



Society of Abidance in Truth



Reflections

April May June 2011



Invocation

*Glory to you, my Sadguru, who has, with natural ease,
Carried me across the originless ocean of the sorrow of
worldly existence in which I was submerged,
By the ferry of Knowledge
To the far shore of the immemorial Supreme Brahman!
Glory to you, my Guru, who has inspired me,
Submerged in several severe sorrows—thinking that I am
the perishable body—
Into realizing that I am the afflictionless Supreme
Brahman
And conferred undivided Bliss on me.*

Song of Ribhu, 44:16

*Glory to the Guru,
Of the nature of the undivided Absolute, who has
appeared as an embodiment of Grace, and who has
taken me into your Grace!
Glory to the supreme Guru,
Who is eminently fitted to be the rare refuge in all the
varieties of worlds!
Glory to the Guru,
Who is blemishless, partless, peerless, and pervasive
without a pause!
Glory to the Guru,
Who is the Supreme Diva, the higher than the highest,
the Supreme Self, the Supreme Brahman!*

Song of Ribhu, 44:18

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Inconceivable, Yet Self-evident

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

His Silence, His Being, is ineffable, indeed, inconceivable. He is known only by Himself. To Himself, He is self-evident. Where differentiation is impossible, that in which there is nothing “else” whatsoever, He is. If inconceivable, how is one to know Him? In the disappearance of the illusion of existing as a separate individual, we can be said to know Him, That, the sole-existent Reality. The Reality is self-evident to itself. Who is to conceive otherwise? Only to an illusion could the Reality of the Self appear as if unknown, but an illusion is not real at all. So, how could its ignorance exist? He, the inconceivable One, is the self-evident One.

Inconceivable, yet self-evident, is His teaching. Just as “there are not two selves, one to know, or realize, the other,” as He has instructed, so there are not two selves, one to be ignorant of the other. The means to realize the Truth, which He reveals and is, is summed up in the question “Who am I?”, yet the true significance of the inquiry is the inconceivable Knowledge regarding the self-evident Truth of the Self. Every particle of His teaching shines fully with the light of this Knowledge. The self-evident Truth is the ever-existent Self, which, being of the nature of the innermost, nonobjective Consciousness, is ever inconceivable. Transcendent of ideas learned and forgotten, His spiritual instruction shines with the same full power of His absolute Silence. His sparkling, eloquent, spoken and written instruction, always brimming with exquisite, nondual clarity that leaves no darkness, reveals the formless yet exceedingly precise path to realize the formless. His teaching is the shining of Reality, itself, and reveals the self-existent, which is the self-evident. Who can

say what His teaching is? It is nonobjective and inconceivable, yet entirely real and self-evident, the very revelation of Reality in which Being is Knowledge. It is never a known or unknown concept, and it stands as the eternal revelation of the eternal, the Self's revelation of itself.

His life shines with a sublime holiness that is the pinnacle of spiritual perfection. However much we laud it, our praise can hardly describe it. All, and more, that is needed to wisely approach everything in life is fully explained by His life. He may be said to be the very manifestation of the unmanifested Brahman, the Self, yet His identity as That renders even such a description futile, for it imagines differences where there are none. Even still, He shows that life in That, as That, is natural and innate, for such is “the egoless state, the only real state that there is,” as He has declared. Yet, His life is the Existence of the Self, which neither is born nor perishes. Unborn and immortal, His Existence is inconceivable, yet it is self-evident, for He is the Self of all forever.

His grace is immense, vaster than the vastest, with innumerable manifestations, while its nature remains utterly transcendent. Did he not declare that “grace is of the Self”? How can one conceive of such grace? All the thoughts of it and different experiences of it are still only an infinitesimal particle of it. As the Self is ever existent, so His grace is ever existent. Just as one cannot actually be separate from the Self, so it is impossible to be outside of grace. Knowledge of it in any manner whatsoever is also His grace. For those who are devoted to Him, relying on His liberating spiritual teachings for their freedom from all illusion, their hearts full of love for Him, depending on Him for their peace amidst all experiences, seeking refuge in Him, and finding bliss in Him, His grace shines as self-evident.

Inconceivable, yet self-evident is He. Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi: the inconceivable, self-evident One. Who can conceive of Him, yet who can be apart from Him or not know Him? The Being of real existence, the Consciousness of true knowledge, and the Bliss of all happiness is He.

He, our only true Self, in us abides, and we in Him, the infinite, dwell. He, the eternal, is always with us, and we, who are nothing else, are ever in Him.

What little has been said here is only of Him. That He is utterly inconceivable is quite self-evident. May we ever remain blissfully absorbed in Him, the One without a second.

Om Sri Ramanarpanamastu

Written on this sacred Jayanti of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, December 23, 2010, by Nome.



The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*)

January 26, 1946

Yesterday, a newly arrived Andhra youth told Bhagavan about the vagaries of the senses to which Bhagavan said, “All that is due to the mind. Set it right.” “That is all right, Swami, but however much I try to reduce this anger, it comes on again and again. What shall I do?” said the poor boy.

“Oh! Is that so? Then, get angry with that anger. It will be all right,” said Bhagavan. All the people in the hall burst out laughing. A person who gets angry with everything in the world, if only he introspects and inquires why he does not get angry with his anger itself, will he not really overcome all anger?

January 31, 1946

This morning, after reading an article in the newspaper about paths beyond the Sun and the higher worlds thereafter, Bhagavan said, “They write a lot about the paths beyond the Sun and other planets and the blissful worlds above them. All those

worlds also are like this world. There is nothing specially great about them. Here, a song is being transmitted over the radio. Last time, it was from Madras. Now, it is from Tiruchirapalli. If you tune in again, it will be from Mysore. All these places are in Tiruvannamali within this short time. It is the same way with the other worlds. You have only to turn your minds to them. You can see them all in one moment. But what is the use? You merely go about from place to place, get tired and disgusted. Where is shanti (peace)? If you want it, you must know the eternal truth. If you cannot know that, the mind will not get absorbed in shanti.”

Similarly, someone inquired of Bhagavan some time back, “People talk of Vaikunta, Kailasa, Indraloka, Chandraloka, etc. Do they really exist?”

Bhagavan replied, “Certainly. You can rest assured that they all exist. There also, a Swami like me will be found seated on a couch and disciples will also be seated around him. They will ask something, and he will say something in reply. Everything will be more or less like this. What of that? If one sees Chandraloka, he will ask for Indraloka, and after Indraloka, Vaikunta, and after Vaikunta, Kailasa, and so on. And the mind goes on wandering. Where is shanti? If shanti is required, the only correct method of securing it is by Self-inquiry. Through Self-inquiry, Self-Realization is possible. If one realizes the Self, one can see all these worlds within oneself. The source of everything is one’s own Self, and if one realizes the Self, one will not find anything different from the Self. Then, these questions will not arise. There may or may not be a Vaikunta or a Kailasa, but it is a fact that you are here, isn’t it? How are you here? Where are you? After you know about these things, you can think of all those worlds.”

February 1, 1946

One morning in 1944, a disciple approach Bhagavan with an air of supplication and said, “Bhagavan, I would like to read books and find out a path whereby I can attain Mukti, but I do not know how to read. What shall I do? How can I realize Mukti?”

Bhagavan said, “What does it matter if you are illiterate? It is enough if you know your own Self.”

“All people here are reading books, but I am not able to do that. What shall I do?” he said.

Stretching out his hand toward the disciple, Bhagavan said, “What do you think the book is teaching? You see yourself and then see me. It is like asking you to see yourself in a mirror. The mirror shows only what is on the face. If you see the mirror after washing your face, the face will appear to be clean. Otherwise, the mirror will say that there is dirt here, come back after washing. A book does the same thing. If you read the book, after realizing the Self, everything will be easily understood. If you read it before realizing that Self, you will see ever so many defects. It will say, ‘First set your self right, and then see me.’ That is all. First see your Self. Why do you worry yourself about all that book learning?”

The disciple was satisfied and went away encouraged. Another disciple who has the courage to ask questions on such matters took up the thread of the conversation and said, “Bhagavan, you have given him a peculiar interpretation.”

Bhagavan replied, “What is peculiar in it? It is all true. What books did I read when I was young? What did I learn from others? I was always immersed in meditation. After sometime, Palaniswamy used to bring from various people a number of books containing Vedantic literature and used to read them. He used to make many mistakes in reading. He was elderly and was not well-read. He was, however, anxious to read. He used to read with tenacity and religious faith. Because of that, I used to feel happy. So, when I took those books in order to read them myself, and tell him what was in them, I found that what all was written therein had already been experienced by myself. I was surprised. I wondered, ‘What is all this? It is already written here in these books about myself.’ That was so in every one of those books. As whatever is written there has already been experienced by myself, I used to understand the text in no time. What took him twenty days to read, I used to finish reading in two days. He used to return the books and bring others. That was how I came to know about what was written in the books.”

One of the disciple said, “That is perhaps why Sivarakasam Pillai, while writing Bhagavan’s biography, referred to Bhagavan

even at the outset as, ‘One who is a Brahma Jnani without knowing the name of Brahman.’”

Bhagavan said, “Yes. Yes. That is right. That is why it is said that one should first know about oneself before reading a book. If that is done, it will be known that what is written in the book is only an epitome of what is really experienced by oneself. If one does not see one’s Self but reads a book, one finds a number of defects.”

“Is it possible for all to become like Bhagavan? The use of a book at least helps one to set right one’s defects,” said the disciple.

“That is so. I did not say that reading is no help. I merely said that there is no need for illiterate people to think that they can never attain Moksha on that account and thereby feel disheartened. See how depressed he was when he asked me. If the facts are not explained properly, he will feel still further depressed,” said Bhagavan.

February 2, 1946

Two years back, when our elder brother came to the Asramam, Mr. Manne Venkataramayya, retired judge, was here. It seems he was sick sometime back and got cured but not completely. After listening to the details of the sickness from early morning until 8:30 PM, Bhagavan said, “Yes, indeed! The body itself is a disease. If the body gets a disease, it means that the original disease has got another disease. If you really want this new disease not to trouble you, you must first take the required medicine for the original disease so that the later disease—that is, the disease of the disease—does not affect you. What is the use of worrying about the secondary disease instead of trying to find out a method of getting rid of the primary disease? Therefore, allow this new disease to go its own way, and think of a medicine for the original disease.”



Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

[This is a transcript of what was said during an evening event at the SAT temple on May 21, 2010. Of course, the long periods of silence are not transcribed.]

(Silence)

Om, Om, Om

Let's dive deep into Sri Bhagavan's teachings. If you brought a copy of *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* with you this evening, we will take up on the entry dated July 3, 1936, dialogue number 226.

A visitor from Tirukoilur asked if the study of the sacred books will reveal the truth.

The Maharshi responds: That will not suffice.

The disciple asked: Why not?

The Maharshi responded: Samadhi, transcendental state of mind, alone can reveal it. Thoughts cast a veil over Reality, and so it cannot be clear in states other than Samadhi.

The disciple then asked: Is there thought in Samadhi? Or, is there not?

The Maharshi replies: There will only be the feeling "I am" and no other thoughts.

The disciple then said: Is not "I am" a thought?

The Maharshi answered: The egoless "I am" is not thought. It is realisation. The meaning or significance of "I" is God. The experience of "I am" is to be still.

The question was initially if the study of the sacred books will reveal the truth.

Scriptural texts, sacred books, contain a profound message. They explain the teachings regarding the nature of the absolute Self and they serve as a means of explanation of negation of what is not real, what is not the Self. Both the end and the means are explained in those texts, but is reading or studying the texts sufficient in itself?

The Maharshi says, **“That will not suffice.”**

Why not? Because Self-Knowledge, which is Knowledge of the Absolute, is nonobjective in nature. Not only is it nonobjective in nature, but it is thought-transcendent. So, the mere reading of a book, however holy, however exalted the text is, will not suffice. Something else is needed. Note that the scriptures are not decried, but some other ingredient is necessary. There must be an interior Knowledge, an interior inquiry that is nonobjective in nature, for the revelation of Self-Knowledge, or Self-Realization as we call it.

The question by the disciple was, **“Why not?”**

Why will not just the reading of the texts that tell you about these things so you can learn about them not suffice?

The Maharshi says, **“Samadhi...”** *and the translator has put into parenthesis (transcendental state of mind)* **“alone can reveal it. Thoughts cast a veil over Reality, and so it cannot be clear in states other than Samadhi.”**

Why does the study of the teachings, however assiduous one may be in that study, not suffice? It is because the real sacred Knowledge is something nonobjective, entirely experiential, interior, interior even to the mind, while the books are relatively external. However much one may learn about the truth, the truth is beyond that. The only way to know it is to interiorly realize it or experience it. In order to experience Brahman, or the Truth, you must be absorbed in it. It can not be known as an object. If it is nonobjective, it requires the dissolution of whatever one's present identity is. Such as indicated by “samadhi”—it is absorption. Absorption in what? In pure Being, in pure Consciousness, which is also pure Bliss. Absorption signifies the dissolution of one's previous identity, that is, one's misidentifications. How else is the Self to be known? Samadhi is absorption. So, it means

that your entire sense of identity, your very existence, is absorbed in That, so that no separate “I” remains who would be ignorant of That. Samadhi is absorption. If the misidentification reasserts itself later, the samadhi is referred to as an experience of profound absorption. If the misidentifications do not recur and the samadhi is permanent, it is known as the natural state, the very state of Existence itself. From the standpoint of the mind, there is entrance into samadhi and possible exit out of samadhi. In samadhi itself, the ideas of entrance and exit are entirely absent. They are not possible. The only way, therefore, to know about samadhi is to be in samadhi. Otherwise, one is attempting to know the Real through the instruments of the unreal, to know about the Self through the instruments of the non-Self, and that will not work, just as it will not work in the case of the books.

The Maharshi says, **“Samadhi alone can reveal it.”**

To know the highest Truth, know yourself. To know yourself, remain absorbed in the Self, as the Self. The inquiry that results in such samadhi is a negation of the misidentifications. In Vedanta, we meet with means expressed as sravana, manana, nididhyasana, and samadhi. Listening, reflection, profound, continuous meditation, and samadhi. Though presented serially, there is no rule that they can not occur simultaneously. But the truth is known in samadhi, that is, in that state in which you have lost your sense of separate individuality, in which you are not a perceiver, not a thinker, not an experiencer, but you abide in That—the Self—as That itself.

“Samadhi alone can reveal it.” It is the self-luminosity of the innate Consciousness. **“Thoughts cast a veil over Reality, and so it cannot be clear in states other than Samadhi.”** From the Maharshi’s answer, we are to understand that samadhi is a thought-transcendent state. Thoughts cast a veil, as it were, over Reality. The Reality is pure Consciousness—infinite, without beginning and end, entirely formless, and homogeneous. Thought is the imagination of some kind of modification occurring in that Consciousness. Thought is always of something. It is an objectification of the nonobjective truth. It is a form or limitation superimposed upon the formless, the unlimited. All the thoughts, whatever form they may take, are rooted

in the misidentification. In samadhi, there is neither world nor thought. Indeed, the world is only in the mind, so to be free of thought and abide in samadhi is to be free of both so-called subjective and objective notions. Then, Reality comprehends itself. Such is Self-Knowledge.

“Thoughts cast a veil over Reality, and so it cannot be clear in states other than Samadhi.” No thought is the Reality; no thought is yourself. When you cease to think of yourself, but know yourself, you realize the Self. When you cease to think in terms of, “This is real, that is real,” and free of “this” and “that,” free of the objectified duality, Existence remains as it is, and there is the self-revelation of Reality.

The question from the disciple was then, **“Is there thought in Samadhi? Or, is there not?”**

The Maharshi responds, **“There will only be the feeling “I am” and no other thoughts.”** Not only will there be no other thoughts about one’s self, but since thoughts of one’s self actually constitute the thoughts conceived of as the objective sphere of experience of the world, there will not be thoughts of that either. Indeed, in the pure “I am,” that is, in pure Existence, there is nothing to form a thought. The idea that thought is existent is simply another thought. What truly exists is utterly mind-transcendent. To know that with its own light is called samadhi, and that, being nonobjective, is the nature of the “I.” So he says, **“There will only be the feeling “I am...”** That is the feeling of Existence, itself, with no other thought. Enter into this yourself by profound inquiry and cease to regard as yourself or as real anything but the Existence that is called here “I am.” **“There will only be the feeling “I am” and no other thoughts.”** When you inquire and remain absorbed in the truth of your own Being, not any of the ideas you have ever had prevail. All of them turn out to be just so much imagination. One real Existence is. One real Consciousness is. It is not modified, and so it is not formed into thoughts. It is absolutely one, so there is nothing else to think about. There is just the feeling, “I am.” That is just Being—only Being.

The next question was, **“Is not “I am” a thought?”**

The Maharshi responds, **“The egoless “I am” is not thought. It is realisation. The meaning or significance of “I” is God. The experience of “I am” is to Be Still.”**

The ego notion is undoubtedly a thought. In fact, it may be regarded as the weakest of all thoughts because it really does not have much form of its own. It is a vague assumption with no substance, no root, and no actual beginning, though if you see this, that is its actual end. The Maharshi says, though, that this “I am” or real Being is egoless and most certainly is not a thought. What comes after, so to speak, is the ego. What is afterward are just concepts, just thoughts. That which is before the ego, which is without an ego, is not conceived and is no mere thought. What you think of, including the idea of “I,” of an individual, is just thought and is to be dismissed as not being your identity, not being a true definition for who you are. The Existence that you truly are, non-individualized, not an object, not a multiplicity, and without any form, is entirely real and is most certainly not a thought. You are not a thought, and everything you ever imagined yourself to be is just a bunch of thoughts. There is no connection between these, as there can not be a connection between the real and the unreal.

“The egoless “I am” is not thought. It is realisation.” It is the Reality. That is the Self which exists. That Self is itself the realization. From the false standpoint of the individual, realization is conceived of as a state, an occurrence, an event that will come about, or an attainment to be had. When, through the profound absorption in Self-Knowledge, you realize your Self, the realization is found to be not an occurrence, not an event, does not happen in time, and is not a new attainment. It is the eternal Existence. The Self is the Reality and the Self is the Realization. The one who is ignorant of it, who is unrealized, never existed. This is what is comprehended. Who then realizes what? The real Self is. It alone is perpetually. It is the Reality, and it is the Realization. To comprehend this in your own experience, inquire in such a manner that you abandon the falsely assumed individuality, or ego. Then, all of this will make perfect sense.

“The meaning or significance of “I” is God.” There is no other actual meaning to “I.” Whatever is small or limited is not “I,” just as God is not limited. Whatever is transient is not “I,” just as God is not transient. Whatever is dependent or relative is not “I,” just as God is absolute, self-existent and non-dependent. For the “I,” there is no other, just as, for God, there is nothing other. Do not regard anything as “I” that is not God.

The Maharshi concludes his answer with, **“The experience of “I am” is to Be Still.”** It is to remain as you truly are: unmoving Being. What does it mean to be still? To remain as you are without swerving into misidentification, without moving into attachments, and without traveling through delusion. Such swerving, such traveling, is entirely illusory. The references to “I am,” “God,” and “Be Still,” are clearly Biblical, probably from Exodus and from Psalms, although there are mention of these things also in the New Testament. The same thing is spoken of in the Vedas. The scriptures declare it, as was mentioned in the beginning, but you must know it by profound absorption in it. The Maharshi says that you must know it in samadhi. Adi Sankaracharya has said the same in his *Vivekacudamani* and elsewhere. Be sure that your inquiry, your meditation is entirely inwardly experiential. Then, such samadhi will result In Self-Knowledge, you will find that that which is called “samadhi” is sahaja—innate, natural samadhi. It does not come, and it does not go.

July 4th, 1936

The Master observed: Being of the nature of Bliss why does one continue to crave for happiness? To be rid of that craving is itself salvation. The Scriptures say, “You are that.” The imparting of that knowledge is their purpose. The realization must be by your finding out who you are and abiding as That, i.e., your Self. To be repeating, “I am that” or “not this” is only a waste of time. For the worthy disciple, the work lies within himself and not without.

As Bhagavan was descending the Hill, one of the workers just outside the Asramam stopped work and was about

to prostrate before the Master. Then the Master said: To engage in your duty is the true prostration. The Master's attendant asked: How?

The Maharshi responded: To perform one's duty carefully is the greatest service to God. (Then smiling, he entered the hall.)

“Being of the nature of Bliss, why does one continue to crave for happiness?” That is the funny thing about the illusion of which this entire samsara is composed. We think that we are missing something when we are not. In fact, we are that which we think we are missing. Not only do we have it, we are it. Bliss is not merely a possession. Bliss is identical with Being. Being Bliss, how could you think that happiness was missing? Once it is considered missing, you search for it, craving for it. You crave it because you know that it is the right state for you, but how is it to be found? If something is thought to be lost but is not really lost, how do you find it? Or, if you thought yourself lost, how do you find yourself?

“Being of the nature of Bliss why does one continue to crave for happiness? To be rid of that craving is itself salvation” How to get rid of the seeking for happiness? You cannot get rid of it unless you fulfill it. You can declare to yourself, “Craving go away,” but it will not go away. You can say that you will stop seeking for happiness, but you will seek it even in that very statement. To end the craving for happiness, you must be happy. To end the searching, you must find. The answer lies in true Knowledge—the wisdom that recognizes that what you are searching for is within you. Then, craving for external things ceases, and all that remains is the singular desire for Liberation, or Self-Realization as we call it. Enquiring within to know yourself, you find that you were not missing at all. The Bliss had been overlooked. It is the overlooking of your own Being. Who overlooks? Just that inquiry does away with the overlooking. What remains has no craving but is the perfect fullness. In that, you are happy. In that, you are happiness.

The Maharshi continues his instruction: **“To be rid of that craving is itself salvation”** You save yourself from your own ignorance, free yourself of the craving for happiness, and seek it

within. Find out, “Who am I?” Then he says, **“The Scriptures say, “You are that,”** Tat Tvam Asi. That you are. That is Brahman or the Supreme Self. Such is the highest Bliss and absolute Being, absolute Consciousness. The scriptures declare, “You are That.” This is the essential Knowledge to be inwardly realized—“You are That.” If you are That, you are never in need again. If you are That, you can never lose your happiness.

“The imparting of that knowledge is their purpose.” What is the purpose of the scriptures? He has declared it—to impart the Knowledge of the nondual truth. The scriptures declare that you are That. Inwardly realize it by a profound inquiry. It is not so much by repeating the phrase, “You are That,” but by a profound inquiry in which you will experientially realize what the ancient sages meant when they said, “You are That.”

“The realization must be by your finding out who you are and abiding as That, i.e., your Self. To be repeating, “I am that” or “not this” is only a waste of time.” You don’t want to go on repeating, “I am That,” “I am That;” you want to know that, the truth of that statement. Likewise is it with every other scriptural statement. You don’t want to just read and then mentally develop an idea of “neti, neti,” “not this, not this,” in relation to everything else. What was originally intended by the sages who gave this instruction is that you are to approach with “neti, neti,” “not this, not this,” thereby removing everything objective, everything that is not the Self from yourself. You ought to do that very thing and not just repeat it. Follow the instructions and realize their essential Knowledge—“not this,” “You are That.” One should not merely go on repeating the instructions in the form of an affirmation. That, the Maharshi said, would be a waste of time because it would be reducing, as it were, mind-transcendent Knowledge of Reality to a mental thought, and that thought would be, for the most part, rather unrelated to the original message, even if the words that were used to express them were identical. To actually inquire and free yourself from all false definitions, “not this, not this,” and to realize the quintessential truth that, “I am That,” what the sages said, “That You Are,” “Tat, Tvam, Asi,” is, indeed, the truth. To recognize within yourself how true that is, that is the thing to realize.

“For the worthy disciple, the work lies within himself and not without.” Note that the definition of without here is everything, both gross and subtle, that is objective. Words and thoughts are regarded as without. He says, **“...the work lies within...”** which is interior to the body, interior to the mind, and interior to speech. Interior means nonobjective. Your sadhana or practice revolves around that point that is not a thought and not a thing, but is rather the very core of your Existence. That ought to know itself as it is. If Being knows itself, not objectively but as it is, in its own light, by its own light, that is the sought-for Bliss, that is the sought-for Liberation, and that is the Reality and the Realization.

The next paragraph is an anecdote:

As Bhagavan was descending the Hill, one of the workers just outside the Asramam stopped work and was about to prostrate before the Master. Then the Master said: To engage in your duty is the true prostration. The Master’s attendant asked: How?

The Maharshi responded: To perform one’s duty carefully is the greatest service to God. (Then smiling, he entered the hall.)

The person who is doing the work on the hill wanted to offer a namaskaram, a prostration. There is nothing wrong in doing such. That is not the Maharshi’s point; he is not criticizing. He says, **“To engage in your duty is the true prostration.”** To engage in his activity in the same spirit that he wished to give his prostration, that is a true prostration. What else does prostration actually signify but the surrender of all and the abandonment and subsidence of the ego-notion. This is what he means when he says, **“To perform one’s duty carefully is the greatest service to God.”** If it is done carefully: to truly be done carefully, it must be done without a trace of the ego. Otherwise, false ideas will creep in, and it won’t be truly careful, and it won’t be an offering to the Lord. Egolessness, meditation, inquiry, devotion, surrender and such, are not reserved for particular activities or for particular times. These ought to be always. The whole life ought to shine in Bliss. The whole life ought to be an offering. The entirety of the mind should be in continuous prostration to

Sri Bhagavan. There should not be a dust mote or a speck of space left for the ego to claim.

Question: Is that very different from mindfulness?

N.: What do you mean by mindfulness?

Q.: Being mindful with one's actions or work. Absolving yourself in doing it well. It is called mindfulness in some other practices, but he is not talking about that is he?

N.: From a superficial reading, there would be apparent similarities, because he says to do your work carefully. Merely doing work carefully by itself divested of any other spiritual practice, though, would not result in realization. There are people who do not have an inkling of this spiritual orientation who may do their work carefully on a physical level, paying rapt attention to the sensory data that is coming their way, but they do not get Self-Realization for all that; they do not get Brahman-hood or Budda-hood for that. There must be something else to it.

Q.: There is something missing in that practice?

N.: Yes. How would just paying attention to the activity or to the sensory impressions reveal Reality?

Q.: Being at one with the action.

N.: How do you become one with the action?

Q.: Fully experiencing the sensual requirements of the activity.

N.: How does that reveal the eternal?

Q.: It doesn't, does it?

N.: So, there must be something deeper to it. Not to lose track of the truth and not to give rise to an ego notion is the proper performance of an activity. Not to take up the false notion of being a performer of action, to refrain from conceiving of the senses and the world as real even while the senses may be engaged in their activities, is helpful. If this approach is taken, what you find is eternal.

Another Questioner: So, that would be samadhi? Not taking your senses and the world and thought to be real? In other words, looking at the previous dialogue about samadhi...

N.: So, where is the consistency in the teaching? There is a consistency between what he said about samadhi and now what he says about activity. Where is the common thread?

Q.: In the experience of that samadhi or realization.

N.: If no ego notion arises, with its concomitant ideas of the world, etc., there is samadhi even in action. In action, there is no notion of being in activity. This is why the *Gita* refers to abiding in samadhi in Brahman-action, in which the entire activity is only Brahman, the one who performs the activity is only Brahman, the purpose of the activity is Brahman, the entirety that contains it is only Brahman. This is samadhi in action. One who has this samadhi sees activity in inactivity and inactivity in activity. As the *Gita* says, he understands all about action and all about non-action.

Q.: It must be ultimately clear though that thought could not limit one's experience. It seems like activity for me requires a train of thoughts.

N.: What is the substance therein? When you experience a thought or a series of thoughts, and thoughts are about some "thing," although the some "thing" is actually only in the mind, for there is no external world and all is just of the mind, what actually is the substance in all that?

Q.: The substance would not be the objective part of it.

N.: The form of the thought is not a substance. It is merely the appearance.

Q.: Yes, that really has no substance because it disappears.

N.: Just as a sense perception is not actually the existence that is there.

Q.: Yes. It could not be that. It has to be what comes before it.

N.: Now, if you truly prostrate, if you see the Maharshi coming down the hill and you decide to do a full prostration, with

nothing lifted off the ground, not your hands, not your feet, not your nose, nothing, a full prostration, because you are impelled to do so, that state in which you would have abandoned everything, in which the “I” subsided, in which there remains He and only He, in all His infinity and all His eternity, that should be the experience while in action. That state can be always. It is about being That that one should take great care. The scripture says that carelessness is death. Taking great care with this Knowledge is immortality. The first sentence is from the scripture; the second one I added.

Q.: Yes, because you are recognizing what is really precious. But, sometimes there is confusion. But to really see where it comes from is everything.

Another Questioner: I always wanted to be in Ramana’s presence. I have always desired that very deeply. Hearing these stories, they are not “stories.” It is really hearing Ramana and his teaching and what I want most I am. Ramana taught me that is who I am. That is the teaching, and it ends all the suffering. It frees oneself from it, and that is the greatest gift.

N.: He has not gone anywhere else. Imagine, if you would, that the person made a prostration and, for some reason such as maybe excessive exhaustion set in, while he was prostrating, he fell asleep. While sleeping, he dreamt. While dreaming, he thought that he was elsewhere, in another place far off in another time. Then, that fellow who was far off in another place and in another time said to himself, “If only Ramana were here, it would set everything right, and everything would be clear. Maybe, one day, I will see him, or, maybe, someday, I will go to that place.” Then, he thought to himself, “Ramana used to be. He was alive, and now he is dead. If only I had lived during those days. Ah, to be back there.” Now, by the Grace of that very Ramana he would get stirred from his sleep. In the recognition that he had only been dreaming of elsewhere and another thing and other ideas, the dream world would vanish away. He finds he has not moved; he finds that Ramana has not moved. He is exactly where he was when he started; only now he will sleep no more.

Dialogue 228, the same day.

At lunch a visitor from Nellore asked the Master for a tiny bit of food (prasada) from His dish.

The Maharshi responds: Eat without thinking of the ego. Then what you eat becomes Bhagavan's prasada.

After lunch the Master continued humorously: If I had given you one morsel from my plate, each one would ask for a morsel too. What will be left for me if I distribute the whole plate to others? So you see that it is not devotion. There is no significance in eating a morsel from my plate. Be a true devotee.

N.: Eat without thinking of the ego. This could be expanded to mean experience without thinking of the ego. If you experience without thinking of the ego, the entirety of your experience has become prasada.

Prasada means blessed food, or prasada means Grace. The word also has a meaning of bright clarity. Experience without the ego rising, and there is bright clarity and Grace everywhere. Eat without thinking of the ego, and you eat desire-free. Without thinking of the ego, bliss shines unveiled, and the craving for happiness, the attempt to get happiness externally, ceases. Imagine trying to get happiness from your food. It is just food; how is it going to give you happiness? If you know that and turn within, passing beyond desire, passing beyond imagination—and all that by the power of Grace—then, what you eat and what you experience is prasadam.

He finished by saying, **“Be a true devotee.”** He said that there was no significance in eating a morsel from his plate, and, if he gave one morsel, he would have to give a morsel to everyone, and soon there would be nothing left for him to eat. Some devotion that is: to make the swami starve! (laughter) What is a true devotee? The question is a profound one. What does it mean to be truly devoted? He has already given the answer: to rest without the ego-thought. A true devotee does not even exist as a true devotee, but only as That to which he is devoted. That is God, that is Guru, and that is the Self. These are three names for one and the same thing. For such a true devotee, the possi-

bility of bondage has become impossible. He is never lost, never forsaken, and never perishes. That which he loves, he is. He does not even have the thought that he is that, but he is that none the less.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Silence

Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti, Om

ॐ

From Yoga Vasishtha

(Continued from previous issues)

3:101:23

Together, they entered, sat, strolled, stopping at the entrances to the space and found three earthen cooking vessels therein that were assumed to be refined gold.

There, two had gone away (or, fallen into [pieces]), and one had become powder. They, with lofty (lit., long) minds, attentively pounded the powder into a form.

Therein, they enjoyed eating a considerable quantity of cooked food, which was ninety-nine dronas (buckets, large measures of grain) of food with a hundred dronas omitted.

The child princes invited three brahmanas, two of which were bodiless, and one's mouth did not, indeed, exist.

There, the hundred buckets (measures) of food was extracted and eaten (enjoyed) by the mouthless one. Inspired, the remaining food was certainly enjoyed (eaten) by those of royal birth.

The three princes, also having come to complete satisfaction, went away to that future town of those three sons of a king, indeed, abiding in happiness and such, proceeding on their chase (hunt).

This short narrative has been told by me for your faultless delight. Kuru, know this well in the heart, if you wish to consume that which is not yet consumed, and you will become wise.

Thus, Rama, the nurse told the young boy the charming short story, and the boy obtained satisfaction by the splendid, short narrative.

Rama, this was certainly told by me to you, the short story of the young boy, comparable to the short story of the mind, lotus-eyed one.

(to be continued)



Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Reflections on Dialog

by Jim Clark

Prostrations to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

His Instruction is the Silence of the Self.

- Dialog is the Grace of the Guru.
- Dialog is direct experience of the Sadguru's Self-Luminous-Being.
- Dialog reveals that He is within me.
- Dialog reveals there is no me. The Sadguru is the One-Self-Existent-Silent-Reality.
- In regular conversation, words reflect concepts. In Dialog, words reflect Direct Self-Experience.
- Dialog is Instruction—Self-Instruction. The Self Instructing Itself.
- In Dialog, the Instruction is Being-Knowing-Self.
- In Dialog, the Instruction is all about you—the only you there is. There is no other Instruction.
- Dialog reveals that all questions are just one question: Who am I?

- Dialog answers only one question: Who Am I? Who Am I is the very heart of Dialog.
- Dialog reveals that by questioning the nature of the questioner, all questions are answered.
- Dialog is the Self Revealing in Itself.
- Dialog reveals that all I need to know is my nature—my very Self.
- Dialog, once truly engaged in, continues until the apparent participants are absorbed in the Self, as the Self.
- Dialog may appear to be a conversation, two people discussing a topic. But dialog transcends individuality—transcends all concepts including bodies and thoughts—and even transcends the very words being spoken and heard. Like inquiry, Dialog doesn't add, it only reveals. Revealing that what I seek most ardently—Eternal Happiness-Peace-Love—turns out to be my very Self. I am who I seek.
- Dialog absorbs all creation, revealing the natural and eternal state of Silence.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya



From the Temple Archives

[This is a message from a seeker, slightly edited for the sake of brevity, followed by Nome's response.]

December 4, 2010

Hi Nome,

I hardly know how to conduct my words since I don't know how to perceive you.

I want to see what is in its wholeness. I will attain it soon. I wanted to know if it would be possible perhaps for yourself to give me shaktipat or if you could put me in contact with someone nearby me that could pass it on. My understanding of it may be wrong. I looked into the book I have of Bhagavan and couldn't quite understand the language. But my understanding led me to believe that awakening my kundalini through shaktipat could allow me to accelerate the process of awakening. So if you could let me know how best I can attain this or otherwise, I would appreciate it.

Love,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

You may find it worthwhile to inquire as to whether or not the Self is an object to be given or received. For it to be eternal, the nature of Self-Realization must be of a nature that is identical with the Self. Therefore, it must be free of duality, nonobjective, and timelessly existent.

It is ignorance alone that causes one to believe that oneself is different from the Self. Self-Knowledge alone destroys ignorance, as light causes darkness to vanish. Transient action cannot do so, for it is within the context of that very ignorance.

Shaktipata literally means the handing down, falling, bestowing, or flying of power. Alternatively, it may mean the "prostration of strength." One has to inquire to determine what is the true power and what is its source. True power lies in eternal peace. It is that which brings one from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality. How could such power be associated with a body or a subtle body? It is none other than the power of Consciousness, itself, which is eternal, formless, unborn, and imperishable. Know yourself.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A seeker who had a few months earlier returned to become a SAT member after a several years' absence wrote about being flooded by fond memories of her earlier satsang experiences, the value of her past friendship with a now-deceased SAT member, seeing the importance of intense inquiry and deep surrender, and questioning how she will become free of distractions. Here is Nome's response]

December 20, 2010

Dear ,

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Appearing in the context of sweet memories, there is an indestructible essence of true Knowledge, which is the actual loving experience, that is inextinguishable.

The body of Saraswati (Rike) may have perished, but that which she loved in the innermost recesses of her heart is unending.

It is evident that you have become aware of the preciousness of that which is spiritual: the Truth, Self-Knowledge, the Guru, the spiritual instruction, deep spiritual friendship, joyful devotion, holy books, etc. There is nothing in this world that can compare to the depth of happiness that is found or expressed in these.

Certainly, whenever you wish to visit here, you are warmly welcome. Obviously, the same is so for [name omitted].

The Self is not defined by the body or by location. It is within you, and it is truly you. The idea that you are distinct from the Self should dissolve. Such dissolution is accomplished by the profound inquiry to know the Self. Deep surrender is the same. For one who practices, illimitable happiness is found to be the natural state of the Self. Distractions, worries, and other forms of delusion are only ignorance. The more that you determine ignorance is just ignorance and not the truth, the more you will find yourself to be free of it. Ignorance always involves a mistaken notion about the source of happiness, what is real, or who you are. The profound Knowledge of the blissful, real Self, found by deep inquiry and thorough devotion, eliminates such ignorance, just as light is said to destroy darkness.

Please convey my best wishes to [name omitted]. May your meditations be filled with the joy that is the innate.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a message from a SAT member, along with the response from Nome.]

December 21, 2010

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste Master Nome:

While reading the *Advaita Bodha Deepika*, I have come across the following: “...Maya has no antecedent cause because it is not the product of anything preceding it, but remains in Brahman, self evident and without beginning. Before creation there could be no cause for its manifestation, yet it manifests and it must be by itself.”

Can you please explain the meaning of this? Is Maya equivalent to Shakti in the Shiva Shakti dance? Is it all Brahman, Pure Being, inexpressible as is Maya or Shakti? If Maya is not real and yet not unreal because it is experienced, are we then seeing Brahman everywhere until we disappear into Being Brahman with no manifestation?

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

In devotion,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Maya can have no antecedent cause because the causality, itself, would be a figment of maya. Similarly, it cannot be a product of a nonexistent preceding thing. Though it may be said that maya remains in Brahman, for there is nothing external to Brahman, Brahman remains homogeneous, undivided, and

without any quality such as maya. Self-evident refers to Brahman. Maya, illusion, cannot be said to be self-evident. By whom is it known and by what means is it known? It cannot know itself, yet the idea that there is another existent one, someone other than Brahman, to know it is also only in illusion, or maya. Brahman is without beginning or end, for it is ever existent. Maya is also said to be without beginning for two reasons. Within maya, illusion seems to have been going on forever. In the knowledge of Brahman, maya is seen to never have started, for that which is unreal cannot have a real beginning. Therefore, illusion is only for illusion. For the Reality, there is only Reality.

In the teachings that pertain to Siva and Shakti, the emphasis is on the undivided reality, which is Siva, and the Shakti, or power, is only of the very nature of Siva, and not anything apart. As Brahman is inexpressible, so Siva is ineffable.

The statement that, “Maya is yet not unreal because it is experienced,” is merely an expedient teaching and should not be taken as a statement of the final truth. Who experiences what? By what means is it experienced? If taken at face value, without further deeper inquiry, such a concept can lead to the idea of a duality of states, such as one with maya still appearing and one without, but the Reality is only one, without conditions, and free of the least trace of multiplicity.

Maya is that which is not. Yet, in truth, there can be no such thing as an existent nonexistence. Brahman, which is the one Existence that alone is, is alone the nature of all. The experiencer, the experience, and the object of experience are only Brahman, yet there is not the least trace of that triad in Brahman. All is Brahman. This means that Brahman alone is, and there is no such distinct thing as all.

It is hoped that you find the above helpful and clarifying. May the Light of Nondual Knowledge ever shine within you so that you, free of the least illusion, abide in bliss.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[The Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning and SAT have maintained loving relations rooted in deep devotion to Sri

Ramana for many years. After the dropping of the body of Sri A. R. Natarajan, who was the founder and leader of the RMCL, the leadership of the Centre has come into the able hands of his daughter, Dr. Sarada Natarajan. Here is a message that she sent in December, with Nome's response. The article referred to, "Inconceivable, yet Self-evident," is reproduced elsewhere in this issue of Reflections.]

December 23, 2010

Dear and Respected Ramana brother, Master Nome,

Namo Ramana!

It gives me great joy to convey that by ever full, all knowing grace of Bhagavan, this year we complete thirty years of publication of "Ramana Way", the monthly journal of Ramana Maharshi Centre of Learning, Bangalore.

In this connection, as a celebration of three decades of learning and sharing Bhagavan's life and teachings, we plan to bring out a special series of the journal in the year 2011-12. The first of this will be the March edition of Ramana Way as the journal commenced in March 1981.

In this first special March edition, we are inviting senior devotees from different Ramana Centres, in India and the world, to share their experience of Bhagavan's blessings, His life, works and teachings.

I would feel deeply blessed, if you could contribute an article for this inaugural special edition of Ramana Way. You may write on any aspect of Bhagavan's life and teachings, say within a thousand words.

As the issue would need to go to the press by mid-February, it would be best if we can receive the article by January end, or latest by end of first week of February.

My warm regards to Shashvatima and all others of the Ramana Family at SAT.

Yours in Bhagavan,

Sarada Natarajan

Dear Sri Ramana Sister, Dr. Sarada,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your kind message, which I received yesterday, the day for Sri Bhagavan's Jayanti celebrations here at SAT. Actually, we will celebrate again on the 30th. One can never engage in too much devotion...

The "Ramana Way" is a spiritual delight for all the devotees who are fortunate to read it. Your idea of a celebration of three decades of publishing it is splendid.

In response to your request, yesterday the attached article was written. I hope that it falls within the guidelines suggested by you in your message. It contains 751 words. It is in a Microsoft word format. If you need another file format, please let me know.

Sasvati sends her deepest love.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[A message from a seeker who attends satsang and Nome's response.]

January 5, 2011

Dear Nome,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

With the goal of making my practice/understanding more effective, I seek your wisdom in response to a few questions I have regarding the following saying by Bhagavan:

"You need not eliminate any false "I". How can "I" eliminate itself? All that you need do is to find out its origin and stay there. Your effort can extend only so far. Then the Beyond will take care of itself. You are helpless there. No effort can reach it."

My questions:

1. Isn't it "I" (ego or non-Self) that "apparently" does the self-inquiry since the non-dual Self cannot be the doer?

2. I conceptually understand that eventually the inquirer (“I”?) vanishes upon inquiry but the Inquiry, i.e. Self-Knowledge, alone remains as the Self. Is this “apparent” elimination of the “I” not brought about as a result of “apparent” deep and intense self-effort, i.e. thought transcendent inquiry/meditation by the yet-to-be-eliminated “I”?

3. Or is it that “I’s” self-effort, no matter how deep and intense, does not eventually result in the “apparent” elimination of “I”? I.e. does the apparent Self-Realization eventually happens when it happens and is independent of the self-effort? And if so, what is the role of self-effort?

Pranam,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. As always, Sri Bhagavan’s instruction is of the utmost profundity.

“You need not eliminate any false I”: There are not two existent selves, that one should eliminate the other. The Self is always only one, and that alone is real.

“How can I eliminate itself?”: The so-called, false or unreal “I” does not exist. If it is assumed to be real, how will the ego eliminate itself? If the ego is truly unreal, which means that it does not exist, how could something that does not exist eliminate or do anything else to itself or to anything else? The ego, being unreal, is insubstantial and utterly powerless. The Knowledge that completely destroys ignorance cannot possibly be for or by the ego. True Knowledge is of the very nature of Being, which is the Self.

“All that you need to is to find out its origin and stay there.”: One should trace his very existence, or identity, to its origin, that is, to its true nature. Such finding or tracing consists of Knowledge in the form of Self-inquiry. To “stay there” signifies steady abidance in the Self, as the Self, without the least false assumption of individuality. It is to remain free of misidentification.

“Your effort can extend only so far.”: We can speak of effort only in the context of spiritual practice. The effort to be applied intensely is that of profound inquiry to know the Self as it is. Since the Self is nonobjective, and, therefore, neither lost nor attained, the effort is primarily directed toward negation of the misidentifications that constitute ignorance.

“Then, the Beyond will take care of itself.”: “Then” may be understood to be upon Self-Realization or the word may be understood to mean therefore. The Self is always the Self and knows itself by its own innate Knowledge. That is eternal, which means that it is without beginning and without an end. The Self knows itself, and there is no individual “I” involved.

“You are helpless there. No effort can reach it.”: The ego, being unreal, is powerless. The Self, being ever-attained, is not to be attained anew. Effort is applied only to the elimination of ignorance. That being accomplished, the innate Self-Knowledge remains. The Self is truly the only existent Reality. Who is different from it? Who is to reach it? Whose is the effort?

In answer to your first question, Self-inquiry destroys the imaginary ego and is not done by an ego. In truth, the Self alone exists and therefore has no inquiry. If we speak of inquiry, it signifies the end manifesting as the means. That Knowledge which the Self is manifests itself as the inquiry. Knowledge belongs only to the Self. There is only one knower. The unreal or imaginary has no capacity to know. Self-inquiry is Knowledge and is not to be regarded as an activity. Knowledge alone yields Liberation; action cannot do so. Actions are performed with the body, speech, and mind. Self-inquiry transcends all of those. A performer of inquiry cannot be spoken of when the inquiry eliminates the very ideas of a performer and of action.

Not a drop of deep, intense, spiritual effort ever goes in vain. The inquiry should be of utmost intensity and should be continuous. Your practice should be as intense and as continuous as you wish for the state of Self-Realization to be. If you want partial happiness and peace, practice partially. If you want full happiness and peace, practice fully.

Self-realization is not an event and does not “happen.” The Realization is of the very nature of the Self that is realized. The Self is not an event. What happens ceases. What comes goes.

What should occur for whom? The Self is only Being. Know yourself.

May you, by the Grace of the Sri Bhagavan, deeply inquire and thus know the Self that you really are and, thereby, abide always in lasting peace and happiness.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[On January 8, 2011, a SAT member who lives at a distance from the Temple wrote a message that contains several questions relating to his deeper spiritual experience and the perception of the illusion of the world through the senses. He also expressed his deep devotion and faith in Sri Bhagavan's grace. In response, Nome sent this message. The questions raised by the seeker can be inferred from the response.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Inquire within yourself: who is it that becomes ensnared by the senses? The Self, which is pure Consciousness, cannot be bound, and, for it, there is no differentiation such as the senses, the objects, etc. If it seems to be another "I," inquire into the nature of that "I." Such inquiry will reveal that there is only one Self, and that alone exists.

From another perspective, recognize that, although the senses appear and disappear, the Consciousness that illumines them, apart from which they cannot even appear, is ever the same and neither comes nor goes. You are the Consciousness, so how can the senses affect you? In addition, contemplation along the lines mentioned by you will certainly be beneficial, especially if you absorb yourself in the actual, essential Knowledge in which the bodiless Self shines clearly beyond illusion's dreams. If you cease to misidentify, to regard the unreal as real, and to imagine that happiness lies in anything other than the Self, what will it matter if the senses appear or disappear?

For whom is this universe? If the seer is inquired into, the objective outlook is abandoned, and the true Existence is realized. When you see the snake, you do not actually see a snake but only a rope imagined to be a snake, for only the rope is there. Similar is it with the world and the Self. The Self alone exists, eternally, both when it is imagined to be differentiated into an experiencer and a world and when it is known just as it is.

The world, the senses, the body, and the mind do not declare their own reality. You say that they are. If that “you” is known in its true nature, all such imagined differentiation, being unreal, vanishes. Your own Self has been imagined as all these things. Self-inquiry reveals the nonexistence of the very root of such imagination, and the Self alone remains.

Of course, you are always welcome at the SAT Temple; Ramanasramam is also a very holy place to visit. Whether there, here, or at your own home, that which is essential is the profound Knowledge of the Self, for in this alone is perfect peace and bliss.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[On January 9, 2011, the same seeker wrote the following:]

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Dear Nome,

Namaste. One point that is still not convincingly clear like a amala fruit in my hand is the everlasting, unborn nature of Being-Consciousness. Either because of lifelong proximity or not deep enough vichara, I cannot imagine beingness without the body. It is said that in deep sleep there is nobody, but there is beingness. But isn't breathing and heartbeat going on even in deep sleep? Please help me get over this hurdle once and for all. Thank you for your time and help. Namaste.

[Here is Nome's response.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The idea about breathing and heartbeat continuing during the deep sleep state is conceived of in the present waking state. In deep sleep, itself, there are no such ideas. Yet, without perception of a body and without conception of ideas, you still exist. That existence is the same now, too. Know yourself to be the invariable Existence, which remains immutable regardless of the apparent changes of the three states.

Even to think of a body, you must exist. This “you” cannot be the body. That which knows the body and which knows the mind that thinks about it is free of both. Even to entertain the idea that you cannot exist without a body, you, the bodiless one, must exist.

Unborn, attributeless, and imperishable is your real Self. Being is bodiless and nonobjective. Consciousness is free of thought. Bliss is innate.

If, by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan, you deeply inquire, what is indicated here will be found to be self-evident. Thus, you will remain absorbed in the blissful Truth.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A message from a SAT member followed by Nome's response.]

January 12, 2011

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste Master Nome:

Chit, pure consciousness and chidabhasa, reflected consciousness are not personal as I understand it. The I that understands is not personal. It seems there is nothing personal. Reincarnation is not personal either, nothing personal, no individual.

Please comment.

In devotion,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Chit or pure Consciousness is absolute and invariable. If that is known as it is, no idea of another can arise.

Chidabhasa or reflected consciousness is spoken of to explain how any appearance, such as the mind, is known or experienced. The reflected consciousness is not personal in the sense of being contained within a personality, yet it can be conceived of as such only in reference to some kind of appearance, which, in turn, must be for an "I."

The idea of a person is for the "I," so, in that sense, the "I" is not personal. Yet, that "I" should be inquired into so that the egoless, true nature of the Self is realized.

Reincarnation is for one who is presently incarnate. It involves the ego notion, the collection of subtle tendencies (samskaras) that can manifest as the illusory person, and association with a body or bodies. In that sense, such may be regarded as personal.

In truth, you are the impersonal, absolute Consciousness. You are not any kind of person. You have no birth, and you will not be reborn. Know yourself as you truly are. In this lies liberation from the imagined bondage of the cycle of birth and death, from reflections and appearances of any kind, and from the false assumption of an ego entity. This is the way to unalloyed happiness.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a reply to a seeker who resides in Canada. The questions he raised can be inferred from this response.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

If you surrender to Sri Bhagavan, problems will no longer be felt to be problems. In the nonattachment that results, peace and happiness remain full regardless of the circumstances.

The way to get beyond worldly life is an inward one. As you have seen, a change in outer circumstances does not necessarily mean increased happiness. One's mind still goes with him, and, if there is ignorance in it, suffering continues. Nevertheless, happiness exists as the very nature of the Self. Turn inward, and you will find it shining in its fullness. Attachment is confusion regarding the source of happiness. If one truly knows that happiness is within, he is detached and cannot suffer. Indeed, he is his own bliss.

Of course, when you are able to visit the SAT temple, you will be warmly welcome. In the meantime, you can very easily read the SAT publications, other books about Sri Ramana's teachings, and avail yourself of all that is on the SAT website, such as listening to and watching satsangs, etc.

According to the Maharshi, the truth about karma yoga is discerned by inquiry as to whose is the karma. Yoga means union and should be understood to mean union with the Self. Karma yoga, therefore, implies abidance as the egoless Self and free of misidentification with the body, even as it engages in various activities, which should be dedicated to the Supreme.

He who, in his heart, is fully devoted to the Realization of the Self, by the Grace of the Sadguru, finds happiness to which nothing in the world can compare and which nothing in the world can diminish.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[From a SAT member who resides at a distance from the Temple, edited slightly for the sake of brevity. Nome's response follows.]

January 17, 2011

Dear Beloved Master,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste.

This heart is always so happy to find the new *Reflections* online. Each time you have a new offering there, I am so excited to read and meditate on them. I have just recently discovered the Invocations to be an especially deep source of meditation. I thank you very much!

Most of the time, my meditations are good. I feel truly blessed. Having said that, I do have areas that need more understanding. All of my life I have carried a concept I would like to work on in a deeper way. Recently it dawned on me that this concept : I am not good enough, I should accomplish more, I wish I had more self esteem and confidence, all would be about building a bigger ego self. One reason I continued to carry this belief was that it makes sense that one seeking enlightenment would have such attributes i.e., living a balanced life, self esteem, confidence, etc. I do notice that one thing that gives me a sense of balance, love and goodness is any act of kindness or service, even on a small level. It makes a huge difference in how I view myself and others. Perhaps that is at least a partial answer to my concern, but I would truly appreciate your instruction.

All my love to you and Sasvati,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Yes, the invocations that appear at the beginning of each issue of "Reflections" are intended to encourage the meditative approach for the reader.

It is essential to know yourself as you truly are. The Self is not an ego, or individual, and similarly is not to be defined by personal attributes. Being the source of all that is true, good, and beautiful, the Self is yet transcendent of all qualities, attributes, and activities. So, you are not a deficient individual; you are not even a confident individual. Being is truly free of individuality and, in this, lies its limitless bliss.

You have noted that whenever you engage in an act of kindness or service that you feel a greater sense of love, goodness, etc. Your own experience thus shows you how to proceed. In the midst of such action, the ego recedes or subsides. Therefore, the natural happiness of the Self shines. One's entire life can be permeated by such egoless joy. Your description contains the explanation of your experience: "it makes a huge difference in how I view myself and others." Actually, it is the view of yourself that gives rise to the selfless approach, the joy, and the view of others. One who has this inner knowledge, or is in quest of it, has no need for anxious thoughts regarding esteem, etc.

May you abide in the profound Knowledge of the Self, the one source of all happiness and love, and thereby be full of peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[In response to a message sent by a Sri Ramana devotee who resides in India concerning how his mind becomes disturbed reacting to circumstances with others, Nome wrote the following.]

January 19, 2011

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

When one overlooks the innate bliss of the Self and imagines that his happiness is determined by outer circumstances, his mind becomes unclear and agitated. Then, he thinks that his unhappiness is externally caused. Abandonment of such igno-

rance, by knowing that it is only ignorance, removes all the suffering and enables one to rest in the innate happiness of the Self. If you deeply examine your own experience, you will find that what is stated here is true, and you will know the way to be free.

In addition, for the Self, what does it matter what anyone else says or does? For one who is immersed in Sri Bhagavan's Grace, what does it matter, whatever happens and by whom-ever? Understand in this way and be at ease.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[In answer to a seeker's question, Nome responded.]

January 19, 2011

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

In whatever form and by whatever name the "I" seems to appear, it is wise to inquire for whom it is, that is, "Who am I?" Then, it is realized with absolute certainty that the one Self alone exists, eternally, and that there is neither an individual nor the objective sphere of experience.

May you abide unwaveringly in the Knowledge of the Self, which is forever unmodified, and thus be delighted at heart.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[In another message, the same seeker wrote:]

January 20, 2011

The self is neither a nothingness or a void. Does it still know itself without an expression? I feel the underlying fear is nonexistence in any way, an idea of just being complete emptiness.

[Nome replied:]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Yes, the Self is neither a thing nor a void. It is pure Existence, for which there is no alternative. Even in the case of a “nothing,” there is still Existence. The nothing exists. The nothing is not real, but the Existence is. Truly, that which is conceived as being nothing does not actually exist, but Existence always exists. Therefore, there is truly no such thing as nonexistence.

Existence is Consciousness. In your inquiry, you may find it easier to discern the truth just stated by observing that the nothing is something about which you know. Even in a supposed state of “nonexistence,” you still exist to know that. That “you,” which is formless and without beginning or end, is the pure Existence. So, it is not possible for you to cease to exist or for you to even imagine your own nonexistence, without you existing to know that.

With or without any expression, the Self ever is. By inquiring to know who you are, and thus liberating yourself from all misidentification as an ego and as a body, you will know the non-dual Truth and thereby become fearless. In such inquiry, Sri Bhagavan’s Grace is evident.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[January 23, 2011, a SAT member sent a message in which he explained at length his spiritual experiences, practice, and the obstructions to his practice. His message ended with: “It just seems that no matter what, there is always an objective experience that pertains to this mental awareness I call “I” or feel as “I” in my enquiry. But then again when you referred to the three states and these being mere modes before the Self, that easily shows that this mental awareness I call “I” is an obstacle, because he comes and goes...What to do?” Here is Nome’s response.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The best way to be liberated from the individual (ego) is to find out whether or not you are an individual to begin with. Focused on your true Being, inquire as to who you really are. Every form of the apparent “I” is objective and cannot possibly be a true definition for the Self. Eliminating such objective definition by clear inquiry, discern what the “I” is in its own nature. In truth, there is only one Self, and it is never individualized. Inquiry reveals this and thus sets you free of the illusory bondage.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self and thus repose in blissful peace always.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message is from a SAT member. Nome’s response follows.]

January 24, 2011

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Dear Master Nome:

Namaste

I have a question regarding a verse in which Bhagavan stated, “Having investigated the various states of being, and seizing firmly by the mind that state of supreme reality, play your part, O hero, ever in the world. You have known the truth which is at the heart of all kinds of appearances. Without ever turning away from that reality, play in the world, O hero, as if in love with it.”

What does “...seizing firmly by the mind that state of supreme reality...” mean?

In devotion,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The quotation of Sri Bhagavan may derive from *Yoga Vasishtha*. The emphasis of the passage is that one should abide firmly in Self-Knowledge, even while one's body is engaged in the activities of the world. To indicate that such is an inner state and not a bodily state, the text says that the state of the supreme Reality should be seized firmly by the mind. If the mind does so, its limitations are destroyed and even the form of the mind vanishes, leaving pure Consciousness as the residuum.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A seeker who had attended satsangs in the 1970's and who had recently visited for a celebration in the SAT temple wrote the following message, which has been edited for the sake of brevity and to remove his personal information. Nome's response follows.]

January 22, 2011

Dearest Master Nome,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

I have just finished reading, Ch'an and Zen Teaching Vol. 2 by Lu K'uan Yu (Charles Luk), which I thoroughly enjoyed and want to share some passages for your enjoyment.

“Now, in front of you, the non-relying man of Tao who is listening to (my expounding of) the Dharma, is clearly distinguishable and does not lack in anything. If you do not want to differ from the Patriarchs and Buddhas, just hold this (correct) view for there is no need to awaken yourselves. If the mind and its mental conditions do not differ from each other, this is the lively Patriarch's mind, because if there be difference between them, the (self-) nature and its phenomenal expression will (also) differ from each other. The sameness of mind and its conditions is identical with the sameness of (self-) nature and its phenomenal

expression.” Lin Chi, founder of the Lin Chi Sect (Rinzai Zen in Japan) from “Finger Pointing at Moon.”

I have always been annoyed and taken exception with the current propounding and insistence of Zen teaching that thought has to be silenced. Here the teaching is quite clear that the problem is not thoughts but the division into self and other that reflects one’s ignorance and confusion which leads to isolation and suffering. Herein is the understanding of, “one without a second.”

From the same text: “Followers of the Tao, people elsewhere are talking about a Tao which can be practiced and a Dharma which can be realized. Now tell me what Dharma can be realized and what Tao can be practiced? At present, what do you lack when called upon to perform your functions (the common acts of daily life) and where do you need repairing?”

I want to acknowledge that in your presence you have always radiated your insistence that all of us are even now as we wish to be and that understanding alone is the key to the Kingdom - Self-abidance.

Again: “If you understand that myriad things (dharma) are not created and that the mind is but an illusion and a transformation, without a speck of dust, and a thing in the purity and cleanness which is everywhere, there will be no Buddha demon (confusion). Buddha and living being are a dualism of purity and impurity. According to this mountain monk’s view, there is neither Buddha nor living being, and neither present nor past. Those who are capable of realizing this, should realize it now without having to wait for an (opportune) time, for it is beyond cultivating and experiencing as well as gain or loss.”

Lin Chi passed away in May of 863 yet his words are as true and accessible today as then.

One more passage: “In your red heart, there is a true man of no (fixed) position who comes in and goes out through your forehead”

From the notes regarding this passage: In China, the heart is believed to be the seat of thought, or intelligence, and its Western equivalent is mind. A true man of no fixed position is the mind which, according to Huang Po, “has neither location or direction” because it is as immense as space.

I thought you might appreciate this statement for the similarity with Sri Ramana Maharshi's view. My understanding given what has been stated here about the nature of mind, is that the reference to the heart is as Ramana expressed.

During our time together, many moons ago, you shared a fondness for the Ch'an tradition of instantaneous enlightenment. Since our true nature is timeless and not different than our Self, I do find enjoyment when that same understanding is expressed in different ways and offer this letter in recognition of your essence and for your amusement.

Om Tat Sat,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message replete with the Ch'an Buddhist quotes. It is good to hear from you again.

The idea that thought has to be quieted presupposes that thought is actually existent and, most importantly, takes for granted the assumption of an individual conceiver or perceiver of it. Upon this assumption is based the idea that one is separate from the Self, the thoughts supposedly creating the barrier or chasm that divides oneself from the one Self. It is certainly silly, yet nothing to be annoyed at, for neither such erroneous notions nor the individuals who entertain them are real.

The passages that you have selected certainly express the essential non-dual Truth. Such is our very Being, which is without gain or loss, free of differences of all kinds, and without an alternative. Forms of expression or the words employed do not matter, whether referred to as Brahman or Tao or God or Self or Mind or by any other term. What is important is the realization of the Truth, which is of the nature of the nonobjective Knowledge that is identical with Being.

That which is here is also truly the nature of you, for such is the Self that dwells in the hearts of all. May you ever abide in That, as That, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, for such is your true abode, the Self itself, the home of paradisiacal peace. This is timelessly so.

Again, thanks for sending these passages.

Om Tat Sat

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is from the same SAT member who previously mentioned about the value of reading Reflections in her earlier message printed above. Nome's reply follows.]

January 27, 2011

Dear Beloved Master,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your instruction. I have been trying to take in all that you wrote to me. It seems so hard to believe I am not a deficient individual. That has been such a long held belief. I'm grateful that you have offered me the opportunity to challenge this idea.

Ramana had said it is not possible to be enlightened as long as we have vasanas. At least that is my understanding. Please help me see that it is possible. I'm sure it is by Grace, but what do I do, since I am not the doer. I'm sorry if this is not clear. I want to be as free of vasanas as possible and it seems overwhelming. It must go back to the one who feels deficient? I would appreciate any further instruction [name omitted]... another teacher that he feels connected with. I know he still wants to return for a Satsang with you. I surrender to it being the way it is. Thank you for being my Guru. I love you with all heart and am grateful beyond words for your guidance and love, and your kindness and care.

All my love to you and Sasvati

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Sri Bhagavan has, indeed, said that the destruction of vasanas is necessary for Self-Realization. The vasanas are merely tendencies of ignorance, which true knowledge alone can destroy. Knowledge is not an action, so there is no question of being a performer of action in the destruction of the vasanas. It is ignorance alone that causes the false assumption of individuality and its concomitant false sense of deficiency. So, it is a bit silly to think that you are deficient in the ability to destroy the ignorance. When ignorance is recognized to be ignorance, it ceases to exist. What remains is the ever-existent, perfect fullness that is innate to the Self.

If you examine the definitions that falsely lend a sense of solidity to the ego, you will find them to be not true and thereby abandon them. If you inquire, "Who am I?", the assumption of existing as an ego entity will vanish, for it is unreal.

The Maharshi has taught that the idea that there is an obstacle or a difficulty should be the first to go. He has also indicated that, if one makes the effort, the practice will not be found to be difficult at all. How could Self-Knowledge be difficult? For whom would the difficulty be?

That he has found a spiritual teacher whose instruction is fully satisfying for him is good. May he ever abide in the blissful Truth of the Self. Of course, he is always welcome here at the SAT Temple.

Grace is ever present. It exists as the Self of all and shines as the love within your heart. This Self has no tendencies, and abidance as this Self is freedom from all illusion.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is from another SAT member who lives at a distance from the temple, followed by Nome's reply.]

January 29, 2011

Namaste Nome,

Very much appreciated talking with you several weeks back.

The two major things I took from the conversation was first to go about finding in myself the source of happiness via turning within (in inquiry) and that to stay focused and go deeper in meditation its good to clearly intend my purpose in the beginning, “Know thyself” with a short reading from the Maharshi, scripture etc. and making the Self-quest an offering to the divine.

I’ve been applying this and finding that I’m more avidly turning back inward during a meditation than previously.

This morning my mind had lots of reasons (thoughts) about why I shouldn’t continue.... “intellect isn’t keen enough,” “body feels off,” “I’m really not focused,” “its just not working,” etc. I found that I could inquire into each excuse, go past and deeper as a result.

Thanks for the instruction and your unflinching abidance in Truth.

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The perseverance in inquiry as you experienced in the meditation described by you is just what is needed. There are no valid excuses for bondage; there are endless reasons to be free. The divine Knowledge of the Self reveals the truth that you, of the nature of Being-Consciousness, are the happiness you always desire. The question is not whether to continue with meditation, but why should you continue in the imagination of non-meditation?

May you ever abide as the Self, the One without a second, and thus be at peace always.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message is from a SAT member and is followed by Nome’s reply.]

February 1, 2011

Aum Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste Master

Thank you for the reply you gave me. It helped a lot. In *Timeless Presence*, you talked about your asthma and the chance of you not living for much longer, since there was no cure, and that you decided to practice right down to the end in hopes for liberation. In the end, you conquered death and the disease disappeared. Is this possible for someone like me? Can destiny really be overcome?

In deep devotion and gratitude,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The Realization of the deathless Self is undoubtedly possible for all who, full of devotion, earnestly inquire to know who they are. Where is destiny for one who abides as the timeless Self? Therefore, have deep conviction in the path of Self-Knowledge and, in the dissolution of the ego, find Liberation to be the eternal, innate state.

Grace is always.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A message, dated February 8, 2011, from a seeker was received that described his feeling that he was caught in ignorance, quoted passages from Yoga Vasishta Sara about bondage to sense objects, and requested instruction to help him overcome the tendencies of his mind. His message concluded with: "What is a good first step to practice Master? I sometimes feel I must read selected texts, verses and scriptures to acquire the thirst for the nectar of supreme knowledge and bliss. Sometimes I feel I must suffer more and more to finally put an end to it. The suffering is now, but ignorant I, who does not

allow me to put an end to it by ridiculous tendencies conjured up by mind. Master, please instruct me on what shall be done to begin my practice, starting all over again, from square one. Because I have it all wrong. Thank you dearly Master Nome, Om Namah Shivaya!” Here is the response from Nome.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Reading and meditating upon spiritual texts is certainly beneficial. Discrimination must be developed so that you discern their true meaning and inwardly verify that truth within yourself.

You need not continue to suffer. Suffering is born only of ignorance. Ignorance is certainly not effortless. It involves thinking in limited, repetitive patterns. Such ignorance is a mistaken attempt to know oneself, to know reality, and to find happiness.

Both verses cited by you refer to the mental tendency, the mistaken concept, that happiness is to be found externally, such as in objects. Certainty in the knowledge of the true source of happiness is a wonderfully strong basis for spiritual practice that results in Self-Realization. It is for this reason, that the Maharshi presented such knowledge in the preamble to the booklet “Who Am I?” and taught more about this later in the same text. Knowledge of the true source of happiness is essential for deep nonattachment and for the intense desire for Self-Realization.

You may also find it helpful to read the passages in the second section of Self-Knowledge that deal with the nature of happiness and immortality.

May you, discovering happiness within, becomes serenely detached from all worldly things and, keenly inquiring to know your own true nature, abide in the Self, as the Self.

Om Namah Shivaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a message from a SAT member. Nome's response follows.]

February 9, 2011

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Master Nome: Namaste

Hearing your words during Satsang on Sundays gives rise to the joy of truth. Bowing in gratitude and devotion, more of it is sought.

What exactly is the meaning of "Abide in the Self"? While Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi answered seekers questions, the questions arose from the perspective of relative or personal illusion, and the answers provided were suitable for the questioner yet arose from Self Realization.

Abiding as the non dual Consciousness of the Self, can one then play in duality, which is illusion? Are their approximations to Self-Realization, or is it all or none?

I am the body is illusion. I am is truth. Reflecting on the truth, one realizes oneself, and yet, while one lived under the spell of being the body, there were ignorant acts which were undertaken by the delusion of doer thought. As acts committed in ignorance carry momentum, how are they to be cut at the root and not cause suffering to others who are dependent on the financial resources such acts engendered?

Yours in Devotion,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Abidance in the Self is truly abidance as the Self. It is Being left free of even the least trace of misidentification. In Sri Bhagavan's spiritual instructions, one finds the Absolute Truth, the destruction of the misidentifications that seem to veil that Truth, the means to realize, and more.

If there is abidance as the non-dual Consciousness, which is the Self, there is no individual entity to engage in duality or illusion. The illusion cannot be for the real Self. For whom is it?

The notion of being closer to or further away from Self-Realization is like the idea of being closer to or further away from the Self. For whom would it be all, none, or partial? Who is it that is supposedly apart from the Self? Can there be two selves? The real Being is indivisible.

Acts committed bring their results. If you transcend the misidentification with the body, the idea of being the performer of action and the one who reaps its result, and even the idea of being an experiencer, you stand completely free of karma.

You do not have the power to make another happy or sorrowful. Happiness is within and exists as the Self of all. If it is unknown, then, due to misidentifications and attachments, one suffers. The suffering is merely the veiling of the innate happiness by ignorance. Any amount of worldly treasure will not make one happy.

Your own abidance in the Self, as the Self, replete with the perfect fullness of supreme happiness, is the greatest good that can be achieved and given to all. Abidance as indivisible Being is the deepest love.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[Two more messages from the same SAT member were received, one of which is printed here with Nome's response.]

February 11, 2011

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Dear Master Nome:

Namaste

Yesterday there was a feeling of defeat. The realization that the I can do nothing for seeing the Self yet persist in questioning Who am I? On the morning walk, I usually repeat "I am

Brahman I am,” but the feeling of sadness was such that repetition of the mantra was thought to be useless.

This morning appeared a revelation that “I am Brahman I am” does not arise from I, the mind. The “I am Brahman I am” arises from the heart, and this may be the reference to “...thoughtless thought...” ?

This morning reading a statement from the heart itself, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, in *Guru Vachaka Kovai* “Bhagavan: Questioning “Who am I?” within one’s mind, when one reaches the Heart, the individual “I” sinks crestfallen, and at once reality manifests itself as “I-I”. Though it reveals itself thus, it is not the ego “I” but the perfect being, the Self Absolute.”

Bhagavan is ever guiding. The heart melts with gratitude for the teachings, for SAT, for Nome!

Yours in Devotion,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for both of your messages.

Perhaps referring to a different translation for verse 204 of the *Garland of Guru’s Sayings* may lend some clarity for you. Professor K. Swaminathan has translated the same verse as: Know well that perfect Selfhood, peace serene, all thought in stillness lost, identity with Being-Awareness, this alone is pure Siva-puja.

It is thus evident that identifying oneself by Self-Knowledge as the one Self is the zenith of devotion.

When you say that there is nothing that can you can do to see the Self, do you conceive of yourself as one thing and the Self as another? How could the Self be powerless to know itself?

Repetition of a mantra is not useless, though it cannot substitute for the actual inquiry that reveals the true significance of “I am Brahman.”

The other verse mentioned by you in this later e-mail message very much resembles verse 20 of *Upadesa Saram* and verse 30 of *Saddarshanam*.

Because His guidance and grace are ever there, and because one's true nature is indeed the Self, the very idea of defeat is absurd. The same is so with any other idea that produces sadness. If the ego subsides, bliss shines resplendently.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[From the same member followed by the response to him.]

February 14, 2011

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Dear Master Nome:

Namaste

When effort is exerted who exerts it? Who is the doer? When does the Grace of the exertion reveal the doer? Does exertion go to waste if the doer is not revealed? When is exertion done?

There has been exertion for many years and an understanding that it is all sacred while karma takes its course. If the body idea had been fully removed, karma would have gone as well. The body and mind idea must live still so it is clear that not enough exertion has been undertaken and yet there is an awareness that no matter how much exertion the idea of a body is still there though there is a conviction of not being the body or the mind. The exertion requires deeper inquiry, how does that happen?

Many questions today.

The joy felt at satsang and the grace of the teachings are magnetic!

In gratitude and Devotion,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

If by effort and exertion you refer to the power of motion manifested in all bodies throughout the universe, the source of such can only be one. That alone accomplishes all.

If by effort and exertion you refer to the spiritual quest to realize the Self, that destroys the doership notion along with the other misidentifications. Such is of the nature of knowledge alone and cannot be any action performed with the instruments of body, speech, and mind. Such power can have only one source. It may be called Grace and should be realized as the Self.

No spiritual striving ever goes in vain, though the results are determined by the proportion of the knowledge-essence in the practice. When the possibility of the false assumption of an ego has become impossible, the striving is complete, and that which remains is the reality of Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

Inquiry becomes deeper by engaging in it.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[From another SAT member. Nome's reply follows.]

February 20, 2011

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste Master

What is the best way to serve one's Guru and give back for all the Grace that has been bestowed upon the disciple? Also, what is the proper way to make use of that Grace that is overflowing so compassionately from the Guru?

In deep devotion, eternally grateful.

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The best way to give for the Grace bestowed is to steadily abide in the Knowledge of the Self. The best way to serve is to blissfully dissolve the falsely assumed ego. The proper use is, knowing with certainty the incomparable value of the truth, the steady inquiry to know the Self. With a heart full of devotion, to deeply meditate upon the indweller of that heart so that your identity is revealed as That, is to abide in Grace.

If this is comprehended, whatever expressions of love, devotion, gratitude, and such that may manifest will be natural.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This message was sent to a seeker, who has written several times during recent years and engages in reading SAT publications, in response to questions posed by him. His questions can be inferred from the answers.]

February 23, 2011

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Abidance in the Self is truly abidance as the Self. In truth, because there are not two selves, there is no forgetfulness or remembrance and no going in or out of the Self. If one truly realizes the Self as it is, who is to stay where? The innate Self is completely free of any such differentiation and is One without a second.

The Self is the very Being of all. If you cease to misidentify as some kind of individual, others are perceived likewise.

The difficulty or challenge does not lie in mere interaction, but rather it lies in the vasanas or tendencies that stem from

misidentifications. Such ignorance is composed of the stuff of imagination, yet seems as if solid when it is lent the sense of reality and identity that truly belong to the Self. Thus, for one who inquires, there are no actual obstacles.

Trace your experience to the thoughts forming it, and trace the thoughts to the misidentifications from which they spring. Inquire, "Who am I?"

When, through inquiry, the misidentifications and their corresponding tendencies vanish, true love remains, which is the indivisibility of Being.

The actual discernment of the Self involves the disappearance of the ego notion. If the individual or ego vanishes, because it is unreal, in true Knowledge of the Self, the indivisible, undifferentiated, non-dual Self alone remains. That is the ever-existent Reality, and there is no one else to claim that he sees it or does not see it, is in it or out of it.

Though in truth we cannot speak of effort for the Self itself and its Realization, in practice every effort should be made to realize, for in that alone are bliss and immortality to be found.

Grace is illimitable and ever present. This is evident for those who earnestly strive to know the Self.

Inquire so that your sense of identity remains as the Self alone. What you seek to realize, you are.

May you ever abide as the Self that you really are, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and thus be at peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[In response to a seeker who expressed his fear of dissolution of the mind by turning within, Nome wrote:]

February 23, 2011

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

To state it quite simply, you have nothing to fear by diving within. Within is the source of bliss.

In actual experience, though there may be fear for an aspirant prior to diving within, such fear utterly dissolves once he actually dives within.

Fear is born of duality and is concomitant with the ego. Ego clinging may be fearful, but ego loss is always of the nature of happiness.

The idea that the mind will not like the spiritual truth is based upon two false premises: the idea that the mind is a separate knowing entity apart from Consciousness and the idea that overlooks the fact that the mind, even if still regarded as such an entity, is always in quest of happiness. That happiness is intrinsic to the Consciousness which is truly the Self.

The wise who have turned inward and completely abandoned the falsely assumed ego are not at all fearful. They abide happily in this supreme Reality as That itself.

There is no need to engage in a battle with your mind. Rather, deeply inquire to know your true identity, which is of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[Dr. Sarada Natarajan, leader of RMCL, sent a message to Nome in February requesting Sasvati to write something for The Ramana Way. Sasvati's writing entitled, "A Prayer," follows.]

February 19, 2011

Dear and respected Master Nome,

The April issue of The Ramana Way is planned to be from women devotees of Bhagavan. I would be very happy if Saswathi ji would give us an article for this issue.

With regards,

Sarada Natarajan

A Prayer...

Salutations Lord Ramana!

Ramana above,
Myself below,
Ramana above and below.

Ramana my Sadguru,
Ramana myself,
Only Ramana.

In gratitude, the words form in my mind, "Please, Lord Ramana, give me gratitude." I contemplate on how grateful I am that my Ramana allowed me to see Him, as if space could hide from itself. Ever grateful within my heart, Ramana alone is.

In devotion, the words form in my mind, "Please, Lord Ramana, give me devotion." I meditate upon the Ramana-love pulsing through my being, just as eternity goes by your holy name. Ever devoted within my heart, Ramana alone is.

With fortitude, the words form in my mind, "Please, Lord Ramana, give me fortitude and never allow the eclipse of forgetfulness of you to enter my mind," as if fire could ever know darkness. I reflect upon the fortitude within my heart, Ramana alone is.

In conviction, the words form in my mind, "Please, Lord Ramana, give me conviction." I meditate upon the absoluteness of my Lord Ramana within me, as earth circumambulates the sun, ever convinced that Ramana alone is.

In peacefulness, the words form in my mind, "Please, Lord Ramana, give me peacefulness." I contemplate the absence of thought in my mind, as water is devoid of thirst. Ever tranquil, Ramana alone is.

Grinning in my mind, the words form, "Never allow me to get under-foot, rather, that the apparition remains unseen by you." I contemplate this inconceivability, as if the atmosphere could cease to stir. Ever remaining in Ramana, Ramana alone is.

For long, I played outside.
You called me into Your house.
I stepped inside and remained therein,
Never again returning to childish play.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.



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 & parking lot, cleanup after events, cleaning the temple, set-up for events; 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 & atmotsava, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Raman Muthukrishnan: running the bookstore including mail order service, maintaining the SAT website, providing prasad after satsang; Sangeeta Muthukrishnan: helping with the bookstore mail order, organizing things around the temple, providing meals at retreats, providing prasad after satsang & atmotsava; Wimala Brown: providing meals at retreats and prasad after satsang & atmotsava; Dhanya Nambirajan: singing during special events, providing meals at retreats, providing prasad after satsang, 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, flower arranging, painting the Satsang Hall; 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 & *Reflections* for publishing, maintaining residential rentals, overseeing property repairs, flower arrangements, maintaining temple gardens; Advait Sadasivan: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play. Jaden Silva: flower arranging, transcription, helping out wherever needed; Ed Smith: dusting & cleaning the temple;

Sandy Smith: copying & assembling *The Four Requisites*; Ed DeDeo: dusting and cleaning the Murtis; Tristin Mzhavia: cleaning & dusting the temple; Jeromy: vacuuming & dusting the temple; Scott Fraundorf: dusting the temple.

Upcoming Special Events

Adi Sankara Jayanti: May 8, 2011.

The Self-Knowledge Retreat: May 27 - 29, 2011.

Guru Purnima: July 14, 2011.

Sri Ramana's Self-Realization: July 17, 2011.