercial. Although there is an apparent transition from one sort of flickering light on the screen to another flickering light and different sounds, the watcher was not changed, not affected. The analogy fails if the watcher gets upset with the timing of the commercial.

Another analogy was as if you were lying under a sheet on the bed and someone took the sheet off. What you viewed would change, but you would not be changed at all.

I realized that the sleep and waking states were just superimpositions on me. Consciousness was a superimposition on me. Even the nothingness of deep sleep was a superimposition on me—at

least it felt that way. Consciousness did not touch me. I was beyond sleep, dream or waking states. All these were happenings in consciousness, but none had anything to do with me. Consciousness had nothing to do with me. I was beyond all.

Consciousness itself is not real, but the awareness that I am not touched by consciousness is a knowledge expressed by Consciousness within Consciousness. Absolute subjectivity is beyond understanding. The Absolute does not know itself, it knows of itself as the constant substratum of changing phenomenality. The Absolute just is. However, knowledge of this and the expression of such knowledge is through Consciousness.

This was a marvelous experience of Self-knowing, of recognizing and accepting my true nature. I could say at last, with full conviction, "I know who I am." Despite the body pain, despite the fear that was still lingering, despite the anxiety of indecision about the move to Sedona, despite my desire to be with Robert and to save my cats from the animal shelter, all of which still crowded this mind, I now knew who I was. The body-mind would continue to do whatever it was supposed to do according to time and place, but it had nothing to do with me. I was beyond the apparent ongoing turmoil of the body-mind.

In the Absolute, there is no body, no space, no time, no knowing and no non-knowing, no ignorance, no enlightenment, no vastness and no consciousness. All that is happening in Consciousness.

I wrote Robert of my turmoil and of the sudden experience of knowing who I was, but I did not have to seek verification. I knew who I was and I did not need confirmation. It was just icing on the cake when I talked to him a week later, about the experience, and he responded by saying, simply, "Congratulations, you are self-realized! Now do you feel completely happy?" I do not remember what my response was, but I did know that I was not touched by either happiness or unhappiness.

Although I would get tied up into being the body and into normal everyday life concerns, they no longer mattered, because I knew who I really was. As a matter of fact, I could now more easily return to the human condition because it did not frighten me. I did not like it much, but it did not frighten me. My body might still experience the appearance of fear, fear, but that was phenomenality's concern, not mine. This feeling of being the owner of reality was associated with an increasing sense of certainty and boldness.

I also knew now that it was right for me to stay in Los Angeles. Robert, on the other hand, moved to a place apparently much worse for him. Of course, over and over he had said about everything, "It is only an appearance." He told me what would happen in Sedona after he moved there and he did not paint a pretty picture. He told me that the promises would never be fulfilled. He told me that the people there would fight among themselves to gain his favor. I think he felt the change in the physical surroundings might help his health because he knew something was wrong with his body. The move to Sedona temporarily rejuvenated his health. He was as energetic as he had been in years, and even his voice improved. Perhaps he felt they needed him more.

In fact, Robert reveled in chaos. I think he found it interesting. He used to create it everywhere around and among his students.

His wife, Nicole, after the 1994 Northridge earthquake, became obsessed by the notion that California was about to fall into the Pacific. From what she had read, Sedona was as close to the ocean as one could get and still be safe. Part of his moving, I am sure, was due to her insistence.

In the end, I do not know why he moved and I don't think he did either. He just did, just as I did not.

I missed him terribly. I missed the walks, the drives, the lunches and dinners, and the constant teachings he gave by both word and deed. However, nothing was happening to open Sedona to me. My cats were not being miraculously taken care of, and no one but Robert called me from Sedona asking me to come. I felt comfortable here even with many self-accepted responsibilities.

During the subsequent weeks, many people from the Los Angeles Satsang called me, telling me of their troubles, and asking how Robert was doing, and why I had not moved with him. They all urged me to stay in Los Angeles, saying they felt this is where I belonged, and that they couldn't picture me in Sedona, and frankly, neither could I.

I reiterate; the Sedona people never kept their promises, even the ones who went on to claim Robert as their teacher. Once Robert got there, he became their captive. He told me this is what would happen, yet he did it.

Robert and I

Robert was imperturbable--nothing bothered him. He never complained, never lacked a ready smile or humorous comeback, and I never saw him angry. Yet, for years, I harbored niggling doubts about him, though I knew I could not find a greater teacher. His behavior was so 'human' at times, and just plain confusing at others, that sometimes I doubted he was a guru at all. In this I was not alone. Mary, one of his longest-lasting disciples almost always had doubts. Robert's own wife, Nicole knew he was very different from anyone else, but did not, at that time, consider him to be a spiritual teacher or guru. At that time, she even lacked the concept of guru-dom.

In his very low-key way, he would say one thing to one person and a very different thing to someone else. Sometimes he would appear not to remember promises, though his memory was excellent, or he would equivocate in a way that everyone thought he had agreed to their separate and contradictory wishes. He denied being a Guru, but acted like one and constantly extolled the virtues of the 'Realized being,' or sage. He even appeared to set people up so that they would clash with each other causing friction at our meetings, which we called Satsang (meaning, being in the presence of Truth). In other words, he appeared to be an altogether normal, if not meddlesome person, acting the part of a Guru while publicly denying he was a one, using the Hindu teachings of Oneness--Advaita Vedanta--as his 'schtick.'

Deep inside though I trusted him and his teachings, because of his utter peacefulness, and because he was absolutely consistent in his description of 'reality'. He always maintained the same bearing and teachings, whether in Satsang, while riding in a car, and while sitting in the park or at lunch. His teachings were always consistent, as if he were talking from a living and absolutely constant experience, instead of just mouthing philosophical knowledge learned from books or from Ramana.

Now that I tasted Knowing, I no longer cared for knowledge, secular, spiritual, or absolute; my focus changed. Rather than regard Robert as a source of teachings, seeking his presence for the transmutative effect he had on me, I began to watch how he behaved in different situations and how he dealt with me and with others. I began to understand how a real master operates with his disciples, *and operate he did!* As soon as a student gets close to a master such as Robert, the game of awakening begins.

I watched how Robert operated on his disciples' one during lunch. One day, while we were eating he appeared preoccupied. He did not talk; he did not look at me. Feeling left out I asked, "What are you thinking about Robert?" He responded, "You!" "Me," I said--"What are you thinking about me?" His answer made *everything* that had occurred during our relationship clear. He said, "I am thinking how to cook you." 'Cook' is the term applied to the spiritual heat that comes from spiritual practice (Sadhana) or from being in the presence of the Guru. One cooks off the ego. So he was thinking about how to process me while we were at lunch, and by deduction, every other moment we were together. I was lunch. Presumably, this happened with everyone else too. He was always stirring the pot, adjusting the fire, cooking egos, yet he always denied he was doing anything at all. After that I let him cook me all he wanted, because I knew he had no self-serving intent behind any of his acts, and by extension, none actions towards anyone else either. He was the Guru playing at being human, curing us of our human illusion.

Spiritual 'old shoes,' those who had spent a long time with the recent great teachers such as Muktananda, Rajneesh or Yogananda, know all about cooking and how the Guru sets up situations to cause self-consciousness and the ending of that portion of the ego. However, Robert lacked all the external trappings of being a Guru, so few people expected him to cook people-- they saw him as a spiritual friend or perhaps as a father-figure or as a prophet, but not as an operator. He never explained what he was doing when he operated on someone. His 'victim' would be 'innocently' walking along, thinking everything was fine with what he or she was doing with and to others at Satsang, when suddenly Robert would thrust a whole new situation on him.

For example, I initiated transcribing his talks with the idea of selling them at Satsang, giving a percentage to Robert, and keeping part himself to start a publishing company for Satsang. It all made sense. Robert did the talking; I recorded the talks, transcribed them, edited them to perfection, and wrote an introduction to cap things off. Thus, a 50-50 split was fair. No? Things went fine for a while, until one day I arrived at Satsang to find new transcripts done by Mary on the table at no cost, asking only for a donation. Then the next week, more transcripts appeared from yet another transcriber. I had lost his cozy post of being Robert's voice, and his new business had also gone down the tubes, and Mary and I were at loggerheads for a time. Yet Robert never, ever explained to me, or Mary, how he had let me dig my own grave, and then used others, with their own ambitions and agendas to bury me.

So too, was it the same with everyone else. Robert let them walk into the quicksand, get attached and stuck, and then let them sink. At other times, he would put people together for a work function that just rubbed each other the wrong way, or he'd arrange for the two largest egos around to be placed in apparent competition.

One recipient of Robert's 'operating', described him in these belittling words: "He is very controlling. He pits one person against another, and gets a great delight at watching what happens. He lies incessantly, telling one person one thing and another something else, then denies to both that he said anything."

When I heard this, I just smiled and said, "Of course he appears to do these things, how else can he work with people at their own level of psychological focus? He is the Guru and he'll do whatever it takes to get someone to move spiritually on levels we don't begin to understand; what we see on the surface is only a small part of his work."

From that recipient's own viewpoint of frustration and disappointment, what she said was true; but she saw only the man, not the source, the Self-embodied Guru. She saw only actions she interpreted in terms of what people like herself would do. Nothing Robert did was from malice; nothing was done with intent to harm. Everything was done from love, with the intent of 'stirring the pot,' to make egos bump together creating a scenario where grosser aspects of the personality, such as jealousy, envy, the need for recognition or control, could be brought into the open and destroyed by Robert's grace. Robert was a steel chisel knocking off the ego's flinty edges in a shower of sparks from his heart's flame.

Nothing Robert did was as it appeared, *because disciples would project their own understanding and moral conditioning onto his actions*, and their understanding was based on a wide spectrum of maturities. What appeared to be the intent of his behavior on one level was usually irrelevant to the level he was really operating on. What they saw was their own appearance, their creation. Long time students did not even bother to try to figure his actions out--they were unfathomable as seen from the outside. Robert was not of this world and worldly logic did not apply. The only thing you needed to know as his student was that he would do you no harm, and that nothing was done maliciously, no matter how painful a situation *appeared*.

By 'Robert's grace' I mean that he drew nothing out of the person that hadn't been brought out a thousand times before in a thousand life situations involving spouses, parents, employers and friends, but which had never been resolved in everyday life. Around him, once the ego showed itself in the situations he created, it was eventually destroyed, and Robert was a master of making the ego show itself. Unfortunately, many people, especially once they got used to him as a person, just saw a normal man doing unexplainable, 'self-defeating' or seemingly hurtful acts, not a Master burning a field of egos.

Another example of his power was Satsang, where he and his disciples sat together for his talk. Many people, especially those coming from other traditions emphasizing Shakti, or 'teachings-philosophy,' found our meetings boring. The teachings of the complete unreality of everything were essentially unfathomable, even by seasoned swamis from different traditions who regarded Advaita as mere philosophy. Robert did not present techniques to find bliss, God or to make life

work better. There was little chanting, and few external signs of devotion among his disciples, who kept mostly to themselves.

Lastly, Robert's Parkinson's Disease moderately slurred his speech, hampering easy understanding of his words. I used to accuse him of getting the disease just to make people listen harder. He also spoke slowly with long gaps between sentences. He emphasized silence rather than content. Some newcomers just found the whole experience lacking energy, understanding, devotion, or even basic comprehensibility. However, because so much was lacking externally, those who stayed were welcomed by silence to go deep within to find perfect peace, happiness and emptiness.

Just being in his presence had a profound affect on many people. Some were overcome by happiness, others by peace. Much more frequently, at Satsang, people felt a deep relaxation that lapsed easily into a barely conscious 'sleep.' Most, who were fortunate enough to go to lunch with him, experienced an overwhelming need to sleep afterwards, a deep, relaxing and totally incapacitating sleep. I witnessed one disciple who went into this 'sleep' state during a meal with Robert. She was lifting a fork to her mouth, but it never arrived. She froze with uplifted fork, her eyes closed, and she was 'out' for a long time. I think we left her behind at the restaurant, in that state, as Robert said not to disturb her. Of course, she would eventually have been disturbed, but he wanted the state to last as long as possible.

Of course these sleep states were actually forms of one or another kind of Samadhi, but to use that term is to create unnecessary mystical connotations that explain nothing. The subjective experience was of the involuntary turning of consciousness 'inwards,' closing down the body's functioning, of feeling great peace, and a total inability to attend to the external world, even while of remaining barely aware of everything. Some people experienced a sinking into light. Others experienced a dissolving into emptiness or the world dissolved into them. For each it was different.

One of Robert's favorite 'games,' I called *The City de jour*, which was loosely based on Marpa's handling of his most famous, hard-case disciple, Milarepa. Milarepa had been a black sorcerer, and had killed several relatives at the urging of his Lady Mac Beth-like mother. At some point, he began to feel extreme sadness and guilt over what he had done, and sought the teachings of peace from Marpa. Marpa refused to teach Milarepa, and instead made him an employee, building Marpa a new home made from loose rocks on Marpa's land. Each time Milarepa completed a house, Marpa found fault with its layout or location, and had Milarepa dismantle it, and begin anew. Milarepa built seven houses this way, and dismantled six of them before Marpa relented and initiated him.

In *The City de jour*, Robert hinted darkly of an impending earthquake that was going to destroy Los Angeles, and we all had to get out immediately. If the earthquake ploy did not work, he embellished on his prediction, saying it would be a 7.2 to 7.5 quake on a new fault near Cucamonga, near the juncture of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, during the last quarter of 1995, most probably during November.

If this did not work as motivation, he found other reasons to motivate people to move. To one, he said, "You will be my right hand." To another, he said, "You will be my secretary." Behind the scenes, he would tell different people different locations where he wanted to move. Those who were about to build a house in Santa Fe anyway, were told he was moving to Santa Fe--shortly. Those who wanted to move to Dallas, he said he would move to Dallas. Those who wanted to move to Arizona, were told to find a house in Phoenix or Sedona.

Of course, everyone knew what he told everyone else, and house finding was happening in four cities simultaneously, with everyone's life in constant uproar as they contemplated living variously in Sedona, Santa Fe, Dallas, Phoenix or even East St. Louis. Disciples were traveling to these locations, lining up houses, jobs, locations for Satsang, and agonizing over the disruption to their lives. Others, who felt they could not move, due to employment, homes or just plain attachment, felt abandoned and angry.

Because of his fragile health, Robert never traveled more than fifty miles to visit family, and even this, rarely. As a dramatic touch, he decided to visit Sedona, where a group of 15 or so disciples had offered him several houses for his use, and offered relocation assistance for other disciples that wanted to relocate there. Naturally, this aroused everyone's anxiety to the highest levels, for now it appeared he really was going to move, and disciples contemplated either loosing their present comfortable lifestyle by moving, or losing their Guru.

Actually, at that time I urged Robert to pick Sedona as one of his students, Marty, owned a jeep tour business and promised me a job driving. Sedona was beautiful and I wanted a change from Santa Monica. Lastly, I was unemployed, so there were no longer strong ties to Southern California.

At this point, the game became even more chaotic, with Sedona disciples constantly flying to LA, and LA disciples scoping out real estate in Arizona during the mid-August monsoon season. Phoenix during August is unpleasant at best, and even Robert's wife remarked, "You've brought us to hell!" Another disciple, a well-know author called Robert and said, "I can't do this! I am driving through Scottsdale, it is a 108 degrees, and I am covered with sweat! I can't do this. I don't like anything about this state!" She did come and bought a huge house. She wanted one large enough to hold Satsang to be close to Robert.

This is typical Guru behavior--creating chaos and anxiety where once there was order, which loosened attachments and roiled gos. He would do the same in all areas of life that could involve his disciples emotionally. He worked on people whenever they opened themselves, even a little, to his power.

Awareness of the Void

At some point, either before or after the initial enlightenment experience—at least in my tradition—you must become absolutely certain that you are not your body.

All that you know is consciousness. Think about it. Everything you experience, your body, the world, thinking, memories, science, history, dreams, other people -- all happen in your consciousness. If something happens outside of your consciousness, such as a storm while you slept, or Lincoln's assassination, you only know about it if someone, or something within your consciousness tells you. That learning occurs now, within your present consciousness. Of course, you can also infer something happened by after effects, such as wet ground implies there was rain. Yet, even that inference is a thinking, a speculation, and it occurs in your present consciousness. All memory about the past and thinking about the future, occurs in your now consciousness. Thus, all knowing and experience occurs now. It is then obvious that you need to experience and understand now-consciousness.

If all that you know or experience is consciousness, **then you too, at least for argument's sake, are consciousness.** Your consciousness is not limited by body, mind, world, time or space; all these occur within your consciousness as objects of that consciousness.

Even the intangible, the invisible, and the hidden, such as an atom, or gravity, are known only by inference from present experience in your now consciousness. The inference to the unobserved, such as the existence of an atom, or a gravity wave, is a mental process occurring within your present consciousness too. Atomic physics, cosmology, and all of science becomes a set of inferences about hidden and non-hidden objects and forces, derived from simple acts of perception conjoined with a set of mental functions we call inference or logic, which are also happenings in now consciousness.

So what is this now-consciousness? Intellectually understood it is called mind. Others would call it imagination. It is all mental stuff. This, of course doesn't help understanding one whit except that it is a pointer that helps you get before the concept that the body is real, and by real, I mean as having its own, autonomous self-existence. Its existence is imaginary, mindstuff.

I must admit my own evolution appears idiosyncratic. That is, for many years before awakening, I was conscious of an almost palatable emptiness or Void. When I described it to someone else, he ascribed it to seeing God.

The only persistent mention I see of it is in Mahayana, where the Void's meaning is explained according to differing schools, and Vajrayana Buddhism, such as the Tibetan Kargya school. It is only in the latter that I see much description of the experience of the Void (as opposed to the theory of the Void), or the mention that the essential quality of mind, mental space, is that of clear light.

The clear light experience is found when the mind is quiet, and the light of consciousness, which is always there, rather than a background awareness, becomes the foreground awareness. That is, the light becomes a more compelling experience than any object within mind. The screen, so to speak, becomes more important than the play of images that make a movie.

How to get to this place is explained further on another page on this site, but it is so important that it is worth repetition.

When at first we look within, rather than at an object in the world, we only find darkness. However, as our 'inner eye' 'adjusts' to the darkness of the mental space within, the darkness gradually gives way to an inner light. It is like entering a darkened movie theater. The eyes have to acclimatize before they see the reflected light from the movie. That inner light illuminates a mental world of emptiness, or void. Many years of looking leads the inner emptiness to expand, and the light to illuminate it ever more brightly.

Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhists call this clear, self-illuminated Void our true nature. Our true nature is nothingness, this nothingness-emptiness, which is absolutely clear, is illuminated by its own light.

At first, this light appears different from physical light. It is less clear, less intense and less 'grabbing' of attention. However, over the years, its intensity grows and its manifested forms change. Color patterns and shadows dance and fill its radiance. An inner movie of insubstantial forms plays to its one audience. Eventually the meditator discovers that the inner light and outer physical light are the same. They arise out of the basic functioning of vision consciousness itself. Of course there is sound consciousness and that is described in many other sources.

Knowing this inner Void of light and peace leads to dramatic changes in one's belief systems. For example, no matter how hard you look, no matter how long you look within, and that within becomes a clear, light, Void, you cannot find an I.

With your eyes open, operating and functioning in the world, you may act like a me, and even feel like a me if you turn your attention to yourself. However, if you stop and look within, eyes open or closed, trying to pursue the I, whether it is a thought or a feeling, you cannot find it. Even if you turn even further inward to look for the one who is looking, you will find the same self-illuminated emptiness only. That's it. That's all you'll ever find looking within.

Looking within and abiding within, means getting to the non-experiential state lying beneath (or before) thoughts, feelings or sensations.

All that you find is nothingness, a lighted void. While this experience may not change you radically, you do begin to wonder who is it that exists, and what is the nature of that existence.

One day the realization comes that within the entire fabric of your being there is no I at all. There never has been an I. There is no coordinator. There is no thinker.

You discover there are thoughts, but no thinker. There are actions, but no actor. There are decisions, but no decision maker. There is movement, but no mover. There is life, but no one who lives. There are trees, but no perceiver.

Everything takes place without a perceiver or organizer. Thoughts come and go, but they are like drops of rain, not something you create and implement. Everything happens without a central point of I-ness.

When this absence of I is clearly understood, your world is turned upside down. Without an I, there is no other opposed to it. I and other become one. I am no longer different from my percept, because there is no longer a me. There is percept, and I am that. There is only one field of perception, undivided by categories of me and thee, I and Thou, inner and outer, and I am all that.

With the disappearance of the I-idea, there is the temporary replacement by the Oneness-idea. You go around saying there is only One, only One! However, even this Oneness-idea is eventually overturned because we realize it too, is only an idea. With the disappearance of the I-idea, all ideas begin to vanish too. Atom is an idea. Quantum is an idea. Communism and capitalism are ideas, as is central bank, gross domestic product, integrity, dishonesty, brain, pancreas, and even Oneness and consciousness. They all disappear and with them, the existence of that which they purportedly denoted. The world is not other than mind and mind is no other than thoughts.

Soon our apparent brains begin to close out random thoughts and we begin to really look at our direct experience without the intervention of thought or the guidance of theory and memories of how things ought to be. The world revealed is vastly different from the world we thought we lived in.

We eventually discover we are not human beings at all, trapped in a body doomed to death, but we are everything we experience. We are the totality of consciousness. Without the I to limit us, without an I to direct our lives in routines of pleasure and pain avoidance, we are allowed to expand and take ownership of the totality of real existence. We leave behind the world of thought existence.

The inner world and the outer world come together. The inner world of vast, inner, self-illuminated space merges with the outer world of objects and sense impressions. When you look within you see the inner light, and when you look without, everything you see is illumined by physical light. When you walk into a dark room, you leave the physical light behind, and you see only the inner light. One day you realize that inner light is always there, even in the external world of sunlight. One day you realize there is only light. Sometimes you may call it sunlight, or lamplight, and sometimes you may call it inner light. However, there always is light, and that light illumines all, whether an inner fantasy or an outer tree.

When we are quiet and still, sometimes the inner vastness opens completely, and we, as discrete sentient objects, as subjects, disappear completely, to be replaced by our totality of experience of the world. The boundary between the trees and us disappears, and we become the trees. We become the sound of the tree blowing in a breeze. We become the jet plane overhead. Body and mind disappear completely, and we become the totality of experience, including portions of body experience mixed in.

We experience we are not the body. We are the totality of experience. We are the totality of consciousness, which includes the experience of the body as a part of a larger totality.

Now comes a most important step. We begin to investigate the body as an object of consciousness, and therefore, like all objects in consciousness, it too is consciousness. We explore the body as consciousness, just as we explored the vast, inner emptiness.

Since the vast, inner, self-illuminated emptiness is now always present, eyes open or closed, it is not surprising to see that the body too has this quality. The body is experienced in many ways. We can touch it, and be touched by it. We can hear the sounds it makes. We can taste its skin, and we taste our mouths. We can see portions of it with our eyes open. We can feel its muscles moving. We can feel our lungs pulling in air. We can feel a headache or muscle strain. We can look within, using our inner vision and find the lighted void that permeates all sensations of touch, taste, smell, sight, and inner feelings.

We begin to see the body is essentially empty and light, as is everything else within consciousness, as well as it should be, because the body too is only another object within consciousness, and thus is consciousness itself.

Whether there is something that reincarnates into a new body is a moot point. Speculating about it does not help you know yourself first hand. Someone who has recognized there is no I can see there is nothing to reincarnate, except the vast, self-illuminated Void. But, this is everyone's void, everyone's true and original nature. Who can say that this part of the Void is me, and that will reincarnate?

The same self-illuminated speck of void is in everyone and permeates everyone's every experience. The void is everyone and contains everyone. The void is One. As the Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra so succinctly states: Form is no other than Emptiness, Emptiness no other than form. Feeling, thought, sensation, and consciousness are also like this. All forms arise out of the Void, and return to the Void, just as clouds materialize from a clear sky, and after an hour or a week, dissipate back into the clear sky.

Perceiving the body and its experience from the inside, with the understanding that it too is consciousness, changes the body's experience. Things no longer happen to it as a passive subject. Rather, the body and environment are inseparable. One cannot experience one without the other. In fact, the body is the One world, and the One world is the body.

Sensations become less substantial. They are all permeated by emptiness. They feel less cluttered, more discrete and clear, but at the same time, less substantial, and in a sense, less "real." We often use the term 'real' synonymously with hard, tangible, or especially impactful sensations. However, all sensations now occur within a simultaneously perceived vast emptiness, which is as real as the sensations.

The experience is a little like seeing the old pirate hologram at Disneyland's Pirate Cove. There is a discrete image of light with the form of a man, but you can see through the image, as if it were a ghost. It has an intangible, empty feel about it. So too become the body's sensations.

They seem less substantial, and less real, which is good if you are dying a painful death, but bad if you are having enjoyable sex.

Another result of the constant presence of the Void is that no experience is more important than any other portion of the totality of the experience. The body is no more important than the tree. With increasing freedom from the demands of the world, we can begin to explore our experience of our bodies more closely. One day we make the remarkable discovery: we have no bodies!

We realize that the body, like our sense of I, is only a concept. There is no central experiencer of the body that coordinates the body's many sensations and perceptions. If you look closely at the body, examine each sensation moment by moment, you will understand completely, there is no such thing as the inner experience of the body as a totality. The sense of body totality is a concept only. Try it, you'll see this is true. You must become convinced that you have no body by this direct experience before you can become free. In fact, this appears to be the essence of Ramana Maharshi's experience. He discovered he was not his body. He did not find realization through self enquiry as he taught everyone else to do, but through a process where he realized he was not his body. I call this sort of self-investigation Microanalysis, and it is a great adjunct to the "Who Am I?" sort of self-enquiry.

If we look at our experience of our bodies from the inside, in a careful, thorough manner, we discover all sorts of things. At any one time we only experience portions of our bodies' feelings. Sometimes we feel a muscle tightness in the neck or back. Sometimes just the pressure of the chair against the buttocks. Sometimes we experience the taste in our mouths. Sometimes a tingling sensation on the feet. Sometimes we feel our heart beating, and sometimes we hear it.

Though many sensations may vie for our attention, and reside on the edges of direct awareness, we actually can only attend to one sensation of the whole at a time. It is like trying to hold onto two thoughts at a time - impossible. Just as you cannot think two thoughts at the same time, you cannot attend to two sensations simultaneously.

While we can examine one sensation after another, either randomly, or in a linear fashion, we cannot experience them all at once. Nor can we experience the body as a whole, as one complete form. If you think you do, please examine that wholeness feeling. You will discover that the experience of the body as a whole, is in fact, an "enduring" image, a fantasy, not an actual experience of the body as a whole. We have a body image, imagination, so to speak, derived from many years of body experience, and this image acts as an inner cognitive reference map that gives all the random sensations a meaning within the context of that map, i.e., a banged toe, hot mashed potatoes in the mouth.

It also becomes clear that the external world has its own reference map, but that map is still within our imagination. It then comes as no surprise that they are the same: reference maps of various dreams.

For example, I will have a sudden slight burning 'pain' somewhere. I search through my memories of similar sensations, until there is a match. I can then declare it a foot pain or a back pain based on past experience. Back sensations are different from foot sensations. The body

image then gives me a map, and I place that pain in my body image's foot. I can then reach down and rub my foot.

Isolating the spatial location of any body sensation from the inside is impossible without this body image map. The map is not itself a sensation or perception of the body. It is an image, born of experience, and supported by our ideas about our body. In fact, for most people, the body image grabs more attention than the sensations, which means we do not experience our experience, but we experience our ideas about ourselves.

This all leads up to my initial statement and final conclusion, the requisite knowledge of awakening: You have no body. The body is only a concept. There are only scattered sensations and perceptions that the brain puts together with a body image. There is only One experience, one field of consciousness, and you are that, the totality of all that is.

Robert used to say, "You are nobody, No Body at all." The body idea is very limiting. You are much more than the body and its many sensations. These all come and go, but who you are essentially, stays the same: Emptiness, without form, vast like space, lighted by its own light. But even this emptiness is not you. It is added to you. Form dissolves into emptiness and both into you.

You are not your body. In effect, you have no body, nor is there a you to have one. No body, no you. Even consciousness is just a concept. The vast, self-lighted Void too, is just a concept, a knowing added onto your emptiness nature. These concepts are both stepping stones and hindrances to discovering who you are, without words, images or concepts. About This, nothing can be said, because that which can be said has nothing to do with you.

Exodus

One fateful August day while driving Robert to Satsang, I asked, "Robert, isn't about time we checked out Sedona? The people there seem to really want us all, as opposed to Santa Fe." He replied in his typically taciturn way, "Yup, next week." For years, we had talked about where we might go to develop a spiritual community, but he always lost interest when push came to shove. The last six months were different. He seemed insistent that we move to another city, whether it was Santa Fe, Dallas, or Florida. I did not want to move that far, so I suggested Sedona, since it was closer to Los Angeles, and even closer to where my mother lived in Phoenix. For the last six months, many new students were coming to Satsang from Sedona, and I had been exploring the possibilities of us relocating there at Robert's request.

Robert traveled in a van when going anywhere for a distance with his family. Parkinson's caused easy tiring, and he could not sit upright for long periods, so he usually lay on the van floor. Therefore, I rented a large Buick that had a passenger seat that reclined almost to a flat position.

Early Monday morning I arrived at his apartment to find him agitated: I had never seen that before. He was pacing around the living room, clearly going nowhere. His wife, Nicole, also appeared anxious. Only Dimitri, Robert's little Lhasa Apsa, remained calm. I felt unexpectedly relaxed, because I habitually felt quite anxious before a trip.

The three of us and departed at 7:10 AM on a beautiful, sunny Monday. Robert sat upright and alert, while Nicole talked about the people at Satsang -- her favorite topic. In fact, Robert sat upright the entire 400 miles to Phoenix, not appearing to tire at all, which confounded Nicole. Nicole was highly attentive to Robert's health and comfort, and she had fully expected him to tire quickly and to require a lot of rest. Instead, he seemed rejuvenated by the trip.

On the other hand, I began to feel hot and tired after about an hour of driving through the heavy morning traffic. By the time we stopped near Palm Springs for breakfast, driving was becoming very difficult. After four hours of driving I felt exhausted and hot despite excellent air conditioning. By the time we reached Phoenix, I was disorientated, and had made wrong turns three times.

The original plan was to spend the night at my Mom's house in Peoria, a suburb of Phoenix, so that Robert and Nicole could get a feel for the town before spending five days in Sedona. By the time I arrived in Phoenix, I was just plain sick. I called Hale Dwoskin, head of the Sedona Institute in Phoenix, and one of Robert's newer students, and asked him to take Robert and Nicole out to see the town. The next day, Hale and his wife Amy drove Robert up to Sedona without me. I was as sick as I remember ever having been. I felt like Moses, unable to enter the promised land.

By Wednesday, I felt a little better and intended to drive up to Sedona the next day, but my mother became ill with symptoms identical to mine, and I could not leave her. On Thursday, I relapsed, and could not drive again. On Saturday, Robert was to come back through Phoenix so I could drive him home. The Sedona people sent an extra driver back with Robert to help me drive home. Driving home, I felt almost completely better.

The whole trip appeared very strange to me -- the illness coming on suddenly the closer we came to Phoenix, and left completely just as we left Phoenix. I never got to see Sedona. No one but Robert and Hale called when I was lying sick in Phoenix, and I felt left out. It made me think I was not destined to accompany Robert, and I told him so. Something inside me was telling me not to go. I took the illness to be a message from myself to myself.

The die was cast. Robert accepted the Sedona devotee's offers. They offered him everything he needed to live there. One LA woman offered to buy a house that we could use for Satsang. Another Sedona businessman offered to buy him a house instead of investing in raw land. Everything was set up and unconditionally promised, at frequent lunch meetings, over the phone and by letter. How could he refuse such generosity and declarations of love? Robert decided to move by the end of September, just four weeks away.

Everything changed now at Satsang in Los Angeles. Robert talked much as he always had, but he had a radiance and presence that he had never revealed before. Rather than sitting back in his

chair and disappearing into himself for half an hour before he talked as usual, he sat forward on the edge of the chair, grasping the microphone, looking at everyone intently. This was a very different Robert, one who knew that profound changes were in the air.

The power he was radiating was palpable. During the last four Satsangs, I felt I was being burned alive. Mary, my dear friend and long time devotee, had to move to the back of the room because she could not tolerate the bombarding energy. I was covered with sweat and had difficulty breathing. Robert was pouring his all into us, giving us his last best shot.

Lunches too were different. Robert still joked, but mostly he was silent. Sometimes he just looked deep into my eyes and I felt him touch the center of my being. He also invited me to his house more often, sometimes just watching television or doing little chores. Overall, I felt that I was burning in his presence. My body was burning, my being was burning, my everything was burning. Being with Robert had become a very intense experience.

Everyone else felt it too. With this change, I realized he really was moving. I wondered if he was pouring so much energy into me because he knew I was not going, and this was his last chance to 'finish me off.' Perhaps this is what happened during the Phoenix trip weeks before.

During this month, my life was hell. I was torn between moving and staying, making plans, packing things, and trying to find a place to live in Sedona by talking to devotees there. I had already lined up a job as a jeep tour guide, generously offered by a Sedona devotee, and a three bedroom house that I could sublease to other LA devotees moving to Sedona.

Kerima, my girlfriend, was unable to leave at that time, and her recent career change made attaining this kind of work an impossible quest in a town as small as Sedona. We would have to separate for a time, six months or more we thought, and perhaps even longer. Kerima had little interest in Advaita and had stopped coming to Satsang a year before; she was totally devoted to her new acting career, and we appeared to be drifting apart. I would have to maintain a Sedona residence and help sustain our Santa Monica apartment at the same time.

Besides these problems, I still maintained a colony of feral cats in a Santa Monica neighborhood. (Which gave me all sorts of grief later.) All the houses where the cats lived acquired new owners, and none of them liked the idea of the cats being there. Several became increasingly hostile about my feeding them. No one wanted to take them. I decided I had to take the cats with me to Sedona, to my new house, and to build a cat run in the yard where they could be protected from coyotes, dogs and the heat.

At one point, just three days before Robert left, I had made a deposit on the Sedona house, enlisted friends to feed the abandoned cats while I was away, tried to placate the neighbors who were now threatening to trap the cats and take them to the local animal shelter where they would be destroyed as feral, and attempted, unsuccessfully, to talk to the devotee, Marty, who promised me the tour guide job. On the way to renting a car, I got sick again. I felt the same illness as I experienced in Phoenix, a month before: nausea, dizziness, weakness and heat -- extreme heat. I felt overwhelmed by the prospect of leaving Kerima, moving to a new house in Sedona with rent three times as much as I paid now, to begin a new job as a tour guide in a town I didn't know,

capturing and transporting six semi-wild cats, building a cat run at the new house, and worrying about whether Kerima could take care of our own five cats and the three strays that lived under our Santa Monica home by herself. I was overwhelmed and sick. It was too much to handle all at once.

The jeep tour operator later reneged on his offer, pretending he never made it. Stop by and say hello to Marty at one of the jeep tour companies up there for me. All other promises made both to me and to Robert were never kept. The Sedona "devotees" had made commitments to financially support Robert and his family, which were never kept. After Robert made the move, all those who made commitments, reneged. One of the L.A. devotees that moved up there was shoved aside as the Sedona people wanted Robert all to themselves. Many of the Sedona people advertise themselves as students of Robert, even though they didn't act like it.

For the last two years while I was with Robert, I had done very little. For work, I wrote a few psychological evaluation reports, and created a few projects here and there, writing, speech writing for religious leaders, and I tried to launch a new radio show called "The Voice of Consciousness." But mostly I did nothing. Each afternoon, from about 1:00 to 3 or 4:00 PM, I would go into an involuntary 'trance,' where I would remain conscious, but my body and mind would disappear. This made holding a regular job difficult -- very difficult. I was not used to being so involved in the world, making decisions about moving, transporting cats, finding a job, and assessing what the Sedona situation was like. All this involvement felt unseemly and a little loathsome, and was dragging me from my state of constant peace.

The day arrived, Rosh Hashanah, September 25, 1995, and I did not leave with the caravan that carried Robert. Robert had suggested that I drive separately from him so that I had transportation in Sedona, and a way to return to LA. Two new devotees, who had known him less than two weeks, moved with him. Robert rode with Nicole in the van of one of the Sedona devotees. I let him go. I felt I had no choice. I was not used to dealing with a dozen problems at a time. I decided I would tackle just one problem at a time. I would find homes for the Palisades Street cats before I moved, or I'd have help lined up in Sedona to take them there, if that were at all possible.

The first few days after Robert and Nicole left were horrible. Terror gripped me. My body was wracked with pain as all my muscles tensed from fear. I was terrified of the idea of moving to Sedona. I feared something awful would happen to me there.

I had lost any interest in or ability to reenter the painful world of the human condition for several years, but now I was again totally immersed in the tumult of human fears, money concerns and logistical problems. It was as if I had allowed myself to become human again. Still, a part of me was entirely unperturbed. I knew this situation would pass, and though it once again appeared real, I knew it was not. Moreover, I knew I had to undergo this immersion into fear to overcome it. I had to experience it fully without Robert's soothing presence, alone.

Confession of the Jnani

Maybe once a month at Satsang, Robert would have Mary Skene read aloud one of Robert's own writings, "Confession of the Jnani." 'Jnani' is a title to an advaita master, one who obtains the knowledge of the absolute Self, the ground of all existence. Mary started coming to Satsang about a year after I started. She and I stayed the longest with Robert, but she moved to Sedona with him.

CONFESSION OF THE JNANI

For the Jnani who has realized the identity of his inner being with the infinite Brahman, there is no rebirth, no migration and no liberation. He is beyond all this. He is firmly established in his own absolute, existence-knowledge-bliss True Nature.

The further existence of his body and the world appears to the Jnani as an illusion, which he cannot remove, but which no longer deceives him. After the death of this body, as in life, he remains where and what he eternally is, the first principal of all beings and things: formless, nameless, unsoiled, timeless, dimensionless and utterly free, untouched by objects, experience or thought. Death cannot touch him, cravings cannot torture him, sins do not stain him; he is free from all desire and suffering. He sees the Infinite Self in all, and all in the infinite Self, which is his being.

I am infinite, imperishable, self-luminous, self-existent. I am without beginning or end. I am birthless, deathless, without change or decay. I permeate and interpenetrate all things. In all the myriad universes of thought and creation, I alone Am.

Dimitri

I have talked about Robert's special relationship between he and his dog, Dimitri. I talk more about them at several places on this site, such as on the Memories page. They were inseparable. They were mutual devotees. Robert said Dimitri kept him grounded, and that if he were not around, neither would be Robert.

I received this email two weeks ago from someone who was with Robert during his last days. I have not heard from the author since. Perhaps this is the only message I will ever get, one meant, I think, for all readers of this site.

Despite how unbelievable this story is, I know it is true because I knew Robert and his love for Dimitri.

“Ed,

So nice to hear from you!

There is a story I would like to share with you about when Dimitri left the body. It happened like this: I believe this event took place in the month of October.

On one of the days that I give Robert a massage, instead of doing it in the morning, he had asked that I do it in the evening. I think this was because Nicole had the carpets cleaned. So I came over in the evening and Robert was given a massage.

Right after I finished, I heard Nicole yelling out that Dimitri did a pooh on the freshly cleaned carpet. She was quite upset about it. I came out of the bedroom, picked up Dimitri and told Nicole not to worry, that I would clean up the mess. I took Dimitri outside and placed him on the ground. I went back inside, cleaned up the pooh, and then went outside to bring in Dimitri. When I picked him up, he felt heavier for some reason. I left him inside the spare bedroom and went to pack up my table. Robert was sitting in the living room, waiting for his dinner. Then I heard Nicole scream out, Dimitri left the body! Dimitri left the body!

I rushed out to see what she was screaming about and lo and behold, Dimitri wasn't breathing at all. I tried picking him up but he was completely dead-weight. I felt for a pulse but there wasn't any. I put a mirror under his nose and there was no sign of breath. Immediately, Robert came over and looked at his dog lying on the floor. Robert picked up one of his paws but it flopped back down. Nicole was a bit hysterical, and I felt extremely bad, because I was the last one to handle Dimitri. But, given Dimitri's already weak physical condition, I wasn't surprised that he had died. According to the vets, Dimitri should have passed on months ago.

We left Robert alone inside the bedroom with his dog and that's when I noticed that Robert did something to the dog's head and I didn't think anything of it, so I went back inside to collect my table and bag and to wait around to see what he wanted to do about Dimitri. Seconds later, Nicole came rushing in taking me by the hand and lead me back to where Robert and Dimitri were. What I saw bowled me over.

Dimitri was sitting on his haunches, gazing up into Robert's eyes, like he was completely alert and energized. Then suddenly, he fell to the floor and blood seeped from his nose. For almost 30 seconds, Robert had been giving Dimitri a transmission, even after Dimitri had already physically died.

I asked Robert what had happened, and he told me that Dimitri's spirit needed a little help on its way. And that he would never have to be reborn -- his karma was complete -- he was liberated. Tears streamed down the sides of my face, as I truly witnessed something miraculous.

The following morning, I took Dimitri's body to the crematory. Robert showed no emotion, as I knew he wouldn't. As much as he loved that dog, he knew that no thing is ever born, and no thing ever dies. That following Sunday, we had satsang and Dimitri was prominently talked about. Robert and Dimitri were like one in the same. I remember when Robert face moved to Sedona, I used to see him walking Dimitri along the West Highway 89A.

Ed, just keep on doing what your are doing, and tell people the truth about Robert -- he was the Mysterious Sage as you had so eloquently described.

The strangest thing occurred on the night before I learnt of your website. Sunday night, I had a dream about Robert. He was dancing with Nicole, and she looked beautiful, peaceful and happy. I walked up to Robert, all excited and happy to see him, and then he began dancing with me, he looked beautiful, like a holy man, his eyes were bright blue, and clear. We danced and I told him how happy I was to see him again. And then, someone came up to him, telling him that it was time for him to go. Robert said to me, "before I go, I want to write something for you". He found a sheet of paper and a pencil and in his Robert Adams handwriting style, wrote: "Only you can know your true self, no one else can do it for you...nothing else matters but this! He handed me the paper, and then he said all is well, he took Nicole by the hand and left with the man who was waiting for him. I woke up and it was 6 in the morning. I stayed awake feeling so exhilarated. We had some visitors who were devotees of Papaji's who were staying with us, so getting up before everyone else did and sitting in quietude was heavenly.

Then yesterday morning my husband, G., sent me your web address, telling me that he had found it looking at different spiritual sites. He said he saw the name Robert Adams and immediately opened your site. We both sat and listened to the audio streaming of his satsang. Well, I can go on and on about Robert, because I believe he has ever left.

It is so lovely to connect with you again, Ed, after so many years have passed. I really like your website and will spread the word to others...

Love,"

Eulogy

January 21, 1928

March 2, 1997

In this work I've endeavored to capture a bit of the taste my life with Robert, and what I learned from him and through my own inquiry. Though human in form, Robert was not a man even

when he acted like one. Robert was truly not of this world. He let it do its thing without being bothered by it. The world to him really was an illusion. He even devoted an entire Satsang lecture to telling everyone that he was good for nothing. His only reality was nothingness, and into his nothingness, I came looking for myself.

How Robert met death himself is a tribute to the power of his teachings. He met death as a friend, a liberator from a body weakened by age and disease. The brief eulogy that follows shows his clear mastery over death--and this mastery is the surest measure of any man's depth.

On Sunday morning, March 2, 1997 at 3:00 A.M., Robert Adams, the great guru and disciple of Ramana Maharshi, entered Mahasamadhi surrounded by his family and devotees in Sedona, Arizona.

He spent his last days telling devotees secrets about their lives and giving explicit instructions as to who and what to avoid during the turbulent period following his passing, and also the what positive actions they should take. To each of the others he gave something they wanted or needed. Two people he told to start Satsang. To a few others he handed on the responsibility for taking care of his family.

Late in the evening, hours before he passed, a great peaceful energy permeated his bedroom, and he began smiling and laughing. He told devotees and family that Ramana Maharshi had entered the room along with Christ, Buddha, and many other saints and sages. He pointed towards each for his devotees' and family's sake, and asked whether they could see them. He talked to Ramana and the others, just as he did in a vision he had shared with devotees ten years before. Nicole, his wife of 43 years, said she had never seen Robert more joyous or happy as when he was surrounded by these saints. His last spoken words were to his family, devotees and to these saints.

For the last days, his face and body were aglow, and he radiated an energy that invigorated everyone. Everyone felt that Robert was working on them at a subtle energy level, transforming and purifying. During these last days he requested complete silence throughout the house. Devotees said he could hear their slightest whisper, no matter where they were in the house, and he would call out for silence.

Robert faced his passing with an attitude of happiness and excitement, as if he were embarking on a great journey. Robert, as a young man was always traveling to all the corners of the world. He embraced his final journey on this plane with obvious relish.

Robert's little dog Dimitri, had died just a few months before. Dimitri was the closest thing to an attachment Robert ever had. Robert many times said, "Dimitri keeps me grounded. When he passes, so will I." And so it was.

The two nights before he passed, devotees and family took him outside for a last look at a mountain called Capital Butte, which looks almost identical to Arunachala. He pointed upwards towards the mountain and said, "Snow." The devotees could not understand what he meant, for there was no snow on the mountain. For the next two days, Nicole states, Robert would repeat the word 'water' over and over again, and sometimes made movement as if he were swimming in a deep pool of water.

As if in compliance to his inner state, the external world took on an aspect of water. Snow began to fall, gently at first, then with a growing fury. Within hours everyone in the house was trapped by the snow, unable to leave, and thus they were blessed to witness the great Jnani's Mahasamadhi in complete isolation from the outside world. Hours before his death, the snow ended.

Robert was fully conscious when he died, and smiled to the end. Minutes before he died he held his daughter's head and ran his hands through her hair, mouthing words he could not pronounce, "I love you; I love you, I love you!"

He said there was no more pain, only "tingling." The last hours he spent alone with his family, and no one but they know his absolute last words, because he could speak no longer and communicated by gripping Nicole's hand. A devotee outside his house saw a meteor fall at the time of his Maha-samadhi. The next morning, there was no sign of the snow that had trapped them for two days; it had melted overnight.

At 3:00 A.M. on Sunday morning, his beloved devotee Mary Skene, felt Robert nudge her in the ribs as she lay in the bedroom next to his. She thought to go inside the bedroom where Robert lay surrounded by his family, but thought better to leave them alone together. He died with a smile on his face.

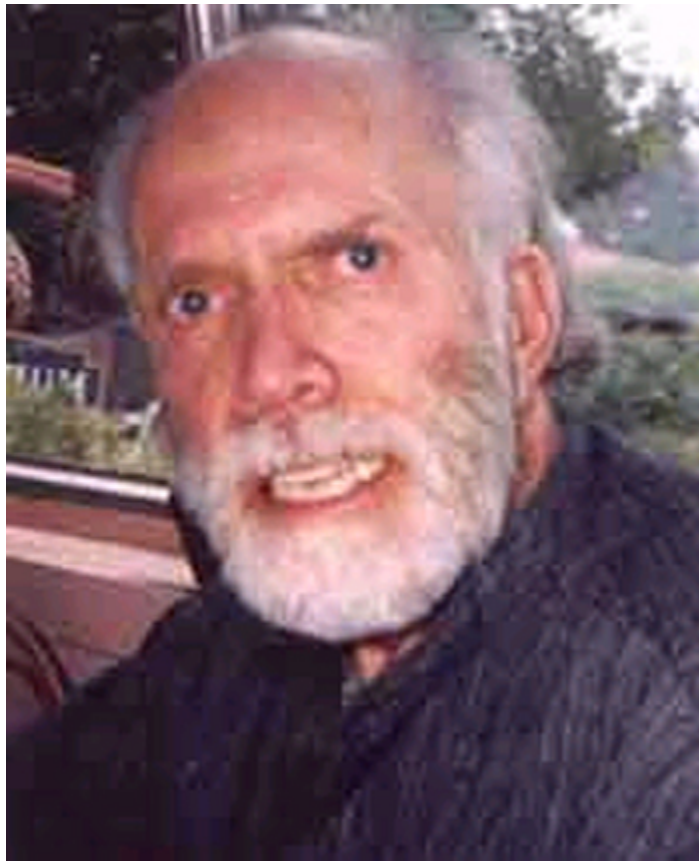
Mary was chosen to anoint his body with fragrant oils. He was dressed in white linen and silk shirt and pants. Everyone who saw him was overwhelmed by his beauty. His face was radiant, and his skin soft and unwrinkled as a baby's. A gentle smile lay on his lips, and the house was bathed in his peaceful energy. Parts of his body remained warm for days, especially his feet and his chest.

He was cremated on Wednesday, March 5, 1997, and his ashes will be kept in an urn at the Ashram house for Darshan.

A great teacher such as Robert is so very rare. To get even a glimpse of such a guru in one's life is a blessing. More so the blessings he gave all of us who served him through the years. Robert will be sorely missed by all his devotees, his family, and all of mankind.

Robert was a very strange man. He was so quiet and self-effacing, that few knew him at all. Most everyone felt they knew him, some even felt him a close friend. In fact though, they only knew

their projections. He was the perfect psychoanalyst, never disturbing the images people projected onto him. His ever-present, yet barely perceptible smile made him appear bemused by all the activities and fantasies others had about him. Still, despite his aloofness, his ever present silence, and his detachment that made it appear he didn't care, he was always there, in a low-key affectionate way, filled with humor and offbeat wit.



Robert Adams on Enlightenment and Gurus

Robert Adams never named a successor. He told me once that there was a book he had just read by Lakshman, who claimed that Ramana Maharshi had named Lakshman as his successor. Robert said that Ramana never named a successor and he should know since he was there. A few years later, I met Ganeshan, the editor of the Mountain Path, the publication of Ramana Ashrama, as well as Ramana's nephew, who said he too never heard of a successor.

Perhaps Ramana gave a secret transmission, as did the Fifth Buddhist Patriarch to the Sixth Patriarch, so that the latter would survive. As it was, the latter was pursued for 12 years, sought by both jealous wannabes, who wanted his succession bowl and robes and those who wanted enlightenment at the point of a sword. But, what would be the point of a secret transmission?

There is and was no need for a line of succession from Robert's point of view. Robert laughed at that idea and said, "What's the point?" He hadn't needed to be named a successor. He saw the whole concept of imaginary succession of imaginary students within an unreal mental space as the ultimate joke.

Robert's only wish was to have his students find their true selves and be liberated from imagined suffering and death. He left it to his students to find and teach their own way, without the public relations boost to build their "practice." If anything, he went out of his way to tear down anyone with an ego declaring that he/she was his successor or being enlightened, and there were so many around Robert. He never even claimed that for himself; however, he never denied it either. We just knew it by his bearing and his teachings themselves.

Robert almost always refused to comment on whether he thought one or another teacher was enlightened. I remember asking him once about Rajneesh, because he had the bearing, far off look and soft voice of Robert. Robert nodded and said yes, that he was. All of the other times I asked any such nonsense questions about anybody, he would say no. For Robert, enlightenment was a rare, rare thing.

My friend Swami Shankarananda calls the endless list of those claiming successorship of one Advaitin guru or another, "California Advaitins." This is very apt.

The point of this is, is that no one knows who has it or not. Just try the only practice Robert Adams ever taught, namely self-inquiry, Atman Vichara, and watch the impact on your imaginary self. Of course, to do that, you need to have faith, and that is an entirely different story.

More of Robert's last days:

Robert's health had been seriously deteriorating beginning sometime during 1993 or 94. The L Dopa medication he had been taking to control his Parkinson's symptoms was becoming ineffective. He was finding it increasingly difficult to move or talk. His voice had grown very weak and sometimes, if his medication was not working, he was almost impossible to understand.

Before going to lunch with a student (this was his way of giving private teachings, which was to go to a vegetarian restaurant near his home called Follow Your Heart), he'd take his L Dopa an hour ahead of time so that he could move and be understood. The same with Satsang. On rare occasions, but increasingly so, he would sit before the audience in his chair and just stare out into the audience. He would do this for a long time, then suddenly get up and briskly walk out. He could not talk, and his walk seemed off balance.

His close students knew something was wrong.

By 1994, he had grown very weak. His wife, Nicole Adams, later told me that Robert knew that there was something wrong with his body and that is one of the reasons he wanted to move to Sedona, thinking he might have better health there.

As related elsewhere on this site, by 1994 the number of people coming to Satsang had increased dramatically. During the last six months before he moved to Sedona in 1995, it was obvious he was very ill. People were coming to Satsang from all over the world.

One day at Satsang, we had an exceptionally large audience. Just before Satsang began and people were milling about and talking, Robert leaned over and whispered in my ear, "They are all coming to see the dying guru. The day I die, the place will be packed."

Before Robert moved to Sedona, I believe in September of 1995 (I am chronologically challenged.), his wife, Nichole would spend much of the day taking care of his daily needs. Robert was barely functional before he took his L-dopa and another medication the name of which I forgot.

After he moved to Sedona, Mary Skene, one of the last of the old-timers, began to assume the task of taking care of him.

Robert had liver cancer. After a while the pain gave way, as he described it, to a "tingling." He gradually ate less and less as the disease progressed and became quite thin. Other students would come over and do the shopping and sometimes prepare meals.

Robert became evermore silent. He wanted quiet throughout the house. When I came to visit the last time, he would pace back and forth between the bedroom and the living room where I was

sitting. He wanted to be with me, as he knew this was our last meeting, but he had a hard time socializing and being up out of bed.

Robert died in 1997. The picture above was taken about six months before he died. It seems that all Advaitin teachers and most Zen masters die of cancer. Anyway, after he died, wannabe gurus from all over the world began to descend on Los Angeles and Sedona giving talks and workshops. It was apparent they were trying to glean Robert's students. I felt them to be spiritual vultures.

The point of all this, is beware of teachers who proclaim some special talent, enlightenment or successorship. Beware of those who do a lot of advertising or give expensive workshops. Robert never charged a dime for someone to come to Satsang and never gave any workshop. As Robert said many times, the best teachers are unknown. They avoid have a large following and are looking for quality not quantity.

However, as he thought very highly of Rajneesh, one of the highest profile teachers of our time, it appears there may be exceptions to this rule.

30 April 2013

ROBERT ADAMS AS ADVAITA GURU AND SHAMAN

accessed from Self-Knowledge and Self-Realization: ROBERT ADAMS AS ADVAITA GURU AND SHAMAN
(itisnotreal.blogspot.com)

Those of you who follow Robert Adams, my teacher, let me ask you a question to ponder.

When Robert states that we should ignore the world, ignore our reactions to it, because the world is not real, "it is not as it seems," what does he mean? More powerfully, he even says "The world does not exist, it is like a mirage."

What does he mean? A mirage over what?

Some of us who have had some sort of awakening experience, especially of the non-existence of an internal, objective 'I', for a long while experience objects in the world to appear like a hologram, sort of transparent against a background of the Void, or beingness, or emptiness which acts as a screen or container onto which objects are seen, felt, heard, tasted, etc.

This is the Zen-like world of the Heart Sutra where we read, "Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form." Internal forms, such as images, thoughts and emotions, emerge from the background of internal, imaginal space, while external forms such as chairs, cars and people supposedly emerge from and return to empty space, even though few of us ever really see that unless we are on psychedelics or are diagnosed with a mental disorder.

There is more about Robert that very, very few people know.

Robert was an empath. He practiced psychometry. He used to touch objects gently, run his fingers over things to get a "feel" for whoever owned or created it. Whenever he received a letter, before opening it, he'd run four fingers around the edges of the letter and also touch the front of the letter. He used to do the same with some objects in a new room he was in, or when riding in my car, he'd run his fingers over the dashboard, as if divining some deep mystery of the car.

It was as if Robert "felt" by means of his fingers a world within the world I saw, but which was invisible to me. I wondered what he found so interesting about a world he claimed did not exist.

When I directly asked him at lunch as to what he meant by the world was not real, did he mean it just keeps changing and nothing was permanent, he said yes. That is, it was impermanency that made the world and us as human unreal, and that the underlying unchanging beingness, the witness, was the real.

Yet I knew there was more to his story than just that. If you spent time with Robert you would know without a doubt that Robert was seeing a world differently than you did.

Robert's eyes were large and almost always unblinking. He could look at you or a scene for two or three minutes without shifting his gaze at all, and he would not blink during that time. He could sit in his chair by the rear window of his condo and just stare at the backyard scenery for hours. Most thought he was in Samadhi perhaps witnessing some inner truth, Void, emptiness or joy, but if so, why were his eyes open? He always looked like he was staring at a different world and that this world was of no use to him at all.

Even his wife Nicole repetitively commented that Robert was an alien from a different world and she expected one day a flying saucer would land and take him back to his home planet. Even his own wife thought Robert was from a different world. Does this not suggest that Robert actually experienced a different world from our commonly accepted world of fixed objects, cause and effect and flowing time?

Another thing: Robert often had "visions" which he explained were not dreams, but visions of entities or of an alternative landscape that no one else saw. These visions were quite common and sometimes he spoke about one or another of them at Satsang.

His most common and repetitive vision when he was a youngster, was of seeing a two foot tall dwarf with white hair and beard standing at the bottom of his bed speaking "gibberish" to him. This vision disappeared about the age of seven. And at that age Robert developed a siddhi. He would just think of something he wanted, the most famous example he gives was of wanting to learn how to play a violin, say the word 'God' three times, and shortly he would get what he wanted, such as when his uncle brought him a violin the next day to learn to play.

Thus Robert "co-created" events, entities and objects in our commonly experienced manifest world just with "magic" of some sort, with ritual. Let the average neo-Advaitist chew on that one. His intentionality of wanting something was often followed by his getting it after a short ritual.

He often restated his most common adult vision, which was of him, Ramana, Jesus, the Buddha, and others, coming together in the middle of a mountain and ascending together as light bodies towards heaven.

He had this vision again just as he lay dying, telling family and friends around him on his deathbed that Ramana was there, pointing to everyone where Ramana was standing, and Jesus and others. They came to him just as in his vision, and then he died.

Shortly before that by a month or so, his dog Dimitri died. The story is found by clicking the Dimitri tab underneath the Robert tab on the wearesentience.com website. Someone found Dimitri's dead in a room of his condo, and they tried to revive him. Blood was coming from his mouth as perhaps he had an aneurism. He did not revive.

A few minutes later, the woman who told me this story, went by that same room, and saw Robert with Dimitri. Only now Dimitri was live, sitting up and looking into Robert's eyes as Robert bent over to greet Dimitri's gaze. Then Dimitri laid down again and died. Robert told the woman, "He was having a hard time passing, and I helped him."

All of these incidents points surely to the fact that Robert actually lived in a different reality than his wife, family, friends and students. Indeed, I am certain Robert was a shaman, able to see, feel, taste and touch a different world concealed to most, that existed side-by-side with the common world the rest of us saw, a hidden world within the world we all experienced.

This is what differentiates Robert from other Jnanis: he was also a shaman who lived in a different reality from more common jnanis such as Nisragadatta or Vivekananda, but much more in line with teachers or the Kriya or Raja Yoga traditions, such as Yogananda's lineage of Mountain Gurus.

I know now that what Robert meant by the world is an appearance only, a mirage, is that the external phenomena were only the clothes worn by "the real," and underneath the appearance were worlds hidden to most except to other empaths or shamans like himself.

Robert never directly stated there were other worlds hidden within the one we commonly experienced, but he did say there were a myriad of other worlds, other realities, but he never directly stated he had access to these. Part of this is that Robert was very careful about the teachings he expressed. After teaching for 40 years he knew what he could say and do and get away with without creating too much controversy for himself. I think he knew if he claimed also to be a shaman, claim powers, claimed to teach about others world, it would confuse his students who were trying to escape from this reality and to find peace within.

This double teaching that the world was not real, and we should only go within to find the Absolute, or the Self, did not fit well with the teaching that the manifest world was not as it seemed, and was really covering over a world of magic and infinite dimensions, a world of energies, ecstasies, astral projection (which he frequently talked about), mysterious healings, and the dead coming alive to be possessed by the presence of a dying master. (Also found in the life of Robert on the wearesentience.com website.)

Indeed, he would reserve such teachings for the mature student who had already become Self-Realized and would not lose that realization by the distraction of siddhis, visions, ecstasies, and other sorts of "magic."

Edji Facebook postings about Robert

Oct.4/15:

THE MYSTERY OF ROBERT ADAMS, NICOLE ADAMS, AND THE INFINITY INSTITUTE.

Robert rarely ever talked about his recent past in the United States. he talked about his travels in India, his time with Ramana, with Yogananda, Muktananda, and his childhood events, and sometimes even mentioned distributing pirated audiotapes in Hawaii, or mentioned abandoning a sangha in Santa Fe years ago when he called himself M.T. Mind.

But he rarely talked about meeting Nicole or their life together, the foster children they raised, or where he lived prior to coming to L.A., except that he left Oregon to be with Nicole and daughters after he developed Parkinson's.

Nicole wrote a book supposedly about her life with Robert, but there are no dates or places named, no photos of her or Robert in it. Mostly it was about her life with Robert after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, with added teachings direct from Robert's transcripts. .

She, and Infinity, threatened to sue anyone who posted Robert's photos on the Internet. Then a mysterious figure named Blake Warner appeared and came to head the Robert Adams Infinity Institute, and began copyrighting all of Robert's works, including downloading Robert's a book of Robert's transcripts and then applying for copyright of those transcripts 16 days after I posted them. The boo keven had my name on it as editor.

If you see the early editions of Follow Your Heart (1991 and 1990) and other small books by Robert at that time, there are acknowledgement sections as well as a list of regular attendees to Satsang. Neither Nicole or Blake or Melanie Warner are ever mention. I posted these books on my earlier website, and was threatened with lawsuits many time by either Nicole or lawyers hired by Infinity.

Nicole even publicly denied I ever existed even though I posted an audio tape where she congratulated me for my very accurate portrayal of who and what Robert was at the time (1994), and even though we frequently talked on the phone about the Sangha. .

Our Sangha urged Robert to get on Social Security, but he said he wanted nothing to do with the government and had never registered with the Social Security Administration, yet three years later when we went to a dentist to get dental work done, the application required a SS#, and Robert rattled it off.

Nicole even threatened to Sue Yoga Journal because they were going to publish a photo of his to accompany an article I wrote about Robert called, The Mysterious Sage of Sedona.

Recently it has come to my attention that Robert Adams and Nicole Adams may have been pseudonyms, and this is being looked into. Someone has surmised that Blake Warner too is a pseudonym as no address or phone number is ever given for the Infinity Institute, or Blake or Melanie Warner, or for Nicole Adams.

People buy items from the Infinity website and send checks to various P.O. boxes, and the location of Infinity, Blake, Melanie, and Nicole remain hidden.

According to Nicole, Robert never left her side for their entire marriage, yet Robert said he traveled in India for 17 years, some of those years during the time they supposedly were married because he told me that he stayed with Nisargadatta for six months during the time Ramesh was there.. Also, Robert said he was living alone in a cabin in Oregon when he was diagnosed with Parkinson's and then moved to L.A. to be with family.

None of this touches the legitimacy or power of Robert's teachings, but it does point to the actions of someone who was very much involved in the world, a wheeler-dealer in a way, that perhaps hiding from his past, and even though he constantly preached that the world was not real, that no one existed, and all that there was, was Consciousness, he very effectively acted and taught in that same world that he said was illusory.

Every effort to get Blake and Nicole to supply and address or phone number has failed. Their lawyers have not revealed it in their many threatening letters.

I have to thank Nicole and Infinity though, because of them I could not keep teaching in Robert's tradition, which forced me to go more deeply inside to find my own expressions of my experience, and ended up in ways 180 degrees opposite of Robert by emphasizing the Manifest Self as the teachings for our time.

Perhaps I will get a letter from them again because of this post, and if I do, I'll post it here.

Oct.8/15:

Robert Adams was full of twists and turns. One day he will tell you he needed money to support his family, and in Satsang he'd say he needs nothing--the Jnani is complete and self-contained.

Weeks later he'd be engaged in having what appeared to be an affair with some woman in the Sangha, which would set off a fire-storm, and we'd be forced to move Satsang to a different location.

Mary Skene would complain to Robert about his womanizing, and he finally promised to stop a few months before he died.

In one Satsang he flung a small pill container at Samantha, then apparently angrily exited the Satsang.

He claimed to have no social security number or contact with social security because he said he distrusted the government. Yet, when we went to his dentist he rattled off his social security number for me to put on the finance form.

Then he would have three or four people transcribing his talks, tell Ananada to make a book out of them, and then turning the book and manuscripts over to his wife as her inheritance.

He rarely talked about his early life, and made it sound like he was with Ramana from 1947 to 1950, when in fact he was at Ramana Ashram a total of only a few weeks. Currently people at Ramana ashram who were there do not remember Robert because he was there only a short period of time.

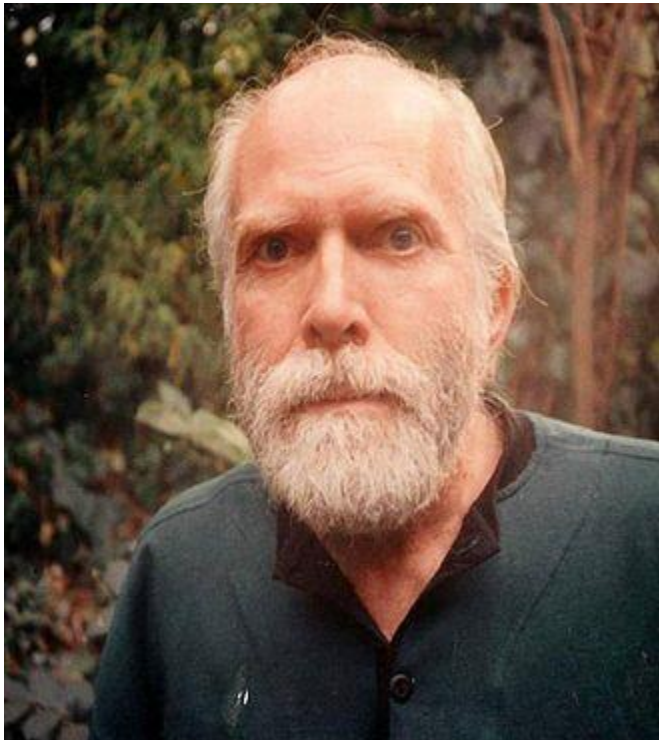
Then there was the time for six months or so where he warned about a great earthquake that would strike Los Angeles, and started rumors he was moving elsewhere, maybe Santa Fe, Sedona, etc. The earthquake never happened.

And over and over, all the eight years I knew him, he's repeat, "I am looking for the ten students that stay with me. That is all I want."

Robert did not reach out so much to meet students at their level, but made them reach up to where he was. In a sense he demanded a lot from his students, more than most could stand.

The Mystery of Robert Adams: Did He Really Meet Ramana Maharshi and the Sages of India?

Posted by [existence1010](#) February 10, 2020 Posted in [Uncategorized](#)



(Robert Adams was an American neo-advaita teacher who claimed to be a direct disciple of Ramana Maharshi and to have lived in and around Ramana Ashram in Tiruvannamalai for about 3 years, and also with other renowned saints and sages in India, including Anandamayi Ma, Nisargadatta Maharaj, Swami (Papa) Ramdas, Baba Muktananda (from Ganeshpuri), Neem Karoli Baba and many others.)

This is **Part 1** in our series. [Part 2 link](#): Was Robert in India? [Part 3 link](#): The Question of Integrity by Kitty Osborne| [Part 4 link](#): Questions for Kitty

An interview with Steven Strouth

Q: How did you meet Robert Adams?

A: In 1986 I operated a Ramana Maharshi study group in the Los Angeles area and he called me up and asked if he could attend. He said he didn't have a car and we agreed to have our next week's meeting at his place. I was the only one at the next week's meeting and so I drove to Panorama City and met with him.

Q: What was that like?

A: In those days Panorama City was sort of a more dangerous type neighborhood with a certain amount of gang activity. When I got there Robert seemed sort of apologetic for living there and said the only reason he lived there was because his brother had died and left him this large apartment building. That turned out to be a lie. He did not own that apartment building, no one died and left it to him, and I don't even think he had a brother.

Q: What was your first meeting with him like?

A: We went into one of the empty apartments which I later found out he had the keys to because he was working as an apartment manager there and we started talking about Ramana and self-enquiry and how self-enquiry was not a mysterious process like people used to think. Then Robert told me he had actually been to India and met Ramana which really impressed me. He told me he had actually been at Ramana ashram for two weeks when he was 18 years old. Meeting someone who actually knew Ramana in 1986 hadn't seemed like even a possibility, but when I did the math I realized it was possible and I was quite impressed.

His supposed India trip would have been right after he got married to Nicole. Nicole was an heiress from the Cayman Islands and had money, according to his story. I thought he said it was Nicole's money that financed his supposed trips to India but there was also a story about an aunt that died and left him money. He said he spent 17 years in India traveling, so I thought perhaps he was flying back and forth. I never really questioned him on how he spent time with his two young daughters and at the same time spent so many years in India.

Anyways we talked some more and Robert wanted to be part of the study group and said we needed to expand it. I was 32 years old at the time and while I never took Robert Adams as my guru or as any guru, I did think he understood the correct approach to self-enquiry and so the next week I met with him again.

Q: What happened at the next meeting?

A: Again no one else came and I drove to Panorama City from Burbank. Robert said he wanted to run ads in the Whole Life Times to let more people know about what we were doing. He said he envisioned starting an ashram/health center. I thought that would be fun. So anyway we ran ads and slowly a few people started to come. Robert wanted to charge everyone \$10 to come to our meetings and was quite insistent on it saying it was the only way we could get the ashram going. I told him I would have nothing to do with charging money for satsang and he would be on his own if that was the approach. He reluctantly agreed to not charge money.

As it turned out, the house I was living in was bought to be demolished and I needed a new place to live and Robert said: "Hey why don't you rent an apartment in my building and we can hang out and plan our ashram." So I did that. I used to work from 5pm to 1am in those days. I moved over there and we used to hang out every day and talk and plan our ashram. Robert used to regale me with stories of all the spiritual teachers he met.

He said he had co-owned an import shop in Manhattan, NYC with Rudi where they sold artwork, statues and trinkets from India. He said Franklin Jones used to hang around the store and he used to give him errand jobs and such in those days. Robert often talked about Swami Chetanananda (whom Robert jokingly called Swami Shit-ananda), who inherited a guruship from Rudi. They had obviously been buddies at some point. Later I talked to someone that had been with Rudi from early on and he never heard of Robert Adams and didn't recognize his picture so a lot of the Rudi stuff may have been made up too. It is unlikely Rudi shared ownership of his store in NYC.

My impression was always that Baba Muktananda was really Robert's guru and he talked about him a lot... always reverentially. Loved to talk about him, tell stories about him and defended him against scandalous stories.

Robert also mentioned to me that there were a lot of wild sexual hijinks and orgies going on at

Ramana Ashram. Something few people knew about. I remember finding this so shocking. He also said he met Papa (Swami) Ramdas who was inappropriately sexual in front of little girls according to Robert.

In those days (1986) I started reading Nisargadatta Maharaj and I showed Robert the book of his dialogues, titled "I Am That." Years later I'd heard he was telling people he met Nisargadatta, and that he spent time with him in his upstairs loft in Bombay going to satsangs for six months straight during the last three years of Nisargadatta's life, but no one ever recalls having seen him there and it's curious he never mentioned anything like that when I introduced the books to him. When I knew Robert he talked normally and walked normally, but there were certain hints of Parkinson's like a slight shaking in his hands now and then.

When we first decided to hold satsang I said to Robert that I may not have enough furniture in my apartment and he said, "Don't worry about that, I have a lot of furniture in storage," and we went down to a storage room and got some really nice chairs to use for holding satsang. Robert said that he had furniture in storage in Nevada, Florida, Washington State, New Mexico, Hawaii, and I think somewhere else where he had given shaktipat and had held satsang, but then moved on. He said Nicole got tired of losing all of her good furniture every time they moved and so they started putting it in storage.

Q: What was the Hawaii kidnapping story?

A: At first the Hawaii kidnapping story sounded bizarre, but after knowing Robert for a while it made perfect sense. Robert had the habit of "borrowing" money from followers. Yet while most people use the word "borrow" with some slight intention of someday paying it back, Robert never used the word like that. In fact, he would be shocked if someone even mentioned "paying back" in association with money he "borrowed" ... so my guess is that the kidnapping involved someone that lost a lot of money. Robert didn't do things in a small way. Robert said some of his followers kidnapped him and held him for ransom. I think he said this was in Hawaii but I'm not sure of the exact place – it could have been New Mexico. I think he said he held satsang there under the pseudonym "M.T. Mind".

Q: Did Robert Adams hold satsang in Hawaii?

A: I had heard that he taught on the Big Island under the name Robert Siegal. At that time, he was saying his guru was Baba Muktananda and he was not claiming to have been with Ramana Maharshi. The story I got was that after the kidnapping incident Robert left Hawaii and it so happened that some years later two women (former students) were visiting L.A. and heard about a satsang being given by someone named Robert Adams who claimed to be a direct disciple of Ramana. They went and were surprised to see it was the Robert Siegal who they had been students of in Hawaii, who had been previously been saying that he was a student of Muktananda's in Siddha Yoga and never mentioned having met Ramana.

Q: What is the story about Robert Adams having been under psychiatric care?

A: Robert told me his mother had him under psychiatric care starting when he was around 12 years old. He said it was because she didn't understand his "spirituality." At the time I took that to mean she found it odd that he was talking to a 2-foot-tall Ramana by his bed, but perhaps she discovered more troubling aspects of his behavior too.

Q: What was the story about Henry Denison kicking Robert out of his house.

A: I only heard that second hand but from several people. In those days Henry Denison used to have a wide variety of spiritual teachers give satsang at his house in the Hollywood Hills overlooking Lake Hollywood. A student of his, Karen Evans, was having regular private interviews with him. Karen was a classically beautiful-looking woman about 25 years younger than Robert. During one private interview Robert sexually propositioned her. Karen said no, and then Robert tried to grab her, but she slipped out, and told him never to do that again, and that she will only engage with him in a student-teacher relationship. He agreed to that, and she believed him, and the next week she went for a private interview, and he grabbed her and tried to force his tongue in her mouth. She pushed him away, ran out, and some days later went to his next satsang, where, when Robert asked for questions after his talk, Karen asked him why did he try to kiss her (or why did he grab her, was another report). Robert answered, "I tried to comfort you." and she answered, "With your tongue down my throat?". An uproar ensued, and Henry Denison got up and told Robert, "Robert, you are a dirty old man, get out of my house." It plunged her into a depression, and she later killed herself.

Q: Did you ever witness Robert being sexually inappropriate?

A: No, but he talked a lot about women that came on to him and how his wife Nicole used to get jealous. One day at our satsang a very pretty 30ish girl came for teaching and I didn't see Robert the next day and two days later he mentioned that he had been over to her house, and she had made a pass at him and tried to get sexual with him by wrapping them up together in a blanket. He said her little boy was a brat and he didn't want to have anything more to do with her, and she never came back to our satsang.

Q: Did you lose money loaning to Robert?

A: Yes, and I think a lot of people did.

One day Robert came over to my apartment with an ad for a Honda Prelude. He said he needed it so Nicole could get back and forth to the swap-meet to sell her t-shirts. He asked me if I would co-sign for it. \$19,000. He said I wouldn't lose any money. He would make the payments of \$200 a month.

I told him I would think about it. The next day I told him I would not be co-signing for him to get this car. He was annoyed about it. I said I would look for a used car for him and he could pay me back. I said I would get something cheaper, and in the next week I bought a \$600 Honda Civic. It was a beautiful car... it ran great. It did have a dented up front fender, but mechanically it was perfect.

After two months Robert had not paid a dime on it. I asked him why not. He said he could not pay anything, that he didn't have any money, no job... where was he to get any money? (In other words the whole \$19,000 would have been on me.)

I told him that if he didn't pay me something in two weeks I was going to sell the car. He laughed at that. Two weeks later he had paid nothing and I sold the car. He was angry and started blaming me. Later that day, Nicole came over, and was mad that I had sold "their" car. I explained to Nicole the situation and she calmed down.

Later I asked Robert why he had not told Nicole that he owed me money for the car? He said he had made Nicole think that the car manifested by magic.

Q: What is the story about him posing as a medical doctor and operating a medical stress clinic?

A: One day I was over at Robert's apartment and we were just sitting around chatting and I happened to pick up a piece of paper under the chair he had been sitting in. It was an ad for a medical center stress clinic in Las Vegas. It was clearly written by Robert, I could recognize his way of talking and writing. It said this particular medical doctor would cure you of stress. Robert seemed very uncomfortable at my reading this. I asked him what it was. He said it was something he had written for a doctor friend of his. I sensed he was lying and it also seemed highly unlikely that a medical doctor would have Robert Adams write his ad material. Also this was after the whole apartment manager union idea went bust and I knew he had money trouble. He had already started referring to himself as Dr. Robert Adams and I was noticing how much respect he had gotten from people this way. He actually did look the part of a doctor. Anyway, all I can tell you is I sensed there was something very strange going on about this and his behavior that day.

Fast forward a few years... a friend of mine tells me she was having lunch with Robert at "Follow Your Heart" in the valley and a man comes up to them who recognized Robert and says to him, "Dr. Anderson, how great to see you again." Robert shakes the man's hand, hugs him and goes back to his dinner.

Also later I heard that Robert had operated a stress clinic in Hawaii.

By that time he had already told me so many blatant lies that I knew absolutely nothing he said could be trusted. I believe Dr. Robert Adams aka Dr. Anderson had worked as a medical doctor in more than one state.

Also, I remember that one time after I had bought the car for Robert, his daughter Prentiss (about 19 at the time) had been driving it a lot, I asked him how she liked it. He said she was used to driving their Ferrari but it was fine. And I'm thinking, she was used to driving their Ferrari? Robert had no job skills and actually never mentioned ever holding down any job anywhere. How did he get money for a Ferrari?

Q: What about Nicole's heiress money?

A: When I knew him his family was pretty much broke and he was trying to make ends meet as an apartment manager. I had heard mainly from Dana who used to have lunch with Robert every Wednesday at "Follow Your Heart," that Nicole was due to inherit money from her family in the Cayman Islands but I never heard about any of that ever having come through.

Q: Who is Dr. Blake Warner?

A: Robert had two daughters, Melanie and Prentiss. Melanie was married at the time and lived in Woodland Hills I think. I never met her but I often saw her husband David Warner. He used to come to our satsang. He was interested in Robert's teachings. He played guitar, sang and all around was a great musician. Dr. Blake Warner is Melanie's husband David. I always liked David and thought he was very sincere. In those days he used to work for the cable TV company. I think he was an installer. If we could ever get a hold of him and get him to tell the truth, I bet a lot of truth about Robert could come out.

Q: Nicole Adams wrote a biography of Robert Adams. Have you read it?

A: No. I was told that it contained no information on where they lived, where they travelled, how Robert earned money, no dates, no places, or anything. What kind of biography leaves that sort of stuff out? My speculation would be one that knows if she says anything at all, then the whole pack of lies and misinformation all of a sudden unravels.

I did see somewhere a promotion for Nicole Adams' book in which it was claimed she was by Robert's side "every day for 40 years," but that quote seems to have disappeared. Since Robert said to me and many others that he traveled alone in India for 17 years, maybe someone told her the numbers didn't add up that way. See what I mean? As soon as she mentions even a single number it all unravels. At least she didn't put anything definite like that in her book according to reviewers.

With Robert it was kind of an advaita game you might say. Anytime you might start to question something he had said that didn't seem to add up, he would say, "don't live in the past. The past doesn't exist, the past is unreal," that sort of thing. When talking of his "spiritual experiences," or supposed interactions with Ramana the past seemed important.

When he needed to borrow money it was pressing and important and when you brought up repayment, it was always like, "the past is unreal. Why are you living in the past?"

Q: Did Nicole or their daughters ever come to any satsangs while you were there? They are portrayed on their website as his most devoted students.

A: No. I asked Robert why and he said they get enough of him at home. Prentis used to go to Science of the Mind classes in the Valley.

In hindsight perhaps if they were there, then personal questions might have come up that were being kept hidden? I don't know.

Nicole did come over to my apartment one day and told me she was "Mrs. Da Free John," so I guess by that she meant she had read his books. She also said she knew what I was doing alone in my apartment, whatever that was supposed to mean.

Q: Who was Tony?

A: Tony was a young man that hung around the apartment complex and did various jobs for Robert including night watchman/security for the apartment complex. Robert and Tony seemed to be very close. Tony had worked with Robert in the previous place they both lived, I never asked doing what. One day I asked Tony why he never came to our satsangs and he told me he wasn't interested and besides Robert never said anything new, just repeated the same old stuff.

When Tony was arrested for shoplifting Robert borrowed \$300 from me to get him out on bail and that was never paid back. Again, "borrowing" meant something different to Robert than I had (until then) understood the word.

Q: Did you ever actually ask him for the "borrowed" money back?

A: Many times. He always just said he didn't have any money. A couple of times he reached into his pocket and pulled out a one-dollar bill and gave that to me. (This is out of thousands owed).

Q: What is the apartment manager's union story?

A: One day Robert came over to my apartment and told me he had had a vision from God and

that all the money needed for the ashram would be forthcoming. He said God has taken him into a higher realm and showed him this beautiful ashram and said it would all come to pass. He said God asked him, “Where will the money to build this ashram come from?” He said to the Divine, “the One who is showing me this will provide the money also.” At that, the Divine showed him that Robert would start a union for apartment managers all throughout the USA. They have never been unionized and this would make all the money needed for the ashram. He asked me if I wanted to be a part of this. Yes, I did.

So, he said, going by the vision, we needed to get the addresses of every apartment manager in the USA, and send them an invitation to join our newly formed union. Long story short, we followed everything Robert was told to do in the vision and I lost more money. This time over \$2,000 dollars.

Q: You must have felt like an idiot.

A: Yes, and no. At the time I was confused about the whole self-enquiry thing. Every time I asked, “Who am I?” I came up with nothing. Nothing happened, nothing seemed to work. Robert claimed something had happened for him. He said the Self rose up and pulled him into the Heart on the right side of the chest and made him God-realized. He had such confidence and spoke with such authority about it... I had nothing with which to doubt his authenticity except the evidence of a few lies, and his lack of morals which is often said to be no indication of anything. With the apartment manager thing, we did get two people that sent in their \$30 to become members and I told Robert that we can’t run an apartment manager union with only two people paying membership dues and it looked like we needed a new idea. Robert agreed. At that point I said I was going to mail them back their money and Robert said, “Why would you send them back their money?” In other words, he wanted to keep their money even though there was no union. More than anything that was when I realized Robert was not in a state of unity with all beings.

Q: Is that when you left involvement with Robert Adams?

A: After that I moved and didn’t have much to do with him, and some weeks later I met Bernadette Roberts and started going to her talks and retreats and it was only after meeting someone so real and genuine as Bernadette that I saw in hindsight what nonsense Robert Adams was up to. Now it seems like a big laugh, but at the time when all this seemed so confusing and someone shows up with such confidence and speaks with such authority it is hard not to be taken in by them.

Q: What did Bernadette say about self-enquiry and focusing on oneself?

A: My interpretation of what she taught is that there are two types of inward movements. One is the self-reflexive loop of the ego. When you spend a lot of time focusing on yourself you can glorify the self-reflexive loop to the point you convince yourself you are Divine. She said she saw a lot of that in modern “spiritual” teachings. The self-reflexive loop is very attractive to narcissists because they are already extremely self-obsessed. The true spiritual movement is not to focus on “oneself,” but involves the still center, that immovable still point that has never changed amidst all of the comings and goings of life.

I came across this quote from Robert Adams:

“Robert: [...] As you keep referring back to yourself and saying, ‘Who am I?’ the ‘I’ becomes weaker and weaker and weaker. Eventually it has to disappear, and then you’re free.”

Actually no, that’s how you become more and more stuck in the self-reflexive loop until you eventually start thinking you (the separate self-sense) are Divine. Now you can bask in the reflected glory of your fake “Divinity,” sit on a dais and be honored. You have become in your mind a superior being to others and can tell them to glorify their ego selves too as a remedy to low self-esteem. Actually loving your ego self is a step ahead of self-hate and the low self-esteem most people are in, but nothing like actual freedom.

Here’s another quote from Robert Adams:

“Begin to practice this exercise. Looking in the mirror, begin for maybe a minute, then you go on to two minutes, three minutes, four minutes, five minutes. Look at yourself. Admit the truth to yourself. ‘I am Brahman. I am the ultimate reality. I am boundless space. I am the atman, the perfect intelligence, the one without the other, all-pervading, perfect self.’ What if you told yourself this every day? What do you think would happen? If you looked in the mirror and did this every day, you would turn into the God that you are. And you will find peace, total peace, total love.” ~p. 838 Robert Adams complete works.

To look at your self-reflection in the mirror, your self-image, and repeat, “I am Brahman, I am ultimate reality,” at it, is to attempt to deify your own self-image. This doesn’t end in enlightenment, this ends in crack potted-ness and neurotic self-reflected glory, which is perhaps not so harmful to yourself as to your followers (narcissistic supply).

Overall though, I don’t recommend Bernadette’s Christian stuff to anyone and don’t feel it is suited to our current times. But she was the real deal and her company was a great inspiration. I like Swami Sarvapriyananda and Atmananda Krishna Menon among others for nondual teachers these days but one thing Bernadette said to me that has always seemed helpful. If you are sincere and true, a path will open up for you. From there it will just be a matter of remaining true and sincere.

Q: Did you ask Bernadette about self-enquiry?

A: Yes. Usually the first thing she would ask in return would be about the dark night of the soul. When you deeply investigate your true nature you come face to face with emptiness. This is the emptiness everyone is running from, not just spiritual people but everyone. Spiritual people will often hold on to love and bliss and happiness as a protection against their own emptiness.

Generally speaking, if a teaching or teacher doesn’t talk about going into that emptiness, that emptiness in which death would seem infinitely better, it means they have just haven’t gotten that far and instead have burrowed into another hole this time one of love and light. Emptiness holds everything— love, hate, joy, misery, life, death— it is fine with it all.

That’s why true “atma vichara” is more about: self-investigation and not a holding on to the “I”

thought or “I” feeling. When you point at yourself, you are pointing at nothing, emptiness, and generally that emptiness is what everyone is wanting to avoid. You hear it everywhere, “I felt so empty.” Emptiness is generally everyone’s worst nightmare. But that still hasn’t gotten to emptiness because there is still a “you” experiencing it. That has to be seen through.

Q: What is the difference between “practice,” and “investigation.”

A: A practice is when you do the same thing over and over again, perhaps trying to do it better each time.

An investigation is a firsthand looking in order to find out the truth. These are very different things.

Let us say I determine that I am a physical tube that takes in food on one end and excretes it on the other. No one can really argue about that as being what I am, from a certain level. So from there I can practice holding onto the sense “I am Brahman.” And with practice I can get a sense that “I am Divine.” But subconsciously I haven’t fully discarded the tube identity. I have deified it. You can deify your own image, your past, your own energy, your kundalini energy, your separate being-ness. In your mind you can deify anything you might take yourself to be. But an investigation is different. It’s when you start to question, “am I really a tube that takes in food?” Maybe I am something else? Maybe I am energy. Maybe I am perception. Maybe I am love, or happiness or awareness. You don’t stop investigating until you are certain about what you truly are. This is not a practice, it’s a quest.

(Note: readers may be interested in this conversation on Michael James’ blog involving Arthur Osborne’s daughter Katya who lived at Ramana Ashram all during the time period when Robert Adams claimed to be there. Her comments are in red.)

Link of the discussion website page:

<https://happinessofbeing.blogspot.com/2019/11/ego-seems-to-exist-only-when-we-look.html?commentPage=1>

Michael James said...

Salazar, in your comment of 14 November 2019 at 21:08 you write that Robert Adams claimed that he stayed at the house of Arthur Osborne and one afternoon Bhagavan walked into his room and gave him a mango. What you write seems to be a summary of what he said on 2nd August 1992 as recorded on pages 2839-40 of this https://robert-adams.ru/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2019/01/Robert_Adams_Transcripts-English.pdf 3652-page transcript of ‘Robert Adams Satsangs’ from August 1990 to June 1993, in which he said: ‘I had been living in Ramana ashram for about a year and a half. This was the end of 1948. I stayed with Arthur Osborne, in his house. In those days when foreigners came they were put up with Arthur Osborne most of the time without him knowing. And on one particular evening about 4 o clock Sri Ramana walked into the cottage and he brought me a mango.’ He made a similar claim a week later, on 9th August 1992, when he said, as recorded on page 2868: ‘In 1948, I was at Arthur Osborne’s home near Ramana ashram. And Ramana used to walk in there every once in a

while. He came in one day, sat down and he started to talk about not reacting to things.’ To set the record straight, despite what he claimed, Robert Adams never stayed in the Osborne’s house or compound, and Bhagavan never visited there. As Katya Douglas (formerly Kitty Osborne) wrote to me today,

‘Our house in Tiruvannamalai was...and is...tiny and NO ONE could stay in it without us knowing. What a ridiculous idea. Bhagavan NEVER came to our house, that is pure fantasy, a polite way of saying it is a lie!’

I do not know why Robert made up such stories, but such patently false claims call into question all his claims about having met Bhagavan and having lived there so long in those days.

I came to know about this claim that Robert stayed in the Osborne’s house only last weekend at a meeting of the Ramana Maharshi Foundation here in London, when a friend came up to me and said something to the effect, ‘You know people say that no one in the ashram remembers seeing Robert Adams when he stayed with Bhagavan. Well apparently Kitty Osborne remembers him, because David Godman wrote under his video on Robert that her father lent him their car so that he could tour around India’. I was vaguely surprised to hear this, because it seemed to me rather implausible, but did not give it any further thought until I saw the comment that Asun wrote on 14 November 2019 at 12:15 asking, ‘By the way, have any of you read Kitty Osborne’s letter denying the information which according to David Godman he got from her, about Robert Adams visiting Ramana’s ashram and the story about her father and the car that he tells in a video?’, and then your comment written later that day that I refer to above.

This prompted me to do some fact-checking, so I searched and found David’s video <https://youtu.be/KIo0AbN8LzA> Robert Adams and Ramana Maharshi, under which he wrote a comment six years ago saying: ‘I gave this interview ten years ago. At that time I knew no one who had met Robert in Tiruvannamalai. Since then I have discovered that he was well known by the Osborne family. Arthur wrote or edited three books on Ramana. He liked Robert so much he gave Robert his only car so that Robert could drive around India after Sri Ramana passed away. I received this information from Arthur’s daughter, Katya, who remembers being annoyed that their family vehicle had been given away.’ However, under this comment there is a reply written two years ago by someone called Steven Strouth saying:

This is an email from Katya Osborne disputing this claim you are making:

“Dear [.....] I would like to clear up some obvious misconceptions you have been led to believe about Robert Adams etc. Firstly I have never, until now, ever heard of Robert Adams. I don’t say he never visited Ramanashramam, I would not necessarily have met him if he had, but he most certainly did not stay there for 3 years as I would certainly have met him in that case.

Secondly the story of Bhagavan giving him special attention and having food served in his room is nonsense. Bhagavan did not do that sort of thing. I can only think that it may be an excuse proffered in order to explain why nobody saw him!

Thirdly, our family never had a car so it was impossible for my father to have given it away. I cannot understand how David Godman got his idea that I was part of that whole

fantasy. The only business connected with a car was when a friend of my parents, Louis Hartz, imported a car to India for his own use, and when he was ready to leave the country he offered the car to my father. My father refused, explaining that he had no use for a car. End of story. I cannot understand how I can be so completely misquoted while I am still alive and my memory is in pretty good working order. Surely the slightest fact-checking would straighten things out?

Lastly, I should point out that it was completely impossible for my father to have given money to 'Robert Adams' as until 1948 we were living on a war pension which he qualified for after 4 years in a concentration camp in Bangkok. In those years we barely had enough to live on, and most certainly didn't have enough to give away.

I have read the obituary written in 1997. It seems as though it is well meant but based largely on hearsay. This is a recurring problem when people write about anything to do with Ramana Maharishi. There are so few of us left who were there way back then, and many people prefer the stories they have been told without reference to facts.

To reiterate: I would like to state quite clearly that I have never met or heard of Robert Adams until reading your letter.

Secondly, the story of the car is completely spurious.

Yours sincerely,
Kitty Osborne"

I therefore wrote to Katya through a mutual friend to ask her whether there is any truth in what David wrote, or whether the email quoted by Steven Strouth was actually written by her, and she replied confirming that she did write that email, and that she had also sent a copy of it to David, who replied to her saying: 'I got the story second hand from someone who said that you were the source. I will not cite you as a source on this again, and if anyone asks, I will say that the car story is false. Thanks for letting me know about this'.

Michael James said...

In her first reply to me Katya wrote:

'There is no way I could remember Robert Adams because I never meet him, neither did I even heard his name spoken of until recently. My father could not have lent him a car because didn't own one. Neither of my parents drove. The whole thing seems a complete fantasy'.

In another email she wrote to me today she said:

'It is so deeply offensive when people make up stories about Bhagavan and pretend they are true. We all know that being a so-called 'guru' is the biggest ego-trip possible, and some people just cannot resist. Devotees of Bhagavan...especially those who live around the ashram and have access to all the writings and some of the people from way back then, have a particular responsibility to try, as far as possible, to maintain the authenticity of Bhagavan's words and actions. To make things up and publish them as fact is unforgivable

and so is condoning others who do the same. I will say again that Bhagavan NEVER came to our house for a visit or a chat. Robert Adams NEVER stayed in our house and we NEVER lent him a car that we didn't in any case own. He made up all these stories, obviously to give himself a bit of stolen lustre from Bhagavan. It is pathetic. Anything you can do to put a stop to these utterly fabricated stories, please go ahead and do with my blessings.'

Michael James said...

For the record, in continuation of my previous three comments, another remark Katya made when writing to me today was:

'Bhagavan would never have come visiting anyone and offering fruit. He just never did anything like that'.

Katya has written to me today:

"Dear Michael, I just came across a comment by somebody or the other that he had seen our house in Tvm and it didn't seem small at all! I am moved to elucidate. When my parents were alive our house consisted of 2 rooms downstairs plus a bathroom. There was one room on the top where we put guests. The bathroom downstairs was used by everyone, including any passing frogs or snakes that wanted to cool down. We children slept all over the place on the verandah. We took our beds...the sort of tape cot that one can easily carry...and we attached our mosquito nets to some of the numerous nails that decorated the walls. I call that a tiny house. After my mother died I built on to the house quite a bit so that my family could have regular bedrooms etc. I also built more bathrooms and a kitchen. In the old days we used to cook outside, or when it rained there was a kerosene stove in the passage from where we ate on the verandah. Trying to imagine an unknown guest creeping about there unnoticed makes me laugh.

I still cannot come to terms with people who are so desperate to be acknowledged as spiritual masters that they tell barefaced lies about everything and everyone. They even lie about Bhagavan. That seems to me to be the ultimate in disrespect.

Yours, Kitty Osborne"

[End of Michael James' comments.]

Another commenter A. Dostal on the same website added this insightful comment:

There are other alarming ciphers in R. Adams biography *(his claims, personal communications) that Robert donated to Ramanashram and three years later got from Arthur Osborne, \$7000: From biography of saga Rober Adams:

...Robert stayed at Ramana Ashram for a little over three years. Visitors then were not allowed to stay long, so he lived in caves above the Ashram. During his time there, he bought a jeep for the Ashram to bring supplies from town, and helped build a large hospital at the Ashram using money from an inheritance.... (Robert donated about \$7000).

...After Ramana died, Robert had wanted to visit several other saints in India, but had no money left. The famed Ramana biographer, Arthur Osborne (Ramanashram resident), heard about Robert's situation and deeds and gave him \$7,000 to continue his travels and spiritual education. In the strange way these things happen, which is my own experience; this was precisely the amount he had spent for the jeep and hospital. ("I once gave Robert \$7,000 in 1990, when I still had money. He said it was an investment in his wife's business of sewing clothes for sale to retailers and at swap meets. However, deep in my heart, I knew this was my first donation towards his support. \$7,000 seems to be a significant figure in our lineage. However, inflation-adjusted, in case anyone cares, that 1942 amount would be about \$70,000 in 2006 dollars" by Ed Muzika, Robert Adams disciple and friend, online)...

Everybody could imagine what kind of sums in dollars R. Adams talked about in his talks during his Ramanashram visit in 1946-7. Supposed, Robert exchanged \$7000 in India 1946-7, he got something about 23,000 rupees (exchange rate in '46-7, online), then we are talking about "astronomic" figures here. When an Indian rickshaw driver made 10 rupees per month in 1947.

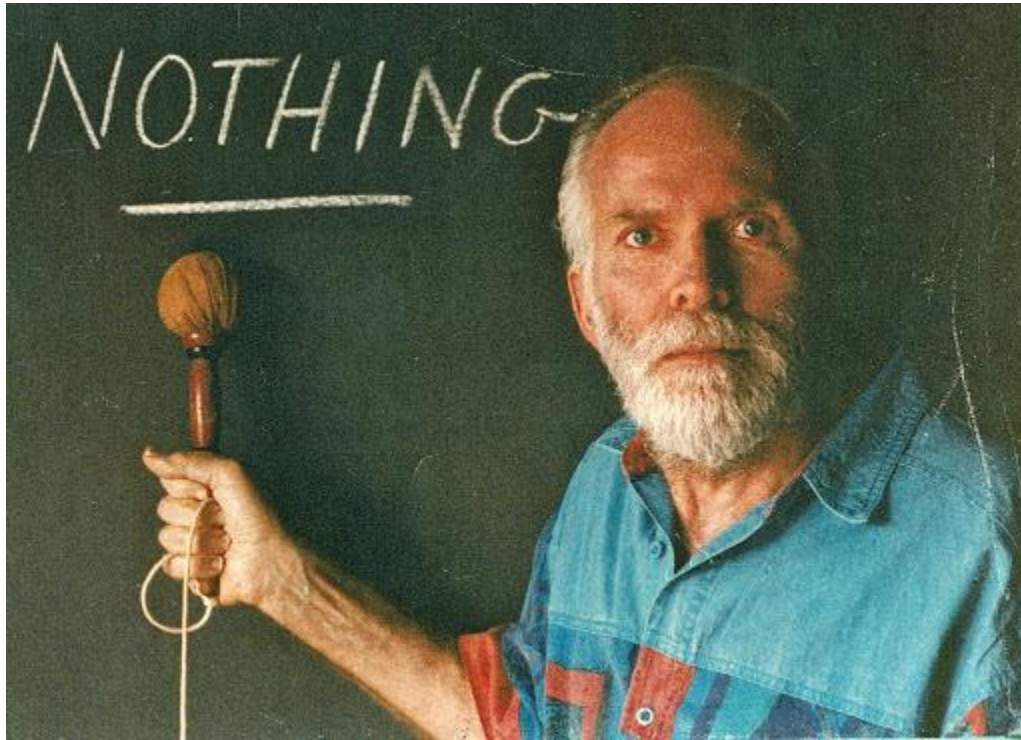
David Godman took down his talk about R. Adams at YT in the discussion below there video the critiques were very concerning about R. Adams' money/car statements in 1946-7 and included some first-hand statements from Katy Osborne (daughter A. Osborne, who was there 1946-7) and other US disciples of R. Adams. Indeed, there has been no proven record or remembering about a generous donator and a car ownership in Ramanasram in 1946-7. I do not know what to think about that...?"

[Part 2 link](#)

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[Note: This article was originally published with a 1985 first meeting date. I have discovered the actual date was 1986. I immediately changed it.]

Was Robert Adams Really in India? Part 2



*(Robert Adams was an American neo-advaita teacher who claimed to be a direct disciple of Ramana Maharshi and to have lived in and around Ramana Ashram in Tiruvannamalai for about 3 years, and also with other renowned saints and sages in India.) An interview with Steven Strouth. This is **Part 2** in our series. [Part 3 link](#) | [Part 1 link](#) |*

Q: Is it true that Robert Adams could say, GOD, GOD, GOD, three times and manifest anything he wanted?

A: Are you being serious right now?

Q: Yes, this is reported widely in his writings.

A: Well, I think this goes back to his Joel Goldsmith days and “power of the mind” type teachings which Robert believed. You send out your request to God, believe it and act as if it happened.

In the case of Robert, you then go find someone who actually has a job and get that person to buy it for you.

Q: You don’t take that seriously?

A: No. I call it magical unicorn spirituality.

Q: Why did you write part 1? What was your motivation?

A: Love of truth in all of its forms. If people are upset over the truth, what is that saying? Should we hide, deny and fight the truth so they feel better?

Q: Has anyone gone through the photo archives at Ramana Ashram and found evidence of Robert?

A: I've heard several people have made efforts at Tiruvannamalai to verify some of Robert's stories, going through thousands of photos and talking with those alive back then and have come up empty-handed.

Q: Why do you want to libel or defame Robert?

A: I'm not. To libel someone is to make false and damaging statements about them. Robert was my friend. He was a fun person, we always got along well. If I saw him tomorrow we'd have fun again and enjoy a laugh. I think he really wanted to help people in his own way. But people have a right to know some of his stories are made up. Simply telling the truth is not libelous or defamatory in any case.

Q: You said the satsangs started in Panorama City, California ... how did that start and get going?

A: As I said, Robert wanted to run ads and get his message out there. I had a few friends in the Radhasoami community, the Da Free John community, and the Bhagavan Nome community and I told them all about Robert.

I argued with Robert for over a week about his plan to charge money. In Radhasoami they have a few rules about being a guru.

- There is no money charged.
- No advertisements.

But with no one coming we did do advertisements in the "Whole Life Times."

Q: So you rented an apartment in the same building Robert had claimed to own?

A: Yes. 8315 Willis Avenue near Roscoe and Willis. The building had about 50 apartment units around a courtyard. Robert's family members were on the ground floor and I moved to an apartment across the courtyard, but on the second floor.

People talk about Robert sitting silently all of the time but when I went over to his apt. around noon most days, he was usually watching cable TV with Dmitri (Robert's pet dog). Sometimes the whole family was.

Q: Who was the first person that came from the ads?

Lewis. Robert was over at my place when Lewis called. I talked to him for a few minutes and thought he was a nut, going on about Jesus and the Bible and a few other things. I was hoping he wouldn't be coming.

Robert took the phone and the next week Lewis arrived.

Q: Is that how it got going?

Yes, a few weeks later there was a film director, Tom, who came to the meetings from the ad.

He loved Robert and then he brought Dana LaMonica who had worked as a script editor in films and from then on Dana always came to every satsang until Robert moved to Sedona.

Q: Why was Dana so hooked on it?

A: Panorama City back then could seem like a dangerous neighborhood.

Dana came one week and parked outside, and being Dana was late, and didn't want to disturb the meeting, she thought she would just wait outside the apartment door. And then, when she got out of her car she was so relieved to see Robert there walking Dmitri, and she followed him in and sat down, and Robert had already started. Later, she asked someone why the meeting started late, and she was told it didn't, Robert had been talking for 30 minutes when she walked in. After that, she just thought he was a magical being.

Q: Did anything like that ever happen for you?

A: No.

Q: How do you explain it?

A: Hypnosis. People do and see all kinds of things under hypnosis.

It's not so much a matter of getting people hypnotized. It's a matter of getting someone out of it. It's most people's normal condition. You do understand people have seen all kinds of incredible stuff under hypnosis, right?

Q: I have heard of such things

A: People under hypnosis think they are chickens and try to fly.

Q: Chickens don't fly.

A: Whatever. Just saying there is weird stuff the mind can do.

Q: Did you stay friends with Dana?

A: Yes, she went to almost every satsang and lunch with Robert in LA and I heard a lot of stories from her over the years.

Q: Who was Jeff Brookner?

A: After I realized Robert couldn't be trusted I moved away, but occasionally would still go to a meeting now and then. I enjoyed what he was saying. After I left, Robert started having satsangs at Jeff's parents' house.

Q: Did you go there?

A: Yes, one time. Jeff's parents did not want Robert in the house but let Jeff hold the satsang in his bedroom. The day I was there it was 5 people, a little crowded for a bedroom but not too bad.

Q: How long was the satsang held at Jeff's?

A: Not too long. Jeff became annoyed that Robert wasn't paying back money loaned to him. Also, in those days Robert used to say that there were only two great gurus in the last 100 years. One was *Ramana Maharshi*, the other *Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh*. Jeff had heard about various goings-on at the Rajneesh ashram in Portland and found it concerning. He asked me if it might be true the story about a naked man chasing a woman through the compound there and I told him it sounded like the kind of stuff I'd heard.

Q: Where did the group meetings go next?

A: I don't really know. I think there was a house in Tarzana they used to meet in, and then probably Henry Denison's house.

Q: Was Robert more of a mystic or a jnani?

A: When I knew him, one day I told Robert about a mystical experience I had with the astral form of Baba Muktananda. As I approached Baba it was like approaching an apartment radiator in winter. Only instead of giving off heat, it was giving off bliss.

Robert said this experience is highly significant and important. That experience is important to people interested in mystical experiences. To a jnani it is meaningless.

Q: What is the story about someone pulling a knife on Robert?

A: It was in Panorama City when he told me that one. Someone pulled a knife on him and asked him for money. He said he just looked at him and said, "You don't want to do this," and the guy just ran off. I thought he said that happened in NYC.

Q: When did you stop trusting Robert's advice?

One day I got a postcard in the mail saying that if you send this particular company \$500 they would double it and send it back the next day by overnight express mail.

Joking around I told Robert about this and he said he thought we should do it. The "we" meant my money and "our" shared profits.

Anyway, I just thought if Robert believes someone is going to send you \$500 overnight he's operating in a different world than the one I know.

Q: How did you come to possess an email from Katya Osborne, daughter of famed writer Arthur Osborne?

A: A friend sent a letter to the Mountain Path journal published by Ramana Ashram, trying to find out if there was any truth to the story that David Godman reported that he heard from Katya Osborne, that her father Arthur had given young Robert Adams the family car, and she actually wrote back.

Q: What was the first email from her?

A:

— Forwarded Message —

From: Katya Douglas
To: [.....] @[.....].com
Cc: David Godman
Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 6:17 AM
Subject: Robert Adams

Dear [.....],

I would like to clear up some obvious misconceptions you have been led to believe about Robert Adams etc. Firstly I have never, until now, ever heard of Robert Adams. I don't say he never visited Ramanashramam, I would not necessarily have met him if he had, but he most certainly did not stay there for 3 years as I would certainly have met him in that case.

Secondly the story of Bhagavan giving him special attention and having food served in his room is nonsense. Bhagavan did not do that sort of thing. I can only think that it may be an excuse proffered in order to explain why nobody saw him!

Thirdly, our family never had a car so it was impossible for my father to have given it away. I cannot understand how David Godman got his idea that I was part of that whole fantasy. The only business connected with a car was when a friend of my parents, Louis Hartz, imported a car to India for his own use, and when he was ready to leave the country he offered the car to my father. My father refused, explaining that he had no use for a car. End of story. I cannot understand how I can be so completely misquoted while I am still alive and my memory is in pretty good working order. Surely the slightest fact-checking would straighten things out?

Lastly, I should point out that it was completely impossible for my father to have given money to 'Robert Adams' as until 1948 we were living on a war pension which he qualified for after 4 years in a concentration camp in Bangkok. In those years we barely had enough to live on, and most certainly didn't have enough to give away.

I have read the obituary written in 1997. It seems as though it is well meant but based largely on hearsay. This is a recurring problem when people write about anything to do with Ramana Maharishi. There are so few of us left who were there way back then, and many people prefer the stories they have been told without reference to facts.

To reiterate: I would like to state quite clearly that I have never met or heard of Robert Adams until reading your letter.

Secondly, the story of the car is completely spurious.

Yours sincerely,
Kitty Osborne

Q: Was there another email from her after that?

A: Yes.

— Forwarded Message —

From: Katya Douglas

Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2016 2:46 AM

Subject: Re: Robert Adams

Yes you may indeed quote me about the totally apocryphal family car story. I am constantly appalled by the slipshod way in which Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharishi is misquoted and misrepresented. People who are concerned with writing or spreading the words and wisdom of a great sage have a responsibility to get it right. If they are writing fiction, which many of them are, then that should be clearly indicated. To use Bhagavan's name in order to aggrandise oneself or claim some sort of superior knowledge is absolutely unforgivable. It does however, happen with increasing regularity. It seems that the passing on of rumour and gossip is easier and more fun than taking the trouble to check facts...and if in the process one can gain a reputation for spiritual knowledge, well what more could a writer on spiritual matters ask for? There are still a few of us left who were there when Bhagavan was sitting in the hall in the body. We are old, but in the main we are sane and our memories work just fine. However we are seldom if ever asked to confirm any story about Bhagavan. By and large writers prefer their own versions and are most reluctant to be corrected or told the truth!,

I should also like to add that Ramanashramam in its entire history, up to and including today has never owned or been given a car, a jeep or a bus. I hope I have helped you to get nearer the truth of what happened way back when.

Regards,

Kitty Osborne (also known as Katya Douglas)

Q: Is that when people started seriously believing Robert was making things up?

A: Various people who had actually known Robert had been talking about this for years, but up until then it was just the word of some anonymous internet users against the word of... well, the whole internet really. At David Godman's website and talks, at Wikipedia, at Robert Adams oriented Facebook pages, and everywhere he was referred to on the net, were these massive lies about Robert's life that he told people, and they believed, and anyone who questioned any of his stories was harassed and then drowned out in a tsunami of revulsion.

Q: What other emails do you have she wrote?

A: Katya was told that Robert claimed to have lived in the Osborne house for quite a while when he was living in Tiruvannamalai.

From Katya:

"What nonsense people write. Our house in Tiruvannamalai was...and is tiny. There was a

sort of guest room under the eaves where many people stayed until they found somewhere more comfortable. NO ONE could have possibly stayed there without every one else knowing...what a ridiculous idea. My mother felt that as we were lucky enough to have a place to stay near Bhagavan, then we should share it if people were in need. She also liked to feed people. As I said, many people did indeed pass through our house, but for goodness sake, certainly it wasn't possible to do this in secret. I had no idea people wrote or believed such utter rubbish. If people don't want to hear something, then they won't listen is my experience. One can tell them the truth as one knows it and then leave them to get on with it as they will.

Regards, K”

(and added in her next email a couple of minutes later:)

“PS. I would just like to clarify that our house in Tvm. was, as I said, quite tiny. I enlarged it a bit after my mother's death. Anyone who didn't know this might get themselves in a muddle and make 'mistakes'. My father was neither blind nor deaf. One could not have a mouse in the house without everyone knowing...and anyway how about us children? Anyone could have stayed for a few days and just been another person passing through, but for several years? or even months? Simply not possible. I would definitely have known the person and I definitely didn't know any Robert Adams, or Segal or whatever he called himself. I don't know why I should still be amazed by people's dishonesty, but I am.

Regards, Katya”

Q: Why hasn't David Godman come forward and admit what he said was untrue?

A: I don't know. Strange isn't it?

Q: How does something like this happen?

A: Carlos Castaneda certainly made up a lot of his stories of being with his shamanic teacher Don Juan that nobody else has ever found, and there were the accounts of Lynn Andrews, Lobsang Rampa, Baird Spaulding, and many other new-age teachers and writers who would write what is now known to be fiction about their studies with masters in remote places, that can't be confirmed. It happens.

Q: Did Robert fly on a prop plane to India in 1946?

A: Nowadays when you go to India, you will just get on a plane. But in 1946 you would go by ship. Only the super-rich would cross the ocean in a plane and there were no direct flights to India. Even when I was a kid in the 1960's it was only the wealthy that went places on airplanes and you had to dress in a suit with a necktie.

“According to a study by Compass Lexecon commissioned by Airlines for America, the average flight from L.A. to Boston in 1941 was worth \$4,539.24 per person in today's money, and it

would have taken 15 hours and 15 minutes with 12 stops along the way.)
[<https://www.travelandleisure.com/airlines-airports/history-of-flight-costs>]

Q: Did Robert talk to a 2 ft tall Ramana as a baby in his crib?

A: This is a story Robert told repeatedly. Do you remember things that happened to you when you were in your crib? Does anyone? The earliest memories adults can recall are around 2 years old and that is for major events like hospitalization or birth of a sibling. Of course, this doesn't mean it couldn't have happened. It's just extremely unlikely.

Q: Did Robert drive around India in a new car meeting spiritual teachers?

A: Nowadays when we think of going places we think of getting in a car and driving there, especially in Los Angeles. But in India in 1950 no one did that. You took a train then a rickshaw for the last mile. India was not a car society back then. And if someone did have a car, they would be noticed big time.

Katya Osborne said the same thing in this email quote:

“In India 1950, a car was useless and slow for a long-distance travel. It was much more comfortable, faster, and cheaper to travel by a train like most of the people and then by a local rickshaw driver.”

Q: What is the earthquake story?

A: As long as I knew him, Robert was saying Los Angeles was about to be destroyed by an earthquake. One day he came over to my apartment and said “if we want to hang on to our bodies, we need to get out of Los Angeles now, it is all going to be destroyed.”

This was already after the “apartment manager’s union” vision didn’t pan out so I was skeptical like, “Oh yeah, hold the presses, I’m now going to quit my job because Robert had another vision.”

I did hear even eight years later he was still telling people this was about to happen and they were believing him.

Q: Did Robert discuss his enlightenment experience with Joel Goldsmith in New York at a seminar in 1946?

A: Robert told that story widely.

“At the age of sixteen, Robert Adams’ first spiritual mentor was [Joel S. Goldsmith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joel_S._Goldsmith), a Christian mystic from New York, who Robert used to visit in Manhattan, in order to listen to his sermons.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Adams_\(spiritual_teacher\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Adams_(spiritual_teacher))

While it is true that Joel Goldsmith was born in New York, he moved to Boston in 1930 and then Florida in the 1940s. He didn’t return to New York until he gave his first seminar there in 1953.

Robert told me that he went to Joel Goldsmith seminars and talked to Joel after the seminar about his experiences. I am not sure what he said in the transcripts. I contacted the Joel Goldsmith Institute and they said Joel gave his first seminar in New York in 1953. I’m pasting

the email below along with a part from Joel's bio saying he moved to Boston in the early 1930s and then to Florida ten years later, and then to California.

“By the early 1930's he was successful enough in this method of practice to marry Rose Robb and take on the support of her two children.

The new family relocated to Boston, where one of the children planned to attend Harvard University. Again,[after]... having served for ten years as a Christian Science practitioner in Boston, Goldsmith decided to move to Florida with his wife, who died shortly thereafter.

Following a brief return to Boston, Goldsmith was persuaded by friends to move to California.

In the mid-1940s, Goldsmith's periods of meditation began to be the loci of a series of spiritual experiences he termed “initiations,” some of which culminated in “ordination”: conscious union with God. During a visit to Zürich, Switzerland in November of 1954, he reached the zenith of his mystical experience in a transfiguration-style event he called becoming “Christed.” ”

~[<https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.GOLDSMITH>]

—Original Message—

From: Steven Strouth

Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2020 5:14 AM To: info@joelgoldsmith.com

Subject: Hi from me

For some very important research I am doing I need to know in what years Joel Goldsmith gave lectures in NYC. That is I need to know the date of his earliest seminar there. Was it 1954?

Thank you.

Steven

Victor Ropac

Mon, Feb 17, 2020 at 9:00 PM To:[.....]@gmail.com Reply | Reply to all | Forward | Print |

Delete | Show original

Steven,

The earliest was in 1953.

Vic Ropac

Q: So the dates don't add up again.

A: No.

Q: How did Robert meet his wife Nicole?

A: I'd heard they met at a Joel Goldsmith seminar in NYC in 1954 so that number adds up. (But other things don't add up... wasn't Robert supposedly, according to his own words, traveling in India for 17 years from 1946 onward?)

It was a weekend seminar. He said he noticed her 8 rows ahead of him but was too shy to speak to her. On Saturday he managed to sit 3 rows behind but still didn't say anything. On Sunday he sat directly behind her and started up a conversation and some months later they were married.

“Mrs. Robert Adams accompanied her husband in bringing The Teaching of Love, Compassion Humility to the world during 43 years of marriage.” <http://www.robertadamsinfinityinstitute.org/welcome.pdf>

(Robert died in 1997. That means they married in 1954.)

Q: Robert had a family and two children, how did he support them?

A: Robert never spoke of holding any sort of job other than starting a medical stress and weight loss clinic. But he did tell me he was a spiritual teacher and had a lot of groups across the U.S.A. giving shaktipat (that’s why all the furniture in storage). But the groups always broke up in a scandal. He told me it usually involved money and that it’s impossible to trust financial officers.

Q: But I thought he never charged money?

A: He told me he *always* charged money. He only reluctantly went along with my idea of *not* charging money when I said I’m leaving otherwise.

Q: A lot of people are upset at your telling these stories.

A: I wonder, are they upset with Katya Osborne too?

Q: What about the love, happiness, and joy, Robert taught?

A: I think a lot of people want to join team happiness or team Robert Adams. There’s always a problem with that. If you join team Robert Adams you tend to be in opposition to anything not supportive of the team.

Emptiness embraces all opposites.

Q: How can someone be spiritually realized and also “off” somehow?

A: I would not call them realized, but there is no shortage of self-appointed teachers from what Sri Aurobindo called The Intermediate Zone. It’s an interesting subject.

(In Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy the Intermediate zone refers to a dangerous and misleading transitional spiritual state between the ordinary consciousness and true spiritual realization.)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intermediate_zone

Q: Who was the film director that came to the first meetings... anyone famous?

A: No, his first name was Tom... I don’t remember his last name. More like a journeyman film director. But he did tell others and he seemed instrumental in getting it going.

Q: Who was Lenny Rose?

A: Lenny was a comedian who had been in Radhasoami and saw the ad in “Whole Life Times.” He was there a lot at first. Later the whole “borrowing” thing bothered him and he quit going. He was always joking around and made the meetings fun.

Q: You mean Robert's borrowing money and not paying it back?

A: Yes.

Q: Whose idea was music?

A: I had some "Siddhadas & Freddie" recordings and got the idea to play them during Robert's long pauses. Robert liked the idea so we always did that.

Q: Are you trying to be a guru yourself with all of this?

A: No. I have no interest in that.

Q: What was "Follow Your Heart" restaurant?

A: That was and is a health-food vegetarian restaurant in Canoga Park. Robert loved going there. At that time it was owned by some people in Radhasoami. In 1987 I'd heard that they were selling it and Robert told me they must sense LA will be destroyed by an earthquake.

Q: I've heard people actually sold their houses because Robert predicted an earthquake for LA?

A: Yes.

Here's what Ed Muzika wrote:

"...Robert hinted darkly of an impending earthquake that was going to destroy Los Angeles, and we all had to get out immediately. If the earthquake ploy did not work, he embellished on his prediction, saying it would be a 7.2 to 7.5 quake on a new fault near Cucamonga, near the juncture of San Bernadino and Riverside Counties, during the last quarter of 1995, most probably during November. If this did not work as motivation, he found other reasons to motivate people to move.

To one, he said, "You will be my right hand." To another, he said, "You will be my secretary." Behind the scenes, he would tell different people different locations where he wanted to move. Those who were about to build a house in Santa Fe anyway, were told he was moving to Santa Fe shortly. Those who wanted to move to Dallas, he said he would move to Dallas. Those who wanted to move to Arizona, were told to find a house in Phoenix or Sedona.

Of course, everyone knew what he told everyone else, and house finding was happening in four cities simultaneously, with everyone's life in constant uproar as they contemplated living variously in Sedona, Santa Fe, Dallas, Phoenix or even East St. Louis.

Disciples were traveling to these locations, lining up houses, jobs, locations for Satsang, and agonizing over the disruption to their lives. Others, who felt they could not move, due to employment, homes or just plain attachment, felt abandoned and angry."

http://www.wearesentience.com/uploads/7/2/9/3/7293936/it_is_not_real_-_robert_adams.pdf

That was Robert for you. Ed thought it was crazy wisdom. I actually had a different take on it.

Q: What was Robert's attitude toward sex?

A: From Ed Muzika:

*“... when asked about sex, Robert said there was absolutely nothing wrong with it. In fact, problems often arose in our sangha [community] about Robert’s relations with some of his female students for one reason or another, and we were often forced to change the venue of our satsang meetings because someone or another got upset about his actions. Robert did not care who came and went to his satsangs; he was only interested in who stayed with him **no matter what he did.**”*

Q: What were the problems that arose in the sangha with his relations with women.

A: I guess that was mostly behind closed doors, but I don’t buy the crazy wisdom stuff. I understand Robert’s womanizing caused a lot of problems in the group.

Q: Regarding his transcripts on the internet, what’s up with all of the take-down notices?

A: Apparently Robert said publicly his teachings are to be made freely available. They were handed out to anyone who wanted them at no charge. But as Ed wrote, Robert told one person one thing, another something else and a third one something different entirely. Nicole said there was a will from Robert giving her the rights to everything he said.

It did create the kind of crazy theatre Robert was good at creating.

Q: Did you know Ed Muzika?

A: I said hello to him briefly one time but I was just a stranger to him. I think that was at a meeting in Hollywood I happened to go to. It seemed like Ed was Robert’s number one supporter then (possibly around 1991). When I moved in 2006 I thought of giving Ed all the tapes I had made of Robert’s talks at my apartment.

Q: Why didn’t you?

A: I had to leave on short notice and didn’t have a lot of time for it.

Q: Very sorry to hear about Karen Evans’ suicide. She was a beautiful person.

A: I don’t know what specifically led to her death, but the idea of holding onto the “I” feeling as a practice is not always fun. Someone with the sense, “I am bad, there is something wrong with me,” for them, it will tend to re-traumatize and feel awful.

Narcissists on the other hand, that is people with an inflated self-esteem, will enjoy doing it and find it delightful. They can do this all day. They can’t think of anything more fun than to enjoy a positive self-reflexive loop of ego.

Q: And that doesn’t work for those with childhood PTSD?

A: Often not, because for many the sense of separate self feels bad. There is a belief, “I am bad, I am wrong, there is something wrong with me.” So for them to focus on the “I” feeling, it ends up being a self-reflexive loop of torture.

The narcissist can’t understand this and has no idea about it. To him, what could be grander than focusing on himself all day.

I'm not a big fan of these types of practices. Truth is all about discovery, which is something entirely different.

Q: How did the wrong information about Robert get so widely spread?

A: Those of us who knew Robert all knew he made up stories, lied and told contradictory stories. Many thought it was charming or a type of crazy wisdom. But almost no one thought he lied about Ramana.

(Michael James lived in Tiruvannamalai for 20 years starting in 1976 and became an editor and translator of some of Sri Muruganar's and Ramana's books as well as working with Sadhu Om who was with Ramana for many years.):

Michael James said:

“I do not know why Robert made up such stories, but such patently false claims call into question all his claims about having met Bhagavan and having lived there so long in those days.”
[<https://happinessofbeing.blogspot.com/2019/11/ego-seems-to-exist-only-when-we-look.html>]

Q: But what about the statements made by David Godman?

A: *(Michael James continues):*

“I therefore wrote to Katya through a mutual friend to ask her whether there is any truth in what David wrote [David Godman], or whether the email quoted by Steven Strouth was actually written by her, and she replied confirming that she did write that email, and that she had also sent a copy of it to David, who replied to her saying: ‘I got the story second hand from someone who said that you were the source. I will not cite you as a source on this again, and if anyone asks, I will say that the car story is false. Thanks for letting me know about this’.”

Q: The internet is great!

A: Yes, Robert lived and taught in the days before the internet made so much information widely available. In 1987 no one could have foreseen the impact the internet might have on the world. Now we can communicate with almost anyone in the world instantly.

Q: Did Robert think people were gullible?

A: For those of us who knew him, we all knew Robert lied and fabricated stories. We all knew that he joked about people being naive and gullible, but somehow we just couldn't believe he would lie about Ramana. Ramana was held sacred. You may lie and spread false stories about the Pope, the Dalai Lama, even God, ...but not Ramana Maharshi.

The funniest part about it is that the people who wanted to have a movie made about Robert and get him more recognized by society probably could have done it if they had told the truth about him, or found out the truth.

Robert seems to me a sort of combination of Chauncey Gardiner and Frank Abagnale and a movie about his actual life could have been great. But then there wouldn't be the fantasy many were eager to believe.

Q: Did he directly say to you that people were gullible?

A: Yes.

Q: You mentioned hypnotism. Was Robert Adams a hypnotist?

A: Yes, whether it was completely conscious or not I can't say. Let's take Robert's story about saying, "God" three times and getting all of his desires fulfilled. Most people are going to hear that and roll their eyes and walk away. That's good. He is looking for someone highly suggestible. Someone who will believe anything. A good subject.

Remember Robert Adams is on record as saying he was looking for just 10 people who would do anything for him.

Let's take the chicken example. If I tell you that you are a chicken, most people won't believe it and just walk away. I am looking for that one person who is so suggestible that he will play along and say, "Ok I am a chicken." Finding this one person is the hardest part. Once I have someone like that, getting them to flap wings, peck, or believe they laid an egg is the easy part.

Q: So to make sure they are good subjects, say something ridiculous?

A: Yes, well often a bit ridiculous. You start with something a bit ridiculous. Such as, "I can say 'God' three times and get anything I want." Next or even at the same time, you might describe being friends with Ramana, being God-realized, that sort of thing. Once you have someone going along with that... well... Are you going to refuse to loan money to your own Creator? Are you going to refuse to make love to your own Divine Creator? See what I mean? Once you have that single suggested assumption in place, everything else follows easily.

That is why you will find people hearing the craziest insane things Robert Adams did, lying, cheating, promiscuous sex... and they say "well of course he did that ... he's God. He's just trying to help **you** by doing that. He's trying to get you to let go of your attachments."

Q: "He's so unselfish he doesn't care how he appears."

A: Yes, "he may take all of your money, be inappropriately sexual, lie to you, but it is all for **you**, that is how unselfish he is."

Q: You are right, most people are not going to go for that.

A: Exactly. He's looking for those ten people that will. That is all he needs. Actually, even just **one** person will do if they have a job or access to money.

Q: So in a way, this isn't so much standard hypnotism as exploiting gullible people.

A: Yes.

Q: How does someone wake up out of that?

A: Drop all beliefs. The hypnotist wants you to drop all beliefs except beliefs in him and the ones he gives you.

Q: But it feels so safe having found the true adept.

A: Do you want to feel safe or do you want out of trance?

Q: Did Ed Muzika say that Robert Adams lied a lot?

A: Yes. Here's another quote from Ed's book, "It Is Not Real — Robert Adams":

"One recipient of Robert's 'operating', described him in these belittling words: "He is very controlling. He pits one person against another, and gets a great delight at watching what happens. He lies incessantly, telling one person one thing and another something else, then denies to both that he said anything." When I heard this, I just smiled and said, "Of course he appears to do these things, how else can he work with people at their own level of psychological focus?" ... what she said was true; but she saw only the man, not the source, the Self-embodied Guru." ' http://www.wearesentience.com/uploads/7/2/9/3/7293936/it_is_not_real_-_robert_adams.pdf page 27

See what I mean? If you see someone as perfect, then anything they do can be fitted into that framework.

Q: Ed Muzika has been the great champion of Robert Adams on the internet.

A: Yes. He has been one of the most prolific at getting recognition for Robert. Here is something else he said about Robert Adams:

"I saw it in Robert. Robert was always seeking personal love because he said it grounded him and kept him in the world. What he meant was that love of the self turned inward resulted in a Ramana, benevolent and impersonal, but love of the self turned outwards, brought a transformative power both to the guru and to those who loved him or her.

Yes, Robert loved me. I could feel it all the time. But he also sought the love of a woman to ground himself, to excite and energize that Self-layer of his, as well as energize the Self-knowing quality in the woman. We men students were largely left out of the masculine/feminine transformation around Robert, and most felt the Void and beyond, which can become very, very dry." [He continues]:

"I truly believe that one is OFTEN best served by having a guru of the opposite sex, for it can use human love as a transformative energy, a sort of conscious or unconscious Tantra." <https://standinginanopenfield.wordpress.com/2012/05/25/a-new-way-of-teaching-by-ed-muzika/>

"...Robert became a notorious womanizer, both, I think, trying to overcome periods of emptiness or boredom."

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1020223968048490/permalink/1179118818825670/>

Q: Did Robert Adams have high demands on his followers?

A: Ed Muzika said this:

Robert Adams was full of twists and turns. One day he will tell you he needed money to support his family, and in Satsang he'd say he needs nothing—the Jnani is complete and self-contained.

Weeks later he'd be engaged in having what appeared to be an affair with some woman in the Sangha, which would set off a fire-storm, and we'd be forced to move Satsang to a different location.

Mary Skene would complain to Robert about his womanizing, and he finally promised to stop a few months before he died.

In one Satsang he flung a small pill container at Samantha, then apparently angrily exited the Satsang.

He claimed to have no social security number or contact with social security because he said he distrusted the government. Yet, when we went to his dentist he rattled off his social security number for me to put on the finance form.

Then he would have three or four people transcribing his talks, tell Ananada to make a book out of them, and then turning the book and manuscripts over to his wife as her inheritance.

He rarely talked about his early life, and made it sound like he was with Ramana from 1947 to 1950, when in fact he was at Ramana Ashram a total of only a few weeks. Currently people at Ramana ashram who were there do not remember Robert because he was there only a short period of time.

Then there was the time for six months or so where he warned about a great earthquake that would strike Los Angeles, and started rumors he was moving elsewhere, maybe Santa Fe, Sedona, etc. The earthquake never happened.

And over and over, all the eight years I knew him, he's repeat, "I am looking for the ten students that stay with me. That is all I want."

Robert did not reach out so much to meet students at their level, but made them reach up to where he was. In a sense he demanded a lot from his students, more than most could stand. <https://www.facebook.com/edwardmuzika/posts/10206695079248892>

Q: That went downhill fast.

A: Yes.

Q: You said you only lived next to Robert a few months so how do you know all of this stuff about him?

A: I lived in the same apartment complex across the courtyard for about 5 months I'm guessing. But over the years I stayed friends with Dana LaMonica who was one of the first people at the satsangs in my apartment in the early days. She used to tell me various things. I also went to some of his satsangs over the years. I never had a falling out with him. I just didn't like some of his activities.

Q: Did Dana LaMonica have a "torrid passionate love affair" with Robert?

A: No, I don't believe that. But they were always good friends. They went to lunch every Wednesday at "Follow Your Heart." That was for around 8 years. I talked with her on the phone regularly for years and in email. She died in 2015. I loved Dana.

Dana was a great listener, the perfect "straight man" for Robert's often outlandish stories. She also talked regularly with Nicole Adams even after Robert died.

One time, on the phone to me, she seemed a bit upset over something. It took a while before she

got to it: “Now they’re saying I had a ‘torrid passionate love affair’ with Robert,” she told me. “Can you imagine? How ridiculous.”

I said, “But Dana, you **DID** have a ‘torrid passionate love affair’ with Robert...”

She started to say, “but not...”

And then I could feel her smile on the other end of the line.

“Yes, I guess I did. We all did.”

After that whenever anyone accused her of having “a passionate love affair with Robert,” Dana cheerfully just said, “Yes, I did. We all did.”

Q: Who was Samantha?

A: I had heard something about Samantha but Dana never talked about it much. Ed Muzika posted a youtube video that went into it in more detail and was along the lines of what I had heard.

This is a partial transcript of Ed Muzika talking:

“... I know that other women that Robert had a relationship with, the relationship went longer and deeper... like Samantha it went on for a year and a half or so and in the end she parted bitterly saying Robert is just a man.

Robert and she were very close for a long period of time even when she went to lunch with Robert and I, he took me over to her place and gave her flowers and chocolates because it was her birthday and she would show up a lot of times whenever Robert went to lunch with other people and just accidentally being in the neighborhood when he was there so she could see him for five minutes and then leave.

I don’t know what happened between them but it was a big explosion one day Robert got up in the middle of satsang and stormed out and as he was passing by he threw a bottle of pills at her which shocked everyone. But she would never talk about what happened between them or the love they shared or the energies she felt or the bliss she felt but only that she felt slighted or somehow disturbed by what he did at some point after a year and a half she walked away. She died a year later of cancer.[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtLIS0De-PM&feature=youtu.be>]

Q: Wasn’t Robert married to Nicole during the time Ed is referring to an affair with Samantha?

A: Yes.

Q: Is Nicole still alive?

A: There has never been an announcement on their family website that she has died so I assume so.

Q: I understand that there were some questionable stories Robert Adams told about Ramana?

A: These are stories from Robert Adams Complete Works. Pages 457, 134, 471 & 470. <http://www.robert-adams.info/Robert%20Adams%20Complete%20Works%20->

[%20Jan%202012%20%20prev%20unknown%20files%20now%20dated%20and%201%20new%20transcript%20added.pdf](#)

Story 1

“I recall a Westerner, I’m trying to think of his name, Henry Wells, from Scotland. After about four months of being there he donated forty-thousand dollars to the ashram, and I’m just watching all these things going on.”

Story 2

‘A devotee went to Ramana and said, I’ve been with you for twenty-five years, doing “Who am I?” and nothing has happened yet, so Ramana said, “Try it another twenty-five and see what happens.

Story 3

“...there was a German lady who had come to the ashram, and apparently she had made a donation of some kind, but she wasn’t happy for some reason. She was complaining to Ramana, and he just kept silent. I again asked the interpreter, “What does she want?” The interpreter said, “She wants her donation back. (laughter) She wants to go home back to Germany.” So she started to argue, everything was going on in front of Ramana. She started to argue with one of the managers of the ashram and Ramana just looked. Then Ramana said in English, “Give her back her donation and add fifty rupees to it,” which they did, and she left.

Story 1 seems questionable because I’ve never heard mention of that sort of money being donated to the ashram. That would be today’s equivalent of \$3.3 million (yes million) using India’s consumer price index.*

Story 2 seems inconsistent with other accounts of Ramana.

Story 3 On p. 470 Robert Adams relates to having personally witnessed an event that seems inconsistent for several reasons. Firstly, no one else has ever reported Ramana dictating what to do with ashram funds as if they were his own to disperse. Secondly, at that time **50 rupees would be equivalent to over 4,000 rupees in 2020 money**. Would Ramana casually hand over to a foreign tourist the equivalent of 4,000 rupees of ashram money? Without consulting anyone else?

*It may be worth noting that while \$40k in 1950 would only be worth \$400k in 2020 using the consumer price indicator (cpi) for the USA, using India’s cpi puts its value in the millions of dollars.

[<https://www.inflationtool.com/indian-rupee/1958-to-present-value>]

Q: Why did no one else see Robert Adams at Ramana Ashram?

A: Various theories have been proposed including that he spent most of his time silently meditating in the caves of Arunachala. Page 2319 of the transcripts quote Robert:

“I recall when I was with Ramana Maharshi, I used to stand at the door of the meeting at the old hall, when people used to come in to hear him, to see him. I was interested in the people that came in to see him. And because I was a Westerner, the Westerners would stop and talk to me.
p.2319

Q: So Robert claimed to be at the ashram in a highly visible role, often standing at the entrance greeting and talking to other Westerners?

A: Yes.

Q: Did Robert offer differing accounts about his initial meeting with Ramana?

A: Yes.

“During the Fall of 1946, Robert Adams arrived by train to the town of Tiruvannamalai, a few miles from Arunachala Mountain, where lay Ramanashram and his future teacher, Ramana Maharshi. He took a bullock cart to the Ashram, was admitted, and stayed the night. Early the next day while walking back from the mountain, towards the Ashram, he spotted Ramana walking down the path towards him.

An electrifying energy coursed through his body, and the last of what men call an ego left him. He felt completely surrendered, completely open. As Ramana got closer, Robert stripped off his clothes, approached Ramana and dropped to his guru’s feet. Ramana reached down grabbing Robert by his shoulder, and looked into Robert’s eyes with complete love and said, “I have been waiting for you. Get up! Get up!” Robert said had Ramana asked him to leap over a cliff at that moment, he would have done so gladly.”

<http://www.arunachala-ramana.org/forum/index.php?topic=5135.0>

“When I was eighteen years old, I arrived at Tiruvannamalai. In those days they didn’t have jet planes. It was a propeller plane. I purchased flowers and a bag of fruit to bring to Ramana. I took the rickshaw to the Ashram. It was about 8:30 a.m. I entered the hall and there was Ramana on his couch reading his mail. It was after breakfast. I brought the fruit and the flowers over and laid it at his feet. There was a guardrail in front of him to prevent fanatics from attacking him with love. And then I sat down in front of him. He looked at me and smiled and I smiled back.”

P. 469 Complete Works

“When I got to India and went to Ramana Maharshi, it was about 5 o’clock in the evening. He was about to take his stroll. He was with an attendant and I was climbing up the hill with my knapsack on my back. He turned around and looked at me, and he gave me one of his beautiful big smiles. I smiled back at him and he continued his walk.”

P. 734 Complete Works

Q: Maybe his L-dopa Parkinson’s medication caused memory difficulties?

A: That is possible, except he was making conflicting statements like this to me as far back as 1986 before he ever started any medications.

Q: What other conflicting statements did he make?

“For the three years I was there...”

“I was with Ramana Maharshi for two years...”

“I had been living in Ramana ashram for about a year and a half. This was the end of 1948.”

“...we [Ramana and Robert] had many conversations. Most of them are personal.”

“I was [only] able to have an audience with him [Ramana] twice.”

“I was [at Ramana Ashram] 1948 to 1950”

“In 1947 I went to Ramana Ashram...”

[RobertAdamsCompleteWorks-Dec 2011]

Q: It sounds like he wasn't exactly sure when he was there.

A: And his is the only account about it in the world so far, other than Katya Osborne's.

Q: And hers doesn't match anything he said.

A: No. Hers seems pretty consistent with what many have been saying for years though.

Q: This whole thing has been quite a saga.

A: Yes.

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The Question of Integrity

Posted by [existence1010](#) August 3, 2020 Posted in [Uncategorized](#)

Kitty Osborne

[This article is reprinted from "The Mountain Path" July-September 2020 issue and is written by Kitty Osborne]



Kitty Osborne with Ramana Maharshi at Sri Ramana Ashram

Kitty Osborne, daughter of Arthur Osborne, first came to Ramana Ashram in 1941. Though sent to boarding school in Kodaikanal she nonetheless spent much time at the ashram right up to Bhagavan's mahasamadhi in 1950.

Sometimes I think about the New Testament in the Bible. It seems that the general opinion is that the first Gospel was written some forty years after the death of Jesus. The mind boggles! When one contemplates the extraordinarily imaginative sayings that have been attributed to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, and that is when people who knew him are still alive (me for instance!), then it seems unlikely that what Jesus Christ said is what has come down to us unmutated by time. What Bhagavan actually said has, for the most part, been well documented. However there are those, who possibly to suit their own interest, just make up or misrepresent his words. I suppose that, provided nothing contrary to the spirit of Bhagavan's teaching is advocated, then too much harm isn't done...except to the perpetrators of these tricks. One should never forget the power of a true *jñāni*. He encompasses the whole universe and one plays games with him at one's own peril. I don't know whether the source of the information that people are seeking makes any difference to the recipient? The trouble is that many people who claim to be the channel

through which Bhagavan's teachings are disseminated, really aim to be a sort of a guru by default! In point of fact Bhagavan's words are, virtually in their entirety, available to anyone who can read. They were written down almost as they were spoken, and have been published by the ashram. It is the age of the Kali Yuga. The words of all the great masters of the past are now available to all. Perhaps it doesn't matter whose mouth utters those words? For those who are seeking for a true guru, I suppose there are several criteria that more or less always hold good. If the one you approach asks for any sort of donation...money, cars, sex, whatever...look again. Bhagavan never accepted any gifts of any description, except for fruit, which was shared out amongst those around, or flowers which were offered in the temple. A lady who made some special pickle for him brought it as a gift and Bhagavan asked "Is there enough for everyone?" When told there was not, he refused to accept it. That story has gone down in the annals of ashram lore, as have many more. There was a definite protocol about the giving of gifts. Bhagavan sat on a couch, and beside it was a low table about 3ft. square. Devotees would place their gifts upon this table and an attendant would take them. If someone tried to sneak in anything valuable or personal these were returned by the attendant. Of the fruit or flowers a few were taken and given back to the donor as 'prasād' or a gift from the recipient, while the rest were used for puja if flowers, or sent to the dining hall to be shared out after lunch. Bhagavan never actually touched or handled any of these gifts...and he never ever gave an individual gift to anyone...ever. To do so might have caused the recipient to consider him or herself to be particularly favoured and special, and Bhagavan would never tolerate that. The closest I know that Bhagavan ever came to giving a gift was to my father! Some workmen were renewing the thatch somewhere in the ashram when, amongst the straw, they found a strange bit of metal. They took it to Bhagavan, as everyone did with everything in those days, and asked him what it was. Bhagavan studied it closely, turning it around and examining it and then came to the

conclusion that it was a shoehorn...twisted and bent, but still recognizable. "Give it to Osborne," he said. "He must wear western shoes sometimes." That was as personal a gift as I ever heard Bhagavan gave. I have the shoehorn still.

Then there is the story about Bhagavan coming into Osborne House. Absolutely not. Bhagavan was an ascetic, he had an iron control and adhered in every way to the customs and religious observances of Hinduism. He is a *turīyātīta*, beyond all three states of consciousness, and in his daily physical existence, a *sādhu*, and that implied he did not enter the home of a householder (*grihasta*). To my knowledge, he never entered the house of a *grihasta* after the 1st September 1896. He held fast to all the restrictions of the state he assumed for daily life, and would never have broken even one of those rules. In days gone by he used to go for walks on Arunachala and often his path took him through Palākotthu, an enclave of *sādhu*-s who lived in huts or caves just beyond the ashram at the foot of the hill. Such a one was Cohen and Bhagavan sometimes stopped and sat on the ledge of his verandah. At that time Cohen was himself a *brahmachari* and not a householder, but nevertheless Bhagavan did not go inside his hut, he merely rested outside...until one day Cohen put a chair out so that Bhagavan should be more comfortable. Bhagavan never came back! He invariably refused special treatment just for himself. That is probably the origin of the story about Bhagavan going to visit people in their homes. However, back to the search for a guru... If the person you fancy as a 'guru' wants to be treated specially... look again. I don't mean someone who is treated specially, but someone who wants it. That brings to mind another well-known Bhagavan story, but it bears repeating. The poor and the beggars etc. used to be fed in the ashram, then as now. They were fed first and then the inmates went to the dining hall for lunch. One day, Chinnaśwami, Bhagavan's brother and manager of the ashram's daily business, lost his temper and said in effect enough is enough. From now on we eat first and outsiders eat afterwards. When the lunch bell went, no sign of Bhagavan anywhere. After much searching he was eventually found sitting on the ground with the waiting beggars. Shock horror! from all concerned, but Bhagavan gently explained that he too was originally from outside so he would wait for his turn with the rest. Needless to say that rule was immediately rescinded and to this day the poor are fed first and the inmates later. Just by quietly obeying the new rule, and not putting himself forward in any way, Bhagavan made sure that all were fed correctly and in their due time.

Anyone who gives special treatment to a particular devotee, whether by favours or gifts, or in any other way, is not a true guru...look again. A *jñāni* cannot lie. That is a purely human talent!...a *jñāni*, by definition is super-human. Bhagavan always spoke kindly of people. Another well-known story...A man known to be a thug and a rowdy died, and Bhagavan's devotees came and told him, wondering somewhat mischievously I feel, what he could find to say about such a notorious hooligan, Bhagavan said that he had always kept himself and his clothes immaculately clean! I have a lot of trouble with that last precept. Suppose a fantasist comes to Tiruvannamalai, someone who seems to have fooled many people...after all that is what a good storyteller does...I feel so strongly about it that I need to speak out. Such a one I feel, was someone called Robert Adams, who claimed to have come to Ramanasramam first in 1947 when he was just 17 years old. No one saw him. That was in the days when every foreigner was noted and written about and talked about. However nobody apparently saw or spoke to

Robert Adams. If he had come for a short visit of a few days to the ashram while I was in school I might never have known, but if he had stayed for even a month or two, never mind several years as he claimed, he would have been entirely memorable! He also claimed to have stayed in my family home without my father apparently knowing about it! This is according to one of his statements recorded on a website devoted to his teachings. He certainly could not have stayed in our house while we were there without us knowing, when we were not there the house was locked up and unused. What is even more extraordinary is that he claimed that Bhagavan used to come and visit him several times in our house and bring him fruit. They supposedly had long chats there. Who was their interpreter? That whole story is a fabrication. Bhagavan understood English pretty well, but he barely spoke it at all. As I have explained earlier, Bhagavan never went into any house, including ours. My goodness if he had, the whole street, town, country, would have known about it. It would have become a landmark day for our family and remembered for ever more. It would have been written about by the diligent scribes who religiously recorded every word Bhagavan uttered and everyone who came into his presence!

Bhagavan never left the ashram by the front gate or even crossed the road from the ashram (where our house is still) after 1928-29 when he stopped doing *giripradakṣiṇā*, except for two recorded occasions. Once when he went to look at a lake (*Samudram*) that had unexpectedly filled with water and secondly when he went to see a well in Ramana Nagar that never went dry. Every move he made was noted and recorded, and everyone who was associated with him, would have been noted. Bhagavan would never have cosy buddy, buddy chats with anyone, thereby showing favouritism. Whoever invented these stories was definitely indulging in a fantasy and not only had no idea of how Bhagavan behaved, nor the strict norms and hierarchy in the ashram, but apparently had not even met Bhagavan. Contrary to appearances, Bhagavan was not an easy-going pushover! Because he paid so little attention to his physical form people assumed he was a softie who could be easily manipulated. On the contrary, trying to envisage getting Bhagavan to do anything that he didn't want to do is unimaginable! For goodness sake...Bhagavan could stop a charging elephant at 50 paces with one look if he so wished. Of course that was never necessary, of course no one told us so, we just knew...everyone knew. No one who lived in his ambit ever had any doubt as to the sheer power of Bhagavan. There was even a story put about, that my father had given Robert Adams our family car. Amazing! Our family never owned a car, neither of my parents drove and if we wanted to go anywhere we went by bus. Adams claimed he gave the ashram a jeep. The ashram, to this day, has never owned or was given a car or jeep. In 2018 it purchased for the first time, a mini-truck for ferrying cow dung and cattle feed. That is verifiable fact. In Tiruvannamalai we get more than our fair share of dodgy gurus. Admittedly most of them come with their hands out, so that eliminates them! Being worshipped is probably the biggest ego trip in the world and only the genuine can resist the allure. Many find the temptation of that kind of power absolutely addictive and they become corrupted by it. But how about those who are genuinely searching for guidance? Those who want a living voice to point them in the right direction? I have no special axe to grind regarding Robert Adams, I never met him and only heard his name mentioned for the first time a couple of years ago. I wish his admirers well and hope they find what they are searching

for...but please...not through fraud. Everyone should evaluate for himself/herself the nature of divinity and the worth of the one placed on a pedestal. I was incredibly lucky I now realise. I grew up from the age of five years at the feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Now when my time on this earth is coming to an end, I am sorry that not many voices will be left to correct flagrant faults in reporting the days when Bhagavan lived in Tiruvannamalai. The truth is so important to us all, now as then when we thought everything we knew would last forever. When not at school, my brother, sister and I saw him every single day. We told him our secrets, ran around and played in his presence and always recognized that he was Bhagavan...special and all knowing. The ashram was our playground. The rules that governed it we imbibed without conscious thought. Some things were done one way, some another. No one was ever shown favouritism, not even the poets that came and recited their verses to him. Not even his three devoted attendants, although I heard that they had been given special dispensation to enable them to touch him in the course of their care. He suffered from rheumatism, but nonetheless the touch of a *jñāni* is supposed to be devastating. Maybe that is why he normally never touched at all. Either that or perhaps he had imbibed the characteristics of a South Indian Brahmin; they usually never touch anyone nor do they encourage touching. His words alone were words of power. Let us not forget some other words of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. As he lay dying someone called out “Bhagavan don’t leave us. What shall we do without you?” And Bhagavan replied “You place too much attention on the body. I am not going anywhere, where should I go.” I feel that a genuine cry for help to Bhagavan will definitely be heard. He never performed ‘miracles’, at least not in a spectacular way; but things tended to happen around him that seemed entirely accidental, but had the desired effect of answering a supplicant’s prayers. Bhagavan is very subtle, but he surely hears...the question is can we ‘hear’ his response? As for Robert Adams, it seems to me that there are so many inconsistencies and downright impossibilities in his stories, such a total lack of verifiable fact or any credible witness, that I can only conclude that he never met Bhagavan at all.

Reprinted from The Mountain Path July – September 2020

Part 1 is now available [here](#):

<https://selfreflexiveoopphotography.photo.blog/2020/02/10/the-mystery-of-robert-adams-did-he-really-meet-ramana-maharshi-and-the-sages-of-india/>

Part 2 is now available [here](#):

<https://selfreflexiveoopphotography.photo.blog/2020/05/17/was-robert-adams-really-in-india-part-2/>

Part 4 is now available [here](#)

Questions for Kitty Osborne

Posted by [existence1010](#) August 12, 2020 Posted in [Uncategorized](#)

Kitty Osborne, daughter of Arthur Osborne, first came to Ramana Ashram in 1941. Though sent to boarding school in Kodaikanal she nonetheless spent much time at the ashram right up to Bhagavan's mahasamadhi in 1950. It was a wonderful and rare opportunity to ask her some questions about the unusual stories Robert Adams told about Ramana Ashram.

[Part 1 link](#) | [Part 2 link](#) | [Part 3 link](#) | This is Part 4 in our series

Question to Kitty Osborne:

How likely is this quote from Robert to have happened:

“Another thing Ramana used to do. People used to tell him that were some intellectuals coming to see you, some Pundits. Who are coming to have a discourse with you about the religion, about hinduism, about this, about that. So he used to go outside of his place and he always wore loin cloth. And he would rub himself with mud and become filthy and sit there in the mud. And when they'd come by they would say, “Where does the sage live?” and he would say, “he's gone, he doesn't live here anymore,” and then they would inquire up the hill and they would say, “you just passed him sitting in the mud.” (laughter) And they would become disillusioned and go away.” –p.216 Robert Adams Complete Transcripts

Or this one:

“I recall a Westerner, I'm trying to think of his name, Henry Wells, from Scotland. He apparently had read a lot of books about Ramana, and this was his first visit. He came into the hall, and I was watching this. He ran over to Ramana and prostrated himself on his stomach, and started going crazy. His feet were shaking, and he was chanting. The devotees wanted to pick him up, and Ramana said, “Let him stay.” When he came out of it he told Ramana, “At last I have found you. You are my father, my mother, my son, my daughter, my friend.” And Ramana just smiled at him. And I said to myself, and I was only eighteen years old, I said to myself, “Someone who is this enthusiastic, let's see what happens, if it lasts.” The days went by and he kept prostrating himself every day for about a month. Then he finally stopped, and he sat down like everybody else. And after about two months or so, looking around the room at everybody, and he started complaining, that this wasn't right, that wasn't right. After about four months of being there he donated forty-thousand dollars to the ashram, and I'm just watching all these things going on.

After about six months of being there, he started to find fault with the management. At that time Ramanas brother was managing the ashram.

He started to whisper to the other disciples, of course the devotees had nothing to do with this. It

was the disciples and the seekers. He started spreading rumors. He hardly ever talked to me. I guess I was too young.

He was about forty-five years old.

When about the seventh month he came over to me one day and he asked me, outside the ashram, "Do you think Ramana is really enlightened?" So I just smiled at him, I didn't answer and walked away.

He started getting devotees to fight against each other and rebel against the rules of the ashram.

On about the eighth month he saw me again and he tells me, "Do you think it is right for Ramana to stand naked like this? Let's buy him some clothes and dress him up, so when Westerners come they won't be frightened." So I told him what Ramana said: "Remember the reason for why you came." And this went on.

A couple of days later I didn't see him in the hall. Second day passed and I didn't see him. Third day passed and I didn't see him. And the fourth day I inquired, "What happened to him?" And the house guest he was living with said, "Oh, Henry packed his suitcase and went back to Scotland," and nobody ever heard from him again." *-p.758 Robert Adams Transcripts*

Kitty Osborne:

The first question about Bhagavan rubbing himself with mud etc sounds completely spurious. ...I can safely say that the first one was entirely made up. Bhagavan would NEVER dirty himself up in order to mock seekers. He would never dirty himself up anyway, and he was almost always kind and patient with genuine seekers after knowledge... however annoying they might seem to others. The only people he had no time for, as I said yesterday, were egoists playing 'look at me, aren't I wonderful'.

Bhagavan was scrupulously clean in his person and in his habits, ie the way he ate for instance. Not a grain of rice was left on the floor. He did not encourage self-aggrandisement in any one, nor did he condone exhibitionism. When he ignored someone it was memorable!

The second story about the Scotsman sounds as though it was cobbled together from various questionable bits of gossip... there were many weird people who came to the ashram and I didn't meet them all.

The gift of 40,000 dollars is pure fantasy...that I can state categorically.

Ps. If anyone gave \$40,000 to the ashram in those days we would ALL have heard about it! The ashram was poor and that amount of money would have bought most of Tiruvannamalai! I suspect that story was invented in order to nudge people into the idea of substantial gifts of money!

Pps. What was a Scotsman doing with dollars?