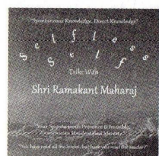


BOOK REVIEWS



SELFLESS SELF Talks with Shri Ramakant Maharaj edited by Ann Shaw. Published by Selfless Self Press.

2nd ed. 2015. pp. 434. \$22, Rs650. ISBN - 978-0992875619 www.ramakantmaharaj.net and www.selfless-self.com

Ramakant Maharaj (RM) is a direct disciple of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj (NM). He was born in 1941; is married with two sons; and qualified as a lawyer and worked in the banking industry. He spent 19 years closely associated with NM from whom he received *Naam Mantra* in 1962. For the past decade he has been guiding students from his ashram in Nasik, Maharashtra. He belongs to the Inchegiri Navnath Sampradaya, which is known for its practicality. Fortunately for those who do not speak Marathi, he speaks English and has evolved the teachings of the Lineage to meet the ever changing circumstances of modern life in India. He cuts through all concepts including the 'I Am' concept and strongly discourages dependency on the master or his form. He points to our 'Invisible Presence' by giving 'Direct Knowledge'. RM says: "It is my duty to share this Knowledge, the same Knowledge that my Master shared with me."

The book format is different both in dimension and presentation. It is meant to encourage reflection. It is not meant to be read cover to cover but rather to be picked up and absorbed in section by section. The layout with its use of bold capital centred statements means that the reader is alerted to important statements which cannot be ignored. The book is long and dense. The book is divided into three parts: Self-Enquiry, Self-Knowledge and Self-Realization. The book is not so much a presentation of concepts as a manual addressed to the 'Invisible Listener' in us.

The teaching of RM is concrete and radical. He hammers the same point over and over again with subtle variations: The body form is a material and all knowledge is material knowledge. He constantly directs our attention to the illusion of our identity with the body-form.

"When You Become One With Selfless Self, Your Identity Is Forgotten, Your Identity Then Poses As Your Master. It Takes The Shape Of Your Master." "You Are The Cause And Consequence Of Your Entire World." "Try To Know Your Identity. Try To Know Your Unidentified Identity. The Knower Will Disappear While Trying To Know Ultimate Truth. The Knower Will Disappear. No Knowledge, No Knower."

This book may appear to be just another recitation of the familiar party line of Advaita but what differentiates it is the obvious sincerity and one pointed focus and power of the teaching. RM does not tire in pointing out the fallacy of our false identification with that which has no existence in its own right. We are reminded of Sri Ramana's who consistently taught self-enquiry to all who entered his presence. Truth does not grow stale. It is ever fresh. To state it again and again does not show a lack of imagination but indicates a powerful and unceasing conviction that reinforces the essential from whatever angle one takes.

At first one may feel intimidated by the size, scope and seeming repetition of the book but with patience one can see its value. The book's aim is to bring the reader back again and again to the central point: Who is the knower?

RM reminds one of NM whose fierce uncompromising commitment to the truth quelled the superficial questions and arguments of the curious. This book too is not for the casually inquisitive or faint hearted. One has to breathe this book not think it. There is more happening in the dialogues than words can say. After reading through this book I have come to the conclusion that to be in the presence of RM is to enter another dimension of understanding.

— Christopher Quilkey

Mountain Path Review – July 2016

SELFLESS SELF

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