



**Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya**



**Om Namah Sivaya**

**Bhagavan:**

**The thought, "I am  
the body" is the  
string**

**On which are  
threaded diverse  
thoughts like  
beads.**

**Therefore, on diving  
deep upon the  
quest**

**"Who am I and from  
where (whence)?"  
thoughts  
disappear,**

**And Conscious-  
ness of the Self  
then flashes  
forth**

**As the "I-I" within  
the cavity**

**Of every seeker's  
Heart. And  
this is Heaven,  
This is that Still-  
ness, the  
abode of Bliss.**

**- Atma Vidya, v. 3**

**(Continued  
on page 3)**

**Reflections**



**SAT Temple**

**April . May . June 2018**

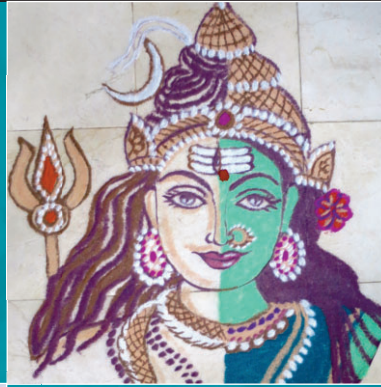




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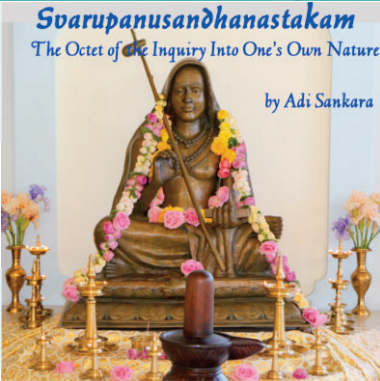


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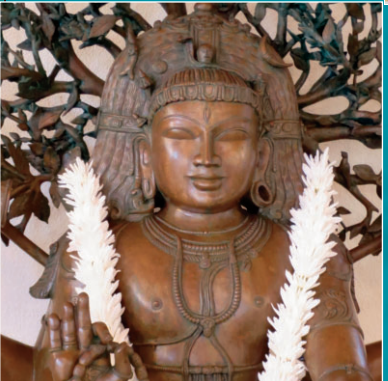
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Publisher: Society of Abidance in Truth (SAT Temple) / Editor: Sasvati Nome  
Contributor: Grant Summerville, transcription of Satsang and Ribhu Gita events  
1834 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA / 831.425.7287 / email: [sat@satramana.org](mailto:sat@satramana.org) / <https://SATRamana.org>  
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**Commentary by Nome on Verse 3 of  
Sri Bhagavan's Atma Vidya  
taken from a transcript of a retreat held in the  
SAT Temple in August 2007**

**Nome:**

**The thought, "I am the body" is the string on which are threaded diverse thoughts like beads. The notion "I" is integrally connected with the idea of everything else. Every idea about the world depends upon the idea, "I am the body." If there is the misconception, "I am the body," which is not true, you think that you are limited to the scope of it,**

that you are born when it is born, you grow when it grows, you decay when it is decays, you die when it dies, and you think you are in a world, although it would be more appropriate to say that the world and the body are in you, rather than you are in them.

Upon this notion, “I am the body,” are threaded all of the pseudo-experiences, or conceptions, of “this.” If the body is subtle, the conceptions of “this” are subtle. If the body is gross, the conceptions of “this” similarly are gross. The “I am the body” conception is pivotal to delusion. The granthi, or knot, is the conception that ties together Consciousness and the body, the Self and the body, the Consciousness with the inert. If the knot is cut, delusion crumbles. Dissolve the form of the experiencer, and the limited experiences that are based upon the form of the experiencer, correspondingly are destroyed, leaving the vast expanse of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, the real Existence. Destroy the illusion by Knowledge. The remainder, naturally present, is the Truth.

**Therefore, on diving deep**  
How do you dive deep? You dive deep by the quest, “Who am I?” and “From where, or whence,

am I?” From where does this notion “I” come?” Does it come from your body? You say, “my body.” The “my” refers to someone who is other than the body. The one who is regarded as the owner is someone else than the body. Who is this? Where does the sense of “I” originate? It does not come from the body; it does not come from any of the parts of the body, such as the head, the torso, and the limbs. Where does the sense of “I” arise? Trace inwardly, “From where is ‘I’?”

The “I” cannot be the body. The “I” that says “my body,” cannot be the body. Then, no one else is their bodies, so how will we distinguish among the supposed individuals?

The “I am the body” conception gives rise to the sense of being located in time and space. “I am here and now,” is imagined from the misidentified perspective. If you are not the body, where are you? If you are not the body, what is the nature of everyone? Everyone is no longer a multiplicity. If you are not the body, where do you begin and where does somebody else begin? Where do you end? Do you end in time or in space? These do not apply to the Self.



**“Who am I? From where am I?” If you inquire in this way, thoughts disappear, and the Consciousness of the Self then flashes forth. If there is no form of “I,” there is no form of anything else. The “this,” is always a mirror image of the “I.” However the “I” is conceived, so is “this” conceived. Although we may speak of it as perceived, it really is just in the mind, as in a dream. If the “I” has a form - “I” am the body - “this” will have a form, “There is the “world.” If I am not the body, what is “this”? Without the forms of “I” and “this,” what is thought?**

**You may be accustomed to the interweaving of streams of thoughts appearing as interior conceptions and external perceptions, but there is something else that is more familiar to you, and you have never quite become thoroughly adapted or accustomed to those streams of thought. Otherwise, you would not seek to be free of them. They are familiar because they tend to be repetitive. If not the actual form of a thought, the manner in which the thinking proceeds is repetitive. Samsara is characterized by repetition, the wise say. It is repetition within one’s mind, rebirth after rebirth of the same conception, the same**

**erroneous definitions. If you trace for whom these streams are and comprehend his nature, you find innate freedom from, the innate transcendence of, those streams. If you trace for whom these thoughts are - “Who am I?” - the false definitions about the “I,” which give rise to those streams of thought, without which those streams of thought cannot appear or survive, ceases.**

**The “I” appears as a thought, but you are not a thought. You exist with or without thought. The thought of “I” is one thing; the Existence that is really I is another. Trace all the threads of thought to the notion “I.” Then, inquire “Who am I?” There is no place from which those streams originate, but, as long as you do not inquire, the streams seem to be going on in a dream that is ages old. The streams of thought about everything are based on the definitions of you. The definitions of you are woven into all of the patterns of thinking, and the definitions have one supposition at their core - “I.” Without it, there is no creation. What is regarded as the entire universe is your Self, but where and when the “I” arises, there and then begins division.**



That which inspires you to seek the Reality must be something that exists irrespective of the presence or absence of thought. True Knowledge does not have much to do with thought, nor is it the suppression of thought. It is not necessarily an interruption of thought at the level of thought. The destruction of thought is the abandonment of the very idea that thought is ever existent. If one merely stops thought, as beneficial as that might be, depending upon the spiritual circumstances, it will resume. Thought ceases at times, such as deep dreamless sleep and similar states, but we do not see any permanent Liberation coming from that break, even if one has had that many times.

Where “me” and “mine” vanish, something else arises and shines that is true and real. It has nothing to do with thought. If you maintain the idea, “my thoughts,” it will not shine for you. If you retain the idea, “my absence of thought,” it will not shine for you. Where the “me” and the “mine” disappear, it shines. Emphasis is placed on Self-Knowledge and not just the stoppage of thought. The Self and its Realization are not dependent upon the stoppage of

thought. The Self is thought-transcendent and so is its Realization.

The thoughts are completely inert and have no knowing power. A thought does not declare its own existence. Something else knows it. So much is this so that, apart from the something else that knows, the thought cannot be said to exist at all. Have you ever known or experienced a thought apart from the Consciousness that knows it? If it has no independent existence, it does not actually have any existence.

If you become entangled in thoughts, you are naturally going to have a yearning to be free of them. The yearning must come from something that knows better and that already stands beyond thought. If the yearning turns in on itself, which is the practice of inquiry, thought becomes irrelevant.

Surrender and inquiry signify the dissolution of the notion of “I.” If you inquire as to who you are, your experience will be abidance just as Sri Bhagavan, and, if you surrender to Sri Bhagavan, he takes over everything, and there is nothing left for you, neither you nor yours. “I” and “mine” disappear entirely in either case.





The inquiry should be addressed regarding identity. You need not worry about whether the thoughts appear or not. Just address the assumption of “I” - “me” and “mine.” The illusory presence of “me” and “mine” makes bondage; the absence of “me” and “mine” makes for Liberation. If there is no “me,” there is no start for the thoughts; if there is no “mine,” there is no possessor of the thoughts.

Therefore, on diving deep upon the quest, “Who am I and from where?” thoughts disappear, and consciousness of Self then flashes forth as “I-I” within the cavity of every seeker’s Heart.

Inquiring “Who am I?” you lose the misidentifications. Inquiring, “Whence am I?” the sense of “I” returns to its origin, its rightful place, free of superimposition. What is the result? The Consciousness, the pure Knowledge of the Self, which is the Knowledge that is Consciousness, **flashes forth** to itself, because there is none other to whom it would flash, the false identity having been dissolved. The only thing that remains of “I” is Consciousness, said to be flashing forth to itself.

**This flashes forth as the “I-I,”** which is the continuous identification with pure Existence, just the Self. It is not as an ego-”I,” but is that which is truly “I,” **within the cavity of every seeker’s Heart.** That is the space of quintessential Being, which is the space of Consciousness.

**And this is Heaven, this is that Stillness, the abode of Bliss.** This is Heaven within. Where else is Heaven to be found? **It is that Stillness.** What is stillness? It is the same as Silence, the unmoving, invariable Existence. It is the Maharshi’s silence; it is Dakshinamurti’s silence; it is the stillness of the unmoving Brahman, which never becomes other than what it is, the immutable One. The immutable One, the real Stillness, transcendent Silence is the abode of Bliss. One who abides in That exists as That. So, you live in Heaven; you are Heaven. Being still, you are the Stillness, the Silence. Similarly, when you know the Abode of Bliss, you are the state or Abode of Bliss, and, being That, you cannot lose it. What you go into, you may come out of, but the true Heaven is That which you are, and it is neither lost nor gained. ॐ



# Special Events at SAT

*Devotees celebrated four special events during the first quarter of this year:*

**Arudra Darshana** was celebrated on January 1st; **Mahasivaratri** on February 14th; The **Nondual Self-Inquiry Retreat** on March 16-18th; **Sri Rama Navami** (Lord Rama's Jayanti) on March 25th.

**Images, readings, and bhajans from these events may be viewed and listened to by following these links:**

**<https://satramana.org/web/gallery/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/SATTemple>**





from LETTERS FROM  
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

## The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi



### Samadhí

September 8, 1947

This morning, a European who was sitting in front of Bhagavan said through an interpreter: "It is stated in the Mandukyopanishad that, unless samadhí i.e., the 8th and last stage of yoga, is also experienced, there can be no liberation (moksha), however much meditation (dhyana) or austerities (tapas) are performed. Is that so?"

Bhagavan: "Rightly understood, they are the same. It makes no difference whether you call it meditation or austerities or absorption or anything else. That which is steady, continuous like the flow of oil, is austerity, meditation, and absorption. To be one's own Self is samadhí."

Questioner: "But it is said in the Mandukyopanishad that samadhí must necessarily be experienced before attaining liberation."

Bhagavan: "And who says that it is not so? It is stated not only in the Mandukyopanishad but in all the ancient books. But it is true samadhí only if you know your Self. What is the use of sitting still for some time like a lifeless object? Suppose you get a boil on your hand and have it operated under chloroform; you don't feel any pain at the time, but does that mean that you were in samadhí? It is the same with this, too. One has to know what samadhí is. And how can you know it without knowing your Self? If the Self is known, samadhí will be known automatically."

Meanwhile, a Tamil devotee opened the Tíru-vachakam and began singing the "Songs on Pursuit." Towards the end comes the passage, "Oh, Iswara, you are trying to flee, but I am holding you fast. So where can you go and how can you escape from me?"

Bhagavan commented with a smile: "So, it seems that he is trying to flee, and they are holding him fast! Where could he flee to? Where is he not present? Who is he? All this is nothing but a pageant. There is another sequence of ten songs in the same book, one which goes, "O my Lord! You have made my mind your abode. You have

If you have given yourself up to me, I enjoy endless bliss, but of what use am I to you, even though you have made of my body your temple out of your boundless mercy to me? What is it I could do for you in return? I have nothing now that I could call my own.

given yourself upto me and in return have taken me into you. Lord, which of us is the cleverer? If you have given yourself up to me, I enjoy endless bliss, but of what use am I to you, even though you have made of my body your temple out of your boundless mercy to me? What is it I could do for you in return? I have nothing now that I could call my own." This means that there is no

such thing as "I." See the beauty of it! Where there is no such thing as "I," who is the doer and what is it that is done, whether it be devotion or Self-inquiry or samadhí?" ॐ





## Satsang with Nome

True Knowledge  
September 23, 2007

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: The certitude of Self-Knowledge is found in the identity of the Knowledge and Being. In Self-Knowledge, the conception of “I know this” is absent. Likewise, its corollary, the doubt “I do not know this,” is also nonexistent. In the so-called knowledge that is of a conceptual or perceptual character, “I know this” is a curious combination of the reality of our own Being, the luminosity of our Consciousness, and some objective thought-form. Self-Knowledge is entirely nonobjective, and, in it, there is neither an individual knower nor an object known. The constancy and the ever-sameness of Self-Knowledge have nothing to do with what is perceived and conceived. It is not determined by any bodily or sensory state. It is not determined by any mental mode or state. The very nature of the knower is the Knowledge. This, therefore, is not a topic that can be studied, but direct, timeless experience is solidly realized by a profound inquiry into the knower, even the one that seems as if individualized, who, when caught up into the imagination of duality, says, “I know this; I do not know this.”

If, as Sri Bhagavan has instructed, we inquire, “For whom is the Knowledge?” or “For whom is the ignorance?” and discern the real nature of “I,”

Knowledge is not a possession of anyone, and there is no ignorant being. If the one who appears as if ignorant inquires to know his own nature, he finds only Liberation, which is pure Knowledge.

the Knowledge that so discerns is, in substance, the Knower himself. Adi Sankara has revealed Brahman alone is capable of knowing Brahman. The Maharshi revealed Self-Knowledge, the Self knowing itself, of itself, by itself. Who is it that could stand apart and say, “I know this,” or who could doubt and

say, “This may be so, but I don’t know this”? Who is the one called “I” in you? Can that one be a body, which is merely the known, an image projected within the mind, by the mind, in the waking state? Can “I” be the mind, which, as Sri Bhagavan said, is only a bundle of thoughts that are inert in themselves? What is the definition of your own nature? Is there one Knower, or a multiplicity of knowers? Is there a Knower who is pure Consciousness and another one, be it called ego, mind, or individual soul? If it were to be a multiplicity, who would know the multiplicity? Inquire within to perceive, not through the senses and not through mere thought, all of which is objective to you, with real Knowledge what, in truth, you are.

That which is known as God, the Lord of all the universe, by those who perceive a world, is the very same thing that is known by those who deeply meditate as the Consciousness which is the witness of all. For those who inquire and know the Self as it is, the very same One transcends all the previous definitions and abides as the unborn, uncreated Absolute, for which there is nothing else to be witnessed or any object ever created. We should know our identity as That. Such Knowledge does not come bodily and does not come conceptually. The Knowledge is realized within your Self by a deep inquiry, "Who am I?" When realized, it is found to be innate, identical with Being. As there is no second kind of being, be it an ego, a mind, or anything else, there is, in truth, no one in ignorance.

Knowledge is not a possession of anyone, and there is no ignorant being. If the one who appears as if ignorant inquires to know his own nature, he finds only Liberation, which is pure Knowledge. What he finds, he himself is. The certitude of this Knowledge lies in being It. Being it does not mean a mode of mind and does not mean thinking about it. Being as Knowledge is not a possession, nor can it be lost. The illusion which is not is gone. The Knowledge sought is actually ever-existent. Look deeply within yourself to see what's being hinted at.

Questioner: How can I make the knowledge constant?

N.: The unsteadiness of knowledge is due to the presence of vasanas, tendencies, and, conversely, the destruction of vasanas, destruction of tendencies, brings about steadiness of Knowledge. It is the tendencies that represent the steadiness or unsteadiness, and we just casually say that the Knowledge is steady or unsteady. Really, the Knowledge is quite beyond all of that; it is of a transcendent nature. The steadiness and unsteadiness appearance is due to the presence or absence of vasanas. Understand vasanas to be the tendencies manifesting in the mind based on misidentifications; the form of the misidentifications, the form of attachments, are the vasanas.

Q.: To resolve the vasanas we are taught negation, and the negation certainly is not a quick,

mental dismissal. The negation has to come from the sense of unity.

N.: Is your identity, your existence, declared by the Upanishads to be Brahman, quick or slow? Can something ever-existent be determined or be discussed in terms of time? It is similar with the destruction of ignorance. While the intellectual idea of negation might be of some use, the real inquiry is always mind-transcendent. The mental aspect is too cumbersome; it is not the right tool for the job. It is like using a crowbar to try to sew cloth.

If you still feel something appears, something arises, find out for whom it is. If you do so, you will find out that whatever it is, the object part of your experience only a mirror image of the definition of the subject. Find out the real nature of the subject, and then say if anything appears or arises. If there is unsteadiness in the experience, find the source of the unsteadiness. The cause or the source will always be the definition of yourself. You cannot make the Self steadier, but you can remove the disturbance, which is the illusion of the separate individual and all the definitions that are dependent upon or appended to that individual assumption. Since they are composed purely of ignorance, the removal is always a negation in the Knowledge of your identity. Since we are not producing anything new, nor are we involved in a transformation or in a new attainment, but simply the revelation of the ever-existent, all that is necessary is the removal of the presently standing imagination. To see the rope, all that is necessary is the removal of the imagination of a snake. The rope is already there. We do not make the rope stand still; we just remove the imagination that there is a snake. So it is with the Self.

Another Q.: Whenever I think about knowing the Self or anything else, it's good to know who it is that knows it, because otherwise, it's mistaken identities. Then, the objects become real, because I've assumed that I'm a body.

N.: First, there is the unmodified Consciousness. Somehow, it supposedly becomes modified and becomes thought-form. The form of a thought is always an object, which, although it does not exist separately from the thought-form or from the



Consciousness which knows it, is assumed as a separate thing upon which is projected the reality of one's own Existence, with the knowing quality, coming out as "known," of the pure Consciousness, both of which are your Self. Then, one arrives at the dazzling conclusion, "I know this," although all the while it is only one's own Existence, Consciousness, entirely undifferentiated, vast, all-pervading, and without anything else, that really is.

Q.: Thought seems to have form, but, upon introversion, it doesn't have any form at all?

N.: Thought seems to have form, yet there is nothing existing as form except the thought itself. If we remove the form aspect, negate that, from the thought, what remains? Is there any such thing as a formless thought?

The Self is all that remains. That is all that was actually there, just the Self, which is unalloyed Consciousness. So, do you think?

Q.: What is normally taken to be a thinker is the body with a brain in it.

N.: That is the idea, but who thinks about that? (laughter)

Q.: It is ridiculous, because that is contained in thought itself.

N.: Hmm, hmm.

Q.: If I subtract the body part of it, then where would the thinker sprout from?

N.: If the background Consciousness is of a formless nature, how would a thinker emerge therefrom?

Q.: Unless it was always formless and never anything other.

N.: Then, thoughts would not really exist, nor a thinker.

Q.: Yes, the thinker especially?

N.: So, even now, do you have thoughts?

Q.: I am trying to find where it is. It seems that it is only in that notion.

N.: The notion that there could be a notion?

Q.: Yes.

N.: The thought that there could be another thought?

Q.: Can you explain? I don't understand. I was thinking it came back to where I take myself to be.

N.: Are you a thinker? If you are not a thinker, how can you take yourself to be anything? You abide only as pure Consciousness. As is the case with the thinker, so it is with the object portion, the thought. Ever so many rishis and yogis recommend that one be free from thought. We can see this many times in the Maharshi's instructions, as well. The Self is described as being free from thought. If it is truly freedom from thought, it must be permanently so. It must be eternally so and not touching thought at one point in time and then not touching it at another.

Q.: Yes. That would apply to any ignorance?

N.: Exactly so. Has thought ever touched your Being? Does Being ever become a thought? Thought cannot exist without Being, but, if Being never becomes a thought, what can we say of the thinker and his thoughts? Contained within the thinker is the idea that there can be other thoughts, some object portion for him. It is all one supposition. So, what is actually existing?

Q.: I don't quite see where, in that place, I call myself an individual, If I look for it, I don't see where it starts. However, I have a notion that it will start, and that's the problem.

N.: How do you know that you have a notion it will start?

Q.: From the same place that it probably starts from. (laughter)

N.: Has it actually started? If the "I" has been born, it may be reborn. Has it been born?

Q.: That is mind-blowing. Even thinking about that is interesting.

N.: Yes. Realization extends beyond past, present, and future; time becomes irrelevant. The Realization is not an event. When you have the notion that it will occur, is the “I” that possesses this notion the Self or supposedly somebody else?

Q.: Well, it is definitely not the Self, because it could only be for an outward-going one. You know it’s sort of like, it’s outward-going.

N.: Have you seen the outward-going one?

Q.: That eliminates everything, the past, present, and future.

N.: If the notional, outward-going one, the assumed individual, has never come to be, was never born, nothing else was ever created, not time - past, present and future - nor worlds, nor bodies, nor thought-forms, nor anything else. What is is the perpetual Existence, pure Consciousness. It has not begun. It exists always. It has not given rise to anything else. It just is as it is, and it alone is.

Q.: So, “Where in that alone, solitary spot can anything be created?” is the inquiry?

N.: That solitary, indivisible Existence, which is One without a second, without anything else whatsoever, is the significance of Advaita – Nonduality, Kaivalyam – That which alone is; That is Brahman, That is the meaning of Siva, and That is the only real definition of “I.”

Q.: Because everything else never existed?

N.: Just one Existence is, always. In this Realization, there is steady Knowledge, for there can be no cause of unsteadiness. In this, there is certainty, being beyond differentiation – nirvikalpa. It is beyond doubt – nirvikalpa.

Q.: If there is a doubt?

N.: Then, the Maharshi says, “Doubt the doubter.”

Q.: Doubt the doubter?

N.: The entire illusion becomes swallowed up and is gone without a trace. The doubting and the doubt are only in and for the doubter. The doubter proves to be nonexistent; all that is there is the Self. Ignorance is then said to be burned up without a trace. Because the individual or ego never came to be, he cannot return.

Q.: As in the movie analogy, I think that something occurred, but really nothing happened.

N.: Only the screen is there the entire time. To one who sees and is caught up in the picture as it is being projected on the screen, it is pointed out that the screen remains unaffected as the substrate. What actually is there the entire time is only the screen, and the images are entirely unreal. So, of course, the Reality, the Existence, is unaffected. There isn’t anything else truly there to affect it.

Q.: What you’re saying now, though, is that that projection never even occurred.

N.: Yes, all analogies can be used only to a certain extent just to bring forth or to clarify a particular spiritual point.

Q.: The actual projection of the movie never occurred? There is only the screen?

N.: That is right.

Q.: If it were imagined that there is a projection, then it would have to be found out for whom was the projection?

N.: If we so inquire, for whom it is, who is the seer of it, the seen is swallowed up, and the projector is no more.

Another Q.: One could doubt the questioner, and that would be swallowed up just as easily?



N.: Whether it be the questioner, the doubter, or the thinker, such is only different attire for the same invisible man.

Another Q.: When I meditate, I usually seek a place that's quiet, with low light. I usually close my eyes when I meditate. When I open my eyes or when I meditate, the Existence becomes very clear. If I open my eyes, the sensory input goes up. Then, there's the sorting out what's being seen. It appears to be different than Existence. When most people meditate, they want to reduce the sensory input; it's helpful.

N.: Hmm, hmm.

Q.: When the sensory input increases, it doesn't appear as Existence; it appears as something else.

N.: What makes it appear as something else? Yes, when meditators meditate, they often close the eyes and do as you describe. It may be because it is found to be helpful to have less sensory input or it may simply be due to the wisdom of knowing that one is not interested in the senses at that time. What you are seeking is a non-sensory experience. Not that the senses being active would be an obstruction, but simply there is no interest. What makes for the differentiation? In the teachings of Vedanta, you have probably come across such terms as indriyas – senses, manas – the mind, buddhi – the intellect, chitta – memory. How can they stand apart from Existence? Considering the mind, usually three, sometimes four, parts are described. Manas is the cognitive quality or cognitive power, which uses only the light of Consciousness, for what else could give the knowledge to the cognition of the senses and the ability to mentally discern what is being sensed. Buddhi is intelligence or intellect and the ability to understand. It can be used in correct or incorrect ways. The ability to think and to have an active intellect is with borrowed, reflected light. Where does the power to truly understand reside? Chitta is memory. It gives a sense of continuity to the mental conceptions and cognitions. Where does the continuity really reside? What gives it its light? What gives it its ap-

parent solidity? The fourth part is not really a part at all, ahamkara – “I”-ness, ego sense. With that aham – “I” with the ego sense, everything is differentiated. If there is that one, there are many. If there is not the “I,” the very seed for differentiation is missing, and all the previous that have just been described are only of, in, and by the one solitary Existence, the real Self.

When you open your eyes in meditation, does that signal an end of meditation? When you open your eyes or the other senses become active, does that mean a change of state?

Q.: No, the Existence is still quite obvious.

N.: So, what change has occurred, or has a change occurred?

Q.: If I look at the senses and objects, it is clear that they are inert. It's clear that it's only by the Existence that they have any existence.

N.: So they are both inert and have no power to bind. They are not self-existent, being utterly dependent on you, the perceiver. So what is the difference for you between eyes open and eyes closed?

Q.: There is no difference in my Existence.

N.: Do you have an experience apart from your Existence?

Q.: I have these experiences that don't ...

N.: ...that don't exist. Your eyes are open now. Is the Existence changed from when you had them closed?

One could be vividly daydreaming that his eyes were open while, indeed, they were closed. It is similar to that when, meditation drawing to a close, you open your eyes. Of course, if you see it that way, meditation does not conclude, and the eyes being open or closed is utterly insignificant. This is so for the ears, too. (laughter)

Q.: It works for all objects.

N.: It does.

Q.: I thought something had been added. When I think of meditation, I think of the solid Existence that doesn't go away.

N.: Yes, it doesn't go away. It is solid and unchanging.

Q.: Yes.

N.: Is something really added to it? If you imagine that something is added to it, you say that it has been altered, that something changed. But if nothing has actually been added, you remain the same; nothing has changed.

Q.: Yes, dreams don't add to reality.

N.: A person could dream an entire world, and nothing would have been created. It could go on for a long time, but really it would not have gone on at all.

Q.: That's very freeing, because one is untouched by any of that.

N.: One's certitude becomes firm, and he remains unaffected, because of the solidity of Being, its immutability, and also because there is nothing else added.

Another Q.: I have heard, "It's all good; it's all grace." If it is all grace, isn't even the illusion, dream, or the vasana that also?

N.: We can accept it that way. We can say it is all good, and thereby we emphasize the right aspect of it. We can go further and say that it is all good. Siva means the "good;" it is all Siva. It means Siva is, and what we thought was all was really just Siva. So the first is sifting the essence of the illusion and the latter is just the Essence without illusion.

Q.: The value of that expression is that it allows one to not resist or fight it.

N.: Fight what?

Q.: The mind fighting it.

N.: Fight what?

Q.: The identification with the mind in the fighting is a reinforcement of the illusion.

N.: Do you apply this understanding to phenomenal things, such as if something is not to your liking?

Q.: Yes, if I'm going to be truthful.

N.: (laughter) That is a good idea. There may be something not to your liking. If you accept that it is all grace, even if you make efforts to rectify the situation, you will still be without attachment and happy in a state of grace. Consider Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita. He had to fight. Did that mean he was out of grace? In the end of chapter 18, the final chapter of the Gita, Arjuna says, "My memory has been restored." What did he remember? Krishna expounded the teaching, starting with the second chapter on the nature of Reality and the Self and proceeding thereafter to cover all aspects. What did Arjuna remember?

Q.: His true nature.

N.: The very same as grace. He had understood; he had truly surrendered himself.

Q.: It's all good.

N.: All good

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from the Avadhuta Gita.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om ॐ





## *from* **The Adhyatma Ramayana**

### Chapter One

#### Rama as the Supreme Self

7, Parvati said: Salutations to thee, O God, the refuge of the world. Thou art the knower of all as thy ownself, thou art the supreme Lord. I ask thee about the eternal nature of the highest Purusha. Thou art thyself eternal.

8. The great declare to their devotees even what is otherwise kept secret and is not to be revealed to any one. Wonderful! O God! Do I, thy devotee question thee. Thou art dear to me. Do thou tell me what I am going to ask thee about.
9. I know what thou hast already said, yet, again, I ask thee about the nature of jnana and vijnana (Knowledge and the Realization thereof) and the science of devotion and renunciation. Do thou once more declare in measured words blazing like the sun that to me by which people may cross this ocean of life.
10. I ask thee another question which is a deep mystery. Do thou, O lotus-eyed god, answer it. Steadfast devotion to that essence of the world known as the auspicious Rama is declared to be the best boat for crossing this ocean of worldly life.
11. For release from samsara, devotion is said to be the only means. There is no other means. Yet, it behooves thee to drive away the doubt that is lurking in my mind by thy pure instruction.
12. They say that Rama is One, foremost of all beings, above the flow of the attributes of maya, and that those who carefully worship him day and night attain to the supreme abode through realization of the Self.
13. Some say that, though supreme, Rama did not know his nature through the influence of his own maya. He, however, knew the nature of the Supreme Self when roused by another.
14. If he knew his true Self, why did he, the Supreme, grieve over the loss of Sita? If he did not know his own Atma, who would worship him, for he is then equal to other embodied creatures.
15. What reply to this is known to thee, do thou tell me in order to dispel my doubt.



16. The Lord Mahadeva said: Blessed art thou; thou art the devotee of the Supreme Self, thou that desirest to know the nature of Rama. Before this no one ever questioned me desirous of knowing this great mystery.
17. Through devotion has thou stirred me up. I shall answer thee having bowed to that foremost of Raghus. Rama is the Supreme Self of prakriti without beginning, bliss itself and the One Supreme Purusha.
18. Having created the whole of this universe through his own maya, he pervades it in and out, like space. Though abiding within all, his nature is concealed from all. He sees all created beings by his own maya.
19. These worlds ever revolve around him like iron drawn by a magnet. This, those of deluded minds know not, because of understandings enveloped with ignorance of their own creation.
20. They superimpose their own nescience upon Him who is the Self of all, who is pure, and who is beyond maya. Attached to wives and sons and engaged in actions of various kinds, they wander about in the samsara.
21. They do not know Him who abides in their own hearts, like those who forgetting the necklet around their own necks run about in quest of it everywhere. Just as darkness does not abide in the sun whose nature is light itself, even so avidya (nescience) does not abide in the Supreme Lord, whose nature is light. How can nescience reside in the supreme Raghu (Rama), who is replete with pure intelligence and who is the supreme of the Supreme?
22. Just as stars and other objects appear moving to one of defective sight from the turning of the eyes, even so is man stupefied in superimposing the notion of doer upon the Supreme Self, when the doer is the aggregate of the body, the senses and the ahankara (egoism).

23. Day and night never appear in the sun whose nature, which is light, never leaves it. In the same way, how can, then, Knowledge and ignorance abide in Hari (Rama) whose nature is pure intelligence itself (chidghana—a mass of Consciousness).
24. Therefore, darkness never abides in the foremost of Raghus, the lotus-eyed Rama, who is full of Bliss, whose essence is Knowledge. He is the witness of nescience itself. Therefore, it never overpowers him.
25. Here, I shall tell thee a mystery which is difficult of comprehension. It is the dialogue between Sita, Rama, and Hanuman and is a means of emancipation.
26. In the days of the Ramayana, Rama, who was skilled in warfare, having killed Ravana, that thorn in the side of the gods, with all his sons, army and followers, came to Ayodhya in company with Sita, Sugriva, Lakshmana, Hanuman and others.
28. Installed on the throne, surrounded by Vasishtha and other great men, he was seated, resplendent like a million suns.
- 29-30. Seeing Hanuman standing in front of him with folded hands, all duties performed, without attachment to anything, of great intelligence and desirous of instruction, Rama said to Sita, “Do thou declare to Hanuman the truth. He is without faults, qualified to obtain Knowledge and devoted to us.”
31. “Very well,” said Sita, and thereupon she, whose maya deludes the world, told Hanuman, who had approached them for instruction, the truth about Rama.
- 32-33. Sita said: Know Rama to be the Supreme Brahman, Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, without a second, free from all superimpositions, being itself beyond conception, happy, pure, calm, free from defect, devoid of faults, pervading all, the Self of all, self-illuminated and above error.



34. Know me to be the primeval prakriti, the creator, preserver and destroyer.  
By mere proximity to Him, do I ever watchfully create all this.
35. From proximity to Him what is created by me is superimposed upon Him  
by the ignorant. . . .
43. Rama never moves, nor stand, nor grieves, nor wishes for anything, nor re-  
nounces, nor does anything. The embodiment of bliss, unmoved, un-  
changeable, He appears to be following the attributes of maya.
44. The Lord Mahadeva said: Then, Rama himself said to Hanuman who was  
standing near him. “Listen now to the truth about the self, the not self, and  
the Supreme Self as I declare it to thee.
45. Just as there appears to be three kinds of space, viz., space absolute, space  
as limited by a jar, and space as reflected in the water that is in the jar,
- 46-47. even so is the Consciousness (Chaitanya) limited by the principle of  
cognition and Consciousness reflected and Consciousness absolute. In this  
way, Consciousness is threefold. The notion of the doer, which is the func-  
tion of intelligence as reflected in the buddhi together with the notion of  
jiva, is superimposed upon the unlimited, the undefiled, the witness, (Ab-  
solute Consciousness), by the foolish.
48. The reflection of the Consciousness is an erroneous belief, as it is said to be  
a result of nescience. Brahman is without limitations, and limitation is super-  
imposition upon it.
49. The unity of the limitless with the reflected self with what underlies the no-  
tion of egoism is established through sayings like “Thou art That.”
50. When this knowledge of the identity of the two selves arises through the  
great saying “Thou art that,” then avidya with all its off-shoots is destroyed.  
Of this there is no doubt.

51. Knowing this, my devotee attains to my own Self. Let those who are devoid of devotion to me roll in the abyss of the shastras. Theirs is neither Knowledge nor Emancipation, even through hundreds of incarnations.
52. This deep mystery of the heart of my ownself has been in truth declared by me to thee, O thou faultless one. Let it not be divulged to one who is without faith in me, who is of evil disposition, even though he gives for it a kingdom greater than that of Indra himself.”
53. The Lord Mahadeva said: Thus, O Goddess, have I declared to thee the mystery of Rama. It is a great secret. It is dear to the heart. It is a purifier and destroyer of sin.
54. This was said by Rama himself. It is a compendium of all the Vedanta. Whoever always reads it with faith becomes Emancipated; of this there is no doubt.

—TRANSLATED BY RAI BAHADUR LALA BAIJ NATH, B.A., PUBL. BY SUDHINDRA NATHA VASU, 1913





# The Ribhu Gita

Chapter 1, Verses 27-35

With Commentary by Nome at a  
Boundless Wisdom Event held on  
August 7, 2009 at the SAT Temple

## the Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om  
Om Namah Sivaya

27. If there is an interior, there surely is an exterior; if there is no interior, there is also no exterior. If there be (a concept of) completeness, it implies something of incompleteness.

*If there is an interior, there surely is an exterior; if there is no interior, there is also no exterior.* The existence of the Self may be said to be like space. Space has no inside and no outside, no interior and exterior. It is artificial to conceive of divisions in the space. There is the space in the room and the space outside. We speak of inside and outside only in relation to the walls, window frames, etc. that supposedly divide the space. But the space inside is the same space as outside, and the space outside is the same space as inside. It is one space. Similarly, the Existence of the Self, which is Brahman, is only one. It has no divisions, except for those that are imagined in delusion, corresponding to the walls in the analogy. What becomes the focal point or the marking place of division? If there is the concept "I am the body," there is misidentification with the body. Then, there is outside the body and interior to the body. Identity is assumed more with the interior than the exterior. If, though, you inquire as to who you are and disidentify from the body, your Existence is not confined to the space of the body, but rather your Existence is everywhere. Or interior may be supposed in terms of interior to the mind and exterior to the mind, which usually includes the body as a reference point. How do you know what is inside your mind and what is outside your mind? Do you know anything of the exterior to the mind, apart from the interior of the mind? Is not the exterior conceived within the mind?

Your real Being, the Self; is not divided into interior and exterior. Just as it is free from the body, it is mind-transcendent. Keenly inquire and discern that



with which you identify. If you cease to misidentify with the body, the senses, and the mind, there is for you no more interior and exterior. There is just one Existence, and you are that Existence, without division, separation, or any difference whatsoever. ***If there be (a concept of) completeness, it implies something of incompleteness.*** The nature of your Existence, which is also pure Consciousness, is utterly beyond conception. The highest ideal of perfection, the highest idea of completion, falls far below. States of complete and incomplete are for the individual, but is the Self individualized? Inquire. The idea of a state that is complete is conceived from the notion that there is a state that is incomplete. The notion of being complete is an intuition of your real, natural state, but, cast in duality, it appears as a state, as a condition pertaining to the individual, which can neither be eternal nor real. For that which is unborn and truly the highest perfection, such dualistic ideas do not exist.

You do not exist confined within thought. The same is true with the body, for the body is only conceived in the mind. Once you regard yourself as interior, in terms of the mind, you view the universe as exterior and the Self as exterior; you are in the mind trying to reach the Self, or you are in the mind and there is a universe external to you. But the world is not external, and the Self cannot possibly be apart from you.

If the conception of interior and exterior is eliminated by an inquiry to know your real nature, the entire division of jagat-jiva-para, the universe, the individual, and the Supreme, dissolves into one undivided Existence.

***28. If there is a little that can be thought of, it becomes all in no time; if there is not a little—nothing whatsoever of anything at any time—nothing arises.***

A single mere thought, “I,” appears as all “this”. ***It becomes all in no time.*** In a moment, the solitary notion “I” expands into the bubble of its own world, and an entire dream plays out. It takes no time for illusion to appear, time itself being part of the illusion. ***If there is a little that can be thought of, it becomes all in no time.*** A little “I” becomes all of “this.” A minute speck appears as a tremendous amount. From “I” comes the notion of objectivity; the “this”, or objective aspect of one’s experience. If there is a single objective notion, it multiplies and manifests in an endless variety of ways. Inquire and determine if this “I” that is the start, the speck that becomes all “this,” truly exists. Between the notions of “I” and “this,” all illusion appears. With the disappearance of “I” and with the disappearance of “this,” illusion vanishes. There is no object to be conceived; the object itself does not exist, so how can one conceive of it? It is like things seen in a dream. ***If there is not a little,*** that is, if the “I” has not been born at all, if there is no objective thing ever created, but only one solitary, indivisible Existence, or Brahman, is; there is ***nothing whatsoever of anything at any time –nothing arises.*** Where the individualized experiencer is abandoned and you remain in the natural, true Existence of the Self, there is nothing else to appear or to arise. Everything that appears or that arises in one’s experience depends on the perceiver thereof. No matter what the per-



ception, subtle or gross, no matter what the conception, is, inquire "For whom is this?" The "this" has no existence independent of the "I" that knows it or experiences it. "For whom is this?" "Who am I?" If you inquire in this manner, Knowledge dawns. The nonexistence of the illusory ignorance is realized. What remains is the undivided, solitary Being-Consciousness-Bliss for which nothing appears, nothing disappears, nothing rises, and nothing sets. It just is, perfect and always. That is what you are.

Even the least bit of a thought or ego becomes everything. The least notion that something objective exists becomes everything. It amounts to the same. The destruction of the false ego is the destruction of the objective outlook.

**29. Therefore, all this does not exist in the least at any time: neither you nor I, neither this nor that. There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.**

**All this does not exist in the least at any time.** What is it that does not exist? You, I, this, that, what you regard as objective, and what you regard as subjective: none of that actually exists. What does exist? **Only Brahman alone**, which is vast, formless, unconditioned, unperturbed, immutable, absolute Existence? **Be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.** The implication is that the Self is identical with Brahman, and not merely a part of Brahman, nor Brahman an aspect of the Self. The Self and Brahman are one and the same. If this is so, there is no scope for an individual, and, where there is no individual, there is no I, you, this, that, etc. Only real Being exists, and that alone you are. Where is the certitude of which he speaks? This is Self-Knowledge, in which Brahman knows Brahman, the Self knows the Self, and such Knowledge is absolute. It does not depend on any other instrument or means to be known. It is self-luminous Self-Knowledge. Such Knowledge has all the certainty, all the steadiness, of the fact of your very Existence. For Brahman, there is no doubt about being Brahman. For those who inquire, this Knowledge is the same.

**30. There is nothing by way of example in this world, nor is there anything for which an example is to be given. There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.**

How can there be an example in the world, for something which is of the nature of no world at all? How can there be an example for your Self? Of course, the scriptures and the sayings of saints and sages are filled with analogies and examples to help aspirants realize, but the Truth, itself, is quite beyond an example. Because it is the infinite and only existent Reality, there is nothing apart from it or outside of it that can be used as a comparison for It. Even to say it is like space, as alluded to earlier, falls far short of being an accurate definition or description for the Self. **There is nothing by way of example in this world.** The Being of your Self is not like anything else, nor is there anything for which an example is to be given. Being is not a thing; it is non-conceptual. Examples and analogies can be provided for things, occurrences, activities, and such, but, for Being, or pure Consciousness, which is absolute, what example



can be given? How can it be grasped and measured by the mind, so that an example for it can be conceived? ***There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.*** You are alone by your Self always, and you are infinite and eternal. You should know your Self with the Knowledge that is innate.

***31. There is no mind to think, "I am the Supreme Brahman," "This universe is only Brahman alone," "You are also only Brahman."***

The Knowledge that he reveals is not a mentally conceived knowledge. You are instructed to know, not to merely think, "I am the Self, I am Brahman." ***There is no mind to think*** The existence of a mind is assumed only so long as one has not inquired into the very nature, or root, of the mind. If the root, or source, of the mind be sought, the mind ceases to appear. If the nature of the mind is known, only Brahman, the homogeneous Consciousness, exists, and there is no such entity called the "mind;" nor do any of its possessions, in the forms of various thoughts, exist. Only Brahman, the infinite Being-Consciousness-Bliss, exists. ***There is no mind to think, "I am Brahman," "This universe is only Brahman alone," "You are also only Brahman."*** If there is no mind to think those ideas, there is certainly no mind to think of anything else.

The success of any other kind of meditation is due proportionately to the Knowledge essence, which composes the entirety of the inquiry. If someone meditates upon these aphorisms, the degree that there is success is because Knowledge shines. If Self-Knowledge shines unobscured, the nonexistence of the mind is plainly obvious. It is not a thought-dependent or thought-produced Knowledge; nor can thought obstruct it.

At first, examples are required in order to yield some grasp of the Truth. Later, declarations of Truth by themselves stand without an example. The Truth, Brahman, stands beyond both. The essential Knowledge stands beyond both the example kind of knowledge the plain statement kind of knowledge. True Knowledge is utterly beyond any use of the mind.

***32. I am Consciousness, and there is no non-Self. Be of this certitude. Thus, in brief, the definition of the Self has been told to you.***

***I am Consciousness, and there is no non-Self.*** Your very Existence is Consciousness. Consciousness can never be an object, as if it were something to look at or look away from, to possess or to lose, to rise and to set. Consciousness is identical with your Existence; it is your very Being. By an inquiry to know your Self, your identity should rest just as Consciousness and nothing else. ***I am Consciousness, and there is no non-Self.*** For purposes of discrimination, one discerns what is not the Self and what is the Self, and the Self remains as the pure Consciousness. Pure Consciousness is without modification and is boundary-less. What, then, has become of the non-Self that was discriminated as such? Ignorance and illusion have absolutely no substance whatsoever. Consciousness is what exists and exists as you. All that is known,



including all that appears as other than the Self, is known in Consciousness, by Consciousness. Realizing the nature of Consciousness, it is indivisible. There are no sections within it, and no modification is possible for it, for there is nothing else outside it to modify it. Being homogeneous, there is no power within it to modify it. Consciousness alone exists. When you conceive in terms of "I" and "this," such is all just only Consciousness. When you know Reality as it is, there is only Consciousness, and the Reality, you who know, and the Knowledge are one and the same Consciousness.

### **33. By hearing this once, one becomes Brahman oneself.**

You need only to truly listen once. Hearing it again and again may be part of listening once. You need to really listen, that is, to know the Truth that is being revealed, once. Once Truth is known it cannot be forgotten, because it is identical with your Existence, and you can no more forget the Knowledge of the Self than you can forget your own Existence.

**One becomes Brahman oneself.** Can another become Brahman? We can say Brahman can become Brahman, but then there is really no becoming in that. Brahman just is Brahman. So, it is said that one becomes Brahman by listening to this, by understanding it, really once. If one becomes Brahman, what is the nature of that one? If the seeker is said to find Brahman by realization of his own Self, what is the nature of that seeker?

The purpose of the verse is to utterly dismiss the unreal. If one becomes Brahman oneself, then certainly it is realized that the unreal never comes to be, and the Real always alone is.

Ribhu is not alluding to just the sound waves impacting the eardrums or the formulation of ideas that are supposed to, in the mind's view, correspond to what has been heard. Listening, here, implies Knowledge. Real Knowledge has finality to it. When we really know, ignorance is impossible. It is impossible to conjure up, and it is found to have been impossible always. In real Knowledge, there is a complete absence of anyone to be ignorant, or to be bound, and, consequently, there is no ignorance and no bondage. For this kind of listening, listening and inquiry into the Self are simultaneous.

When Knowledge dawns, it dawns for itself, since it is not a knowledge, but the Knowledge is of the nature of pure Consciousness. When Knowledge is dawning, that is true listening. As it dawns, ignorance fades into the nonexistence that it was and is. **One becomes Brahman oneself.** The ostensible meaning seems to be one of merging with Brahman. But who is it that merges? Who is it that becomes? You cannot become Brahman. One thing does not become another. So, who becomes Brahman? Nevertheless, Ribhu does know what he is talking about. Ignorance vanishes, and Knowledge stands revealed, like darkness and light. The darkness is merely an absence of light. The ignorance is destroyed by inquiry which is itself of the nature of Knowledge. The inquiry is into the nature of the inquirer, so he, himself, is the power of his inquiry. He,



himself, is his own light, his own knowledge. Ignorance is destroyed; it is destructible because it is utterly unreal. The Real is not modified at any time. What does one become? It is only Brahman, which is what one always was and always will be.

Who would have the option to remain as an ego? The Self has no options; it just is. To say that the ego has the option to remain as an ego is absurd, because that presumes it is already existent. It is like overlooking the rope and saying that the snake has the choice to remain as the snake; or the mirage water has the option to remain wet. Inquiring very deeply into your nature, you find it to be invariable. It is not one thing at one time and another at another time. Whatever actually is your Existence is always so without a moment's interruption, without any modification, without any phases, stages, conditions, etc. Only in the mind is there plurality. You are not in the mind.

Nidagha then asked Ríbhū:

**34. Nidagha: Who are You? Who indeed? Tell me, best among speakers, that upon hearing which one is released instantaneously from the great hardship of samsara.**

The illusion of samsara, with all its bondage and suffering, that seems vivid and real is utterly dependent on ignorance prevailing. When ignorance ceases, the samsara vanishes without a trace. So, ignorance should be destroyed. Between the destruction of ignorance and the shining of true Knowledge, there is no gap, there is no lapse. The illusion is vanquished, and the Reality stands shining in its own light. You want to be free of samsara and realize the truth of the Self. If you want such ardently, intensely inquire and absorb deeply the instruction of sages such as Sri Ramana Maharshi and Ríbhū. If you do so, liberation from all the imagined bondage is guaranteed.

Ríbhū replied:

**35. Ríbhū:**

***I, indeed, am the Supreme Brahman. I, indeed, am the supreme happiness. I, indeed, am myself. I, indeed, am. I am Brahman alone.***

***I, indeed, am the Supreme Brahman.*** It is a statement of identity. Knowledge of your identity is essential. It composes Self-Realization. Without Knowledge of oneself, there is no Knowledge of Brahman. With Knowledge of your Self, there is only Knowledge of Brahman. Trace the nature of "I" within you and realize vividly, distinctly, and with utmost clarity what the "I" is. I am Brahman. The "I" should not be equated with, or misidentified with, anything else whatsoever. If it is misidentified, there is maya, illusion, and samsara, the repetitive cycle of birth and death. Who am I? If there is no confusion regarding the "I," there is just Brahman, the perfect fullness, and not a trace of samsara, not even the possibility of samsara. ***I, indeed, am the supreme happiness.*** Everyone everywhere, at all times, searches for happiness. The motivation behind every



desire is the search for happiness. To know the happiness is within you is the beginning of spiritual practice and brings detachment toward everything in the world. To know that the within-ness is the Self and one ought to know it as it is is the beginning of inquiry. If you know yourself as you truly are, you find that you are yourself the supreme happiness. You find that what you were searching for in so many ways is not only within you, but it is you. That which is considered within alone is your identity and not anything less. The happiness of the Self is to such an extent and of such a depth and is so utterly non-dependent and is so completely fulfilling, that it leaves nothing else to be desired, ever. For the sake of supreme happiness, profoundly inquire into your nature and know yourself as you are. Then, you find a happiness that never comes to an end, just as your Existence never comes to an end.

The entire delusion is conceiving the Self as the non-Self. If only you know yourself as the Self and give up misidentifying with what is not the Self, everything is fine. What is not the Self? It is anything objective, anything perceived, anything conceived, anything temporary or transient, anything sporadic or discontinuous, anything with parts, anything with limits, anything known by you. Abandon any tendency to misidentify with the non-Self, and what remains? Ribhu says, *I, indeed, am myself*. Inquire; know the Self, and what you know is what you are. Just Being. Just Being; Being alone. As Being alone exists, forever one without a second at all, he says, “I, indeed, am.” If you would simply abide in the Knowledge indicated by “I am” and did not append in imagination anything to it, that would suffice. Then, supreme happiness and supreme peace remain. He concludes the verse with, *I am Brahman* alone. Nothing else are you; nothing else actually exists. Brahman is; That is you. That is the Self, and That is all.

(Silence)

Om Shantí Shantí Shantí Om ॐ

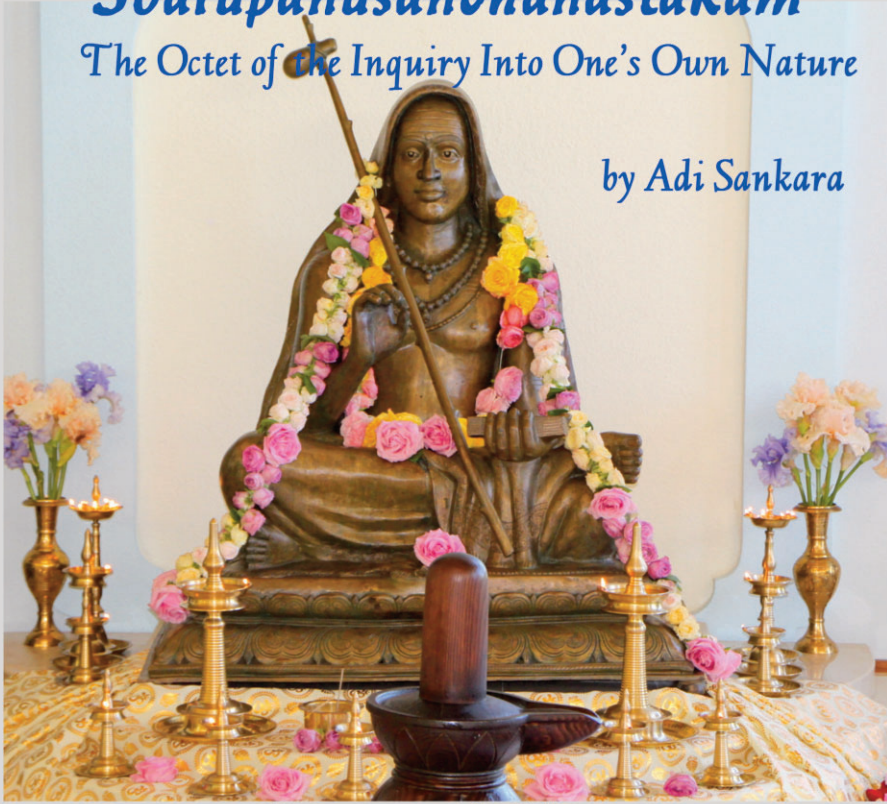




## *Svarupanusandhanastakam*

*The Octet of the Inquiry Into One's Own Nature*

by Adi Sankara



*Commentary by Nome*

## The Octet of the Inquiry into One's Own Nature

by Adi Sankara

From the book

*A Bouquet of Nondual Texts*

Translated by

Dr. H. Ramamoorthy and Nome

English Reading and  
Commentary by Nome

(September 2008)

Recorded at the SAT Temple

## *Aksharamanamalai*

From the book

*Parayana*

**The Poetic Works of  
Bhagavan  
Sri Ramana Maharshi**

In gratitude to Sri Ramanasramam  
for granting permission to use this  
publication to create this recording.

Recorded at the SAT Temple  
Contributors: Scott Roney, Guitar;  
Ankit Mehta, Tabla; Sangeeta  
Raman, vocal and drums;  
Sasvati, vocal

Appreciation is given to Jesper Christiansen for  
sunset photograph as it appears in Unsplash.





# from *Aksharamanamalai*

**Even when the thieves of the five sense break in upon me, art Thou not still in my heart, O Arunachala?**

**One art Thou without a second; who then could dare elude Thee and come in? This is only Thy jugglery, O Arunachala!**

**Shine as my Guru, making me free from faults and worthy of Thy Grace, O Arunachala!**

**Dazzling Sun that swallowest up all the universe in Thy rays, open the lotus of my heart, I pray, O Arunachala!**

**Unless Thou embrace me, I shall melt away in tears of anguish, O Arunachala!**

**Grant me wisdom, I beseech Thee, so that I may not pine in ignorance for love of Thee, O Arunachala!**

**What value has this birth without knowledge born of Realization? It is not even worth speaking about, O Arunachala!**

**Unless Thou extend Thy hand of grace in mercy and embrace me, I am lost, O Arunachala!**

**I am a simpleton devoid of learning. Do Thou dispel my illusion, O Arunachala!**

**Mere thought of Thee has drawn me into Thee, and who can gauge Thy Glory, O Arunachala?**

**Guard me lest I flounder storm-tossed like a ship without a helmsman, O Arunachala!**

**Who was it that threw mud to me for food and robbed me of my livelihood, O Arunachala!**

**Bless me that I may die without losing hold of Thee, or miserable is my fate, O Arunachala!**

**From my home Thou didst entice me, then stealing into my heart didst draw me gently into Thine, such is Thy Grace, O Arunachala!**

**Hill of Patience, bear with my foolish words, regarding them as hymns of joy or as Thou please, O Arunachala!**

**O Arunachala! My Loving Lord! Throw Thy garland about my shoulders and wear this one strung by me, O Arunachala!**

## From The Ramana Way

The following articles appear in the December 2003 issue of "The Ramana Way," a monthly publication produced by the Ramana Maharshi Center for Learning in Bangalore, India. RMCL has been producing monthly publications entirely devoted to Sri Ramana and His teaching since the early 1980's. Sri A.R. Natarajan dedicated his life and his family's life to the cause of Bhagavan Ramana. Sri A.R. Natarajan was absorbed in the lotus feet of His Master in 2007. His daughter, Dr. Sarada Natarajan, continues in his legacy, keeping the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning and "The Ramana Way" alive for all Ramana devotees. May the devotion and wisdom from which these articles are written "jump" off the pages and into your heart. Please visit them at: [www.ramanacentre.com](http://www.ramanacentre.com)

### Taking for Granted or Watching the Mind Space By Dr. Sarada

If you watch the sky, if we are moved by its many moods and softened by its expense, then sometimes it may strike us that the sky is like the mind. Or, shall we say the mind is like the sky? We give as little (or less) attention to the mind as we do to the sky. Have we ever noticed that, like the sky, it is such a variety of moods, of shapes and colors, a mixture of stillness and movement? Sometimes, a single thought dominates like a huge shining white cloud embracing the horizon, filled out and fluffy, apparently still for a long, long time. Then, almost unknown to us, the thought cloud changes shape in the imperceptible breeze, moves ever so little in different directions and begins to disintegrate, melting away, leaving us wondering "Was that so important to me? Why was I obsessed with that thought? Why did it look as if it would never change, never go away?" Or, perhaps we pine,



"Where has it gone away, melted into trivialities, little fluffs of cotton floating aimlessly?"

Sometimes, the sky is homogeneous, all of one color. One wonders if there can be so many shades of the same color. Then suddenly the multi-layered gray of the sky is thrown open with light as the sun peeps out in its downward journey to the horizon casting newer patterns of light and shade across the vast area of grays. Again, as quickly as it appears, the

sun disappears behind another gray mountain, leaving behind a trace of itself in rays spreading out like a huge magic hand-fan, the way we would draw sunrise between mountains when we were children. Similar is the play of the mind. There are moments of sudden clarity, of insight, of light that breaks through layers of thoughts and holds us spellbound for a brief while only to let us get engrossed once again in the variety of the world of thoughts.

Sometimes, there are just a few strands of white in the startling blue sky, sometimes gray and orange partly with white and deep pinks. There



are times when the mind seems to be practically free of thoughts, just a simple, clear expanse where a few thoughts enter and float away. There are other times when soft and hard, mysterious and well defined, dark impure thoughts seem to exist all at once, one merging into another, a third emerging from the second, and, all the while different combinations getting formed, existing a while and then melting away in ever repeated patterns. So intriguing, so absorbing is the mind like the sky.

So many are the wonders that the sky holds and reveals to us—the glorious sun, the gentle moon that waxes and wanes with comforting predictability, the innumerable stars carrying us into the land of dreams and wishes, the magic rainbow the sometimes takes our breath away by spreading right across the horizon, the soft rain that drops as a blessing on earth, arousing its fragrance, renewing life, or the storms that light up huge canvases or streak down in fascinating flashes.

Is it a wonder that we are lost in all this activity, this movement and change in the sky and fail to explore its real nature? How much more varied is the mind, how absorbing is every thought that catches the light of our attention. How beautifully it rises, grows in association with its kind, changes shape and color with the moving day and melts away, leaving in its place another equally absorbing and intriguing.

True, the sky is forever the home of clouds, temporary home of birds (natural and man-made, like the great airplane), bats and insects and of colorful kites in windy seasons or amazing fireworks on festive nights. Yet, everything passes. The sun passes across the sky during day, the moon at night, stars appear and disappear, clouds move, melt and disappear, birds rise up and fly in the sky only to come back to rest on earth. These are all, every one of them, only inhabitants of the sky from time to time, for shorter or longer durations. They are not the sky itself.

So, in the mind, wonderful or painful, dull, drab gray or sparkling white, gaily touched with orange or misty like a rainy evening, lined with the clarity of sunlight or plain and simple dark, good, bad or indifferent, whatever the nature of the experience it passes. Like the sun and moon and stars and birds and bats and even the clouds pass away from the sky, every experience enters the mind, stays a while in the span of attention and fades into some distant unknown horizon, perhaps to rise again in that form, perhaps never to be repeated. The sky is not the birds that fly in it forming amazing patterns or in a solitary splendor. The sky is not the sun or the moon or the stars or even the clouds that it houses. What is the sky? The mind, too, is not any of the thoughts that rise and set in it. Each thought rises, comes into view, stays a while and moves away. But the mind does not pass away with the passing of any thought, does it? Then, how can the thought be the mind? Therefore, would watching thoughts amount to watching the mind? It would not. What is it that gives room to the rising and setting of thoughts? What is it that sustains them while they exist? That must be the mind. What is that? It is Consciousness, the Light of Knowledge that shines as “I.” This light is the basis of every experience. However, we are so caught up in that which moves in the sky that we do not look at its basis. Similarly, we lose ourselves in the moving experiences of the mind and do not delve into its nature. Watching, in itself, is a kind of meditation. Whatever may be the object watched, if it is watched wholeheartedly, it captures our entire attention and therefore quiets the mind. Further, rather than watching other objects, when thoughts are watched it gives us a certain sense of detachment from our own experiences. The watching of thoughts makes us aware of their passing, it makes us recognize that the “I” exists before each thought arises and after each thought passes. It brings home to us the central role that the “I”-thought plays and the utter dependence of



other thoughts on this "I." Hence, such watching gives us a certain freedom from the overpowering rule of thoughts which we have subjected ourselves to. This is good, no doubt, but not good enough. We must travel deeper. We must travel beyond thoughts to the thinker for their alone lies the clue to our true nature. Even if we have taken time to pay attention to the mind, then continuously caught in the fascinating parade of thought-images we fail to look at the substratum, the basis on which they move. What is the essence of the mind?

Looking at the mind, we have found that it is like the sky in being the home of every experience, yet being none of the experiences. It is like the sky in protecting the earth, which, in this case, may be said to be the body, and connecting it to the universe, the Self. It is like the sky in its formless, pure, true nature, untouched by experience. Yet, it is different from the sky in that it is not only the home or basis of all movement, it is the very substance of every experience as well. So, Bhagavan has explained the role of the mind through the analogy of light from a movie projector. If we understand the Self to be the fullness of light, and the images projected to be the experiences that we undergo as thoughts, then, there is a link between the two. This link, this bridge is the "I"-thought, the essence of the mind. Therefore, Bhagavan asks us to hold onto the "I"-thought and trace it to its source. He declares that the conquest of the "I"-thought is the conquest over everything.

Go beyond every experience that rises and sets, beyond every thought that moves. Look for that which knows the thought. Look at that which is aware of the experience.



## Holistic Meditation Reflections By A.R. Natarajan

Since we are now in a half stage it seems necessary to take stock, to reflect before proceeding on this inner journey, in our return home,

in order that we may not lose track by the many distractions on the way.

One wonders if people go around their own gardens or any public garden with an eye open to beauty. If one looks this way there is a total charm in the variety and color of the fauna and flora. If one moves around a rose garden in the peak of winter, one would be struck by the range of colors in each and every variety of the rose. If one happens to look at the evening sky towards sunset time, there is the charm of various shades of pink. Even if one watches occasionally the National Geographic or Animal Planet channels on the TV, one would be aware of the multiplicity of life on earth. This infinite variety of creation in the universe is mind-boggling and unimaginable. At the same time there is order, a pattern, a season and time for all life. One must admit that there must be some Supreme power which is behind the splendor. In all perception of this immense variety, there is the perceiver, the perceived, the world canvas and the light. However, the essential core of all perception is only the light, the Consciousness, which enables this perception. This, according to Ramana, is the light of the Self, the Heart, for it is not only the primary but also the only energy source which could



always be tapped. If one succeeds in focusing his attention on the Heart-center, then the perception would be unitary. Our present fragmented mind can only be aware of variety and not of the essence. Therefore, our mind's attention is always on pairs of opposites and often one loses sight of the core, namely the Consciousness which enables perception. Caught up with the concept of the "I," with a thinker, as the core of the subject, one sees the world as apart from oneself. In Holistic Meditation, one is practicing Self-attention or attempting to replace, in Ramana words, "The variety of the mind by the unity of the Heart."

In a sense, we are living in semi-darkness. Our minds are functioning as we have seen, on borrowed power, the power borrowed from the Heart. This lending and borrowing has taken place without knowledge during deep sleep when the fragmented mind is unconsciously linked to the energy center. By way of analogy, we are using the moon's light instead of the blazing light of the sun. Why should we not avail of the light of the sun itself? Why depend on the borrowed power, which gets exhausted each day? But we fail to inquire and, therefore, continue to operate in semi-darkness. The commonly used methods of meditation cannot give an essential breakthrough from the inherent limitations of an egocentric mind. Their confines are limited to the mind as it is now, and whatever freedom one may obtain from the pestering thought momentum by adopting any such method can yield only temporary results. For, all methods of control of the mind suffer from a basic fallacy of dealing with the thoughts instead of the thinker. They overlook the pivotal position of the thinker in not only igniting thought but also in

causing their thrust. To be completely dependent on such method seems like being bent upon using oxygen masks when there is fresh air to breathe all around.

Meditation, which should be causing the flow of joy's fresh air, becomes reduced to a matter of goals, expectations, need for visions and the like. What is being sought is not very different from the rest of one's activities for it is enjoyment-bound. In such seeking of the bliss of the Self, it cannot be experienced for it is not the product of any action in the field of time.

But here there is need for a note of caution against inferring that no spiritual effort is needed in the Holistic Meditation way, which is capable of helping in discovering one's essential timelessness. Ramana does not recommend control of the mind as a means by itself, for the controller himself is the problem. He, therefore, places before us an alternative, which he calls, "Destruction of Mind."

The very word "destruction" makes one tremble at the prospect of it. One assumes that one would become an idiot as a consequence. Therefore, Ramana assuages one's fears by assuring that in that loss is the opening up of the Consciousness which is untrammelled by self-imposed conceptual limitations. All that happens is not very different from the sun disappearing behind our horizon and rising in another. The mind merges in the source, the heart, and one discovers its essential freshness, potency and unitary nature. ॐ



# Ever Yours in Truth

## Correspondence between Nome and seekers.

(Names of seekers are omitted to preserve their privacy.)

*[A seeker who is a medical student asked, "What can a seeker do to help foster more intensity, inspiration, and devotion to the practice and path?" This is the reply.]*

December 2, 2017

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste.

If you cease to misidentify as a performer of action and identify yourself with that which is transcendent of all thought, the studies necessary to practice medicine will not be an obstruction to your sadhana.

Rereading the books is wise.

Knowing the source and nature of happiness and contemplation on the transience of the bodily life yield spiritual intensity. Keeping holy company and reading sacred texts provide inspiration. Devotion is similarly aided by such.

May you, recognizing the immensity of grace that provides spiritual opportunity, deeply inquire so that, realizing the Self, you abide always happy and at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya  
Ever yours in Truth,  
Nome

*[Here is the reply to a seeker in India whose questions can be inferred from the answers.]*

December 29, 2017

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya  
Namaste. As you have observed, fear and worry are constituted of thoughts. Those thoughts are based upon, or include, misidentifications, which are false definitions of yourself. Self-inquiry destroys such ignorance. The resultant Self-Knowledge is fearlessness and eternal peace.

The real Self is innately fearless. A "second as it were" brings fear, in the waking and dreaming states of mind, in which thoughts appear. A "second" is an ego, an individual, a misidentification or false definition assumed to be you. Thus, the efficacy of the inquiry is evident.

Chanting Aksharamanamalai is excellent. While doing so, be sure to meditate deeply upon the meaning of each verse. Thereby your devotion and nonattachment will increase, and the troubles and worries of your mind will vanish.

Happiness is natural.

Om Namah Sivaya  
Ever yours in Truth,  
Nome

*[A seeker described, among other things, her approach to the elimination of vasanas and her desire to suffuse her manifested life with spiritual knowledge. This is the response.]*

January 1, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. That the only real identity is the Self, Brahman alone, is the knowledge that provides for the destruction of



vasanas, which have misidentification as their basis. If the nature of the thinker, perceiver, actor, and such is inquired into, the expression of such clarity, freedom, and peace is natural.

Dissolution of the ego supposition, inclusive of its attendant tendencies, is joyful and essential. Sravana, manana, and nididhyasana (listening, reflection, and deep meditation) are the means used by the wise for countless centuries.

The Grace of Sri Bhagavan, which is not different from his Existence, is forever.

Om Namah Sivaya  
Ever yours in Truth,  
Nome

*[A seeker wrote:]*

January 4, 2018

Dear Nome

For the past thirty years, I have been very interested in nutrition (the plant based diet). I guess it's a bit of a hobby, as well as being of practical use in my life. Does there come a point where this interest should fall away, as it is still focusing on the level of the body? I enjoy reading the latest scientific findings on the plant based diet, but I am concerned my interest may be holding me back.

Many thanks for your time.  
Warmest Regards,

January 4, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Interest in a plant-based diet, studying it, and consuming it present no bondage provided you inquire and remain in the Knowledge of the Self's freedom from the body. It is what you regard as your identity that is important. If you eat while fasting from misidentification with the body, what you partake of is prasadam (blessed food, grace).

Om Namah Sivaya  
Ever yours in Truth,  
Nome

*[A seeker asked about dealing with gossip. Here is the reply.]*

March 22, 2018

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The incident and remembrance of it can be used for a good purpose by exercising sharp discrimination to discern vasanas (tendencies) that may be involved from which you can be entirely free. Examine and determine for yourself if any of these are applicable in this case.

If one converses or gossips about other people, what is the assumed identity mistakenly attributed to those other people? Will not the same false identity be attributed to yourself?

If, while engaged in any kind of gossip, a falsehood is told to you and you believe such, does not this add illusion upon illusion? If you repeat the same falsehood to someone else, even if you do not know it is false, does not karma accrue from such?

Upon having been immersed or absorbed in deep spiritual experience, one should make every effort to continue in such. Some aspirants tend to end it rapidly by returning to their tendencies and ignorant suppositions, their misidentifications and attachments, perhaps because such are familiar and thus, in delusion, seem to represent some security. Isn't there a wiser, more joyful way to proceed?

The Self is Brahman, and a jnani is only That. Any previous identity is entirely dead, indeed is eternally nonexistent. That the jnani is such is the promise that all can realize the same truth. Is it not absurdly ignorant to think of the jnani as a continuing embodied ego entity and to refer to him as if he were such? Does this not involve doubt regarding the reality and a tenacious grasp on the unreal?



Is this not what the earnest seeker is attempting to go beyond? Will not the misidentification that one erroneously attempts to apply to the jnani never touch him but will revert to oneself?

It is not necessary to be cautious concerning with whom you speak at the temple, but it is wise to use spiritual discrimination regarding who you converse with and about what. In this way, you benefit your spiritual practice and do not impede it, which means your experience will be full of joyful Self-Knowledge.

So, you need not worry about forgiveness. This is merely something from which to learn. The

above is not intended as criticism. It is a demonstration of how to examine and question. The direction has been pointed out. Now, you happily, wisely proceed and be at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya  
Ever yours in Truth,  
Nome





# I am Protected by Anandeshvara

I am protected by Anandeshvara, the blissful Lord, and am of the nature of eternal joy and of the nature of the Bliss of Brahman. He who bestows Knowledge, who is of the form of Guruguha, is Consciousness-Bliss, the Lord whose own nature is self-luminous. He is beyond the three parts (gross, subtle, causal) and is the witness of the three states (waking, dream, deep sleep) and such. He

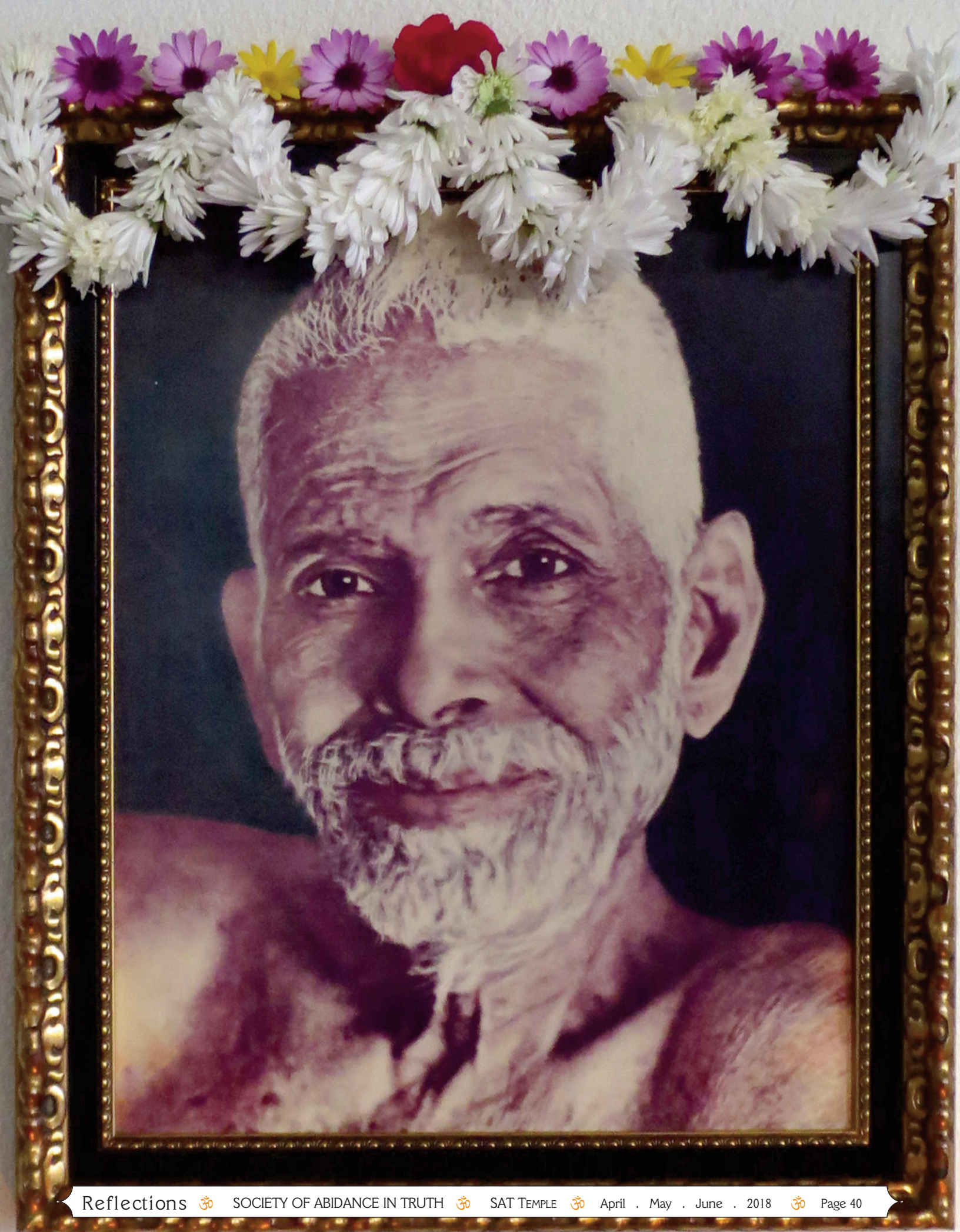
is pure. He is Existence (Siva) that transcends the five sheaths. He is Knowledge. He is Siva, who is of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss and is free. [By] listening, reflection, deep continuous meditation, and abidance in samadhi, one will have direct experience of remaining as only Him within oneself (as oneself), the effulgent one, the great Lord.

—Muttuswami Dikshitar



























# Upcoming Special Events at the SAT Temple

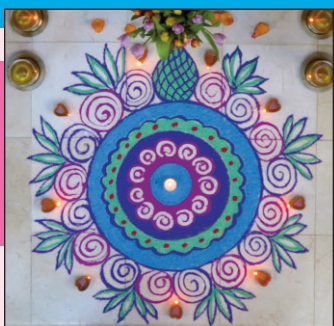
**Adi Sankara Jayanti: April 20, 2018**

**Chitragupta Pournami: April 29, 2018**

**Ribhu Rishinatha Day: May 14, 2018**

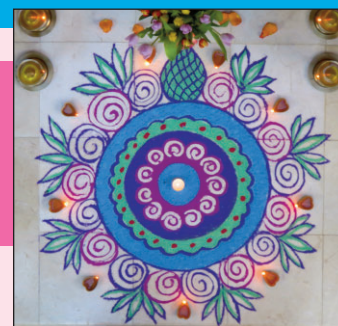
**Self-Knowledge Retreat: May 25-27, 2018**

**Sri Sadisvara Mandiram Pratishta Day: June 14, 2018**



<https://satramana.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/SATTemple>



Many satsangs and special events are available to  
view on YouTube at: **satramana**



Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya  
Om Namah Sivaya

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# Upcoming SAT Retreat

This year, SAT will offer retreats to assist spiritual seekers in their quest for Self-Realization. SAT retreats are wonderful opportunities for spiritual experience and practice and are perfect for all seekers of nondual Self-Knowledge.

In SAT retreats, Self-Knowledge and Self-inquiry meditation, the means of inquiring within to know the true Self, are taught, with ample time to ask questions as the teachings are given, so that you can clarify and deepen your understanding and experience. SAT retreats are very thorough in their presentation and provide a tremendous amount of spiritual guidance. The experience of attending retreats is profound and very helpful for spiritual development.

All of SAT's retreats are taught by Nome, a sage who practiced the inquiry for steady abidance in Self-Realization. He places no emphasis on himself, but keeps the focus of the instruction entirely upon Self-Knowledge and Self-inquiry, turning the aspirants' attention fully inward, for it is in this way that meditation, Self-inquiry, and Self-Knowledge truly open for one.

Recommended readings for the retreats are the works of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Ribhu Gita and The Song of Ribhu, Self-Knowledge, the writings of Sankara (Adi Sankara), such as those contained in Svatanirupanam and Advaita Prakarana Manjari, Avadhuta Gita, Ashtavakra Gita, Saddarshanam and an Inquiry into the Revelation of Truth and Oneself, The Essence of Spiritual Instruction, and The Quintessence of True Being. Familiarizing yourself with or studying these books will enable you to obtain even more from the retreats, which are an experiential immersion in the essence of Advaita Vedanta. All of these books and similar nondualistic literature are available from SAT.

Vegetarian meals are provided during the retreats. During retreats, lunch and dinner are served on Friday, three meals are served on Saturday, and two meals are served on Sunday. SAT does not provide special meals for those with unique dietary concerns.

## The Self-Knowledge Retreat

**May 25 - May 27, Friday morning through Sunday afternoon**

This retreat is based on the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi contained within Origin of Spiritual Instruction. The spiritual instruction focuses on the discernment between the Self and what is not the Self, between what is real and what is not. The Nondual Realization of the Unborn State of the Self and the Truth of No-creation (Ajata), as always in the teachings presented at SAT, are central to the instruction provided during this retreat. The retreat provides much time for silent meditation in addition to the instruction.

## Sri Ramana Maharshi Self-Realization Retreat

**August 17 - August 19, Friday morning through Sunday afternoon**

The date of September 1st is when Sri Ramana Maharshi arrived at Arunachala, steadily abiding in and as the Self, where he would henceforth reveal the highest Nondual Truth with teachings of Self-Knowledge, showing the primary means of the path of Knowledge - Self-inquiry. This retreat, which precedes the celebration of that holy day, focuses on the Maharshi's teachings contained within Atma Vidya, Ekātma Pancakam, and other short texts, with spiritual instruction about these teachings, and much time for silent meditation. This retreat is an immersion in the fusion of Knowledge and devotion.



## The Truth Revealed Retreat

**November 16 - November 18, Friday morning through Sunday afternoon**

This retreat is focused on nondual Self-Knowledge as revealed by Sri Ramana Maharshi and consists of an in-depth explanation of the teachings contained in Sri Ramana Maharshi's Saddarshanam (i.e., Sat-Darshanam, Truth Revealed, Forty Verses on Reality). There is also much time for the participants to silently meditate upon this quintessential, profound, Blissful Knowledge for the revelation of the Truth within.

# Online Retreat Registration Available!

End of sign-up date is

one month prior to commencement of each retreat.

Please visit the link below to register for retreats at the SAT Temple:

<https://satramana.org/web/events/retreats/retreat-application-form/>

Or, visit the SAT website at: [satramana.org](https://satramana.org) > Events > Retreats

