



Reflections

April May June
2010

Society of Abidance in Truth

Invocation

*As for ourselves, we have neither ignorance
nor knowledge Our Guru has made us realize
what we really are.*

Jnanadeva: Amritanubhava, 8:1

*No word that can describe us has yet come
into existence. No sight that is able to see us is
possible.*

Jnanadeva: Amritanubhava, 8:5

*God, Himself, becomes the devotee. The
destination becomes the path, and the entire
universe becomes one solitude.*

Jnanadeva: Amritanubhava, 9:35

*Now, God should worship God with God
in the form of any kind of offering.*

Jnanadeva: Amritanubhava, 9:41

*This is the wonderful secret of natural
devotion. This is the place where meditation and
knowledge merge themselves.*

Jnanadeva: Amritanubhava, 9:61

Contents

Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana From <i>Day by Day with Bhagavan</i>	1
From <i>The Ribhu Gita</i> Verses 36-41	4
From <i>Yoga Vasishtha</i>	17
Temple Archives	18
Our Hindu Heritage	48
Announcements	49
Upcoming Special Events	50

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The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From *Day by Day With Bhagavan*)

October 18, 1946

This afternoon, a visitor from Shimoga asked Bhagavan: How to still the tossing mind? Bhagavan replied: Who asks this question? Is it the mind or you? The visitor said: The mind.

Bhagavan: If you see what this mind is, it will be stilled.

Visitor: How to see what the mind is?

Bhagavan: What is your idea of the mind?

Visitor: My idea is, it is thought.

Bhagavan: The mind is a bundle of thoughts. But the source of all thoughts is the I-thought. So if you try to find out who this “I” is, the mind will disappear. The mind will exist only so long as you think of external things. But when you draw it from external things and make it think of the mind or “I”—in other words introvert it—it ceases to exist.

November 19, 1946

About 10:30 a.m. today a visitor asked Bhagavan: The realized man has no further karma. He is not bound by his karma. Why should he still remain with his body?

Bhagavan replied: Who asks this question? Is it the realized man or the ajnani? Why should you bother what the jnani does or why he does anything? You look after yourself.

A little later he added: You are under the impression you are the body. So, you think the jnani also has a body. Does the jnani say he has a body? He may look to you as having a body and doing things with the body, as others do. The burnt rope still

looks like a rope, but it can't serve as a rope if you try to bind anything with it. So long as one identifies oneself with the body, all this is difficult to understand. That is why it is sometimes said in reply to such questions, "The body of the jnani will continue until the force of prarabdha works itself out, and, after the prarabdha is exhausted, it will drop off." An illustration made use of in this connection is that of an arrow already discharged which will continue to advance and strike its target. But the truth is the jnani has transcended all karmas, including the prarabdha karma, and he is not bound by the body or its karmas.

The visitor also asked: When a man realizes the Self, what will he see?

Bhagavan replied: There is no seeing, Seeing is only Being. The state of Self-Realization, as we call it, is not attaining something new or reaching some goal which is far away, but simply being that which you always are and which you always have been. All that is needed is that you give up your realization of the not-true as true. All of us are realizing, i.e., regarding as real, that which is not real. We have only to give up this practice on our part. Then, we shall realize the Self as the Self, or, in other words, Be the Self. At one stage one would laugh at oneself that one tried to discover the Self which is so self-evident. So, what can we say to this question? That state transcends the seer and the seen. There is no seer there to see anything. The seer who is seeing all this now ceases to exist, and the Self alone remains.

November 24, 1946

Mrs. Chenoy (from Bombay) asked Bhagavan this evening (after reading "Who Am I?") whether it was the proper thing to do if she asked herself "Who am I?" and told herself she was not this body but a spirit, a spark from the divine flame.

Bhagavan first said: Yes, you might do that or whatever appeals to you. It will come right in the end. But, after a little while, he told her: There is a stage in the beginning, when you identify yourself with the body, when you are still having the body-consciousness. At that stage, you have the feeling you are different from the Reality or God, and then it is, you think of

yourself as a devotee of God or as a servant or lover of God. This is the first stage. The second stage is when you think of yourself as a spark of the divine fire or a ray from the divine Sun. Even then, there is still that sense of difference and the body-consciousness. The third stage will come when all such difference ceases to exist, and you realize that the Self alone exists. There is an "I" which comes and goes, and another "I" which always exists and abides. So long as the first "I" exists, the body-consciousness and the sense of diversity or bheda buddhi will persist. Only when the "I" dies, the Reality will reveal itself. For instance, in sleep, the first "I" does not exist. You are not then conscious of a body or the world. Only when that "I" again comes up as soon as you get out of sleep do you become conscious of the body and this world. But in sleep you alone existed. For, when you wake up, you are able to say I slept soundly. You that wake up and say so are the same that existed during sleep. You don't say that "I" which persisted during sleep was a different "I" from the "I" present in the waking state. That "I" which persists always and does not come and go is the Reality. The other "I" which disappears in sleep is not real. One should try to realize in the waking state that state which unconsciously everyone attains in sleep, the state where the small "I" disappears and the real "I" alone is.

At this stage, Mrs. C. asked: But how is it to be done?

Bhagavan replied: By inquiring from whence and how does this small "I" arise. The root of all bheda buddhi is the "I." It is at the root of all thoughts. If you inquire wherefrom it arises, it disappears.

Mrs. C. then asked: Am I not then to say, (in answer to my own question "Who am I?") "I am not this body but a spirit, etc?"

Bhagavan then said: No. The inquiry Who am I? means really the inquiry within oneself as to wherefrom within the body the "I"-thought arise. If you concentrate your attention on such an inquiry, the "I"-thought, being the root of all other thoughts, all thoughts will be destroyed, and then the Self or the big "I" alone will remain as ever. You do not get anything new, or reach somewhere where you were not before. When all other thoughts which were hiding the Self are removed, the Self shines by itself.



The Ribhu Gita

Verses 36-41

[This is a transcript of what was said during an evening event at the SAT temple. Of course, the long periods of silence are not transcribed.]

(Silence)

Om, Om, Om

N.: If you brought a copy of *Ribhu Gita* with you tonight, we are on chapter verse 36. Ribhu is giving his instruction to Nidagha and says: “I am Consciousness alone. I am possessed of divine Knowledge. I am without any words to express myself. I am Brahman alone.”

The “I,” your real Self, is Consciousness and Consciousness alone. You are nothing objective, nothing conceived or perceived. Rather, your nature is pure Consciousness, which is formless and undifferentiated.

He says: “I am possessed of divine Knowledge.” Inherent in Consciousness, that is, in the Self, is the innate Knowledge of itself. It is God’s Knowledge of God, so, it is divine. “I am possessed of divine Knowledge.” What in you can possess such Knowledge—Self-Knowledge, Knowledge of Brahman? Only the Self or Brahman can do so. The senses can not do so, the body can not do so, and the so-called mind can not do so. Only that infinite, absolute Consciousness, which is the Self’s very nature, can possess this divine Knowledge of itself. That is already within you, that is you and that is the nature of all sages.

He says: “I am without any words to express myself.” Thus, the image of Daksinamurti. What is inconceivable is obviously ineffable. What word is there for your actual Being? The word “Being” was just employed, but what can be the definition for that Being? Truly, what word do you have for yourself? What thought can there be for yourself? A thing can be conceived, a

thing can be perceived, and a thing can be expressed. It may be a subtle thing, that is, an abstract thing rather than a gross thing, but how can That which is not a thing at all, but which is ever-existent, be put into words? The entire spiritual instruction therefore is conveyed in silence, and it is that silence which lends its power, as it were, to the words of spiritual instruction.

He concludes by saying: "I am Brahman alone." Not anything else is "I." Inquire within yourself, "Who am I?" and determine what Ribhu is proclaiming by your own interior experience. "I am Brahman alone." It is a statement of identity. Determine it by inquiry. Inquire not so much by thinking the thought, "I am Brahman alone," but by finding the meaning of this statement, "I am Brahman alone," within yourself. That is the divine Knowledge.

Q.: Why does he use the word "possess"? It is different than most expressions of it. I do not usually hear of the Self being "possessed by."

N.: He says: "I am possessed of divine Knowledge."

Q.: Yes, usually, it is nonobjective. But, in this case...

N.: In this case, he has it, but what he has is what he is. Without digressing much, make an inquiry into what is really yours. Whatever is truly yours must be yours at all times. Only one thing is with you all of the time. That is Consciousness, but Consciousness is Existence. Here, the distinction between you and yours disappears.

Q.: For the possessor and the possessed.

N.: All those differences disappear. You have what you are.

Verse 37: "I have no meaning. 'This' is without meaning. I am devoid of the meaning of all. I am Brahman alone."

Several interpretations are possible with this verse. The first is to consider the lines together regarding "I," "this," and "all." Such words, such ideas, have no meaning. The real Existence is just Brahman. That alone is the Self. The idea, or word, for an individual "I," that simply does not exist is quite meaningless. The idea of "this," when no objective thing has ever been created, is quite meaningless. Where "I" and "this" are meaningless,

most certainly “all” is superfluous. What exists is Brahman—pure Existence—which is forever undifferentiated, and that alone is what you are; that alone is real.

We can interpret the verse otherwise. “I have no meaning.” For the intellect, there is meaning, but how can that which is supreme Existence, itself, be said to have a meaning? Or, we may interpret the meaning as a purpose. I have no purpose, for what I am truly, in myself, is pure Existence. Things serve a purpose, but I am not a thing. An idea has a meaning, but I am not an idea. Beyond the conceptions of purpose and meaning lies the true Existence and the real “I.” That is the Self. Thereupon, “This’ is without meaning.” The only nature of “this” is the same as the nature of “I.” Any conception about “this,” in an objective sense, is utterly meaningless. Indeed, “this” serves no purpose for your Self. Your Self is the unmodified, perfectly full Existence. For that which is perfectly full, what purpose would anything serve, whether it is “all,” “this,” or anything else? “I am Brahman alone” concludes the verse. If you inquire within yourself, to know your true nature, you will cease to misidentify with whatever is actually not the Self. With the cessation of misidentification, what remains, which is the one thing that exists all of the time, is known as Brahman. It is vast, illimitable, expansive beyond all conception, and it is yourself. Do not take yourself to be anything else.

Verse 38: “I am ever pure, enlightened, eternal, totally blemishless. I am of the nature of the ever-blissful. I am Brahman alone.”

The consistent theme is, “I am Brahman alone.” In each verse, he elucidates the Knowledge so that the experience of it, the Realization of it, can be full. The repetition, which is apparent, is intentional. It is to aid us to keep the focus entirely on the discernment of what is Real by the Real.

So, he says, “I am ever pure, enlightened, eternal, totally blemishless.” We may take “pure” to mean unalloyed, unmixed, with anything else. If we take it to be stainless, without fault, then it is synonymous with totally blemishless at the end of the line. We may take it simply as, “I am ever pure,…” ever unmixed. Earlier, he said that your nature is Consciousness that is identi-

cal with Being. Consciousness is ever unmixed. It never becomes something other than itself, and nothing else ever becomes mixed up with it. To think otherwise is delusion, which is productive of illusion. When by inquiry—Self-Knowledge—delusion is put to an end, what we find is that which is ever pure, that which is not mixed. Consciousness never mixes with duality, with multiplicity, or with anything whatsoever. It remains as it is. So, when you inquire, you do not purify yourself; rather, you find that which is ever pure and come to identify with that alone and not with anything that is mixed up—the double entendre is intended.

“I am ever pure, enlightened,...”: the ostensible meaning is that Ribhu says that he is enlightened, but that is obvious at this point in the text. So, what is the purpose in him uttering this, “I am enlightened”? It is to cause us to find that same enlightenment within. Now, again, what can become enlightened? It is customary to conceive of oneself as a being, and, if one is a being in ignorance, one will then become a being in enlightenment. That is, one will proceed from a bound individual to a liberated individual—a mukta, a liberated one. The conception is good as far as initial practice is concerned, but what actually is the Realization? In the Realization, in the Enlightenment, all trace of individuality is absent. There is, therefore, no enlightened being. There is Being, which is the Enlightenment.

Again, what can know the Self? Only that Being, the Self itself, can do so. Another can not do so, because another does not actually exist. Your nature is singular. So, who can truly say, “I am enlightened”? Only that which never knew any darkness. That is the very nature of the innate Consciousness, which shines in apparent darkness and apparent light.

“I am pure, enlightened, eternal,...” If we understood just this much, “I am eternal,” and, with the aid of Self-inquiry, distinguished what is eternal, in your own experience, in your own Existence, that itself would suffice. What form is eternal? What thought is eternal? What body is eternal? No body is eternal, no perception is eternal, no thought is eternal, and obviously no individual, no jiva can be eternal. What actually is eternal?

Another Q.: That is a great question to meditate on, “What is eternal?” At first, I start to look for some form that is eternal, but quickly I find that it cannot be any of the forms, because I have always seen them come and go. What has always been here? What has always been beyond all the forms? What is always eternal? It leads me right to myself. There are no words for that, but I know it better than any word could describe it.

N.: Yes. It is best known, it is Self-known, and, likewise, he says that there are no words for myself. He also expressed that it is the very nature of Consciousness, which knows no beginning and knows no end. It is utterly changeless, for, if something changes, it is the perishing of a form. For something to be eternal, it must be utterly without any change at any time and without a moment’s interruption.

Q.: So, when you give that description, I look for what that is. What you said leaves nothing but the formless.

N.: The formless knows itself. This was emphasized earlier. The Knowledge of what is eternal—the true Knowledge—is as eternal as that which is known. That is, the true Knowledge of the eternal is not transient. The Knowledge must be as lasting as that which is known; thus, the permanence of Self-Realization. To be eternal, it must be utterly formless. There can not be a multiplicity in that which is formless. You cannot have two things be formless. Formless must be absolutely one, so that the Knowledge of the eternal can not coexist along with the eternal. Rather, they are one and the same thing. Being knows itself.

Q.: There is just no room for “I” left in what you are saying.

N.: That is why he says, “I am Brahman alone.” He does not say that I am Brahman plus something else, but, “I am Brahman alone,” absolute.

He said, “I am of the nature of the ever-blissful.” Everyone yearns for the deepest happiness and yearns for that happiness to be always present—continuous, without a break. That for which they yearn is the very nature of the “I,” if the “I” would be known correctly and truly. “I am the ever blissful.” As long as bliss is considered an experience, it comes and goes, and the “I” is not ever blissful. Ribhu declares, “I am the ever blissful.” Such

bliss can not be objectively experienced. It must be of the very same nature as Being-Consciousness, which has already been described. Bliss is ever blissful. Cease to regard bliss as objective and, consequently, inert. Bliss is the same as Consciousness, or Being. Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss, is one thing. Bliss experiences its ever-blissfulness. You are that bliss. You experience your own bliss. To identify just as Consciousness, just as Being, is the same as identifying just as Bliss. To so identify and thus be ever blissful in this way, all that is required is the profound thorough inquiry, "Who am I?" The result of such inquiry is a cessation of misidentification. Since misidentification alone is the cause of all the illusory suffering, when, by deep inquiry, you know yourself as you are, suffering is abolished. The very seed of suffering is found to be nonexistent. It vanishes like last night's dream, and the perfect fullness of the ever-blissful is not only your direct experience but is you. So, happily inquire.

Verse 39: "I am of the nature of the eternal Perfection. I am Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. I am of the nature of non-duality alone. I am Brahman alone."

The eternal perfection: Consider it deeply. Ribhu declares the truth that the nature of the Self is eternal perfection. It is not some limited individual, not anything flawed, not some mistake, and not something that has mistakes, but eternal perfection. Within the context of the ego, the perfect fullness seems as if veiled. No sooner does the notion of being an ego arise than there is this feeling that something is wrong. Something is not quite right. It is an intuition of your real nature, which is egoless, worldless, without bondage, and without limitation at all. The intuition that manifests as, "This is not quite right," will not disappear unless there is Knowledge of the Self. Upon Knowledge of the Self, it vanishes, as a mistake vanishes when you know the right thing. Then, you are happily surprised to find that there never was anything wrong, no reason to suffer, no bondage, no limited individual, and no birth and death, but just one perpetual Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. That alone is "I," and that alone exists. Existence-Consciousness-Bliss is triple compounded term for one unspeakable essence. That is the "I." Any other view of yourself is just ridiculous. To see how ridiculous it is, we

have only to inquire. When we see the ridiculous as the ridiculous, the absurd and the absurd, we are no longer caught up in it, and we remain free and happy.

Q.: Your description of “a little bit wrong” is exactly the feeling at the beginning of misidentification. The mistake that I make is that, instead of inquiring when I feel a little bit off, I will tack on some tendency within the mind to try to fix that uncomfortable feeling, and it never fixes it.

N.: It is so because it is based on the same presupposition that is the cause of the difficulty. It is a good way of explaining the movements of the tendencies of the mind.

Q.: When I really inquire, it is pretty blissful. So, it would not be entirely honest if I were to say I do not know what bliss is, but, when I start feeling a little uncomfortable and start looking for bliss, I am waiting for this blissful experience to make this uncomfortable feeling go away.

N.: Yes, the intention is right, but the approach is misguided.

Q.: That is for sure. (laughter)

N.: The intention is right because it is natural for everyone to yearn for complete happiness. So, to strive for great bliss once one knows that it is available makes sense. To complete that striving, the view must become nonobjective. This is generally true of all aspects of spiritual advancement. There is a big difference between expecting something to happen to us in contrast to that which shines from within us.

Q.: One is always there and the other one never happens?

N.: If the meditator is waiting or trying to reach something that is going to occur in time, it will disappear in time. Sri Ramana says that what is gained is lost, what appears disappears, thereby pointing out that we should inquire and strive to realize that which has no appearance and disappearance, which is not acquired and lost. The funny thing is that one could wait for bliss to come over one, while all the while his very nature is bliss. If he thinks bliss is not here, that is like water saying it is thirsty. How could water be thirsty?

Q.: Exactly. It is a silly question. It is ridiculous.

N.: If we learn to utterly relinquish the objective outlook and actually inquire nonobjectively—Self-Inquiry—Being shines within, Bliss shines within, and Consciousness shines within. They do not happen to us. Self-Realization does not happen to anyone. The idea of an “anyone” is abandoned, as well as the objective outlook, and what remains is the forever-present, undifferentiated Reality—the pure Self—Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Because it is not an occurrence, it endures, just as your Existence always endures.

Another Q.: I study about the sages and the saints. There is a unique pattern after awakening or enlightenment. There is no sense of needing to accumulate a lot of possessions. In my life, there is a lot of pursuit of travel, seeking great restaurants and wines, automobiles and all that stuff. With the sages, there is a sense of fullness in which all of that becomes unnecessary and ultimately drops away. I am curious if that is part of the process of awakening: the fullness is so complete that luxuries lose their attraction?

N.: Even prior to Self-Realization, for the aspirant who has determined where the source of happiness is and is actively diving into it by his inner meditation, the worldly things lose their interest. He becomes naturally, transcendently indifferent toward them. They do not mean anything. To be abiding at the very source of happiness is what is so important. A fancy car, or in bygone days, a fancy chariot, really does not amount to much.

Q.: Intuitively, I get a sense of what you are saying.

N.: People yearn or crave for things in this world only because they hope to get happiness through them. If they know where the place of happiness is, the craving for objects disappears. Depending on circumstances, temperament, or other factors, a person may have more objects or less objects. I am speaking of the interior experience. In the interior experience, one becomes detached even from his own body, let alone the things of the world.

Q.: Those objects come and go.

N.: When one is in the midst of infinite Bliss that endures for all eternity, what could be the significance of the various things of which you were speaking? What could one obtain that would add to it? Where could one go that would make it different?

“I am Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. I am of the nature of non-duality alone. I am Brahman alone.” He says, “I am of the nature of non-duality alone.” Alone means no alternative, just That. I am Brahman alone, with no alternative, just that alone. Nonduality is also indicative of no alternative. While it may be commonly understood as a resolution of opposites, nonduality or advaita signifies that for which there is no alternative—no other. For the Self, there is no alternative. There is nothing else that exists but that. The significance of nonduality is just That, just the Self. Another does not exist, even to the extent that one could call it nonexistent. In the solitary, singular, pure Self, which is the Reality as it is, there can be no alternative. Even the slightest notion of differentiation, of grades of difference, of something else, or of some other time besides that alone—any notion of such differentiation is based on the notion “I,” as the Maharshi often pointed out. The “I,” therefore, is the first differentiation. So, the root of all duality is the ego-“I.” Brahman alone is and, in truth, has no alternative. It means that no ego-“I” could ever actually exist at any time. If we comprehend in this manner, we see that duality is never true at any time, and dualism, that is, the belief in duality, ceases. What you are you are always without an alternative. Find out what you are. If you do, in unison with Ribhu, you will say, “I am Brahman alone.”

Verse 40: “I am of the nature that cannot be described. I am without beginning and without end. I am not of the nature of insentient matter. I am Brahman alone.”

That you can not be described in words should be obvious. Though for something that can not be accomplished, Ribhu does a splendid job of it!

You can not be described in thought. Come to the realization that not one of your thoughts, not one of them, is a description of who you are. Inquire, for whom are the thoughts? You will see that no thought describes you, and no thought defines you, who are without beginning and without end. As the

Bhagavad Gita declares, “Never is there a time when you are not; never is there a time when you will cease to be.” You are without beginning and end. Your Existence did not commence with the birth of the body, and your Existence will not end with the perishing of the body. Your Existence is without a beginning and without end. It is not even possible for your mind to imagine a time before you existed, without you existing to be the witness of that imagination. Similarly, it is impossible to imagine the cessation of your Existence. You can imagine the cessation of your body, but not your Existence. You can conceive of the cessation of even your thinking, but not your Existence. Likewise, is it for the beginning. All things have a beginning and an end. You are not a thing. You are pure Existence. You have no beginning and no end. One who knows himself as the beginningless and the endless—the eternal—is not confused by anything else and does not confound anything that has a beginning or an end with himself. So, he is happily detached from everything and is free of the least trace of misidentification. He is simply himself, without beginning and without end. Likewise is the Realization, for it must necessarily be of the same nature as that beginningless, endless Self that is realized. If it were otherwise, what he said about nonduality, would not be so.

Ribhu says, “I am not of the nature of insentient matter.” Having declared such absolute, singular Truth, he also shows a means of discrimination: “I am not of the nature of insentient matter.” Your body is composed of matter. Are you the body? If you are not the body and if you are not the matter composing the body, can any of the attributes of the body be you or yours? Can any attributes such as beginning and end, birth and death, inactive and active, doing and not doing, growth, maturation, decay, and diminishing, be yours? Size, shape, form, and boundary pertain to the body. Can we be bodies? It cannot be so. You are not insentient matter. You are pure Consciousness alone. That Consciousness is Brahman, the vast Absolute. “I am Brahman alone.” I am not a thing, I am not matter. “I am Brahman alone.” Inquire and realize the truth of this within.

Verse 41: “I am without any sankalpa of my own. I am devoid of all nescience. I am all. I am That itself. I am Brahman alone.”

The first phrase is: "...without any sankalpa of my own." Sankalpa may be interpreted in two ways in the verse. Sankalpa can mean will, volition. It can also mean a fixed idea, a fixed concept. He says that he is without sankalpa. Where ego, that is, "I-ness" has vanished, what volition could be attributed? Where "I-ness" disappears, the Supreme alone is all, does all, decides all, and empowers all. There is no scope for the ego and no scope for volition.

Sankalpa can mean a fixed idea. I have no fixed idea of my own. This is the state at which to arrive through profound inquiry to know yourself. Every idea about "I" and every idea about "this," the two poles of dual experience—subject and object—is merely sankalpa, a fixed idea. It seems solid by falsely deriving the sense of reality from the true Self. We may say that it shines by reflected light as a false appearance, as a distortion. To abide in the state that has not a trace of sankalpa is natural. It is what is right. Our ideas about things are not the Truth. Pure Consciousness plus the deluded notion of objectivity comes out as the form of thought, and it shines in one's experience as, "I know this." It is similar to the misidentification of, "I am this." It is just misidentification. "I know this," is misplacing the reality of one's own nature upon something merely imagined; such is sankalpa. To be without this tendency is to be free of sankalpa. When you cease to believe in whatever ideas are conjured up in the mind, you know Reality as it is. You know the Truth, and that Truth is Brahman—Brahman alone.

He says, "I am devoid of all nescience." Ribhu, being a realized sage is, of course, devoid of even the least trace of ignorance. There is neither "I" nor "this," no sankalpa, no misidentification, no false attachment, and so forth and so on. That which is the "I" in Ribhu is also the "I" in you. In truth, you are not ignorant. The ignorant one is not who you are. When you inquire, "For whom is ignorance?" the ignorance vanishes into the one who supposedly has it, and that one, upon inquiry as to who he is, also vanishes because he is not real. What remains is the perpetual real "I," of the very nature of Knowledge, itself. For that "I," there is no nescience ever. The shining of the truth of this can be seen in one's own experience even in the course of practice. When you determine ignorance as ignorance, you

abandon it right then and no longer conjure it up. In fact, you could not do it even if some one asked you to do so. Only so long as ignorance is thought to be valid, as if it were real knowledge, can you conjure it up. When it is seen as ignorance, you cannot do so any more. It is just like that with suffering. When you discerned the root of suffering and have abandoned it, you forget how to suffer and cannot do so anymore. So it is with nescience. The very foundation of it—the ego notion—is found missing. The “I” that is real, the one without alternative, never has ignorance. The Knowledge of those who know is eternal.

“...I am all. I am That itself. I am Brahman alone.” The three statements mean the same thing. If there is all, you are all. If there is That you are only That. Describe it in any way you please, there is just Brahman. That alone is the Self, and That alone is real.

Another Q.: You mentioned that sankalpa has two definitions. It seems like the fixed idea encompasses everything. Maybe volition does, too? There is always someone to have that volition.

N.: Yes, there is someone choosing, willing, or causing with the notion of volition.

Q.: That would be inclusive of any ignorant idea.

N.: So, if we say, “No me, but Thou,” or “Not my will, but Thy will,” it amounts to the same.

Q.: I do not understand.

N.: A devotee, a bhakta, who says, “Not my will, but Thy will,” so that he effaces all sankalpa, reaches the same truth as saying, “Not me, but only That, or only Thou.” There is just no scope for the ego.

Q.: That is interesting. What he is saying is, with the ego, there is volition of some sort. It is not going to be non-volitional, as there is no such thing as a non-volitional ego, except for one that is about to die. (laughter)

N.: That is right. The same volition is manifested in the drive to secure happiness and to know what is. When someone turns within—by Knowledge, by devotion—the happiness, the reality,

and the sense of identity are entirely consumed inside. They return to their original place, which leaves no room for the ego or its volition. The drive at the center of volition has been turned back to its origin. The identity that is at the center of the ego has returned to its origin.

Q.: So, is the ego synonymous with looking for happiness externally or is it just the tip of the iceberg? With it, there is objectification. So, because there is suffering, there is a search now for happiness.

N.: Yes, there is no such thing as a happy ego. The ego is, itself, suffering. The search for happiness is the call of your own nature that does not accept suffering as a satisfactory state. The ego-“I” manifests as the various objectified tendencies. They are just different names or different thoughts for the same “I.”

Q.: It is clear to me that, with the ego, there is a guarantee of outward projection.

N.: Yes, where there is the veiling of the true Self, the form of the ego appears, and there is the projection outward manifesting in multiple ways.

Q.: That is why it is said that, if there is not Self-inquiry, there is world-inquiry.

N.: That is right. Sankara says that ignorance manifests as veiling and projection—the not seeing of the Reality, which is only the Self, and the false projection of multiplicity—I, this, the world, etc.

Q.: Does it go in that order or is it simultaneous?

N.: It rises and sets together, but it is dependent on that single notion, “I.” So, if we inquire and know ourselves as, “I am Brahman alone,” the very seed of the potential to suffer, to project delusion, is destroyed. All that remains is purnam, the perfect fullness.

Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti Om.



From Yoga Vasishtha

(Continued from previous issues)

3:100:28

It brings forth and destroys, just as this which moves and stands;
That is this; in Brahman, Brahman, by Brahman, moves about.

Just as, in itself alone, intense heat [appears as the form] of a mirage,
Just so the variegated variety (the diverse picture), indeed, is displayed (sparkles, vibrates) by the Self.

The cause, the action, and the performer of action, birth, death, [and] remaining,
All are Brahman, alone, [and] surely are not without That.
“Another” is created in the imagination.

There is no perplexity (avarice, desire, greediness), there is no delusion (infatuation), there is no thirst (desire), [and there is] no pleasing (delighting);
[For] one who is in the Self, by (lit., of) the Self, whence is perplexity (avarice, desire, greediness), thirst (desire), or, likewise, delusion (infatuation), indeed?

The Self, alone, is this universe; all is the Self, indeed, caused all at once.
As a golden bracelet, indeed, this arises [in] the Self, from and out of the mind.

The foolish jiva declares that which is the Supreme Abode to be the mind, [and it,] not thoroughly known, indeed, quickly passes beyond being connectionless to relation (to connection).
[Or: The mind that is ignorant of the abode of the Supreme is called the “jiva” (individual).

Not ascertained, indeed, it quickly [proceeds] from friend to being friendless.]

By the ignorance of the Self, of the nature of Consciousness, oneself is led by one's own concept,
By the voidness of the sky, indeed, the individuality (jivata) is made manifest.

The Self, indeed, as the non-Self is said here to be the individual [who] moves and appears (reigns),
Like two moons seen poorly (ill-examined), the true and the false (real and unreal) [seem to] have risen together.

The meaning (purpose) of delusion and the meaning of words (speech) is of the various things seen and such from nonexistence;
And truthfully speaking of the Self, indeed, where is a bound self and where is the liberated?

[Because] of the eternal nonexistence of bondage, [the notion] "I am bound," thus, is badly formed in the imagination.
Of him who imagines, liberation is false, not the truth. (or: He whose imagination is that Liberation is false is not the truth.)



From the Temple Archives

[This message is in response to a letter from a SAT member that described her experiences of love, inquiry, and her plans to re-visit India.]

November 25, 2009

Dear ...,

Namaste. Thank you for your letter of the 22nd, which arrived today.

Yes, the Heart, which is quintessential Being, is all. That words and thoughts do not arise certainly represents no problem.

Whether in the USA or in India, blissful is it to abide as the unmoving, the timeless, the locationless.

Abide as that in which Knowledge and love are one, in which Being, Consciousness, and Bliss are identical, and in which peace and happiness are always.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a message from a seeker that raises a number of questions. For the sake of brevity, it has been edited. Nome's response follows.]

December 8, 2009

Namaste.

I've called a few times in the past 3 weeks, and you were kind enough to speak with me and answer my questions (thank you very much).

I ordered and received several books from your website, and am very much enjoying reading The Maharshi's writings.

Question: I find myself worrying about what I would consider to be certain "injustices" in this dream-world my ego thinks it's an inhabitant of. Sometimes I am frustrated with myself for not doing more to help correct some of these seeming injustices.

Would the Maharshi say that, rather than worry about things like that, inquire as to who is worrying about those things? (and you'll find that the worrier doesn't exist?). One of the Hindu saints said, "Reform yourself first; then you will automatically (help) reform thousands."

I can appreciate that perhaps the best thing I can do to help anyone / everyone in this "dream" (not sure what else to call it) world is to attempt to remove the ignorance that is preventing me from seeing that this "Self" is already realized.

It's difficult to stand or sit by and do nothing when I see certain things going on around us that we believe in our heart are wrong. I hope I wouldn't stand by and watch a person standing next to me be beaten senseless; I hope I would come to that person's aid.

I understand that this world and everything physical in it is illusion / delusion / maya / ignorance / “not-real.” But does that mean that we do not reach out to help others, that we just “turn within” and inquire as to the nature of the worrier, the doubter, etc.?

Is that really the best thing we can do to help make this world a better place? Part of me says it must be, as “I” won’t be able to help spread peace and knowledge in the world unless I am at peace, and that to me means a mind without thought, a silent mind, (and subsequently, no mind, when the “Self” appears.”

When “I” say “I,” “I” understand that there is no small “I.” “I’m” just not sure how to correspond in writing otherwise. “I” could write: “This “Self” has a question for “your Self,” etc., but that seems a bit tedious. Can we just assume that when “I” refer to “me” as “I,” that “I” understand this is just the “I”-thought speaking from a place of ignorance, and that underneath this, “I” understand that all there is is Self, God, Guru (one and the same)?

Thank you. Appreciate your time and patience.

With best regards, (Namaste),

Dear . . .,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Simple, natural communication is fine, such as in the casual use of the word “I.” The intended sense of it is understood. We do not wish to fashion some particular mode of speech, but rather abide in the transcendent Knowledge of the Self. When wise sages seem to employ a particular expression, it is for the purpose of revealing the Truth of the Self to the listener or reader, and it is not intended that one should mimic such expression. Rather the meaning should be inwardly realized.

Much of the answer to your question can be found in your question itself. That is, you have fairly well answered it yourself.

If the misidentification of being a performer of action is abandoned by deeper knowledge, the question of to do or not

to do dissolves. The Maharshi has stated that, within the dream, one must do his best to help his fellow beings, but he should not misidentify or mistake the world to be real. In addition, as you have observed, you can give only of what you have, so that establishing yourself in steady peace is of the utmost importance. Moreover, Sri Bhagavan has set the best example. Can there be any doubt about his attainment being the supreme good? Just observe how much graced benefit is constantly emanating from that!

May your inquiry be profound so that the innate freedom and peace of the Self remain perpetually self-evident.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A message from a Sri Ramana devotee who resides in India. He had written and received responses previously. The practices that he describes were not suggested by Nome.]

December 11, 2009

Dear sir,

I started Ramana mantra meditation and flow life meditation. I was able to face the stress etc. I was okay. Now, I am seeking your assistance again. Due to dream in my sleep, felt a vague pain and a catch in my calf muscle. The reason for it I could not make out. The same day, my student went without recognizing. Known people went without recognizing me. Some wished me in the left hand. These things bothered me, and I felt okay after sometime. How to ignore these things so they do not affect me? It should vanish immediately (not after long time.) How should I view good and bad equally?

Looking for your advice,

Yours in Ramana,

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. Sri Bhagavan has bestowed the liberating teachings that reveals the blissful Truth and has shown the example for all.

Knowing that all happiness is in the Self, recognizing that external objects and events do not affect the Self and do not provide happiness, why should one suffer by thinking that what happens with others (events and circumstances) is a factor in this happiness. Just as the objects do not have the capacity to create happiness or to remove it (that is, create suffering), so the body and its sensations do not. Whether all goes according to your wishes or goes contrary to your wishes or is a combination thereof, remain at peace, with this nonattachment, relying entirely on Sri Ramana's Grace, and absorbed in Self-Knowledge. All will be seen equally, and your bliss will be undisturbed.

May you be unmoved in the certitude of the Self within, the Purnam (perfect fullness), and thus happy and at peace always.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[This is a response to a seeker who had written and received guidance earlier. He was afflicted by vacillating tendencies in his mind and wrote about such.]

December 11, 2009

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

Examining your mind, even as expressed in your messages, some observations should easily be recognized by you. First and foremost, there is an unrelenting spirit, manifesting as the desire to be happy, that shines in your aspiration and even remains coursing along when pursued in ignorant ways. Next, you should be able to discern that, while inner happiness and peace are alone satisfying in life, the tendencies of the mind still romp around in such a way as to cause confusion, bewilderment, and suffering for you. Next, you should recognize that though the path to freedom is direct and not difficult, persevering effort is

needed to remove the self-generated tendencies. Some of these tendencies even cause the basic principles to be a challenge for you, as in the case with understanding ahimsa, which is counted as the first of the yamas, the yamas being the first stage of yoga. In this context, Jnana may be regarded as the final stage of yoga, or that to which yogis devote themselves at the culmination or zenith of their practice.

Still, you are inwardly drawn to the highest. You may notice that, although hearing and reading the Truth, your mind continues in repetitive modes of ignorance and its suffering, though light has begun to dawn so that the delusion is not quite as solid-seeming as previously. To eliminate the ignorance may, at first, seem a daunting task, because of its repetitive character, and because of its apparent multiple facets, but, with honest, earnest spiritual practice of Self-inquiry, it proves to be insubstantial, an illusion, and dissipates as you cease to conjure it up. Practice in such a way that the dips into delusion are not repeated. This means to utterly detach and disidentify. When ignorance is recognized to be only ignorance, it vanishes forever.

The inner yearning for Self-Realization will not die in you, but you need not suffer the oscillating patterns in your mind. Dive within, deeper and deeper, so that, the ego vanishing, you become certain of the nature of your Self. Thus you will wisely dwell in peace, awake from the dream of the repetitive samsara, with a profound happiness that does not fade.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[Sarasvati, a devotee who had participated at the SAT temple for many years, lived at Tiruvannamalai for approximately the last year of her life. When she died there, a message was sent by two SAT members who live at Tiruvannamalai. Nome's response follows.]

December 28, 2009

Sarasvati passed away about 10:45 AM this morning. She had been sick and was getting sicker. When Carol went to take her to the doctor today, she was unconscious, and passed away while the ambulance was on its way.

She had said that the move to Tiruvannamalai was the last she was going to make. And today is a most special day for the Tamils. This is the day they say that the Devas open the gates to “heaven,” so those who die this day are Realized automatically. So, to die in Tiruvannamalai on this day is about the best that a body can do. She was happy here.

We cremated the body this evening. Some of her western friends were there, as were Rajan and the other rickshaw drivers that had befriended her.

The body dies. Was she the body?

Om Arunachala,

Dear...and...,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message and the information about Sarasvati’s passing. Yes, the body dies, but the Self does not perish. Unborn, it is indestructible and is neither burnt, nor wetted, nor withered, nor buried in earth.

Yes, death is said to occur in a holy place. Yet, “What is death if scrutinized?” says Sri Bhagavan. Where is the Self not? It is comparable to speaking of where in a dream one passes away. The ever-existent Self alone remains, and that alone is real.

Thank you for your kind help to her during this last period of her life.

Om Namah Sivaya

Om Arunacalesvaraya Namah

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message is from a seeker who had met Nome in Bangalore in 1995. Nome’s response follows.]

December 26, 2009

Namasthe,

Om Namō Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya!

I am writing to you after a long time. How can a human, a mortal, understand Bhagavan's working? Whatever suffering I am going through is because of my mistakes and my own ignorance. If I remember Bhagavan or see or listen to anything on him, certainly, like most people, I know the importance of his Grace. He has advocated Self-enquiry as the practice of prime importance.

I can only say that, wherever I go and whatever I worship, still I return to him, remembering him almost daily. This is just the fortune of having his vision or darshan when I came to him in 1994-95 I guess. This is not to boast in anyway.

A few months earlier, he appeared in a dream and asked me to repeat OM Namō Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya. This happened a couple of months back.

Surrendering the fruits of work and practicing devotion, as well as the inquiry he taught, is perhaps our effort to be.

I just took an opportunity to write to you, and, like earlier times, I am just hoping you will excuse me if I have acted in anyway wrong with any of Ramana's devotees or family.

With Yours in Bhagavan Ramana,

Dear...

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. I am glad to hear that you are endeavoring to practice Sri Bhagavan's teachings. Surely, His Grace is omnipresent and always. If, being devoted, one keenly inquires as instructed, the Self is assuredly realized, full of lasting peace and bliss.

If you are still residing in Bangalore, you may find it helpful to attend RMCL and listen to Dr. Sarada. You can even obtain a few of the publications of SAT there (they are usually not available at Sri Ramanasramam), which you may also find beneficial. You can also find writings, satsang transcripts, etc., at the SAT website at www.SATRamana.org that may be helpful

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self and thus ever shine in spiritual joy.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,
Nome

[This is a response to a seeker who had corresponded several times previously.]

January 5, 2010

Dear...,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. Two beneficial perspectives can be reflected upon. The first is the orientation of the entire life. If the central focus and what is valued the most is Self-Realization, the supreme good will result. Attachments will dissolve, and the mind will be consistently introspective, even while in the midst of various activities. The precious time of this life will be used wisely, which is joyful. The second is, since you, the Self, are not the body, you are never the performer of action, and, since you, the Self, are the Bliss, you do not depend on external activities to provide you with happiness. Thus, you can be fully happy and at peace regardless of the work, activity, health, energy level, etc. Therefore, the entire experience becomes profoundly transcendent continuously.

Listen (sraṇa), reflect (maṇa), profoundly meditate (nididhyāsa), and remain absorbed in the Truth.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[On January 6, 2010, a message was received from a person who accused all at the SAT temple and elsewhere of engaging in “spiritual business,” collecting donations, “chanting and prancing,” and not understanding the teachings. This is Nome’s patient response to help this person at the most basic level of civility and courtesy. It is printed here because it gives, at a basic physical level, a description of some of what occurs at the SAT temple. The attachment referred to at the end of this

response is the tendency to measure spirituality in terms of money, in this case manifested as derision of those who selflessly give.]

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. From what you have written, it is unclear if you have ever visited the SAT temple or read any of the publications brought forth or distributed by SAT or actually conversed with any of the people at the SAT temple.

If you have visited, you know that no one is solicited for a donation, though no one is prohibited from giving. They are free to give, just as you are free not to give. This is so not only for SAT, but for every nonprofit and charitable organization, including Sri Ramanasramam, whether involved in feeding children and the poor, operating spiritual temples and sanctuaries, or other services that benefit humanity.

SAT provides about 150 events (no donation required) per year, and the temple is freely open for meditation about 300 days per year.

SAT's publications and books distributed by it are at minimal prices, determined by the cost of printing or purchase and importation costs. Any amount that exceeds cost is used to help publish and preserve sacred books, such as the printing of translations of ancient texts.

Chanting is not a regular practice at the SAT temple, though it is done during certain special holy events. Recently, a weekly event for those who wish to learn bhajans has been started. However, for daily chanting, you should visit Sri Ramanasramam. Perhaps, you are referring to the conclusion of satsang at SAT, at which time a few verses are recited in Sanskrit and English? Those verses are usually from the *Upanishads*, and later, the Tamil *Ribhu Gita*. Both are cited frequently by Sri Ramanan Maharshi, and the recitation from the *Vedas* and from *Ribhu Gita* was a regular practice during Sri Ramana's life that continues to this day there.

By "prancing," it is assumed that you mean dancing. That is not a practice here, and, if that is your interest, such should be sought elsewhere.

Everyone is free to come or go as he pleases at SAT. If he finds the spiritual instruction, which is focused upon Self-Knowledge and Self-inquiry, offered here helpful, it is his “to keep,” and, if not, he can forget it as so much prattle about the self-evident Self, the One without a second.

I hope that the above is informative for you. We wish you the very best. May you ever abide as That which is beyond material concerns and attachment, which is free of all the images of the mind, which is transcendent of the body and actions, which is the essence of the teaching, which is the one whom is lauded in countless verses and songs by numberless sages and saints, yet ever remains as Silence, which is ever unmoving, which is wholly love and free of the least trace of ego and its attendant misidentifications, the nature of which is Self-illumination, and which is ever the Self of all.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome (for SAT)

[The following was a message from a family in India who had not previously engaged in any correspondence with SAT. Nome’s response follows. Sasvati also responded with a message with practical information and contacts pertaining to various forms of treatment of cancer (sometimes referred to as “alternative” medicine), especially those that have been successful in curing patients with advanced stages of the disease, that concluded with the words, “I hope that what is mentioned here is of interest to you and your brother and that it is helpful. Of course, each patient decides for himself which course of healing or treatment he wishes to try to restore health to the temple of the body; prarabdha karma will take its own course. Perhaps your brother’s prarabdha is to cure his cancer and live a longer life.

Please let me know if I may be of further assistance. All is in Ramana’s hands.

In Sri Ramana’s Service,

Sasvati”]

January 11, 2010

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PRAY FOR US

Dear Sir,

Our family is facing a severe problem . My brother is in Bangalore working in a very good position and leading a very good family life with one daughter. Suddenly, he started facing back pain and went for a medical check up last week. The doctor declared that he has lung cancer in the fourth stage. We are very much panicked. We are providing all types of treatment, but the doctors are of the opinion that his life is in God's hand.

In this situation, we really beg you to use your sources and arrange through your contacts to do some special prayers for my brother. His name is [name omitted], for which our whole family will be very much grateful to you.

Regards,

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Severe illness, injury, impending death, or the occurrence of death, for a loved one or for oneself, call one to meditate upon and firmly abide in the Knowledge of the Self. It is the misidentification of the Self with the body that is the cause of the fear, anxiety, and sorrow. If this misidentification is relinquished, suffering ceases, and the supreme peace of the Self prevails. The Existence of the Self never ceases. It does not begin or end and does not perish when the body perishes. Therefore, neither for the living nor for the dead do the wise grieve.

To thus remain at peace yourself is a powerful form of prayer for your brother, one that has its basis in That which is immortal.

At some time or another, every form vanishes; all that are born inevitably eventually disappear. The Self is not born with the birth of the body and does not cease to be when the body ends. The Self of all is this Self. Rest in the certainty of this eternal Truth.

Illness of the body does not touch the true Self. Pain does not touch it. Water does not wet it, and fire does not burn it. Wind does not wither it, and the earth does not cover it. It remains, ever changeless and perfect.

Whatever be the outcome of the present situation, all is by Grace. Nothing is without a divine purpose. Both life and death, good health and ill health, are within the scope of this Grace.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi reveals this divine Truth, with infinite Grace. Devotion to Him, surrendering all of one's worries, and the individual who worries, to Him, yields sublime peace and transcendence over the transient dream of this world.

Self-inquiry and surrender are supremely potent "prayers."

Yes, prayers are always beneficial. Let your prayers for . . . be such as to see all dwelling in and merging with the Supreme Lord, who is like an immovable mountain. If the health of his body is temporarily regained, such is by Grace, and, if the life of that body concludes, such is also by the same Grace.

The Knowledge and devotion indicated above do not preclude taking every active step that he, you, family and friends can take to attempt to preserve [name omitted]'s life. For this purpose, included below is a letter from my wife regarding treatments for cancer about which [name omitted]'s doctor may be ignorant. No treatment is guaranteed to be successful. Since you have access to a computer and the web (internet), you can read about what is possible for yourself by looking at the websites mentioned. If you cannot travel to these places, you can implement some of these treatments at your own place or find a clinic in India that treats patients in a similar manner. The patient owes no allegiance to the doctors who cannot help him cure himself. So, remain peacefully detached from the body, yet try your very best; try your very best, yet remain detached from the body.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[A seeker had been directed to SAT by a member in India. Her questions can be inferred from this response.]

January 21, 2010

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

You say that you are unsure as to where to start. The best “place” to start is with that which is absolutely certain, about which you have no doubt at any time. That is your very Existence. It is not possible to doubt your very Existence, though it is possible to doubt that which is not actually your Existence. Even if you would have a doubt regarding it, you would still assume that you exist to entertain or know the doubt. You may wish to refer to the beginning of Sri Sankara’s *Svatmanirupanam (True Definition of One’s Own Self)* for more on this point.

Focused on your very Existence, commence to discriminate between what is this Existence and what is not but illusorily associated with it in delusion in the form of misidentification. Cease to regard what is objective and transient and whatever appears and disappears, gross or subtle, as yourself. What is not the very Existence is not you and is not real. What is real is always so. What is true regarding the Self is always so. You may wish to refer to the Maharshi’s *Who am I?* and to *Self-Knowledge* (SAT publication) for more on this.

Whatever is not continuously present regardless of the three states (waking, dream, and deep dreamless sleep) cannot be your very Being. This applies to the various experiences of the senses by which the world is conjured, the body, various modes of mind (fear, “presence,” etc.), thoughts, the mind itself, and even the assumed individuality or ego, which is the supposed experiencer of the aforesaid. Only that which always is, and is without increase or decrease, without appearance or disappearance, is true and truly you.

For whom is life and death? For whom is the appearance of the body? For whom is unity and multiplicity? For whom is perception and conception? For Self-Realization, which is Liberation from all of the imagined bondage, you must find, within, the answer to the question, “Who am I?” Inquire.

What do you mean by “life”? Is it the tiny, fleeting experiences perceived through the senses? Is it the minute thoughts of the mind? First, find out who you are, and then you can say what is life.

Freedom from attachment, which is confusion regarding the source of happiness, will yield clarity regarding your question of “trust.”

The Upanishad declares, “Where there is a second, as it were, there is fear.” A “second” is dualism. The primary dualism, upon which all illusion is based, is the notion “I.” Conversely, where there is no such false notion of “I,” there you abide as the infinite and the eternal. That alone is your true state, or real identity. That is Brahman; that is the Self. That you are (tat tvam asi).

I hope that you find what is briefly stated here beneficial. You may also find it useful to read some of the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi and some of the works of traditional Advaita Vedanta, such as *Ribhu Gita*, for inspiration, instruction, and to understand the context of what has been mentioned here.

May your Self-inquiry be profound, so that, serenely unattached to the unreal, you know yourself as the Self and thereby abide in the perfect fullness of Bliss always.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a response to another seeker. The questions raised by her can be surmised from the response.]

January 21, 2010

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.

Namaste. The purpose of the manifested life may be said to be Self-Realization. Thus, the Paramartha (Supreme Truth) is the final artha (purpose, truth) of the purusa-artha-s (human purposes or goals) and is called Moksa (Liberation), as described in the Vedas. This Self-Realization is attained by a profound Self-inquiry. For whom is the perception of “life”? The same one Self is regarded as God, the solitary power of this universe, or as the

unmoved Witness of the entire mind, or as uncreated, undifferentiated Being-Consciousness-Bliss, according to the depth of understanding of the experiencer, the meditator, or the Knowledge of the Self, itself.

Yes, ignorance creates an illusory mess. Suffering is only imagined bondage. Bondage is only ignorance. Ignorance is composed of misidentification. Liberation from misidentification is the self-illuminated revelation of the ever-indestructible Purnam (Perfect Fullness) of the Self. Know yourself. Inquire.

The concept of being the performer of action depends on misidentification with the instruments of body, speech, and mind. Inquire to discern your true nature, which is not to be defined by such objective things.

The Silence and Grace of the Maharshi are ineffably sublime.

I hope that, upon meditation upon it, the above is helpful for you.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is part of response sent by Nome to a seeker who commented favorably on some of the translation work published by SAT. The deleted portion dealt with a few technicalities of Sanskrit.]

January 25, 2010

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

...In any event, it is enough if one realizes That before which all words and thoughts turn back, unable to grasp. That is of the nature of Absolute Silence. Having realized That, whatever may be the expressions that pour forth, they are correct for they shine with divine Truth.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a message from a SAT member who resides at a distance from the temple, edited slightly for brevity. Nome's response follows, also slightly edited.]

January 26, 2010

Namaste Nome,

I've noticed recently in meditation and otherwise that there is a feeling of unsettledness, diffuse focus, etc. Rather than resist this unwanted mental activity, I try to remember that the gunas come and go for someone and to keep inquiring. Also, I try to remember to unburden my ego load to Ramana-Shiva.

It's pretty silly to try to use thought to become unbound from thought.

Thank you for *Advaita Devatam*. I'm using it as an aid to meditation. Any other suggestions for its use?

I'm also wondering about the linkage between the two words, "jagat" and "jagrat." I understand jagat to stand for the world and jagrat to stand for the waking state. The world appears and disappears along with the waking state's rise and fall. Is this the reason for the similarity in the words?

I have a home laptop now so am able to view the Satsang DVDs much more easily in the morning.

Om Namo Bagavate Sri Ramanaya

Aloha

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Regardless of the guna of the mind, your nature is ever the entirely peaceful, unmoved, clear Consciousness. Know this with certainty by profound inquiry. In addition, investigate to determine if there is some unexamined vasana that is the cause of the mental mode.

Inquiry, being transcendent of the mind, is not limited in its capacity to liberate you from the illusory bondage of thought.

The book *Advaita Devatam* is for devotional and meditation purposes, as well to further the nondual understanding of the symbols described. The CD from *Advaita Devatam* is for meditation purposes, though it is not intended as a substitute for actual inquiry.

Jagat means moving, movable, that which is alive, the world, the universe, and even humankind. It is said to derive from the root gam, which means to go, move, to pass, or to undergo a condition or state. Jagrat could be transliterated as jaagrat, considered a participle, the root of which is said to be jaagri, which means waking. So, while a connection of the two words is not readily apparent, what you have said regarding the world being only an appearance in the waking state, rising and falling with it, is quite true.

Repose in the happiness that Ramana-Siva is the support of all, the Light, and your very Self.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A response to a letter received from another SAT member who resides at a distance from the temple. Each paragraph is in answer to a question or a comment upon a statement that can be inferred from the response.]

January 28, 2010

Dear ...,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your letter of January 25th, which was received today.

When happiness surges forth from within, it is the Bliss of your own true nature, the Self, that thus shines. When serenity floods your experience, it is the peace of your own true nature, the Self, that thus shines.

When the illusion of depressed modes of mind and similar suffering cast a veil, such is due to misidentification and its concomitant falsely placed emphasis on thoughts that are not true, not you, and not real. As revealed by Sri Bhagavan, inquiry

destroys such misidentifications along with their effects, the mental modes.

Suffering is self-imagined; profound happiness is the Self's nature. Neither is caused by an external cause.

You always have the ability to discern the true and to abandon the false.

You will be very welcome at any retreat that you can attend. As always, whatever donation you offer is helpful and appreciated, and you are always welcome here regardless of ability to offer or not or what amounts.

For that which has birth, death is certain. The Unborn is immortal, and, in that, there is imperishable peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A response to a message from another seeker.]

February 2, 2010

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Though you say that you lack confidence in that which is real, you are completely certain of the fact of your Existence. Focused upon that, inquire to abandon the misidentifications, so that the Knowledge of the Self, the sole Reality, becomes certain.

The Self is only one, and the individual is not real. Death of the body does not necessarily equate with destruction of misidentification. The *Gita* says that for that which has birth death is certain, and for that which has death birth is certain. Therefore, it is wise to realize your nature, bodiless and egoless, to be unborn and thus imperishable. Removal of an object in one's experience will be replaced by another, even if the other is an absence or a blank, which will also be replaced in time. Inquiry into the subject, apart from which the object has no existence whatsoever, yields permanent Liberation from all dualism, bondage, and birth-and-death.

Happiness is of the very nature of Being. Thus, one does not wish to cease to exist. Realize your innately immortal Existence as the bodiless, egoless Self, and thereby abide in happiness and peace without end.

“Fear is where there is duality, as it were,” says an Upanishad. Nonduality is fearlessness. Know the Self that is One without a second.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[Here is a message from a SAT member who resides at a distance from the temple, along with the response from Nome.]

February 11, 2010

Om Namō Shivaya

Dear Nome,

Namaste from . . . All well here. Hope for same there.

I have this question that is coming up for while now. In the meditation/contemplation, I find it easy to just sink into the Self when my eyes are open, because, when I look at the surroundings, all objects have this neon sign on them that says “go home.” Right away, I am aware of the “I” who is seeing them and right at that instant I know and feel my real Existence separate from that “I.” There is no thought or word there. The feeling of “ahhh. . . . finally home,” But, if I try to capture same (capture is not the right word, but you know what I mean) with my eyes closed, I feel like I am still hanging or floating around in mental world. There is a lack of that big push/punch from visual objects. I tried asking “Who does not see any object?,” but that does not seem to work. So please help me.

Over all no complaints! My day starts with reading of *Saddarsanam* and ends with listening to satsang CDs. During the day, for longer and longer periods there is awareness of absence of “I”-thought—the hook on which any and everything can possibly hang. There are certain passages in *Saddarsanam* that serve as stepping stones to inward plunge. With your permission, I will share them with you in next email because your

time is more valuable. Thanks again for your loving, kind guidance.

Namaste

Dear...,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Inquire for whom the mental realm, whether with thought forms or blank, appears, so that, with your focus entirely nonobjective, the ever-present Consciousness stands revealed. That is the same with or without objects, and that alone is the Self. There is not an individual Self, a second, to leave the true “home” of yourself. The Existence of this only Self is equally real at all times. All point to that; all are only that. Any apparent difference is an illusion born of misidentification. The opening and closing of the eyes do not make the difference. By inquiry, repose in the Self, as the Self, in peace and bliss.

Sri Bhagavan’s *Saddarsanam* is of utmost profundity.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A message from a SAT member and Nome’s response]

February 16, 2010

Dear Nome,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.

Namaste. Thank You for ever-present Existence which is Being, Identity and Peace. My heart is full and happy in the Self as the Self. I humbly ask for Your help. I think I might have been out of line when we had the private conversation, for thereafter I could not/would not maintain the level or depth of Inquiry that I was “proclaiming” during the private conversation. I became misidentified with old vasanas in the form of love and

happiness being external/connected with forms/relationships and cling/believing in these ideas. I realize more clearly now that, if I am suffering, I made a mistake. I now can proceed to recognize these as mere ideas and not the Reality. The Self is too precious to cover over, causing one to “move about listlessly” as Sri Bhagavan so clearly describes.

Thank You once again for BEING.

Ever Yours in Truth,

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. The later appearance of residual delusive tendencies does not invalidate an earlier, clearer state of inquiry, but it does show the need for continued, even deeper inquiry.

He who knows that his mistake is, indeed, a mistake no longer repeats it and it can no longer be regarded as a mistake.

Where love is identical with Being is your true abode. Realize this by devotion, by inquiry, and by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a message from a gentleman from Scotland who had never written previously. Nome's response follows.]

February 17, 2010

My dear people,

I have just returned from Arunachala where I met with some wonderful people from SAT. Though I did not abide with them very long.

I was introduced to the *Ribhu Gita* as translated by Nome and R.H. Ramamoorthy (I think by a Richard Clarke?). It is to these that I offer my heart felt gratitude. For this translation reaches to the very highest that language and words can attain before they disappear into the Silence that gave birth to them.

Nowhere except in the words of Bhagavan Ramana have I felt such intimacy of Truth and Grace.

Nome has given the world a most fragrant and sacred gift. It is right that we should all give deep thanks for such a work . . . for here I feel are the very sounds of Siva uttered just prior to the arising of the identified mind.

I know also that a gentle and beautiful being dropped her body in complete surrender to That, in the Grace of our dear Maharshi whilst I was there. Her name was Sarasvati and although I spoke with her only a few times her spirit reached out to me in my suffering, silently and completely. When I learnt of her passing my heart cried, though I hardly knew her, but I knew also of a great wordless significance that I cannot explain.

For all of this and my time within Arunachala, I send you all at SAT my deepest love and fondness for a woman that I never knew.

I thank you, Nome, with the wordless love I have for Bhagavan and his dear disciple Sri Muruganar. I cannot say anymore.

Dear . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. It is always a joy to hear from those who deeply love Sri Ramana.

We are glad to know that you are finding the *Ribhu Gita* to be beneficial and to know of your attunement to this sacred text that reveals the Truth of the Self, the Reality. When you have the opportunity, you may wish to look at the *Song of Ribhu*, too, which is an English translation from the Tamil version of the scripture. The *Ribhu Gita* is the translation into English from the Sanskrit original. Some find them to be good “companion” volumes. If you look at the SAT website (www.SATRamana.org), you can see more about these and other similar literature and recordings.

For that which has birth, death is certain. For the Unborn, immortality is innate, as Existence, which is the Self, can never become otherwise. That is the true abode, the imperishable, the bodiless, and the undying fount of love. That is the very nature

of Grace and is the perfect fullness. That, of the nature of beginningless and endless Being-Consciousness-Bliss is alone what you are.

If you are ever in California, please know that you would be very warmly welcome to visit the SAT temple.

May you ever abide as the Self, in the inconceivable Knowledge of itself, in the Silence in which neither the assumption of "I" nor any other misidentification is possible, and thus dwell in peace and happiness always.

Om Namah Sivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome (for SAT)

[Here is a message from a devotee of Sri Ramana at Tiruvannamalai, who had written a few times previously. Nome's response follows.]

February 27, 2010

My dear sir,

Two days back, I developed a catch in the hip. I assumed it is because of depression. Whenever any problem, I was made to think it is a depressive disorder.

I showed to the doctor and he examined me and said that that is due to age related factor. I developed 20 years back a problem. I worked beyond my limit.

Later, I suffered and it made my mind very confusing and something came to me. I myself met the doctor. I was labeled as bipolar.

Later, when any problem comes, I am made to think of that depressive disorder. But ultimately, it is not so. If I could have met the doctor, they would have suitably advised.

Now I am better .

Kindly advise me how to trace properly, in what way I can approach Bhagawan.

Yours,

Dear Sri . . . ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Approach Bhagavan with a heart full of devotion and with complete trust in Him. Approach Bhagavan with humility and faith. Approach Bhagavan with conviction in His teachings and ardently, consistently, eagerly practice them.

By whatever name called, the shifting of mental moods is only the play of delusion. Trace them to the misidentifications that form their root. That will destroy the mood. Inquire to know the Self as it is, and the innate continuous happiness will shine as the revelation of your true Self. Moods are changeful illusions dependent on the content of thought. The one who knows them is unchanging and is the un-conceived knower of all thought. Who is that one? Ask yourself, “Who am I?”

Regardless of bodily ailments and their symptoms, it is wise to know the Self as free from the body, for in this is found true peace and immortal Bliss.

May your inquiry be profound so that you abide in the perfect Self, as the perfect Self.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[This is a message to two revered devotees of Sri Ramana located at the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning in Bangalore, sent shortly before the annual shraddha (the observances in regard to one whose body is deceased) of Sri A. R. Natarajan. It was later published in “The Ramana Way,” which is the periodical of the RMCL.]

January 4, 2009

Dear ...and... ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. I trust that all is well with you and that the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning continues to thrive in Sri Ramana’s Grace.

Fondly recalling Sri A. R. Natarajan yesterday, I took to the laptop computer at home and wrote a few lines. It is not really a poem, as it lacks rhyme and meter, with just a bare trace of rhythm, though it is obvious that the ninth “verse” is an acrostic with his name. So, I thought I would send it to you. You may do as you like with it. I do not know if you observe the custom of sraddha. He remains ever dear and One with us in the true Self.

Here it is below, in the event opening the attached file proves difficult.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, full of peace and joy.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

Everlasting Spirit

*Called by the name A. R. Natarajan,
He, himself, calling upon Ramana always.*

*Caring for the devotees of the Maharshi,
With the fullness overflowing from his devotion.*

*Graciously giving of his abundance,
Giving himself to Sadguru Ramana.*

*The warmth of his smile, so joyful and sincere,
His heart flooded with inner, spiritual bliss.*

*Urging and encouraging others to spiritual practice,
Based on his undaunted, fruitful experience.*

*Attentive to the Knowledge revealed by Sri Ramana,
Speaking, writing, meditating, realizing within.*

*Recognizing the Truth shining in others,
The Truth of the Self without any “other.”*

*Zealously sharing the love of Sri Bhagavan,
Remaining content, peaceful in heart.*

*Always full of devotion to Sri Ramana,
Ramana ever the Lord of his heart,
Naturally full of the love of his Guru,
Absolute Being manifested in full,
Truth revealed by His unlimited Grace,
Absorption forever in His Existence,
Ramana Sadguru, his true abode,
Attached to none other or to this world,
Jubilant in love, truly devoted,
Abidance unwavering, in Him, as That,
Now and forever, the Self without end.*

*This is not a eulogy,
Or memory that fades,
But love for a spirit undying
And the imperishable Self.*

*[This is a message from a very dear devotee of Sri
Bhagavan at RMCL. Nome's response follows.]*

January 15, 2010

Dear and respected Master Nome,

Your letter written on the date of Bhagavan's Advent in the human form comes as a great blessing to me, to my mother, and to the Centre. I am deeply touched by the donation that you have sent. As you have rightly said, everything is in Sri Ramana's hands always. Whenever His grace gives me this awareness of His infinite power and love, nothing is a problem. However, the clouding of the mind due to ignorance sometimes makes me identify with the illusory body and its appendages with all their ups and downs.

The books not only arrived promptly but were lapped up by the seekers of Truth visiting our Centre. I was wondering whether we could carry extracts from the book in a serialized manner in the *Ramana Way*.

I am sending you two CDs, “Ramana Suprabhatam” and “Ramana Bharat” along with the letter.

Once again thank you for your great love that flows directly from the Self.

With deep regards to you and Sasvati ji,

Yours in Ramana,

Dear...

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message and your letter of December 25th, which were received on the same day.

Of course, you are free to use any portion of any SAT publication in the “Ramana Way,” each issue of which is always a delight to read.

Thank you for sending the CDs. They are eagerly awaited.

Once, when traveling from the holy RMCL to Sri Ramanasramam escorted by your beloved Appa, we conversed, in the Light of Sri Bhagavan’s Grace and Supreme Knowledge, about the nature of the mind, the practice that destroys the mind, what is meant by “freedom from thought” and such. Here is the gist of what was discussed.

In truth, there is no mind, of any kind or form, at all, in the Self, which is the sole-existent Reality.

If an existent mind is imagined to be, it is an illusion or a misperception of Consciousness, which is actually ever without modification.

The root of the mind, as Sri Ramana has explained, is the “I,” or ego-assumption. Thus, the mind is only “I” in various guises. If there is not inquiry, if the path to know the mind’s nature is not yet pursued, the mind appears as a bundle of thoughts, as explained by the Maharshi, apart from which there is no form of the mind. Ignorance is only misidentification, which manifests in various imagined forms within the mind. One of them, which is pivotal, is the misidentification with the body.

Freedom from thought or destruction of the mind is essential. Initially, such is the sufficient focus of an inward turned mind to pursue the spiritual quest, unobstructed by the ridicu-

lous ramblings conjured up by an extroverted mind. From that, freedom from thought is the ability to discriminate as ignorance the thought forms and patterns that are based upon misidentification. This causes them to be abandoned. From that comes the discerning of Consciousness that is beyond thought as distinct from thought. With a steady poise in the “I” by inquiry, the ignorance and the thoughts that form such or sprout from such, vanish. When we ask, “For whom are the thoughts? Who am I?,” the very supposition of an existent mind or existent thought disappears. This is absolute freedom from thought or complete “destruction” of the mind, for in the limitless, undifferentiated Self, such things have never been created.

This, in brief, is the gist of what that dear devotee of Bhagavan, Sri A. R. Natarajan, and I discussed during the journey. It is related here in the event it is of interest.

No matter the up or down, truly, just as the Self is utterly unchanging, so Sri Ramana’s omnipresent Grace is ever there, all around and within you, to such an extent that we know that there is really nothing to us but Him. The bliss of such Grace erases without a trace whatever was imagined in the mind.

Sasvati sends her love. Please convey our love and best regards to

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[Upon the publication of Saddarsanam and an Inquiry into the Revelation of Truth and Oneself and Advaita Devatam, copies were sent to Sri Ramanasramam, among others. In a response, the following was received from Sri Ramanasramam. A previous response requested price information. Nome’s reply follows. As usual, names have been omitted here, especially in consideration of the point stated in the initial response.]

From: Sri Ramanasramam

Sent: Friday, August 14, 2009

Dear Sri Nome,

Further to our email of 15/8 flashed to you at 10.39 am, I

am compelled to state: I was just reading your Introduction in *Saddarsanam*. When “Nome” does not exist, how can names like “. . . & . . .” find place in the book? Sri Bhagavan is the only ONE in Sri Ramanasramam always acting in action. While it may be all right to specify the names of authors of publications for identifying the books, it may be better to avoid mention of others.

Yours in Bhagavan,

Dear Sri . . . ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your two messages.

It can readily be seen that, while the content of devotion to Sri Bhagavan and reveling in his sublime teachings is the same as that to which all devotees of Sri Ramana are accustomed, some of the manner of expression, most noticeably the format of the books, is, in some respects, a little different. This, it is hoped, will not detract or distract from the essential message. Whether or not either or both of them are suitable for Sri Ramanasramam’s book depot is not known by me.

As for the price of the books: the cost is allowing us at SAT to joyfully give them to you for free, should you decide that these books may serve some purpose for devotees there. It would be unthinkable for us to receive funds from Sri Ramanasramam. The treasure of Grace and Knowledge bestowed by the Guru is immeasurably vast and precious beyond description. What little we are able to offer is symbolic of our heartfelt gratitude.

As for the appearance of the names of . . . and . . . in the introduction, your point is, of course, true and very well stated: “Sri Bhagavan is the only ONE in Sri Ramanasramam always acting in action.” Please permit me to offer some explanation, albeit a bit light-heartedly. In accordance with this understanding, it may also be said that it can be considered well-established that, when devotees fondly mention, with regard, other devotees, even thankful for their devotion and the selfless service that manifests such, it is actually the Existence of the Guru that is acknowledged and praised. The Guru is within them,

indeed is their very Being, without there really being any “them” or “their,” but only Him and His. So, it is Sri Bhagavan who is acknowledged in the introductions, even if this is also expressed in the names and forms of His devotees. Thus, to paraphrase the well-known passage of the Upanishad, the devotees are loved for the sake of the Self, the . . . of Sri Ramanasramam is loved for the sake of the Self. Having surrendered your bodies, minds, etc., to Sri Bhagavan, they and their activities belong to Him completely. They have become implements in His hands, and mention, with respect and love, of the implements held and wielded by those divine hands, serves only to glorify that God who holds them and who is the one Power and One Existence in all. That One is and always will be Sri Ramana. Thus, any fault in expressing thankfulness in the introductions ought to be excused due to the sincerity of motive, and likewise should that accidentally happen again in the future.

In light of “Sri Bhagavan is the only ONE in Sri Ramanasramam always acting in action,” the natural humility and purity of heart are revealed. Such are considered praiseworthy by the wise. Of course, this deep humility and purity of heart manifest as a refusal to accept expressions of gratitude and a redirecting even of the appearance of such to Sadguru Ramana, which is also lauded by the wise. So, as you can see, I now need to be excused again for this “problem” of loving appreciation for you who are dear.

Awaiting your further response, at your leisure, and remaining One with you in Him,

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome



Our Hindu Heritage

The Significance of Aarti, Vibhuti, & Kunkuma. . .

Sri Ramana Maharshi said, “Karpura aarti is symbolic of the burning away of the mind by the light of illumination, vibhuti

(sacred ashes) is Siva (Absolute Being) and kunkuma (vermilion powder) is Sakti (Consciousness). Vibhuti is of two kinds: Para vibhuti and apara vibhuti. The sacred ashes are of the latter class. The para is what remains over after all the dross has been burnt away by the Fire of Realization. It is Absolute Being.” - Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, #89

Bhagavan Ramana tells us that vibhuti is Siva. Thus, his entire body is besmeared with vibhuti. Siva devotees generally apply vibhuti in three lines upon the forehead. In Advaita Vedanta, the three lines represent the burning up of the triads such as: knower, knowing, and known; experiencer, experience, and that which is experienced; the three bodies or forms of experience consisting of the gross (the world), the subtle (the mind) and the causal (reflected light of Consciousness); the three gunas consisting of satva (a mind inclined toward light or that which is spiritual), rajas (an agitated mind, a mind that has not been brought under control through spiritual practice), and tamas (a mind covered in inertia, indolence, dullness, darkness); the three cities destroyed by Siva known as waking, dreaming and deep sleep; misidentification with the body, the mind, and the ego. He further tells us that kunkuma is Sakti—Consciousness. It represents the Power of the Self—Knowledge—the real nature of which is Consciousness.

Therefore, Advaita Vedantans who worship Siva will adorn their foreheads with vibhuti and kunkuma, thus being “adorned” with Being-Consciousness.



Announcements

Thank You...

The selfless service we do here to help maintain the temple is prompted by the love we have in our hearts for this teaching. We do not desire acknowledgement for such. We would, though, like to thank all of the folks who perform service at our temple...

Bob Haber: keeping the bathrooms clean, watering plants, sweeping the walkways, cleanup after events, cleaning the temple; Kathy Rogers: maintaining residential rentals, overseeing

property repairs, providing meals at retreats; Claude Rogers: temple repairs; Michael Polam: maintaining the “meditation garden” behind the temple; Ryan Shaw: maintaining the temple grounds gardens; Tim Frank: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Myra Taylor: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, providing prasad after satsang, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Raman Muthukrishnan: running the bookstore including mail order service, maintaining the website, providing prasad after satsang; Sangeeta Muthukrishnan: helping with the bookstore mail order, organizing things around the temple and providing meals at retreats; Wimala Brown: providing meals at retreats and prasad after satsang; Dhanya Nambirajan: singing during special events, providing meals at retreats, cleanup after pujas; Ganesh Sadasivan: organizing special events including singing, recitation, and chanting; Eric Ruetz: editing and mastering all recordings of satsangs and special events, providing meals at retreats, securing the temple; Jim Clark: securing and maintaining safety at the temple, lighting candles at meditation events; Richard Clarke: providing incense for the temple and helping with book orders from India; Nome: temple grounds maintenance, writing books, administrative stuff, general help wherever needed including spiritual guidance; Sasvati: preparing books for publishing; Advait Sadasivan: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play.

Upcoming Special Events

Adi Sankara Jayanti: May 18, 2010.

The Self-Knowledge Retreat: May 28-30, 2010.