

**‘Self-Realization Through *self* - Knowing’, by Sankara Bhagavadpada –
is a systematic approach to the question of ‘Who am I?’**

As I am working in the field of Information Technology, I am able to especially appreciate that this book gives me a systematic approach to ‘Who we are’ in ‘reality’ - in a step-by-step manner, though the path of understanding. The book stresses that ‘sufferings of the Jiva’ could lead to understanding of the *self*- this has great parallels in our traditional spiritual works of Narayaniyam, Bhagavad Gita and Bhagavatham. And this comes to the fore only when we have physical/psychological/spiritual sufferings. Also, I could relate to the goals of life: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha stages of our life - through the psychology of Abraham Maslow’s ‘hierarchy of needs’.

The insight that I got from this book - is the question of Sri Ramana Maharishi whose books I have read and re-read many times from the age of 22 onwards and the question of ‘Who am I?’ has been a puzzle for me for over 29 years and this book and some of the retreats that I have attended have given clarity and insights into Ramana Maharshi’s question. The insight that I got from the book is that ignorance about ‘Who I am’ is destroyed by understanding of the clear distinction between ‘Jiva’ and ‘Atma’ and that you don’t need any special spiritual experiences other than the reality itself.

I didn’t read the book as I normally do - to read it continuously - but I have given breaks (for days/weeks) to get that understanding fully. Also, the insight that Self-Realization calls for continuous sadhana through Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana and by the abidance in the ‘Self’, is rightly put before us, or else the twins of maya, namely, ‘raaga’ (likes) and ‘dvesha’ (dislikes), are just waiting to trample on our Atma and blind us.

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