

## More to Practice than Practice

Dear Ram,

Hello my name is Jackson Smith and I've been exploring your website I was reading your interview regarding Ramana Maharshi and as I was reading you talked about how Ramana polished his mind. I was just wondering what spiritual practice you would recommend. The reason I ask is I read a book about Ramana called "Day by Day with Bhagavan" and he told a woman to repeat over and over again "I" that repetition would eventually take her to who she really was. Is this a practice you would recommend. I know that probably is a tough question to answer since you don't know me or where I'm at. I guess I'm asking is the repetition of any name of God a good one. If not what would you suggest.

You mentioned about folks not being ready for enlightenment what would you suggest to someone to get themselves ready?

Thank you for your website I really am enjoying it.

Hi Jackson,

Sorry for the delay responding to your email. Since the publication of my most recent book I have been absolutely swamped with emails, phone calls, etc. and I have barely been able to keep up.

You really need to tell me more about what practice you do now. The practices one takes up depend on one's eligibility. And the kind of practice that Ramana suggested here is only for very advanced people. Even then I fail to see how repetition of the word 'I' would be of much benefit in so far as an advanced seeker would already know that there was only one 'I' and that it was whole and complete and limitless and that it was the nature of the seeker. And if there was another 'I'...let's call it an ego...the nature of the ego would also be known. It would be known to be limited, inadequate and incomplete. Discriminating in favor of the true 'I' and against the false 'I' is an excellent practice if that means that all the thoughts and feelings that arise in association with the false 'I' are rejected. By rejected I mean that you do not act on them and thereby reduce the vasana load. This is the most powerful and direct means of purification.

This presupposes that you run your life with the karma yoga attitude which is the most basic purifier without which no subtle technique will work.

I suggest that you get my book, How to Attain Enlightenment and read it very slowly and carefully, signing on to the logic as it unfolds. In this way you will see what spiritual practice is and how it fits into self inquiry. It explains all the basic methods of purification in depth. Many people try to practice self inquiry without a prepared mind and they always fail so it is

important to know how to purify the mind and to have your practice supported by the appropriate lifestyle. If you tell me more about your situation in the world and the practice you are doing now, etc. I will have a better picture and perhaps be able to give better advice. The repetition of the name of God is good if you contemplate on the meaning of the name but there is no magical power in the name of God that will set you free. It may produce some kind of mystical experiences in the beginning but it will have no long lasting value unless you understand the meaning of the name.

James

Dear Ram,

Thank you so much for your response. Thank you for your help. My situation is I'm married with two small children. I'm a Christian minister in a very traditional branch of Christianity. But I was very fortunate to have two wonderful parents that are very open to spiritual things. They were into Edgar Cayce "The Sleeping Prophet". This opened the door for other spiritual teachings such as Bhagavan Sri Maharshi. I've been to the AHAM center in North Carolina for weekend retreats, but I've never taken any of their extended training.

My practice is one meditation period in the morning. I try to do something called centering prayer which is to take a sacred word and repeat the word whenever thoughts or feelings distract you. I was also trying to repeat "I" throughout the day. I've just started using an affirmation I say it forty times and am trying to do that for forty days. I also read about a prayer method given by Robert Adams who wrote "Silence of the Heart". The method was to inhale and say I then exhale and say Am. I was doing this but then started to just say "I". I've never really stuck with a practice for very long I start but then move on to something else.

Ram: I think you do not stick with a particular practice because you are expecting it to deliver a result that is not quickly forthcoming. It is natural to want to do something when you do not know who you are, but there is a lot more to practice than practice. I mean that how karma, action, fits into the quest for enlightenment needs to be carefully understood. I suggest that you continue your practices, whatever they are, and that you read my book, How to Attain Enlightenment. Please read it very carefully and see if you can sign on to the logic at each step. Don't skip to the section on practice immediately. It comes in the middle of the book because a great deal of knowledge needs to be assimilated before your practice will bear fruit. Then if you have more questions feel free to write me.

Jackson: I do enjoy reading, I've read several good books on spiritual growth. I would really like to find a practice and stick with it until I come to that place where it is realized that no practice is necessary because ALL is that. I can say that in my head but let me get bad service at a restaurant or a flat tire and I am anything but One.

Ram: The best practice is the practice of knowledge and you can find out what that means and how to practice it in my book. It is the direct means of enlightenment. You can order the book from me, from the Publisher, Sentient Publications, Amazon or your local bookstore.

Thanks again for letting me write to you. If ever you'd like to call to chat you can call collect if you would like to. Again I want to say thanks, thanks for your awesome website, thanks for your willingness to help.

Sincerely  
Jackson

You are welcome, Jackson. Keep in touch.