

**CLASH BETWEEN MATERIALISM AND SPIRITUALISM IN RAMAN  
MAHARSHI'S WHO AM I?**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the degree of  
Master of Arts in English**

**By**

**Gaurab Shali Pant**

**Roll No.: 00006062**

**T.U. Regd. No.: 6-2-530-11-2012**

**Central Department of English**

**Kirtipur, Kathmandu**

**February 2020**

## Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Clash between Materialism and Spiritualism in Raman Maharshi’s *Who am I?*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Gaurab Shali Pant has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Internal Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

External Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Head

\_\_\_\_\_

Central Department of English

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who made it possible to complete this thesis. I would like to thank especially to my respected thesis supervisor Mr. Raj Kumar Baral, Lecturer, Central Department of English for giving his supportive hand .I am deeply indebted to him for his continued assistance and confidence that highly encouraged me to go ahead with my thesis. Without his praiseworthy support and guidance, the preparation of this thesis would not have been possible.I would like to thank all the teachers, who have helped me complete this research work.

I owe a special debt of thanks to my parents Jitendra Shali Pant and Indu Pant who encouraged me to finish my project. They had shown me the power of love to change everything. I am grateful to them in providing me the materials and guiding me throughout the completion of the project.

February 2020

Gaurab Shali Pant

## Abstract

This research paper investigates the underlying clash between materialism and spiritualism in Raman Maharshi's *Who Am I?* As an autobiography by a well known Indian scholar and a sage, it answers to a set of questions on the self-enquiry. Autobiography as such cultivates the ideas and themes bathing from the notion of spiritualism. The researcher, here contemplates into the existing contradictions and limitations of why Ramana Maharshi, the author gives much emphasis on the spiritual way of screening the life and universe from Arvind Sharma's *Predetermination and Free Will in the Teachings of Ramana Maharshi* and J.C. Brand's *The Discovery of the Ramana Effect*. In doing the research, basically what do I understand; as a researcher is the analyzing the issues related to only one point of view would not do justice rather it will arise further contradictions. This research renders to understand the contradictions and find out the middle paths in between materialism and spiritualism. The middle path generated will particularly solve the riddles seen in the holistic approach to view the life and universe.

Key Words: Spiritualism, Clash, Middle Path, Self-enquiry, mind.

## Clash between Materialism and Spiritualism in Raman Maharshi's *Who am I?*

This research paper tries to analyze the clashes between the two doctrines in the Raman Maharshi's *Who am I?* The clashes seem inherent in the text because of the overpopulated dogmatic views seen in regard to the belief of "spiritualism". Ramana goes for the extensive celebration of the spiritual ways to view the life and universe. These perceptions and value-laid ideologies have some contradictions that demand the research which would solve the riddles. I have generated similar kind of assumptions to delve into the existing theories and doctrines to bridge the gap between two sort of ideas supposed by spiritualism and materialism. The book *Who am I?* extensively talks about the spiritualistic sides of the life of the saint who goes through the extreme level of penance to attain the level of enlightenment. What I see is the gap. To valorize only one sort of theoretical dogma would not penetrate the scene as a whole. So I have tried to bridge the gap and go for the middle path which would be helpful in finding the conclusions later.

Deification of one or another theoretical perspective leads us to nowhere. The book that I chose is the autobiographical piece that contemplates extensively on the autobiographical as well as spiritual workings of the writer in a sum. The basics that I chose is the underlying confusion and inherent gaps that is to be fulfilled throughout the course of this research. Rumors are surrounded in the society about the emblems and the values of a saint. The autobiographical theories pave a way to know the exact positioning of the autobiographical "I" for the smooth functioning of the narrator and narrated "I". My views are on the middle paths between the two extreme ideological doctrines that would be efficient for the complete life. But the problem seen in this particular kind of enquiry is that we tend to have lesser understanding of ourselves. The processes and dynamics of the self-enquiry are to have the limited knowledge and

priority into the deep ocean of enlightenment and understanding. The middle path that I assume as a hypothesis would be helpful in understanding these diverse phenomena. Clash seems to be inherent in both deeper and surface level but this should not be the topmost question of the century. Rather the theoretical insights borrowed from the two theories should go hand and hand. Raman Maharshi valorizes the spiritual aspects of the life instead of materialistic notion regarding understanding and internalizing the self "I". In doing so, we can merely guess that conclusion drawn from the one point of view/ perspective would be the hasty generalizations. The research problem would be: Is spiritualism the only key to happiness? Can self-enquiry and materialistic values /norms go alike with one another? Why does the author give more emphasis on the spiritualistic realm unlike materialistic approach to life?

The inherent confusion lies in the perceptions seen in the Ramana. In one point he says: It is the only to the spectator that the enlightened householder seem to be occupied with his domestic duties; for even though apparently in domestic duties, he is not really engaged in activity at all. His outer activity does not prevent him from realizing the perfect peace of withdrawal, and he is free from the restless urge to activity in the midst of all the activities. (77)

This shows how much he is indulged into the spiritual realm. But it is not the perfect solution at all. In doing so, new sort of derivatives should be generated. To make it much easier, elements from materiality and spirituality made to be yoked in designing a wide spectrum of meaning- making practices. Eastern philosophy and theological tradition stresses upon the subtlety going- beyond the constraints of brain, its physical existence and limitations. Brain directs the physical and somehow metaphysical tendencies in controlling the aspirations needed to run the functions of

the body. The pre-requisite seen will be on nourishment of the self-enquiry that is one of the problems to be researched. Without knowing the consequences of the self-enquiry and motivation one could not attain the enlightenment and manage the inherent tussle between the materialistic value and spiritualistic value. Rather it would be the irony to fall in the grip of the tussles that rule the world.

The tussles that govern magnificently build our worldviews and perspective that help us to judge the various aspects and elements of life and universe. Terms, conditions and values of the society works both as a problem and solution that would help in opening the eyes help to establish our identity. Another problem seen in the contemporary scene is the reluctance of the common people in understanding and internalizing the spiritualistic tendencies. Through the research providing the insights of spiritualism would basically indulge the scholars who attempt to weave and decorate their worldviews about it and generating the crux. I have tried to include the theories of Gautam Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi and Osho Rajnish to provide evidences related to it. This research task I accomplish is the product from the Eastern theological writers such as Gautam Buddha, Osho Rajnish and similar others who have anticipated their views about the spiritualistic theories and doctrines which would help me to conduct the in-depth analysis of this research. Talking about the autobiographical theorists, we can analyze classical theory of Georges Gusdorf who postulates the claim between the continuous struggle between subject and self.

To do this, Linda Anderson helps me to dwell in the critical idioms to analyze the dimensions and stereotypical understanding of any piece of literature. I have tried to collect some of the primary and secondary data sources that relate how materialism is shaping the identity of the people and how can we make certain point of departure and find a mid way.

The ancient and modern problems of the personal identity have emerged in the postmodern age as a problem of textuality. The field and purpose of autobiography has been traditionally viewed in terms of the autobiographer's personal identity, so the theory of the autobiography has been especially affected by the classical to the contemporary theory of writing autobiography. The ongoing debate between self and I, narrator and narrator made us to think and delve more on the nature of autobiography (72).

The various facets and rooms for trespassing the gaps and voids on internalizing these stereotypes would help us. Saint Augustine is right to delve into the underlying confusion seen in the spiritual understanding. He says:

And while we speak of the eternal wisdom, longing for it and straining for it with the strengths of the Hearts, for one fleeting instant we reached out and touched it. Then with a sigh, leaving our *spiritual harvest*, bound to I, we returned to the sound of our own speech, in which each word has a beginning and an ending- far different from our Word, our Lord, who abides in himself for ever, yet never grows old and gives new life to all things. (Augustine 198)

Materialism is used to refer to people who value possessions—as in Bill Gates is a materialist. But when we say that Karl Marx was a materialist, we don't mean that he hankered after possessions. And we say that Marx was not an idealist, we aren't saying that he didn't have any ideas about "how to change the world" (79). Idealism and materialism has very different meanings than their popular usage. They represent the two divergent ways of looking "at the world we live in". For the idealist, the mind—or the spirit, in the form of the God—is the origin of all material things. The ancient Greek idealist philosopher Plato, for example, argued that the world and the thing in it were determined by universal, logical categories. Therefore, every specific



tree was a copy derived from the universal category “tree”. Plato and all other idealists—separated the mind from matter, and argued that former ruled over the latter. The materialist view is exactly opposite. For the materialist all of reality is based on matter, including the human brain which is itself a result of the organization of matter in a particular way. In this view the abstract ideas of “tree was developed by humans from their experience of actual trees. “It is not consciousness that determines being, wrote Marx, putting it another way.” but social being that determines consciousness (72).

Brunton is the one who claims to give plenty criticism on the Ramana’s point of departure in the spiritual workings of the mind. He argues:

Raman Maharshi terms his method of spirituality as the most sacred of sacred. Indeed, it is a revolutionary method in spirituality. There is an essential affirmation of Raman that explains the reason for which this method is unique: “What is essential in any Sadhana [spiritual practice] is to try to bring back the running mind and fix it on one thing only. Why then should it not be brought back and fixed in self-attention (to this feeling of “I”)? That alone is Self-enquiry. (atmabichara) (626)

Self –Enquiry is an awareness of the awareness itself. It leads us beyond duality, because the object of meditation (the “I”) is ultimately revealed as the subject itself is the transpersonal Consciousness). Nevertheless, in order to let the question “Who Am I” brings us closer to our real nature, or in other words, to truly ask “Who am I?” is an efficient way, a certain understanding and spiritual maturity.

The Self enquiry method of Ramana Maharshi: there is no rational answer. First of all, we must understand that we cannot answer rationally and intellectually to such question. When we state “I understand I know who I am “we are actually

conceptualizing that which I in reality is ineffable. When we abandon any striving in order to mentally know the answer (when we simply accept an answer like I don't know) to the question, we are in the state of complete open attention. Ramana says:

Rational knowledge is characterized by duality, is sequential and always partial. This knowledge should be of another kind, total and complete. This is only possible if our ego with its personality, mind and feelings does not intervene. All the searching for who we are really gives rise to a sacred wonder or astonishment because it escapes any sort of understanding. (qtd in Sharma 11-12)

Then because of the attitude of surrender, we have the feeling that all our limits dissolve into the infinite and re-orchestration of our energies is produced. In it all the energies converge towards the Ultimate Subject, towards the Spiritual Heart (which brings beauty, love and freedom). Therefore, we should ask the essential question "Who am I?" without expecting a rational answer, but, rather in a state of surrender to a sacred wonderment, to a mystical intuition about who we really are.

In this way, we give up the usual approaches to knowledge we realize that the mind cannot contain the mystery of the answer. Therefore the emphasis shifts from the preoccupation of finding out that we are (which, in the beginning of Self-Enquiry is still done in accordance with our usual mentality, with the rational mind) to the pure presence of the Spiritual Heart .We can love, admire and embrace this question-intuition in regards to our existence. Consequently, it will slowly cease to have rational, objective, conscious character. As it is an answer impossible to formulate, we will free ourselves of the snare of conceptualization and be able to have access to the totality that the Spiritual Heart Consciousness awakens in us .

The question "Who am I?" should be repeated with sincerity, as often as

possible, but we must not ask it of the mind in order not to receive just superficial answers connected with that which we already know about us and our memories of the past. Moreover to live under the mark of the Question “by savoring the state of mystery which it stirs in the Spiritual Heart, but not allowing it to be touched or tinged by any conceptualization, we will learn another manner of existing”. (qtd in Sharma 13-15)

In this new attitude, the intuition of our ultimate Reality dominates and we are in a perpetual surrender and expectancy, in an unconditional openness towards the ineffable mystery of the pure “I am”.

The Question exists in us in a latent state and emanates profoundness and creates harmony in our whole being. This harmony itself brings the recognition of our divine existence. What remains is just a feeling of profound recognition. It originates from the untold depths of our being. It was affirmed the Question “Who am I” comes to a formulated spontaneously when the answer-intuition of our real nature is already suggested. In the Self- Enquiry method of Ramana Maharshi, the question “Who Am I” has a very special quality because it is an interrogation which makes the mind enter into a state of void. If we have the wisdom and adequate training of the mind not superimpose anything on this void. (No concepts, no attributes), the reality of the Spiritual Heart, atman emerges.

The Spiritual Heart being the Ultimate Subject cannot be known by means of methods or systems. When we truly understand this, a kind of surrender comes about in our being and it penetrates us: all our inner energies that were previously mobilized by thoughts, desires, and by our personality in general enter into a peace – bringing equilibrium (qtd in Brunton 16-19).

Raman Maharshi extensively valorizes the complexities in the spiritual conduction of

mind through the mapping of our own value of the psychology and physiology.

Trying to reveal “The Ineffable “with the help of the question “Who am I?” is not a common meditation on some specific object .The Spiritual Heart, atman, is nor as we have clearly stated before, an object. In such a meditation, we remain lucid, without interpreting, without judging, simply following the intimate feeling of existence. This feeling is not unknown but just usually ignored because of our different identifications with the body, mind, etc. It follows that any time the mind tends to hold on to a concept in the desire to explain and make objective the ineffable experience of the Supreme Self, it is necessary to remember the famous Vedantic negation (qtd. in Brand 19-23).

My point of departure is where the spiritualism and materialism should go along. The scholars providing inferences to the spiritualism believes in going beyond the body and mind. So I have tried to bring the middle voice out of all this phenomenon’s contributing to the both sides of the coin. The middle voice will technically, literally and metaphorically help support the nourishment of building claims and arguments that will establish new sort of meanings and mappings. The mappings will significantly ties within the contemporary situation of ours to help the plight of people living in this world. People have money, power, prestige, property and assets but they are seen longing for the happiness that they can get only through the bonding of the generalizations.

According to P. Nagaraja Rao, “traditional thinkers of Advaita analyze an object into five-factors- reality (asti), intelligence (bhati) , bliss (aananda), name (nama) and form (rupa)” (20).

Name and form constitute the stuff of the universe. The world is a medley of names and forms. They also constitute the concept of Maya---illusion--- in broader sense.

The research aims to contemplate the contradictions between this stereotypical and modern view of seeing and conceptualizing the spiritual and material aspirations. The aspiration would develop a free and open space for all those sides and welcoming the creative feedbacks. Many critics and theorists are rigid about their opinion considering the valorization of either one or another theory and point of view. Therefore the research aims to clarify the gaps and void inherent within this point of view. Spiritual narrative aims to narrate the quest of the narrator for the eternal wisdom. The eternal wisdom would grant the environment for the way to enlightenment. The contradictions inherent would be the tussle between the materialistic aspirations and spiritualistic as well.

To do so, various scholars have tried to bring the references to unite the doctrinal values and norms amidst the materialistic and spiritualistic tendencies. Materialistic tendencies imply the various dimensions to the assumptions created to valorize the material aspects of life. It includes the quest for the game of food, sex, and power. The ultimate journey for the materialistic school of thought is to guarantee the license to the above mentioned need and walks of life. The values of the materialistic greed flourish within the pure physical walks of life.

Shree Yogananda wrote in his book, *Scientific Healing Affirmations* talks about the inherent contradictions and shortcomings by:

The only difference between consciousness and matter, mind and body, is rate of vibration. The Creator first stirred his still Spirit with the motion of thoughts; this God the Father's first projection of creation was cosmic intelligent motion, or vibration of thought. This motion became stronger and grosser until it changed outwardly and manifested as cosmic light and cosmic sound (registered in the human body as the visible spiritual eye and the

audible cosmic sound of Aum or Amen). The vibration of the conscious cosmic energy became progressively more gross, until it began to manifest as “divine, semi-intelligent, instinctively guided electronic energy, and finally as the still grosser forms of gaseous, liquid and solid energy”(Yogananda 47).

This kind of spiritual upbringing would negate the material aspect that claims the superiority of one doctrinal value over another. Basic package of the doctrinal value confesses the transcendence. The both transcendental and physical aspects to this value should be engrossed to create the new and vibrant meaning so that the thrust would be carried throughout the time-frame of the research. Confessional and material both could transfer the thrust of these inherent gaps.

Swami Kriyananda in his new book *The Promise of Immortality* talks about the inherent confusion saying that “The inner perception of that consciousness is done through communing with the vibration that produces it and that vibration is heard as sound or is seen inwardly as light” ( 32).

This particular conversation of the consciousness is not the material process but the process of going beyond the “Self”. But we should not forget the fact that one could not negate the physical fact of this body as material entity. In another words, we can also say that being purely spiritual does not mean that we should stop thinking about material aspect. The aspects would confer largely to the holistic approach to the views adjacent to it.

Brunton says that his life experiences with Ramana brought back these earlier experiences. This may be true, but what Brunton says about his first book *A Search In Secret India*, must give cause for great concern insofar as it relates to the record of Ramana. Brunton says that he used the story of Ramana as a “peg” on which to hang his own theories of meditation: It will, therefore, be

clear to precarious readers that he used Ramana's name and attainments as a convenient peg upon which to hang an account of what meditation meant to him. The principal reason for this procedure was that it constituted a convenient literary device to secure the attention and hold the interest of western readers, who would naturally give more serious consideration to such a report of the "conversion" of a seemingly hard-hearted critically-minded Western journalist to yoga (21). God as an illusion. Brunton also criticizes Ramana's view that even God is an illusion: The final declaration which really put me, as a western Enquirer, off Advaita came later: it was that God too was an illusion, quite unreal. Had they not left it at that but taken the trouble to explain how and why this all was so, I might have been convinced from the start. This is rather strange criticism and reflects a rather naïve view of Vedanta (22).

He makes the "confession" that when he first came to India, he was "no novice in the practice of the Yoga, "Even as a teenager the ineffable ecstasies of mystical trance had become a daily occurrence in the calendar of life, the abnormal mental phenomenon which attend the earlier experience of yoga was commonplace and familiar, whilst the dry labours of meditation had disappeared into effortless ease (*Hidden Teaching* 23).

Ramana claims that he not only had practiced yoga but he not only had practiced yoga but that he had experienced the abnormal phenomena or siddhis. He refers to the phenomenon for exploring the reality in its holistic sense. Believing that Brunton's criticism of Ramana is correct, at least with respect to ethics. Ken Wilber also says that, however, realized Ramana was, he had ethical shortcomings (39). The problem is seen as an inconsistency in

Ramana's teachings between different views of the self. On the one hand, the self is seen as static and unmoving, uninvolved in the world. On the other hand, there is the view of the self as dynamic and participating in the world. Ramana says that the field of human activity is meant to be not in the trance world, but in the external world, this "time-fronted and space-backed world" (40).

These seem to be the contradiction between the internal and external world. Internal world is the world of spirituality and external world is the world of materiality. The clashes and the inconsistency lie in the understanding of the scholars and saints who grew up in the Eastern theological tradition about the material life. They completely are indifferent towards the material aspects of life. The view participating in the world seems to be completely back warded. The essence what I have tried to embark is the value and significance of material life without negating the spiritual life. The above mentioned critique made by Brunton amplifies the inconsistency seen in the teachings and lifespan of Ramana Maharshi about the gaps that were in his teachings. He further says:

This previous statement is almost exactly what Ramana claimed for himself- that his experience was direct and that the later books that he read were only "analyzing and naming what I had felt intuitively without analysis or name." Is Brunton being honest here? Or has he invented this story of the previous experience in view of his disenchantment with Ramana? Surprisingly the independent record seems to show that he may be telling the truth. There is evidence that Brunton had had earlier experiences. A 1931 report of his first meeting with Ramana reports Brunton (then known as Hurst) as telling Ramana that he had earlier experienced moment of bliss. (41)



Trance is a way of escape- the body is made quite, the physical mind is in a state of torpor, and the inner consciousness is left free to go on. The theory of psychoanalysis and the inner potential of the writer to go beyond the extravagant anarchy of mind will develop into the shrinking behaviors. The autobiographical narrator as a persona goes beyond the life experiences and pours the spiritual lecture to derive the archaic plus original meaning to the self. In deriving the spiritual ways to view life and perception would syntactically and methodologically the different ways to view the life and universe. It exactly pours the very different stereotypes. So we can view from both the eastern and western intellectual tradition to yolk the ideas in between. Nevertheless owing to various theories and tradition, we can decipher the empirical implications.

In his epilogue, Mason writes: “to see deep into the structure of one tyranny is to understand something basic about all form of oppression. It is totalitarian. Like other authoritarian systems, it requires a suspension and suppression of critical questioning, it demands unquestioning submission to a rigid hierarchical structure, it centers on a cult of personality, it engenders personal intrusion and abuse” (88). This was the point of Masson’s memoir, and it completely explains why Masson joined the Freudian cult of psychoanalysis and why he ultimately rejected it. In Freud, Masson saw a reflection of Brunton’s appeal but found himself to suppress his critical faculties yet again. In the 1940s and 1950s, Brunton lived with American author and psychoanalyst Jeffrey Masson, the son of a Jewish American friend of Brunton as Masson’s parents were one of the handfuls of Brunton’s close disciples. Masson published a memoir of his childhood under the title *My Father’s Guru*. Initially influenced by Brunton, Masson gradually became disillusioned with

him. According to Masson, Brunton singled him out as a potential heir to his spiritual kingdom (88).

The spiritual theorists and scholars are directed to delve into the superiority of their own respective theories and values. They seem to be indifferent to catch up and accept the new sort of ideas and values into the consideration. Brunton and Ramana also suffered from this tendency and later Masson and Brunton also suffered from the same plight. In other words, we can also guess that they could not get out from their own rooms of desires, love, affection, ego and stereotypes. These imply the clashes that seem to be inherent between the both schools of thoughts. Other usual tendencies are seen patronizing the either theories or values. Materialities mean the social, environmental, cultural, dialectical, political and positional enquiry of a certain person or group as whole. But the spiritual scholars deny the fact or are unaware about these aspects of the life. They celebrate the spiritual facet of their life. This research therefore aims to conduct a practical judgment on the various facets of the spiritual and practical arenas to view the life and universe. To do this I have generated the middle point of view to mechanize the ways to view the concepts and facts in between. The linking would provide the righteous way to view the life and universe. Various theories and scholars have laid their views attributing to it will provide the ample evidences commemorating the values, ideologies and stereotypes with it. There is the basic dependency which significantly blurs the gap. Connecting and analyzing the material and spiritual stuffs lies in our forte.

Raman Maharshi extensively valorizes the spiritual aspects of life and attaining enlightenment through the mental penance. He says:

Through meditation on the forms of God and through the repetition of mantras, the mind becomes one-pointed. The mind will always be wandering.

Just as when a chain is given to an elephant to hold in its trunk it will go along grasping the chain and nothing else, so also when the mind is occupied with a name or form it will grasp that alone. When the mind expands in the form of countless thoughts, each thought becomes weak: but as thoughts get resolved the mind become one-pointed and strong; for such a mind Self-enquiry will become easy (12).

Various sorts of analyst have poured their respective opinions about the particular theory of Ramana as full of contradictions and disillusion. Especially Brunton, a western scholar was on the top of that. Receiving the ideas and themes I have tried to shed some light on the darker and brighter sides of him. My special focus here is on the clash between the two significant aspects materiality and spirituality. The frictions between them, their illusion, dimensions and methodologies have tried to look the middle path that would be necessary while gazing this life and universe.

The real dynamics seen in the material and spiritual walks of life. To sort this, we have to find a reasonable status of seeing the perceptive value. The additives seen in the very different use of the materialistic and spiritualistic elements condense the meaning that I have made in this thesis. The ideologies and the stereotypes made in the holistic approach, the ideas and concepts generated from the both school of thought communicate the central thrust of this thesis as a whole. My primary book "*Who am I?*" extensively talk about the spiritualistic journey of the saint who engages in the path of the salvation. Therefore the primary focus would be on the attributes and ways to achieve it. Another part of the coin i.e. the materialistic part is completely neglected and subverted. Similarly scholars supporting materialistic school of thought would concentrate the impact of the material values over the life of a common people. They extremely valorize the material impact of life for supporting

the typology that is popular among the common people. Nevertheless it is the plight of the common people but the solution is yoking the ideas in between. Many scholars contribute their legacy in explaining the terms, conditions and values continuing the ongoing debate. This is exactly and actually what we mean by the clash. Theorists and writers go for the patronage of their ideas to be superior and other's ideas to be inferior.

Very different and aloof from the social spectrum, idealist and materialist are the simply better doctrine that centers on the stabilizing the mood. "*Who Am I*" examines both the spiritualistic and materialistic (in latent) aspects of life to derive the meaning related to the construction of self-idealization. In doing so, there seems to be clash between materialistic and spiritualistic walks of life. The main problem seen in doing research would be how the materialistic and spiritualistic walks of life go hand in hand. In doing so, some sort of clashes/ contradictions can be seen amidst all the circumstances to mentor a quick snap over all the working spectrum of psychology and physiology. Physiology demands a concentration over the physical medium (body) whereas psychology mostly relies upon the working of a mind. Physiology concerns on the basic faculties of body (food, shelter, sex and entertainment). Psychology concerns on the basic faculties of unconscious (dreams, latent desires, and various stages of psychological upheavals). Consciousness is the world of physiology whereas unconscious is the world of psychology. These kinds of inherent mechanisms posthumously increase the tussles between materiality and spirituality, hereby, mapping the graph of contradictions shaping the self "I". We can say that the stereotypes felt and internalized would not work much fluently. Therefore new sorts of meaning-making rhetoric should be established so that "*Who Am I*" would be the amplifying question to anyone.

In doing so, new sorts of derivatives should be generated. To make it much easier, elements from both materiality and spirituality made to be yoked in designing a wide spectrum of meaning-making practices. Eastern philosophy and theological tradition stresses upon the subtlety going-beyond the constraints of brain, its physical existence and limitations. Brain directs the physical and somehow metaphysical tendencies in controlling the aspirations needed to run the functions of the body. Body needs different biological repercussions to attain some sort of spiritual feelings that weave a chain of life. Life attains such level of both physical and spiritual workings. In attaining happiness, (a solely spiritual feeling) the means to way out purely is physical. In another words to it would be the way to spirituality is full of thorns posed by materialism and its harsh nature of reality. Reality is such a harsh and different phenomenon path full of thorns and obstacles.

So Ramana Maharshi confesses the life experiences as a means to achieve the level of enlightenment and solve all the riddles of life and universe. He says:

Other than inquiry there are no adequate means. If through other means it is sought to control the mind, the mind will appear to be controlled, but will again go forth. Through the control of the breath also, the mind will become quiescent; but it will be quiescent only so long as the breath remains controlled, and when the breath resumes the mind also will again start moving and will wander as impelled by residual impressions. The source is the same for both mind and breath. Though indeed is the nature of the mind (12).

The internal manifestation of the established norms and values poses for and against the tenants of the spirituality and materiality can be seen embracing the thrust of the thesis as a whole. Reaction would be on how we manifest the incoming views on the society and social normatively as a whole. Both spiritualism and materialism clashes

on the workings of mind and body hereby aiming the middle path that would be really appealing to all of the folks. Autobiographical confession manifests the working of the mind, going beyond the brain, moving towards realm of spirituality and attaining the level of spiritual enlightenment.

To get this, we need to go through different processes and one of them would be purely material. Without attaining material happiness and satisfaction, one couldn't pass through the thorny path of spiritualism. Ramana confesses the perspective and prospective towards spiritualism excluding the material reality of the time. Various scholars and philanthropist have given their attitude in giving the middle path between materialism and spiritualism. Naming one of them is Buddha who only got enlightenment on the shade of the banyan tree after eating the sacred rice pudding from the hand of the beautiful lady "Sujata".

Here, symbolically, rice pudding stands for the material entity that helped Buddha in attaining such level of enlightenment. Buddha also couldn't get such level of feeling only through the penance but have to undergo material proceedings. Ample evidences show that there should be healthy and mutual relationship between what we call the materiality and spirituality. So we can say that autobiography imply the signature of the author as a pose to gesture the various sort of autobiographical methods to go away from the materiality and transcend through the ways of reaction, conversation, teachings and many other aphoristically cue of crafted work to move ahead through the practice of self-enquiry. Enquiry and knowing the perception and perspective of others seems to be one of the obvious tasks that lead us to nowhere. But knowing the self seems to be one of the heart-throbbing responsibilities that occur in the life of the trespassers who attempt to know the reality of life and universe.

Maharshi seem to pacify those obstacles and thorns that come in the life of any individual who try to actualize the self (24).

Mahabir, Osho and many other saints and philosophers have tried to figure out those hidden and latent Arcanum of the stereotypical normatively. Indeed, it may be regarded as the very corner-stone of Sri Bhagavan`s teachings, for within these twenty brief paragraphs all His basic teachings are summarized in a clear and undiluted fashion. Therefore, on account of the importance of this work, for which we owe a great debt of gratitude to Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai (2), an English translation is given here.

While preparing this translation, an attempt has been made to make it as precise and as faithful to the original Tamil as possible, even if at times this had to be at the expense of an elegant style of English. The division of the text into paragraphs and sentences, and the order of the sentences, corresponds exactly to the original, and as far as possible the structure of each sentence is of the same form as that in the original. All the portions which are printed in bold in the original are also in bold in this translation, while other key sentences which are not in bold in Tamil have here been printed in italics. In the whole of the original text, only one word is within brackets, namely, in the fourth paragraph, the word “shines” (prakasikkum) after the word “Self appears”. Although these carry the Eastern theological tradition of the meaning making process and the gradual evolution of the self “I”, postulates the contradiction of two ideological doctrines. As this gradual evolution of I contributes the variety of meaning –making derivatives that would postulate a new and diverse mechanism to the whole process. Process aims to look at the holistic side of the various aspects transcending the various sorts that

contribute the meaning making discourses. Methodologically every human elements of meaning making discourses characteristically embark the tendency that realizes both the conscious and subconscious efforts. Various scholars and philosophers are right to maintain a clear picture to embark such phenomenological process. *Who am I?* basically dwells upon this conscious and logical process that continues throughout the lifetime. The struggles and aspirations sought in apprehending this complex phenomenon (qtd in Pillai 1-2).

These conscious and logical processes are described by Ramana in a new and progressive regard. In one point he says:

These are only two ways in which to conquer destiny and be independent to it. One is to enquire who undergoes this destiny and discover that only the ego is bound by it and not the Self and the ego is non-existent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to Lord, by realizing the one's helplessness and saying all the time: 'Not I, but thou, Oh! My Lord, my Lord', and giving up all sense to "I" and "mine" and leaving it to the Lord what he likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord (63).

These all are the psychological and spiritual side of the human tendency. Human do have this characteristics that help them commemorate on these kinds of emotions. We should keep considerations on these various kinds of emotions need certain outlet that would be discharged in one way and other. When they are not outsourced and discharged, it would make prone to be diseased both physically and mentally. Who am I therefore answers all those answerable queries to what life and universe poses to make. Life is therefore both complex and easy phenomenon. To both whom people



would try to acknowledge or poor to decipher, life gives equal chances and motivation yearning the disclamation of mutual life experiences. The experiences of two persons in a same row may be different so is the case with the crew members in cinematography. The content may be different but the struggles might be same. Therefore various scholars are limited in identifying these crucial but important elements of life and universe. The factual and rigid explanation of life and universe needs a saint brain to embark the puzzling labyrinth of the meaning generating process. Scholars are right to say that the road to truth is difficult but not impossible. They also claim that it is the path full of thorns. Whatsoever the meaning to the life contradicts the elements of the materiality and spirituality. Materiality includes the physical elements such as food, shelter and clothing and other necessary stuffs in life. Patronage is given by the most of the common folks today is the materialistic elements and tendencies that would summon the desires and aspirations.

Speculation cannot be done on the basis of only the physical aspects to it. Physical aspect is sure to be one of the aspect(s) but not the complete picture in itself. The complete picture is the mixture of the various dogmatic views associated with the two ideological traditions that would generate the equidistance that would generate the relation. Who am I inherently mechanizes this goal both literal and metaphorically. So this theory internalizes the latent and manifested stereotypical and progressive agendas to understand various dimensions of life and universe. Here I not only resemble the individual I rather postulates the various spectrums. that would act as the collective and” group” incident. Spiritualism can touch and feel each and every folks that transcend the logical transformation of the

various spectrums associated. The steps of the growing apprehensions towards the spiritual dogmas challenge the livelihood that stretches the physical and spiritual aspirations that flourishes the tendency that would make more difference on the perception seeing the various facets among the doctrines observed worldwide. Various doctrines resemble different sort of worldviews related to the worldwide transactions of ideas and views attending the narcissistic membranes that would logically plant the seeds of the attributes the challenges and obstacles thereof. The issues of identity and self- essence are shaped by the various factors and elements that would contribute the meaningful discourses and methodological tools that would make it more vivid and rapid. Discussions on it would offer critical views and arenas that would make the amplifying research. Research demand the new school of thoughts that would commence different viewpoints that inherently mechanizes within the framework (qtd. in Brand 31-32).

According to materialistic philosophies, mind and consciousness are the similar other frameworks that would convert all the established practices that stand tall above all the prejudices and contradictions that inherently drives the mechanization to rectify the pros and cons of the everyday gesture magnificently derives the meaning making process. Thus it is notable to see the redundancy in achieving this core reality of time and space. This particular discourses aims at transcending the various sides of the courses on the acting out the values and stereotypical notions that postulates the real and voracious compliment on the real and spiritual realm. The statesmanship of the doctrinal values assertions and numerous other jargons that would helpfully concentrates thereof. Therefore the results collected would be surer to amplify the

meaningful metamorphosis that would generate logical emphasis on the stereotypical and adjacent views on the ways that would historicize the debates ongoing on the rules and assignments that would postulate the new idea on how the materialism and spiritualism got entangled in its own way. Therefore the ongoing debate will help to improvise the stereotypical reactions that would make it more vague limitless of any other pragmatic and empirical school of thought, these emblems nourishes the much clearer picture of looking at the universe. This particular gaze upon the society and universe can nevertheless be one of the tools of achieving life as a material and altogether spiritual source of happiness and prosperity. Many other scholars are right to say that this universe is full of black and white making it grey and this every breath is a boon of the eternity and god as a whole. But we are unaware of the importance of each breath so becoming indifferent towards our own essence that is harming ourselves.

So becoming cautious of this entire phenomenon's, we can rectify ourselves to do our own deeds, not complaining about the pros and cons doing it in more fluent and perfect way. Genuinely picture gets clearer when we generate our own concepts; establish our own worldview so as to create the beautiful family at a particular and beautiful society/ nation as a whole. These concepts and worldviews can only be brought into action when we have vivid and inherent mechanisms to know about ourselves and society/ nation as a whole. This can only be done under the generic conventions that would hold a capability to yolk both the sides of the spiritualism and materialism.

Ramana Maharshi establishes the worldview answers to the questions that we often ask about the life and universe. The answers we sought remorse the flaws in seeing the falsified worldview that inherently mechanizes the surrounding around.

The result coincidentally stabilizes the reality and truth either in the material form or the spiritual form. Both forms and way of truth are right to magnify the life and universe in the positive and consistent regard. Life and universe seeing from the material perspective is the sum total of food lodgings, sex and shelter that would satisfy and liberate the material tools. In one point he says:

Your thinking that you have to make an effort to get rid of this dream of a waking state and your making efforts to realization or real awakening are parts of the dream. When you attain realization you will see neither the dream during the sleep or the walking state, but only yourself and your real state. (67)

Whereas life and universe seeing from the spiritual perspective demands the level of satisfaction in knowing ourselves, from where we come and what is the destiny. Being assertive about the opinions regarding the support and against the ideology and the values would be not praiseworthy. Rather to be flexible and understanding each and every aspect of the coin would be fruitful in finding the facts. The facts would be the hasty generalizations or the repetition of the theories cannot work in today's world. Materialism's view of the universe is too small. Materialism is the antithesis of belief in God, it rules out any such belief on the grounds that a deterministic, reductionist, or mechanistic understanding of the natural world is all that is needed to explain the natural world.

Materialism is wrong on these counts; it is not based on scientific objective or "ultimate" proof, but is culturally constructed. Nature does not come with little abele on it saying "materialist universe". We assume there is nothing beyond the material and we invent philosophies about it based on inductive arguments, but our sample of reality is very limited.

Materialism is simply inadequate from the standpoint of modern physics.

There is too-much going on, too many theories and many of them contradict what was standard materialist assumption. Paradigm shift in many different field have led to the inclusion of concepts that once would have been more and more anti-materialistic. Therefore seemingly very different concepts have been joined to address the confusion and contradictions. These all should be annexed to ratify and complement the existing views on the transfiguration of the ideas and concepts related to it. Therefore, better sort of meaning-making process is done through annexing the various terms and terminologies.

Gethin's analysis of Buddha published in 1992 states that Buddha's eight fold paths seem accurate and progressive to value the solutions in the clashes seen between materialism and spiritualism. He argues that: "There is no reason in principle why familiarities with explicitly 'Buddhist' teachings are a necessary condition for such liberation" (Monteiro et.al.15).

It is one of the best understood as describing a law of the universe, existing whether anyone describes or not. This led to our analogy that this causal law is not an invention of the Buddha or of any teacher, any more than gravity, for example, the law of Newton.

To that end, we can summarize Gethin's case. Insofar as the Pali Canon represents a fundamental source of traditional Buddhism, referring to these texts provides a crucial perspective on the traditional versus contemporary debate.

In the Pali Canon the path to liberation –the cessation of suffering –is parsed in multiple ways. Usually, these parsings consists of various lists, such as the seven factors of awakening. Gethin argued however, that the Eightfold Path is presented as a distillation of these different practices, which is understood as completed in itself with nothing lacking: "the eight-factored path, as the essence of the spiritual life, acts as

thread that runs through the Nikayas: “Formerly and also now ,bhikkus, I make known just suffering and the end of suffering”(203).

Here as elsewhere in the Nikayas, the Eightfold Path is described as the way leading to the cessation of suffering, or the fourth noble truth. It is the way to address the basic problem that Buddhist teachings address: suffering. Buddhist texts portray suffering as a universal problem, experienced by all sentient beings. Gethin’s careful exploration of the Eightfold Path as the distillation of spiritual practice help make the case here that the teachings of the Buddha necessarily imply that there is a certain causal structure to reality, discovered but not created by Buddha, that make the attainment of goal of liberation from suffering a possibility.

Given its distinct role as the distillation of the spiritual life, it is important to investigate some of the key qualities of the Eightfold Path. The eight factors of the path-are view, thought, speech, action, livelihood, striving (more commonly translated as effort), mindfulness and concentration. In its most basic sense, the eightfold categorization describes eight different capacities a person possesses: the capacity for thought, view, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration. Thus the Eightfold Path is merely descriptive. However, according to the Nikayas, in order to realize the fourth noble truth and attain the cessation of suffering, a person must transform their conduct and attainment in these eight elements in such a way that they support awakening. This is the Eightfold Path in its perspective aspect, and involves, in the first instance, moving from wrong or unskillful or right or skillful practices and, ultimately to a transformation from ordinary to noble realization of the elements of the path. Right are the common translation of the word samma and each factor of the Eightfold Path can be right or wrong.

Citing Sumedho, Amaro explained that right in this context means that the

opposite of the wrong, but “rather has the connotation of right as in ‘upright’, ‘balanced’, attuned”(64). This is significant because it frames the ideas of right and wrong in the context of the overall goal of alleviating suffering: “this approach emphasizes the pragmatic consideration ‘Does this attitude, this action, alleviate suffering?’ rather than the theoretical question, ‘Does this experience match the picture of how I believe things to be’” (Amaro 15).

Gethin pointed out that that this treatment of right and wrong view and its relation to the other factors in the *Mahacattariska Sutta* is echoed in the opening of the magga samyutta:

Ignorance comes first....in the attaining of unskillful dhammas ; (after come)lack of self-respect and disregard of the consequence. For one given to ignorance, for one who is ignorant...wrong view appears; for one of wrong view, wrong thought ...wrong speech ... wrong action...., wrong livelihood, wrong striving, and wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration appears. Knowledge comes first.... in the attaining of skilful dhammas; after [come] self-respect and regard for consequence. For one given to knowledge, for one who has knowledge .... Right view appears .... Right concentration appears (221).

These kinds of truthfulness and right path attributed would consequently aims to dominate the various fraternities of the issues associated with the materiality and spirituality. Materiality claims itself to be the superior theory and spirituality claims the same. The claims seemingly transport various thematic and dogmatic views as a whole. Materiality supposes the ideological enquiry that goes for the possession of material assets which seems to be one-dimensional whereas spirituality goes for the psychological aspect. This particular tendency overrules the key aspect of my research and the middle path also known as Eight Fold Paths in Buddhism also correlates on

the same ground. Because of this various aspects in the holistic ground serve the key crux of this research, I have tried to give abundant evidences related to it as a primary and secondary data on this ground.

‘Osho says in his lecture about the middle path:

Yes it is absolutely inevitable that a Buddha will always be misunderstood. It cannot be otherwise. A Buddha is bound to be misunderstood. If a Buddha is not misunderstood then he is not a Buddha at all. Why it is so? Because the Buddha lives in a state which is beyond mind and we live in minds. And to translate something from the beyond to the mind is the most impossible things in this world. It cannot be done. Although every Buddha have tried to do, that too is inevitable. But no Buddha can avoid it. The Buddha has to say the unsay able. He has to define the indefinable. He has to do this absurd act. Because the moment he reaches beyond the mind, great compassion arises.

He can see people stumbling in the dark. He can see people suffering unnecessarily creating their own nightmares, creating their own hell and drowning in their own created hells. How can he avoid not feeling compassion and the moment the compassion arises, he wants to communicate with them and that this is your own doing. And that we can get out of it. and that there is a stage beyond it. And the life is not what you think it is. Your thinking about the life is what the blind man thinks about the light. The blind man can go on thinking about the light. But he will never be able to reach out to the conclusion. His conclusions are very logical but they will still miss the experiences. Light is an experience. You don't need logic for it. What you need is eyes. Buddha has eyes. And eyes are attained only when you have gone beyond the mind. When you have become the witness of the mind, when you have attained to a higher state than psychology, when you know that you are not your



thoughts, not your body, when you know that you only know, the energy that reflects is capable of seeing that you are a pure seeing. Buddha was asked, Who are you? He was such a beautiful man. And the Buddha would have conferred such grace to him. And that many times he was asked: Who are you? He looked like an emperor or a God who has come from the heaven. And he lived like a beggar. Again and again he is asked: Who are you? And the man who was asking was a great scholar. He asked: Are you from the world of Gods? Are you a God? Buddha said no. Then are you a Gandarva? Gandarvas are the musicians of the God. Buddha has set music around him; the music of silence; the sound of no sound; one hand clapping.

Osho's understanding of Buddha seemingly contributes the middle path easier to decipher the meaning. Osho's take on Buddha's eight fold paths aids the meaning of the spirituality to be annexed with the material values. Only the annexation of the both values could suppose the meaning-making process that implies the crucial thrust of this thesis. Valorization of the either or other aspects would not do justice to the whole spectrum.

Similarly Gandhi is also one of the scholars who built the similar sort of middle path that would join the elements of both spiritualism and materialism:

Gandhi was one of the scholars who said that the Buddha was the greatest teacher of non-violence and that he taught us to defy appearances and trust in the final triumph of Truth and Love. Albert Schweitzer once said that the Gandhi continues what the Buddha began. In the Buddha the spirit of love sets itself the task of creating different spiritual conditions in the world; in Gandhi it undertakes to transform all worldly conditions. Raghavan Iyer concurs: Gandhi was in fact, following in the footsteps of the Buddha in showing the connection between the service of suffering humanity and the processes of

self-purification; and even more emphatically he speaks of Gandhi's profound reinterpretation of Hindu values in the light of the message of the Buddha. Observing that Gandhi establishes a middle path between Jain Individualism and the Vedantist dissolution of the individual, Margaret Chattarjee maintains that Gandhi's position most closely resembles Mahayana Buddhism. Chattarjee claims that one of the Gandhi's prayers has Buddhist overtones: "The goal of the devotee is seen as the relief of the suffering humanity, not as personal release from bondage. The mood expressed is much closer to the Bodhisatwa than to the archal end" (Lama 4).

Therefore Buddhist and Gandhist points would confer the middle path that would be relevant to sort out the ongoing clash between the materialistic and spiritualistic values. In doing so, the tenants of both schools of thoughts should be made flexible. The flexibility would more or less contribute the middle path seemingly productive and empirical. Otherwise there would the chance of monotonous and parrot-learner tendency to view the life and universe as a whole. This research is contributing this kind of message at all.

## Works Cited

- Anderson, Linda *Autobiography: The New Critical Idiom*. Rutledge, 2001.
- Bender, Frederic I. "Marx, Materialism and the Limits of Philosophy." *Studies in Soviet Thought*, vol. 25, no. 2 1983, pp. 79-100.
- Brand, J.C.D. "The Discovery of the Raman Effect: Notes and Effects." *Royal Society of London*, vol. 43, no. 1 1989, pp.1-23.
- Gusdorf, George. *Autobiographical Essays* Princeton University Press, 1980.
- Krishnamurti J. K.: <https://jkrishnamurti.com>
- Lama, Dalai "Gandhi and Mahayana Buddhism." *Journal of Oriental Studies*, vol.35, no. 2, 1996, pp.1-4. JSTOR,[www.jstor.org/stable/278450](http://www.jstor.org/stable/278450)
- Maharshi, Ramana. *Who am I?*. Createspace Books, 1902.
- Osho.A Buddha will be Misunderstood. Video, 19 min .2009
- Pillai, Sivaprakasam. "Reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi ." *Greatmaster Studies*, vol.5, no. 3 1923, pp. 1-2
- Ramana Maharshi Quotes: <https://www.brainyquote.com>
- Rupert, Gethin. "Review of Gombrich, Richard F." *What the Buddha Thought*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2012, pp. 1-15. H-NET REVIEWS,[www.j-net.org/reviews/31586](http://www.j-net.org/reviews/31586)
- Rao, P.Nagraja "*The Philosophy of A.N. Whitehead in the Light of Advaita Vedanta of Sankara*". Sri Venkateshwara University, 1966.
- Sharma, Arvind "*Predetermination and Free Will in the Teaching of RamanaMaharshi*"vol.20, no.4, 1984, pp. 615-626 . JSTOR, [www.jstor.com/stable/20006104](http://www.jstor.com/stable/20006104)