I am deeply indebted to my teacher and friend Robert Adams, and dedicate this website in his memory.

Despite what some people have claimed, Robert never appointed a successor. He often said, "What is the point?"

Ramana, the great teacher who brought Robert to full understanding, did not choose any successors and neither did Robert. I do know that Robert told two people, that if they wanted to, they could start a satsang. One was me, when I was in Santa Monica, before I moved to San Fernando (Death) Valley, and the other was his wife, Nicole in Sedona.
Ramana and Robert both knew that those who have awakened didn’t need anything from him, including authorization, an imperial seal, or even a stick of chewing gum.

What I offer on this site is my own understanding of Robert’s teachings, as well as some stories about my eight year relationship with him. Robert changed me and brought me to an awakening from the sickness that is this world.

And with this website I hope to help others in the way that Robert helped me. This is what this site is about.

I failed to find freedom with a dozen other teachers and paths, including Zen; but through Robert, I finally came home. And after coming home, there is no need for approval or a stamp of authenticity. One is done, finished.

If we were to judge attainment based on an analogy, if there were a hundred story building, Robert’s attainment would be the hundredth story.

He was and is so far greater than I, that comparison is not impossible. On that same scale, I would be a ten-story attainer. What I say in 50 words he’d summarize in five. Unlike Nisargadatta, whose every phrase was like a hammer, every sentence Robert spoke was like a cold glass of water on a hot day, soothing and refreshing.

No claim that it takes ten or thirty years to be around someone like Robert to get free or to understand what he had to say, is credible. If one were spiritually mature, only ten minutes in his presence would be enough to awaken. I am embarrassed that it took me six years. It shows how poorly prepared I was to receive his teachings even after 20 years of searching before I found him.

Robert always said that once you are awake, that’s it, you are always awake. But, as with the pigs in Animal Farm, some are more awake than others.
Ramana himself made the distinction between those who have awakened and those who have matured in it for three “higher” levels. Supposedly he had a second and profound awakening. I know nothing of these levels or how they would be applied to a Self that has no characteristics. But if anyone were a level seven, it was Robert.

I cannot repeat often enough, Robert was a spiritual teacher of the highest rank and order. No one else touched him, in my opinion.
In this work I've endeavored to capture a bit of the taste of 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 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 Mahasamadhi. 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.
The Teaching Should Always Be Free

I am deeply indebted to my teacher Robert Adams and dedicate this website to his memory.

Everything I, as well as many others, have done with respect to Robert’s Satsang talks and transcripts follows the personal direction we received from Robert, and in keeping with my own teacher’s tradition, I offer the same personal direction to my students that Robert gave to his on June 9, 1991:

“These transcripts [and audio and video files]... are for your own personal use and you can share them with your friends.”

Robert also said:

“The fellow who prints them up, went to a lot of trouble so he was charging for them so I told him not to do that. I think the way we should do it is when we get some of these lessons some of us should make five or ten copies each and hand them out to each other. That would be the best way, so Ed doesn’t have to make two-hundred copies by himself.

Fortunately, now that we have the Internet, there is no need to laboriously print and distribute copies, so please download and share with whomever you wish.

~ Ed Muzika
Maybe once a month, at Satsang, Robert would have Mary Skene read aloud one of Robert’s own writings. He would ask Mary to read ‘the Jnani’ or ‘The Jnani Oath’. ‘Jnani’ is a title given to an Advaita Master, one who has obtained 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.

The following is the version Mary would read at Satsang, which differs slightly from the version published in Silence of the Heart as ‘Confessions of a Jnani’. This is from the June 27, 1991 Satsang.

For a Jnani who has realized the identity of his inner being with the infinite Brahman.
There is no rebirth, no migration, not even liberation.
For he is already liberated.

He is firmly established in an experience of absolute existence, knowledge, bliss, the sat-chit-ananda atman.
The continued existence of the world and of his own body appears to the Jnani only as an illusion.
The appearance of which he cannot remove, but which cannot further deceive him until the time when after the decease of the body he wanders not forth but remains where he is and what he is and eternally was.
The first principle of all beings and things.
The original eternal pure free Brahman.
While living and even when the body falls dead
the Jnani rests in his own essential nature.
His own swarupa that is all full, all pure,
timeless, consciousness and bliss.

The following assertions made by a Jnani
constitute his own deepest convictions and experience.

I am infinite, imperishable, self-luminous, self-existent,
I am beginning-less, endless, decay-less, birthless, deathless.
Never was I born, I am ever free, perfect, independent, I alone am.
I pervade the entire universe. I am all permeating and interpenetrating.
I am supreme peace and freedom absolute.

A Jnani lives forever.
He has attained life everlasting.
Cravings torture him not.
Sins stain him not.
Birth and death touch him not.
He is free from all cravings and longings.
He ever rests in his own sat-chit-ananda swarupa.
He sees the one infinite Self in all,
and all in the infinite Self which is his being.
He remains forever as the infinite Self of consciousness and delight.
Satsang with Robert

On the April 26, 1992 Satsang, Robert started off stating "Chanters you are not."

He and I loved Satsang, but it was difficult to get our group to chant. Part of it was we had no musicians playing instruments, but had only tapes from various sources such as Self-Realization Fellowship or old Muktananda tapes. Robert especially loved Yogananda’s “Oh God Beautiful,” which strangely enough, was the first chant I ever learned. Both he and I started off our official spiritual careers through SRF.

Robert then goes on to explain why we should chant. He says Jnana—knowledge—without Bhakta, is dry knowledge. He says there are many Jnanis who he called “Cold Fish” at times as they had no Bhakta. He said you had to have love or your wisdom is dry and you are dry. He says if you practice chanting you will notice a dramatic change.

He even tells the story of one chap who would only observe Satsang, and who felt chanting was ridiculous. I don’t remember whether this was at Ramana Ashram or elsewhere. He did this abstract observing week after week and felt superior to the chanters, but also he was not attaining freedom.

Robert repeatedly suggested that the guy do chant, and he did one day. According to Robert, he soon attained freedom.

You will see the difference for yourself even if you just chant along with a tape, or even more dramatically, if you chant at Satsang. Chanting soothes the mind and you automatically go within.

Robert also talks about taking a walk every morning. His walks always led to a small park a few blocks away. He always took his dog, Dimitri. As he said, and as I saw him do, Dimitri walked him not the other way around. Indeed, that is what it looked like; he trailed behind Dimitri with a very slack collar. This is how he was with some of his students too. They would take him by the hand to show him something, and he was like a two-year old following his mother or father.
It was in this park that he met his first students in the late 1980s, and where I now take people who want to know of his being and teachings.

This Satsang had the format of so many others: chanting, his talk, a reading from the Ashtavakra Gita by me, more chanting, Darshan and then food. He used to joke that no one would come without the cookies.

On Sundays, the food layout could be quite elaborate, with hot dishes and various juices. The Pershad family would bring various Indian foods and sweets. I would bring my own favorite, chocolate chip cookies.

Robert would not eat anything unless everyone else was served first. Usually Mary, Kerima or I would prepare his plate, but he would not eat until everyone else ate.

While people were loading up their plates (or cookies on a slow Thursday night), we would have Darshan, consisting of going up to the guru, prostrating in Indian style, then talking to him about whatever. Often people would bring him gifts, such as food, some potion meant to treat his Parkinson’s Disease, or a medicinal magnet or some such to hang around his neck, wrist, knee, etc. Robert indulged everyone.

One time, as was his way, he did the entire Satsang with a powerful medicinal magnet under his shirt. When someone brought him his plate of food during Darshan, as usual, he put the plate aside. However, this time he took a fork and stuck it to his chest, and all during the rest of Satsang, he had the fork glued to his chest to the great delight and laughter of the group.

Unfortunately, most of the tapes available on the Internet (now mp3’s) were recorded by me. When anything happened except Robert talking, I turned the tape recorder off so that I was sure there was enough tape to catch all of his words. Therefore, most of the chanting parts of Satsang are missing as are Mary or my own recitations of the Ashtavakra Gita or Robert’s own The Jnani Oath (also called Confessions of the Jnani) found elsewhere on this website.

Sometimes during this digital mastering, I included some of the chanting, or my recitation. I stated before, that Robert’s Satsangs were an entirety and that hearing his talks alone was maybe 50% of the overall impact of Satsang. This is far different from Balsekar for example, where the tapes are sometimes better than the Satsang itself.
As you can hear on many of the tapes, on Sundays the birds were always talking to us. It was a very sweet and wonderful experience which I dearly miss. I was so fortunate to be with Robert and I am afraid my spiritual thickness at the time prevented me form truly appreciating how extraordinary Robert and his Satsang was.

The Satsang referenced above was recorded, transcribed, edited, introduced and manufactured by Edward Muzika, Ph.D., The Jnana Marga Society. ©No-Self Press, 1992
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 (allegedly — Some Baba monks doubt this), 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.

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 that 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 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 out 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, Roberts’ 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 to 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.

Ramana Maharshi

Ramana Maharshi, Robert Adams' teacher, 1947-1950. For further information, go to the Ramana Ashram website. This site has many of the Maharshi's books and photos for free download. http://www.arunachala-ramana.org/
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 was 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 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 1994. 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 the 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.

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 photo on the left 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 — 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 workshops.

As Robert said many times, the best teachers are unknown. They avoid having 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.

For more about Robert: Robert and I
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 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’ once 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 of his 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 myself 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 the cozy post of being Robert’s voice, and this 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 slurried 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 effect 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 of 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 Cucamunga, 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.

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-known 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 egos. 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.

Taken from It Is Not Real - Dancing with God
Dimitri

Robert had a very special relationship with his dog, Dimitri, a little Lhasa Apso. 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 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 first 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 never 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,

* The Lhasa Apso breed originated in Tibet. It was bred as an interior sentinel in the Buddhist monasteries, who alerted the monks to any intruders who entered. Lhasa is the capital city of Tibet and apso is a word in the Tibetan language meaning "bearded," so Lhasa Apso simply means "long-haired Tibetan dog."
Robert on Ramana Maharshi

When I was 18 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 a bullock cart 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 them on 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.

I have been to many teachers, many saints, many sages. I was with Nisargadatta, Ananda Mai Ma, Papa Ram Dass, Neem Karoli Baba and many others, but never did I meet anyone who exuded such compassion, such love, such bliss as Ramana Maharshi. There were about 30 people in the room. He looked at me and asked me if I’d eaten breakfast. I said, ”No.” He spoke some Tamil to the attendant and the attendant came back with two giant leaves, one with fruit and one with some porridge with pepper. After I consumed the food, I just lied down on the floor. I was very tired.

It was time for his usual walk. He had arthritis in the legs and could hardly walk at that time. His attendants helped him to get up and he walked out the door. When he was outside he said something to his attendants, and his attendants motioned for me to come. He guided me to a little shack that I was going to
use while I might stay there. He came inside with me, and I bet you think we spoke about profound subjects. On the contrary, he was a natural man. He was the self of the universe. He asked me how my trip was, where I was from, what made me come here. Then he said I should rest so I laid down on the cot and he left.

I was awakened about 5 o’clock. It was Ramana again. He came by himself and he brought me food. Can you imagine that? We spoke briefly, I ate and I slept. The next morning I went into the hall. After the morning chanting there was breakfast, and everybody sat around just watching Ramana, and he’d go through his routine. He would go through the mail and read it out loud, talk to some of his devotees, and I just observed everything. His composure never changed. Never did I see such compassion, such love.

Then people started to come over to him asking him questions. His replies were very succinct. They weren’t like you read in a book. Apparently, what you read in a book is his reply to three or four people. They condense it all into one question and answer. But people usually asked a question or made a statement. If he agreed he would nod or say, "Yes. That’s it." If he didn’t, he would offer an explanation in maybe one or two sentences.

There were foreigners at the ashram when I was there, Muslims, Catholic priests, people from all races and all nationalities. The devotees would sit around and say nothing, but the seekers and disciples would ask questions. When I was there a week or so, two of his disciples were sort of jokingly arguing with him about something in Tamil. I asked the interpreter what they were talking about. He said Ramana’s couch is covered with lice, and he refuses to let us kill them. They climb over his body and his legs and he doesn’t care. He even feeds them. We want to exterminate the couch, but he won’t let us. So the next day they tricked him. When he went outside for his morning walk, the sprayed his couch with DDT. When he came back he smelled the couch, he smiled and jokingly said, “Someone has tricked me.” He never got angry, never got mad. I don’t think he knew what the words meant.

A couple of weeks later 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. 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 50 rupees to it," which they did, and she left. This was his nature. He never saw anything wrong. He never took anyone out of his love. No matter what they did, who they were, where their ego was, he understood. He loved everyone just the same.

We're also celebrating the birth of Jesus this month. He was never born this month, but we're celebrating it anyway. Ramana used to quote from the scriptures. Jesus and Ramana said basically the same things. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." Ramana said, "The self is within you. Search for it and find it and awaken." Jesus said, "Son, I am with you always and all that I have is yours." Ramana said, "I can never leave you. I am always with you." His compassion never left him.

Six months prior to his leaving his body, I went to Bangelor to see Papa Ram Dass. I was informed that he left his body. I went back to Tiruvannamalai. But the crowds had already started to come, thousands and thousands of people. So I climbed the hill and went into one of the caves. Stayed there for five days. When I came down the crowds were disbursed. He had already been interned. I inquired of his devotee who saw him last, "What were the last words he spoke?" The devotee said, "While he was leaving his body a peacock flew on top of the hall and started screeching, and Ramana remarked to his devotee, "Has anyone fed the peacock yet?" and those were the last words he spoke.

Now, let's talk about you. Think of the problems you believe you have. Think of the nonsense that you go on with everyday. Think how furious you become, how you always want to stick up for your rights, as if you had any. The problem is you think. If you would only stop thinking. You say, "How can I function if I stop thinking?" Very well, thank you! As a matter of fact you would function much better than you do now, for you will always be taken care of. The universe loves you. It will always supply you with your needs. Forget about other people, what they do, what they don't do. Do not listen to malicious gossip. Be yourself. Understand who you really are. You are the absolute reality, unconditioned consciousness. Work from that standpoint. Do not work from your problems. Do not get lost in meaningless gossip. Understand your true reality. Be yourself.

What Ramana taught was not new. Ramana simply taught the Upanishads. "Who am I" has been around since time immemorial. If a teacher always tells you they have something new to teach you, be careful, because there's nothing new.
under the sun. Ramana simply revised the "Who am I" philosophy and made it simple for people in the 20th Century. But what did he teach? He simply taught that you are not the body-mind principle. He simply taught that if you have a problem, do not feel sorry for yourself, do not go to psychiatrists, do not condemn yourself, simply ask yourself, "To whom does this problem come?" And of course the answer will be, "The problem comes to me." Hold onto the me. Follow the me to the source, the substratum of all existence.

How do you do that? How do you hold onto me? How do you hold onto I? By simply asking yourself, "Who am I? What am I?" the same thing, "What am I?" Asking yourself again and again, "Who am I?" Forget about time. Forget about space. Forget everything. Keep yourself from thinking. When the thoughts come, ask yourself, "To whom comes the thoughts?" Again, "They come to me." Hold onto the me. "I think these thoughts. Well then, who am I? Who thinks these thoughts? Who am I?"

An easier way to do this I have found is to simply say to yourself, "I - I, I - I," and you will notice as you do this that the I, I goes deeper, deeper, deeper within you into your heart center, right to the source. For westerners I have found that saying "I - I" seems to be more helpful than "Who am I?" Again, do not look at time. Do not ask yourself, "When is something going to happen?"

A devotee went to Ramana and said, "I've been with you for 25 years, doing Who am I, and nothing has happened yet, so Ramana said, "Try it another 25 and see what happens." Forget about time. Forget when something is going to happen. Even if nothing happens in this life, you are ahead of the game, for if you've been sincere, and if you've really been working on yourself, you will come back to an environment that is conducive for your realization, and at that time you may have realization when you're about 12 or 13 years old, because you've earned it. But if you're like most people and go around minding everybody's business and saying, "I have no time to do this. I've tried it for two hours and it doesn't work," then you keep coming back again, and again, going through all kinds of experiences, until one day, maybe 10,000 years from now you may actually get it and start working on yourself diligently; what you should be doing now.

What do you do with yourself all day long? Think. From the moment you get out of bed, how does your day go? Do you think of God at all? Do you practice or do you think about your affairs and your body? Be honest with yourself. If you're not making any headway in spiritual life, it's because you're not putting
anything into it. You have to realize that whatever you see in the world is only a reflection of yourself. If people are mean to you, if they abuse you, it is because you're seeing yourself as those people. In other words, you've got those qualities.

I recall, going back to the story of Ramana and the German lady, when he gave her back her donation plus some more rupees, the following afternoon a devotee asked him, "Ramana, why did you do that?" and Ramana explained: "When she gave us a donation, to whom do you think she gave it to? She gave it to herself, for there's only one self. When she took it back, she took it away from herself. When she goes back to Germany I'm sure she'll have financial problems until she learns that anything you give is only giving to yourself, for there's not two or three or four selves, there's only one self," and this includes everything you do in your life, the way you look at another person. You're simply seeing yourself.

This is why the only thing I can do for you is to love you, because I love myself and you are myself. When I say I love myself, I am not referring to Robert. When I use the word self I am referring to infinity, to omnipresence. It includes everything in this universe. So when I love myself I am obviously loving everyone and everything that exists. I also realize that everything that exists is a projection of my own mind, so I do not identify with the images. I identify with the source, with consciousness, with absolute reality, with ultimate oneness, with Nirvana, with emptiness. While I'm talking to you, I realize I'm talking to myself because again there is only one self. If you can only remember that in your dealings with others, whichever way you deal with anyone else, you're doing it to yourself. Can you see now why a person like Ramana could never hate anyone or be angry, it wasn't in his nature.

How do you react to life? When a person displeases you, what do you do? Curse him or her, become angry or violent? How do you handle it? How do you react? Be honest with yourself. It's the only way. Start from where you are. No human being is perfect. We all make mistakes. Do not feel sorry for yourself, but start from where you are. Where are you? You are consciousness. This is your true nature. Learn to love everything. Learn to see only the good. Realize there's a reason for everything. If a person displeases you, simply look the other way and forget it. Learn to stop your mind from thinking, and you do this by immediately catching yourself when you react to a condition, and inquiring within yourself, "Who is becoming angry? Who feels out of sorts? I do? I." Realize you're dealing with the personal I, and all the anger, all the frustration, all the
karma, all the samskaras are all attached to that personal I. Consequently, when you get rid of the personal I, everything else will go with it. So don’t try to solve your problems. Do not try to become a better person. Do not try to run away from your life. Simply see who it is who is running, who it is who needs to be a better person? Who has all these problems? I, I, always I. Hold onto that I with all of your might, but do not concentrate on the I. You concentrate on the source which is consciousness, God.

And everybody asks me over and over again, and I keep telling you. They ask me, “How do I hold onto the I?” By asking, “Who am I?” or just saying, “I-I, I-I, I-I-I.” Automatically you will notice the I going deeper, and deeper, and deeper and deeper within your heart, and one day you will become free. But you’re already free. Why not wake up right now? Why go through anything? Everybody is different.

If this appears too difficult for you, if vichara appears hard, then your next best bet is to surrender completely to God. Surrender everything, your problems, your ego, your body, your mind, your work, your world. Say, “Here, God, take it, I want no more of this. I am yours. Do with me as you will. Thy will be done.” This means you no longer have anything to worry about. If you truly surrender, you will immediately become radiantly happy, for you have given your ego to God. And what’s left is God. You have no body. You have no mind. You have no work. You have no problems. It has been your ego all the time fooling you, making you believe that something is wrong, and you’ve been playing hide and seek, trying to find God here, there and everywhere, when all the time God was within yourself as yourself.

Begin to see the truth. Begin to stand up tall. Become fearless. Become strong. Leave the world alone. It’ll take care of itself. There is a mysterious power that guides the world to its right destiny. It doesn’t need any help from you. If you’re meant to do certain work in the world, it will be done but you have nothing to do with that. It doesn’t mean that you have to leave your job, or go sit in a cave, or give up your life. Wherever you are right now is where you’re supposed to be. Just feel, “I am not the doer” and you’re work will go on. Do not be attached to your work, Do not react to any situation or any condition. Be yourself. Focus your attention on consciousness, and your body will go on doing whatever it came here to do. Everything is preordained. Even when I raise my finger like this it is preordained. Do not be egotistical to believe that you have any power over everybody or anybody or that you are the doer. It’s a
privilege to have been born on this earth, and the reason you have been born is to find your real self. Go for it, do it, and become free.

I don’t know why I talk so much. It doesn’t do you any good. I always want to sit in silence, but sometimes we have some new people and they do not understand the silence yet, so I keep on chatting. I wonder if I know what I’m talking about. It doesn’t matter anyway. Any questions?

S: What is the relationship between effort and realization, since only the ego is doing this effort. How can the ego doing this effort...

R: What you call effort has been preordained.

S: Self enquiry is the ego doing effort?

R: Self-enquiry is the ego trying to find itself as the self, so the effort is brought on through your karma so that you may become self-realized. It is a privilege to have been able to find in this life the method of self-enquiry. Therefore, it’s been predestined that you should make the effort to find yourself.

S: Since God or realization is something that really is like an effortless presence, how could it be...

R: When you get on the path correctly, after awhile it becomes effortless. In the beginning there seems to be a little effort you have to take, because you’re breaking away from your old patterns, and as you continue it becomes effortless, easier and easier. It becomes a pleasure. It becomes a joy and you’re always doing it effortlessly, so the effort is only the beginning stages. It’s not really effort, but when you break into a new habit, the old wants to still stay there and take over. So you still have to push it out as you inquire, “To whom does it come? Who feels miserable?” And as you keep practicing and practicing it becomes effortless, and pretty soon you do not have to do anything. It just happens by itself. You become happier and happier, more peaceful, and your life becomes a joy to others and to yourself.

S: I’m confusing the false I with the true I.

R: There is only one I, but for the sake of conversation we say there is a personal I which is your ego. The only confusion is your identifying with the
personal I instead of the real I. The real I is absolute reality, pure intelligence, ParaBrahmin, satchitananda. That is the real I, and you have a choice. "With whom am I going to identify with?" Identify with yourself, with consciousness, and there will be no question of two I's. But again, when you begin, it is your ego as I that you’re working with. "Who am I?" means the ego. Who is this ego? Where did it come from? Who gave it birth? Why does it exist? And then you will realize, "Why I gave it birth by believing in it. I created my ego myself. I did all this." Then it begins to change. The personal I becomes weaker and consciousness becomes stronger until the personal I disappears altogether and you become free. So do not keep identifying with the personal I. Hold onto it, follow it by asking, "What is I? Who am I?"

All levels and all teachings are an emanation of the mind, for there has to be someone to experience those levels. Vichara or self-enquiry goes right to the heart of the matter. It bypasses every system, negates every system, and awakens you immediately. The mind, as "I," gives you the problem. When the mind, as "I," goes, everything else goes with it, all of your past teachings, the world, the universe, God, reincarnation, karma. You become free of the whole mess and you awaken.

So again, every system is a projection of the mind. You have to be present to do the work, whereas in this teaching we get rid of the you that does the work. So if the you is gone, there’s no work to be done. In other words, who has to meditate? I do. There has to be somebody present for you to meditate. Instead of meditating, ask yourself, "Who meditates?" and the answer will be, "I do." Then who am I? And the lights will come on and you’ll be free. Once the I goes there is nobody left to do any spiritual work, for you become consciousness. You become absolute reality, omnipresent, infinite.

S: So you’re saying these are progressive systems?

R: These are progressive systems, and I suppose most people need these things. They’re good. There’s nothing wrong with these things, but the direct path is vichara. You bypass everything.

S: In the case of the man who spent 25 years with Ramana, who isn’t understanding, is he not going through stages?
R: On the contrary, he is just there. He’s at peace with himself, and when the time is right for him, he’ll awaken. There are no stages to go through as long as he’s present.

S: That brings up this question then. If someone comes in here and they never heard this teaching before and they start practicing, the first thing they have to do is to recognize that they have a mind and to recognize the storm within. And when they recognize that, then they have a herd of horses within, a stampede. So for a while, for atma vichara and "Who am I?" to work, they have to slow down that stampede by working through a system. So that’s a progressive stage in a way, because there are emotions involved and feelings and sensations that come up. And all of this, for a person to cut through this and to evolve, they must work on those levels.

R: How do you know?

S: Because I’ve been through it.

R: Does that mean everybody goes through it?

S: Well, looking at the average human being, I would say absolutely.

R: There are some people who just awaken. There are some people who go through stages. There are some people who do a lot of work. There are some people who practice meditation and mantras all day long. There are some people who do nothing and they awaken.

S: Yes, but most people like that are very few like Ramana. Ramana was an exception.

R: Well, then learn how to do it and become like Ramana. Practice what Ramana practiced, and you too can be an exception. Why should you identify with the other? Identify with Ramana’s practice. He said the same thing. Why go through the trouble to go through yoga practices? You’ll come back life after life after life and keep practicing yoga. Find out who’s practicing and become free.

Doesn’t that sound reasonable? All you have to do is to find out who’s practicing. Who needs to do all these things? I do. Well, who am I? Where did I come from? I-I. Get rid of that I and you’re home free.
S: What about the identification with the body. I’m confusing the body with thought.

R: What about it?

S: Identification. When there's pain in the body, you're just involved in the pain, not the reality.

R: The reality is not the pain. The body is in pain, but you are not the body. So if you stick to your true self, you will hardly feel the pain. Let the body take care of itself. Do not concern yourself with the body. The body will still eat, it will still go to the bathroom, it will still take a shower, it will still take care of itself, but you have absolutely nothing to do with it. You are not the body, so why identify with the pain. Identify with consciousness, with the self, and then see what happens.

This is why when people like Ramana and Ramakrishna were dying, especially Ramakrishna, he literally wasted away, and they used to tell him the same way they did Ramana, "Master; heal yourself. We have seen you heal others. Heal yourself." And the answer would always be the same, "You foolish people, what do you see? Who sees a sick body? There is nobody to be sick. What are you looking at? Change your identification. See the truth."

That's why Jesus was able to say, "I am with you always, even unto the end the world," for he realized he was consciousness, not the body, not what appears to be real. Everything that most of you are looking at right now is an appearance. It is not the truth. There is another world of reality where there is only perfection, love, bliss, joy. With whom are you identifying? The choice is yours.

S: The I seems to be such a deeply ingrained habit. It seems like the primary addiction. It seems like all other addictions come out of the addiction of I. The ego addiction is the primary addiction. That’s the problem is that it’s so addictive.

R: Indeed. Correct. 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.
S: It’s funny that sometimes I feel a little loosened up, abiding, and other times it’s all forgotten and it’s back to the ego again.

R: That’s how it appears to work, but as you continue practicing and practicing and practicing, the day will come when you’re home free. That’s why I said, do not look at time, even if it takes more than a lifetime. You’re still ahead of the person going bowling.

S: Even when you see the thoughts moving and you see how identified you are, it’s almost like the ego enjoys this. It enjoys resisting the peace, silence and intelligence. It’s so used to this that it seems to like its own suffering.

R: Are you talking from the standpoint of the ego or the self?

S: From the ego.

R: So ask yourself, "Who’s going through all this? Who’s suffering? To whom does it come?" Identify with the source, not with the ego. Do not go into all the details of what the ego does. Go into the details of what the self is, pure intelligence, absolute awareness, satchitananda, ParaBrahmin. Speak of those things, and let the ego take care of itself.

S: The ego doesn’t seem to want all that.

R: No, you don’t want all that because you refuse to identify with those higher things. You keep talking about the ego over and over again as if it were a power. It doesn’t even exist. It’s a non-entity.

S: I guess I’m possessed.

R: You’re possessed by God, You can never get away from God no matter how hard you try.

S: I’ve been trying with all my might.

R: Maybe that’s the problem. Just observe and watch. Stop trying. Watch your mind in action. Observe your thoughts, become the witness, and then you’ll say, "Ah, look what’s happening to me. Am I that? Of course not. " Then it will become easier for you.
S: It's really embarrassing to watch my mind, because you feel like you should be committed to a mental institution. It's total nonsense, total craziness.

R: Again, to whom is it embarrassing? It's embarrassing to the ego. The ego watches, the ego's embarrassed, and the ego fights back but you do not react to it. Do not react. Watch, observe and ask the question, "To whom does it come?" That's all you've got to do, and everything else will take care of itself.

S: Watching it breaks the identification?

R: Observing.

S: It's funny, when you start to forget to observe, you melt into the identification of it so easily. You melt into the identification with the ego. That's what is wonderful about inquiry, that it breaks it.

R: Don't get caught up in too many details. Make it simple, very simple. The simpler the better.

S: I think part of the problem is, speaking for myself of course, is that I don't believe it will happen. I feel it happens just to a favored few, like Jesus, Buddha or yourself. What's the sense of trying it if it's not going to happen?

R: Well, if you don't feel it's going to happen, what can you do? Go see a movie. You've got to realize you are greater than you think, and you've got the same power within you as everybody else does. It may appear to be asleep, but as you work on yourself, work on yourself, work on yourself, you will awaken it, and one day it will become stronger than you are and take you over completely and you'll be free. But you've got to keep on working on yourself, and stop putting yourself down. That's the worst thing you can do is to put yourself down. That's blasphemy because you're putting God down. Think of yourself as a higher person, love yourself, worship yourself, bow to yourself. You are greater than you think.

S: Robert, at first when you were speaking to Bob, you said to make things simple and follow self-enquiry of "Who am I?", and at the same time you said, "Don't make it like a mantra." If you keep saying "I - I" or "Who am I?, I am me", you get caught in a circular answer and question thing. You said not to make it like a mantra.
R: “Who am I?” is never a mantra. You simply observe yourself, ask yourself the question, “To whom do these things come? To me,” then say “Who am I?” or “I-I,” “I-I.” It’s not a mantra. As you keep doing it to yourself, you will awaken.

S: Even if I do the question and answer, even though I come into a circle of three questions with three answers, and I kept going around and around, it’s not a mantra?

R: No it’s not. But you can ask yourself, "To whom do these things come? To whom do the three questions come?" There has to be a person to experience the three questions. Get rid of that person and you'll be free.

S: Would I be breaking self-inquiry if I got rid of the me with, “To whom to these questions come? They come to me.”

R: Self-inquiry is only for the ego.

S: I’m like Bob then. I’ve got a big ego.

R: Keep practicing. Keep practicing and you'll break it down.

S: Robert, you said, when you ask yourself the question, you don’t answer because when you answer, that just comes from the mind. When you ask, “Who am I?” just rest, don’t question.

Q: Is consciousness observing the self-inquiry?

R: Consciousness is self-contained. It has nothing to do with self-inquiry. Only the ego does.

S: Then why do we have to do self-inquiry?

R: Because you have to use the ego to get rid of the ego.

S: So consciousness is noticing all of the self-inquiry then?

R: It doesn't notice anything. As you practice self-inquiry, your mind will disappear and your true self will come forth all by itself.

S: Isn't our true self here now?
R: Yes, you will awaken to it, but you don't believe it is, so you must practice self-inquiry.

S: How do you trace it to the heart, when you say that with self-inquiry you trace it to the heart?

R: Another term for the heart is consciousness, so the heart is really consciousness. You simply inquire, "Who am I?" It takes care of itself. The I becomes weaker and weaker and disappears.

S: Your attention then should always be focused on the source. When you hold onto the I that's just a way of focusing attention on the source from whence the I arises?

R: Yes, when I say hold onto the I, I mean you're witnessing the I. You're watching where it goes. From whence it came from and where it goes back to.

S: When you say that consciousness or God dwells in you as you, that “as you” is not referring then to the ego?

R: No, it's referring to consciousness.

S: It's redundant really.

R: Yes. Consciousness is your true existence and nothing else. Everything else we talk about, everything else we do is to make you realize that your true nature is consciousness. Then everything becomes redundant, but we have to talk like this because you believe you're human. You believe you're the body. When will you stop believing that?

Time to eat!

S: Robert, if a person believes that they're happy in this alleged consciousness that we all possibly share, I mean your students, is that the same thing? Being in love with nature as being in love with life. Is that about on the same level in your eyes as...

R: All of these things that you're referring to is a projection of your mind. You create your universe, and you create your world, and you create the trees and
the birds and everything else. So get rid of your mind and everything else will go.

S: There won’t be any trees?

R: You’ll be the tree. You’ll be everything you like.

S: So then it’s really the ego that has all the beauty.

R: You can say that, yes. You bring fresh flowers into your room and then they die in a couple of days. So how can that be real ultimately? Everything you fall in love with gets old and dies. So how can you say that’s real? Contact reality and you will always be happy.

O.K., let’s eat.
There are several schools of Advaita. One says you must abide in the self and one day you will realize that all you thought was true, is not. The other school proclaims that the world is illusion and there is nothing to attain, but offers no clue how to get this understanding. You might say one is the practice school and the other, the no-practice school.

The latter group starts with the conclusion, while the former tells you to abide in consciousness and all will be revealed as conclusion. The former says it is not enough to hear it and cogitate upon it, you have to see it directly by abiding in the I.

Ramana talked from the position of liberation but he gave methods to those who needed them.

Nisargadatta talked from the endpoint and had people try to catch up — at least Nisargadatta as portrayed by his editors. Yet, before Nisargadatta awakened, he stated he spent three years absorbed in his sense of beingness as directed by his guru. Hearing Advaita philosophy is not enough.

In his talks, if you listen closely, Robert says all practices, whether self-inquiry or breathing exercises, as well as all philosophical discourses, are meant to still the mind, nothing more, and out of the still mind the Absolute shines forth. He says dive within to find the source of I, of the ego. Then he says there is no source and there is no ego. These kinds of contradictions exist throughout his lectures, but the intent in all is to still your mind. So simple, yet, as Robert says here, “You want to play with the I.”

Both he and Ramana say the quickest way to awakening is self-inquiry, not mindlessly repeating, “Who am I?,” but introverting awareness to find and rest in the Void. The Void is the edge of realization. Abide there and let your Self do the rest.
Nicole Adams' Message of Thanks

The following is the message of thanks left on my answering machine by Nicole Adams on September 3, 1995 after she read my "Guru's Grace," which was my then summary of who and what Robert was to me.

Nicole urges me to publish my understanding and works regarding Robert, however others are publicly suggesting that she is upset over the information I have provided on Robert. I'll let Nicole's own words speak to the truth of these accusations.

Transcript of the audio file below:

Ed,

I got interrupted and this is Nicole. How long did it take you to know Robert?

I have known him in this way forever. I don't think anyone else could define or describe this person like you have done. It is utterly amazing, I could not stop reading!

Utterly amazing!

If everyone could know him like that, then that would be perfect.

Amazing! Don't have to talk anymore, its all on paper. Great work... great um...Ed. Very well done.

Maybe you should publish that. It is amazing!!

And with this I leave you. It took you awhile I guess, but you found him.

O.K., bye, bye.

Nicole Adams recorded telephone message, September 3, 1995
Robert & Kerima

Every month or so we would hold a special Satsang with potluck meals and live entertainment, including music played by his daughter’s boyfriend. These occasions were far less formal than usual and Robert would socialize more than normal. Every Satsang was difficult for Robert because his Parkinson’s made it difficult to talk or move without timing his medications correctly.

Here he is with Kerima, perhaps 1992-93.
It Is Not Real - Robert Adams
From a Collection of Works by Edward Muzika