

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya ॐ Om Namah Sivaya

Reflections ॐ SAT Temple

April . May . June . 2021



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Painting by Ribhu Sivakumar

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When the mind is no longer taken to be an existent entity, it is absorbed.

When all the forms of the mind are negated through proper inquiry, all that remains of the mind is absorption in the Self, so that there is no longer any such thing as an existent mind.

– Nome



Origin of Spiritual Instruction

(A Catechism of Instruction)

Chapter 3 Continued from Previous Reflections

(This commentary was taken from the May 2018, Self-Knowledge Retreat held at the SAT Temple.)

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

D.: While really the Ātman is Sat-Chit, why is it characterized as something which is neither Sat nor asat, neither Chit nor achit?

M.: The Ātman, or Self, is Sat, but, since it is also absolute and universal, that is, since there is nothing other than the Ātman, to characterize it merely as “Sat” would give room for postulating the correlative conception of asat as referring to something else which is not Sat and thus get involved in dualism. In order to express clearly that the Ātman, or Self, is eternal, universal, and absolute, it is referred to as something other than sat and asat. Similarly, the Ātman is Chit, or pure Knowledge, but, since there is nothing other than the knowing Self to be known, it is characterized as something other than knowledge and nescience (chit and achit). (In other words, since there is nothing other than the Self, the Knower and the Known are identical, unlike in the case of ephemeral knowledge. It is to bring out this distinction that the Ātman is characterized as something other than chit and achit.)

Nome: Abandon the objectifying outlook. Beyond objective conception, there is no duality. There is nothing perplexing. Be free of the tendency to conceive Consciousness as something other than yourself, or Existence, as something other than yourself. If you do so conceive, whose conceptions are they? By such inquiry that abandons the objective outlook, by such inquiry that discerns what your true identity is, the meaning of Sat, the meaning of Chit, the meaning of existence, non-existence, consciousness, and nescience, and all the rest are perfectly understood. What makes

room for duality? Well actually it is only dualism – the belief in duality and not that duality is actually existent. So, what is the basis of dualism? Upon what does that false belief rest? We may think a thing is or we may think it is not, but real Existence is self-evident and uncontradicted. You may think whatever about Consciousness, but is such the Consciousness itself? What is Existence? With the objectifying outlook, we may think it is or we may think it is not, but Existence transcends all such thinking. The Existence that you are is eternal, universal, and absolute. Become free of assuming its individuality by inquiring “Who am I?”. Be free of connecting it to the body by inquiring “Who am I?”. You cannot simultaneously be the Existence that is universal and absolute and an embodied individual. So, which is it? You must discern this deeply inside in thought-transcendent knowledge.

D.: What is the character of ārūḍha sthiti, or firm abidance in Knowledge (Jñāna)?

M.: It is that steady and changeless state of complete identity with, or absorption of the mind in, the Self. It is a state from which, although attained quite spontaneously and without the least effort, the mind never sprouts up and is never reborn. Just as every person, due to his body-consciousness, has the most common and natural (or inborn) conviction whereby he says, “I am not a goat, an ox, or any other animal, but a human being,” even so, the settled wisdom of the Jñāni is that natural and spontaneous Consciousness of the Self whereby he declares “I am not anything from the gross physical body to the subtle nāda, but I am the Ātman, which is Sat-Chit-Ānanda.”

Nome: Ārūḍha means ascended or having mounted upon. What you should seek for in your spiritual aspiration, therefore, is that which is steady and changeless. What you should seek for is a state of identity with the Absolute. That is a state in which there is not the least distinction between yourself and the Self. What you should seek to realize is that the Self is Sat-Chit-Ānanda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and not anything else. What you should seek for is that state in which your identity is wholly Sat-Chit-Ānanda and not anything else.

He says **absorption of the mind in the Self**. When the mind is no longer taken to be an existent entity, it is absorbed. When all the forms of the mind are negated through proper inquiry, all that remains of the mind is absorption in the Self, so that there is no longer any such thing as an existent mind.

He says **It is a state from which, although attained quite spontaneously and without the least effort**. If it is spontaneous and without the least effort, for what are all the efforts in spiritual practice? The efforts in spiritual practice while seeking to attain Self-realization are actually only to negate the unreal. If ignorance is negated, true Knowledge shines. If the ego is negated, the Self stands self-revealed. It is also considered to be without effort because there is no individuality, and, with the absence of individuality, there is only one Self. If there appears to be two, effort is required. The effort should be wisely applied towards discrimination as to who you are. That reveals the existence of only one Self and one Self alone for all eternity . It is a state in which the **mind never sprouts up and is never reborn**. How can you attain that in which the mind is never reborn, in which the mind does not sprout up? No mental state or mental mode will suffice. If inquiring, you discover experientially within that there is no such thing as an existent mind, that there is only one knower, which is pure Consciousness and not a second knowing entity called the mind, then it does not exist to begin with. For that which has not been born the first time, how can there be rebirth? So, he says **It is not born again**.

He then gives an example. Everyone has the conviction, **“I am not a goat, an ox or any other animal.”** There is no confusion between you and any other animal. Agreed, it is a distinction based on bodies, but it is quite natural from that body-oriented position to know that you are a human being and not an animal. Such discrimination is natural. Likewise is it with the wisdom of Self-Knowledge. It is quite natural. There will come a time, if you inquire, when all the misidentifications you ever had, as an ego, with a mind, with a body, with anything in the world, will seem as absurd as the idea of thinking of yourself as a goat or as an ox and behaving accordingly.

“I am not anything from the gross physical body to the subtle nāda, but I am the Ātman, which is Sat-Chit-Ānanda.” This is giving expression to the Knowledge that is essential. Repeating these words aloud or in the mind will not do much to bring about Realization. Plunging inward to verify their significance, the meaning of it, will be very beneficial and will reveal the natural state of Self-realization. Though we speak of it as if it were a state, it is actually not a state at all but simply the nature of your being. Being-Consciousness-Bliss is not something to be attained anew. It is already existent. It is not a transformation of the ego into the Self. No such modification is possible. It is the realization of the eternal non-existence of the ego that reveals the Self as it is. ॐ

from LETTERS FROM
SRI RAMANASRAMAM

The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

The Path of Self-Inquiry (22)
November 29, 1947

This afternoon, a devotee asked Bhagavan, “Swami, for gaining Realization, is the enquiry “Who am I?” the only way?”

Bhagavan answered him: “Inquiry is not the only way. If one does spiritual practice (sadhana) with name and form, repetition of holy names (japa), or any of these methods with firm determination and perseverance, one becomes That. According to the capacity of each individual, one spiritual practice is said to be better than another, and several shades and variations of them have been given. Some people are a long way from Tiruvannamalai, some are very near, some are in Tiruvannamalai, while some get into Bhagavan’s hall itself. For those who come into the hall, it is enough, if they are told as they step in, “Here is the Maharshi,” and they realize him immediately. For others they have to be told which route to take, which trains to catch, where to change, which road to turn into. In like manner, the particular path to be taken must be prescribed according to the capacity of the practitioner (sadhak). These spiritual practices are not for knowing one’s own Self, which is all-pervading, but only for getting rid of the objects of desire. When all these are discarded, one remains as one is. That which is always in existence is the Self—all things are born out of the Self. That will be known only when one realizes one’s own Self. So long as one has not that knowledge, all that is seen in this world appears as real. Supposing a person sleeps in this hall; in his sleep he dreams of going somewhere, loses

his way, wanders from one village to another, from one hill to another, and during that time, and for days together, searches without food or water. He suffers a good deal, inquires of several people and finally finds the correct place. He reaches it, and feeling that he is stepping into this hall, greatly relieved, he opens his eyes with a startled look. All this will have happened within a short time, and it is only after he wakes up that he realizes that he had not been anywhere. Our present life is also like that. When the eye of Knowledge is opened, a person realizes that he remains ever in his own Self."

The questioner asked further: "Is it true that all spiritual practices, as is said, merge into the path of Self-inquiry?"

"Yes," replied Bhagavan, "The inquiry 'Who am I?' is the beginning and the end of the teachings of Vedanta. It is said that only he who has the assets of the four kinds of spiritual practice is fit for Vedantic inquiry. Of the four categories of practice, the first is the knowledge of the Self and the non-Self (atma and anatma). That means a knowledge that the Self is eternal (nitya) and that the world is unreal (mithya). How to know this is the question. It is possible to know this by inquiry as to 'Who am I?' and what is the nature of my Self! Usually this procedure is suggested at the beginning of the spiritual practice, but generally, it does not carry conviction. So, all sorts of other spiritual practices are resorted to, and it is only ultimately as a last resort that the practitioner takes to Self-inquiry. The alphabet ABCDE, etc., are learnt while young. If it is stated that these letters are the fundamentals for all education and that there is no need to study for B.A. or M.A., will people listen to such advice? It is only after studying and passing these examinations that it will be realized that all that has been studied is contained in those fundamental letters ABC, etc. Are not all the

Scriptures contained in the elementary thing, the alphabet? That it is so is known only after learning by heart all the Scriptures. It is the same with every one of these things. There are a number of rivers; some flow straight, some wind and twist zigzag, but all of them ultimately become merged in the ocean. In the same way, all paths become merged in the path of Self-inquiry, just as all languages become merged in Silence (mouna). Mouna means continuous speech; it does not mean that it is a vacuum. It is the speech of the Self, identifying with the Self. It is Self-luminous. Everything is in the Self. In Tamil Nadu a great person composed and sang a song the purport of which is, "We are like a screen, and the whole world appears like pictures on it. Silence is full and all-pervading. Like the saying:

ॐ पूर्णमदःपूर्णमिदं पूर्णत्पूर्णमुदच्यते

om pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ
pūrṇatpūrṇamudacyate

—everything appears to be the same for the Realized Soul. Even though he sees something it is as good as his not seeing it."

So saying, Bhagavan was once again silent. ॐ

Satsangs with Nome

Supposition and the True Self

August 26, 2015

Om Om Om
(Silence)

Nome: The Self is evident in silence. It is the Self that is revealed in the teachings. The Self it is that is depicted in the murtis and symbols. It is the Self that is praised and described in the Vedas and other scriptures. Knowingly or unknowingly, it is the Self for which you always strive. It is infinite, eternal, undivided, free of difference, nondual, changeless, and forever existing as Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

From what perspective do you listen to this? From what standpoint do you attempt to practice, in order to realize this Knowledge? What you regard as your identity is all-important. It is the Self that is described and worshiped. What do you consider to be yourself? What you regard as yourself forms the context within which all this appears.

If you regard yourself as the body, the world appears, and the physical is the context. From that perspective, everything is interpreted in bodily ways and in worldly ways. If you relinquish the misidentification with the body, the entire context is different; the Knowledge, the experience, and such are non-bodily and transcendent of the world, transcendent of all that is physical.

Similarly, if you regard yourself as a mind, you interpret the teachings in terms of mental experience, or subtle experience, and the result is the experience of various modes or



states of mind. If you cease to misidentify as a mind, the experiential Knowledge for you is thought-transcendent, transcendent of all modes of mind.

From what perspective, with what orientation, do you practice? If you know of the means of attaining Self-Realization, and Self-inquiry as Sri Bhagavan has taught, then, what do you regard as the nature of the inquirer? Questioning this is itself the inquiry. Endeavoring to realize the Self, which is Brahman, what do you regard as the one who so endeavors; what is his identity? The means for the Truth is always nonobjective, an inquiry into oneself. Meditating on what has just been described, what do you regard as the nature of the meditator? Again and again, turn your vision inward. What do you regard as you? (silence) If you are an individual, there is difference, and particularization is the context within which you experience. Are you an individual? What is the nature of "I"?

All that is evident in silence and all that is described in the scriptures and in the teach-

ings is you. If you suppose yourself to be something otherwise, the Truth, the Supreme Reality, will seem to be other than you. If, inquiring, you find what you truly are, there is no other. Utterly devoid of difference or otherness, free of the least trace of the assumed individuality or ego, such is the reality of the Self; it is the only Self that there is. Who is there to suppose otherwise?

Questioner: Misidentification has shaped my experience. Whatever identity I carry makes all the difference. I wish I were completely disidentified.

N.: It shapes the experience by limiting it, for at all times it is the Self alone that is experienced. According to the form of misidentification, limitation is superimposed upon that.

Q.: I am trying to discover the depth and the reality of something that is not limited.

N.: Find that which is unlimited, by questioning the nature of the one who is so striving. In the thought, "I am trying to go deeper," what constitutes the "I"?

Q.: It could be various things.

N.: What is it really, what is its nature? If it appears to be a compound of various things, discriminate more finely, "not this, not this."

Q.: The external part is not so important.

N.: What do you mean?

Q.: The ignorant side. What it is specifically is not so important, because it is ignorance.

N.: Is the definition of yourself one who is ignorant?

Q.: Most of the time, yes.

N.: All of the time or most of the time?

Q.: Not all of the time.

N.: Whatever is not all of the time is not you, because you are all of the time. The truth is declared that your Existence is continuous, eternal. From what perspective are you attempting to grasp this. Is it from something inconstant and non-eternal? It will not fit. Questioning that very identity, the truth becomes evident and happily so.

Q.: The idea of being able to grasp this teaching relies on there must be somebody to be grasping it.

N.: If you reduce your form to nothing, it is well grasped.

Q.: It is the exact opposite of how ignorance propagates? It is clinging on to form after form.

N.: Supposition upon supposition. Reality is found by the absence of assumptions, of what you assume yourself to be, of what you misidentify amidst experience. Free from such false assumptions, the experience is unlimited; indeed, it is not right to call it an experience any more. There is just one, undivided, infinite Existence, nameless, formless, timeless, forever itself. The ignorant one does not really exist; he is composed of mere false assumptions. To whom do they belong? To an ignorant one who is just a false assumption?

Q.: (laughter) I need to just keep questioning.

N.: That is right.

Q.: That is why the Maharshi says that effort must be applied to destroy this ignorance.

N.: Yes, for the destruction of ignorance, effort is applied. As for the Reality itself, there can be no question of effort.

Q.: The effort is involved in not grasping the supposition of myself or noticing the falseness of it.

N.: Yes, it is with discrimination that effort is applied, because bondage is nothing other than ignorance. All that is required is Knowledge, and, for true Knowledge to shine, you have only to inquire as to what your nature really is.

Another Q.: The book entitled “One Self” is the transcripts of numerous satsangs, I have found it to be an incredible aid for meditation. In the book, it says, “If you mistake yourself to be an individual, you are imagining yourself to be something that is nonexistent.” When I consider what that means if I try to find that individual, it really is nonexistent. I can’t build something on a nonexistent. When I misidentify, I do not have the experience of not existing. There is just the same Existence that is always there, and, when I turn my mind in far enough, that that mistaken existence is actually the same. I find all the SAT publications to be incredibly useful, and this just happens to be the favorite one that I am using right now.

N.: When your experience seems to be, just seems to be, other than the one Existence, for whom is that experience? If ignorance is unreal, utterly unreal, and it seems to return, for whom is it returning?

Q.: It cannot be for the ego, because that is nonexistent; it cannot be the one that is experiencing itself. So, the only thing that I can come to is that it is not actually happening.

N.: Is “it is not happening” your continuous, direct experience? If not yet, for whom is the difference?

Q.: The difference would have to be for the imagined second entity.

N.: What constitutes that second entity?

Q.: The second entity?

N.: You have said it is imagined.

Q.: The entity and all the imagination that comes out of it are really the same, the same substance, regardless of how I mix it up.

N.: That is right.

Q.: The opening line of the introduction to Saddarsanam says, “The revelation of Truth is the eternal Knowledge of the Self’s own Being.” When I put those two instructions together, it is very

clear where to look to resolve the confusion. It is also a reminder of what one’s true Being actually is.

N.: Practice; practice intensely; practice wholeheartedly; practice with perseverance and humility and the yearning to be free. Practice so that the Reality is known, with finality. Practice by inquiring as to what, in truth, you are.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit of verses from the Ashtavakra Gita.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil of verses from Chapter 10 of the Song of Ribhu.) ॐ

What Existence Is

August 30, 2020

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: You exist. What is the nature of this existence? It is changeless and entirely bodiless. The attributes, qualities, activities, and conditions of the body and the senses do not pertain to it. To define oneself in such terms is ignorance. Freedom from such misidentification is knowledge.

You exist. What is the nature of this existence? Changeless and bodiless, it is timeless and location-less. It never had a beginning; it will not ever end. It is unborn and deathless.

You exist. What is the existence? It is not an attribute of yours. Instead, it is you. None of the forms of thought are actually your existence. Ineffable and inconceivable, what is the nature of your existence? Beyond thought, it is without differentiation. It is indivisible, and there exists nothing else other than it. You cannot be separate from your existence. It never modifies or divides itself.

How is it that you know of your existence? Whether the mind apparently wakes, dreams, or enters deep sleep, the existence is known always uninterruptedly. Existence is Consciousness. Con-

sciousness is Existence. Existence is not individualized. It has no parts. It remains always as One without a second. Free of individuality, or the ego, free of the mind and all that is conceived in any state, free of the body and senses, without form, without beginning or end, what are you?

Abidance in and as that which you truly ever are, Brahman, is Knowledge. Such Knowledge is not a sense perception, not a mental conception, nor any kind of idea. Rather, it is the innate, self-luminous nature of pure Consciousness.

Know yourself. Who should know yourself? The Self alone is. The Self alone knows. Abandon the tendency to misidentify with anything objective, from the notion "I" extending to the notion of the world, and what is being indicated here this morning will be clearly self-evident. Of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, you are. Indivisible, uncaused, and without end. Know yourself as That by inquiring "Who am I?" and abide at peace, the supreme peace of Brahman.

Questioner: At this time, we are celebrating the advent of Bhagavan coming, after his enlightenment, to Arunachala and embracing the Siva Lingam as an expression of finality of a spiritual journey. There is a tendency to try to reminisce or to understand what is the significance of that, and all of that has its place. From the viewpoint that Ramana is our own heart, is our true Self, is the significance of the end of the journey that Ramana reveals the reality of who we are, as we are?

Nome: The only way to know who Sri Ramana truly is is by knowing oneself. In the Knowledge of oneself, the ideas of oneself are destroyed. The meaning of "be still," is the destruction of all name and form. Then, he alone remains in his Existence, and there is no one else regarded as yourself propped up as if an independent existence. That illusion is gone.

Sri Bhagavan said that the inquiry was completed on the very first day - six weeks earlier. The symbolism of absorption in That, represented by arriving at Arunachala, has its significance.

You may imagine it anyway you like but do not end just with the imagined scene. Get to the essence. What was realized? What did he realize? That is of supreme importance. He arrived. Does

it mean just arrival at a place in the world? He arrived at that which is world-less. You, too, should arrive by abidance in absorption in Him, the Existence, the one without another. Do you understand?

Q: He is I and found to be the Self.

N: So, the Realization of the Self is God's own Knowledge of God.

Another Q: Bhagavan's statement that you read aloud is, "Your true glory lies where you cease to be." With my limited understanding, it seems that by "you" he is referring to the ego. As an ego, I do not exist, and only God is, indicating a sense of humility. That is one way I understand it. Going deeper, the "you" signifies everything pertaining to the ego - the "I" and the "mine." When all the attachments associated with it are given up, that is where the glory is. It is one's ego that is disliked by all. It seems that the entire teaching of Bhagavan is contained in that one sentence.

N: Your ascertainment of the meaning is correct, both in terms of the detachment and humility and the utter absence of a separate individual being. Both meanings are applicable. Yes, that is where your glory lies, which means that is the place of your happiness and your peace. If one understands just that one sentence, he is endowed with the keys of wisdom to unlock the secret regarding the Truth.

Q: Knowing that happiness cannot be attained by any amount of worldly possessions, name or fame, is the key to even proceed towards the inquiry. If the mind becomes entangled in worldly pursuits, even the inquiry seems elusive. Clarity seems crucial, and I do not have clarity all of the time. The mind becomes clouded by fears.

N: Yes, but you know the direction in which to go—where you cease to exist, where all kinds of definitions of "you" have vanished. How can one remain attached to objects if she knows there is no happiness in them? They are not happiness, and they are fleeting. Are any of the objects you? That would be absurd. To define yourself in terms

of them is also absurd. You know the direction in which to go. Do not hesitate, but ardently practice in a manner that causes “you” to cease to be. The peace that you will find in this way is worth more than anything in the world.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from the Taittiriya Upanishad and in Tamil from the Song of Ribhu.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om ॐ



Meditation with Nome

September 11, 2020

Om Om Om
(Silence)

Nome: Consciousness transcends all the modes of the mind. Meditate upon this. Meditate on this by identifying yourself with Consciousness.

Consciousness is the light of all lights. Meditate on this. Meditate on this by identifying yourself as Consciousness.

Consciousness is the one knower appearing in all beings. Meditate on this. Meditate on this by identifying yourself as Consciousness.

The single knower, Consciousness is the silent witness of all. Meditate on this. Meditate on this by identifying yourself with Consciousness.

Consciousness is the knowledge in Self-knowledge. Meditate on this. Meditate on this by identifying your Being, the Self, as Consciousness.

If various ideas appear, inquire for whom they are, and thus they vanish. Beginning-less and endless is Consciousness. Meditate on this. Meditate on this by identifying yourself as Consciousness.

You are Consciousness. Inquiring, “Who am I?” realize your true identity as Consciousness. The knowledge of such is also just Consciousness. Meditate on this.

(Silence)

Questioner: During meditation, I was trying to inquire as you described and was noticing who is the meditator. Is it the body that is trying to meditate and understand the instruction? It did not seem that that was the case. The meditator does not seem to be the body, although I think that I am the body. I need discriminate if I am this body or mind and what it fundamentally means.

N: The one who is attempting to discern that he is not a body, is he a body?

Q: No. That would not make any sense.

N: The body is not attempting to discriminate. If then, it is bodiless, what is its nature? If the meditation is of Consciousness, as was being described, the meditation and the meditator are one and the same. This is that indivisible knowledge.

Q: In meditation, there are doubts about is this achievable. Is this fundamental truth who I am? It does not make sense to say this aloud, but this is the doubt in meditation. Is it even possible? Even this

is objective. They are just some thoughts that come up.

N: Then, they are just a mode of mind, but the Consciousness that you are transcends all modes of mind. Consciousness is Existence; if it were not, it would be nonexistent, which is absurd. Existence is Consciousness; otherwise, it would be unknown, which never happens. The Existence-

Consciousness is yourself. Have no doubts about it. Certainty comes by deep inquiry. You are not a body. Have no doubt. You are beyond all thought. Have no doubt about it.

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om ॐ





Correspondence with Nome

[On December 31, 2020, a devotee of Sri Ramana wrote: Seeking your blessings.]

Dear Guru Nome,

Please accept my humble namas-karams.

Yesterday, a small group of people celebrated Bhagawan Ramana's Jayanthi here in Singapore.

This is our first gathering at which we chanted Aksharamanamalai and meditated for few minutes. We randomly played one of your videos from YouTube, which happened to be your speech given in the past on Bhagawan's birthday. We were so pleased about the divine coincidence and to be showered by your blessings. We seek your blessings for the initiative that we have taken to gather more often to chant Bhagawan's Aksharamanamalai and pursue our objective to attain the knowledge of realizing the Self.

With affection.

[This is Nome's reply.]

Dear and Fellow Devotees of Sri Bhagavan,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. It is certainly a sweet joy to read your message. Blessings are always there; grace is ever present. One need be only keenly aware of that. To gather for Self-Knowledge is a divine purpose. Chanting Aksharamanamalai helps that same purpose. May profound Self-inquiry be your meditation, for, as

Sri Bhagavan has instructed, such reveals the truth of the Self, the eternal Reality. Thus may you always abide full of bliss and peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[Nome wrote to another seeker:]

January 4, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, so that you remain happy and at peace always.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker replied:]

Dear Nome,

Namaste.

Thank you for your blessings. It is actually impossible to adequately express the gratitude I feel for the good fortune of receiving your spiritual instruction and blessings.

Before meeting you, I was acquainted with the teachings of Ramana, and even had one or two of the books published by the ashram in India. But it was not until hearing your word-by-word dissection of Ramana's selected works, during retreats, did I begin to

actually appreciate their true significance.

Your instruction has been the gateway to Ramana, and I see no difference between Ramana and you. I doubt that I would have ever had a true understanding of Ramana without you. I feel I only know Ramana because you have made me understand the depth of his teaching in a way that includes myself.

[name omitted] sent me the SAT publication "The Light of Wisdom" as a Christmas present. Reading it and seeing how you exhaustively cover the meaning of the verses in the book, I am reminded of the retreats I attended. The book is a vivid reminder, along with an actual brand-new experience, of the deep, penetrating wisdom you bestowed upon all in attendance. No matter which Sage's works you were teaching, be it Ribhu, Shankara, or Ramana, your instruction always felt like it was coming from the Sage himself. In fact, it was better than getting it from the original author because it was a personalized, direct pointing that covered all possible objections and left no room for doubt. I suppose some might regard my remark here as some form of blasphemy against the great Sages of yore, but, then, I see no distinction between them and you. It is my sense that your words elucidating their instruction are just as original and as powerful because your instruction comes from the Self. Without a doubt you are that Self, and as you so clearly indicate, so am I!

The power of your instruction is backed by the example you set as a teacher. Your unwavering abidance in the truth that you teach is evident for anyone who has eyes to see, ears to hear, and a willingness to look and listen. There is also a palpable sense of quietude and peace in your presence that enables the listener to get in sync with what you are teaching. It is like your presence is a tuning fork that enables the listener to get in tune and actually "hear" the message.

What is also greatly appreciated is your steadfast stand in the absolute.You have always emphasized only the very highest understanding. The directness and course of your instruction leaves no room for an individual that can be left behind in some illusory world. The real is taught as the ONLY reality. There has never been any compromise, ever.

Although you continually state that the teaching is simple and that anyone can realize their true self, I feel the truth of that only when in your presence or reading your words via books. Well, okay, I often do get it on my own when I reflect deeply on what you have taught. But your example and teaching are a critical support for all who are not endowed with the "inward turned mind" and the driving desire to know and abide in the self, myself included.

Very often, I appear caught up in the drama of the great illusion, and even though I "know better" am still acting as if it is real. The illusory "me" that has taken residence in the illusory [name omitted] is definitely still clinging with great tenacity, albeit illusory! Because of your teaching, I know it is not real and it is of no real concern. So, in this case, [name omitted] finds safe harbor in your teachings because it is there that [name omitted] dissolves into the Self. So, when [name omitted] has "big" questions, or thinks he is real, all that is necessary is to be reminded that it is just the fluttering of an illusory mind and ego.

Thank you for being a great teacher and reminder of who I really am.

Ever grateful,

[This is an excerpt from the response to a seeker whose mother in India is very ill.]

January 11, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Death of the body is inevitable, but the Self is eternal, changeless, and imperishable. The deathless Self is her true nature, just as it is your own real existence. This Self transcends time and space. Even if the bodies are at different locations, there is no separation for the Self. Moreover, the grace of Bhagavan, the real Being of all sages, never abandons one. Your mother will not die alone.

Regardless of your decision to travel there or not, it is imperative to realize the Knowledge of the Self and, with deep devotion, abide therein.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker presented a series of questions, which can be inferred from the reply presented here.]

January 12, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste

The purpose of Self-inquiry is the inner revelation of Self-Knowledge. Your true Being is not a thought or a group of thoughts. To misidentify with thought is ignorance. The ignorance is two-fold in form. One is the mistaken belief that the content of the thoughts is true and valid, and the second is the false supposition that thoughts occur and are real. The discernment of ignorance as only ignorance, which results in its destruction, comes by deep inquiry.

By knowing the mind's true nature, it subsides. If the mind ceases to believe in its own imaginary forms, which are the thoughts, what remains of it? One thought-transcendent, formless Consciousness exists. That alone is real; that alone is the Self.

All spiritual practices, such as worship of and contemplation on God, japa, chant-

ing God's name, and such, as mentioned by you, are beneficial. They turn the mind inward and reduce or dissolve the ego. In the end, though, one must come to Self-Knowledge.

The idea of destiny is based on the notion of an existent individual, who is embodied in a world that is thought to be real. First find out for whom the destiny is, and then see if the question about destiny still arises.

The work does not require you to misidentify. The worldliness of others does not cause you to become ignorant. With strength and depth of spiritual practice, the obstacles diminish, dissolve, and prove to be unreal.

When nothing, from the subtlest thought to a manifested object, is claimed as yours, the "you" also vanishes, and God alone is, such is surrender.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker in Canada wished to know if he would benefit by reading the Vedas and Upanishads. This is Nome's reply.]

January 29, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. To determine how much benefit you will have by reading the Upanishads, try reading them.

As you know, Bhagavan has declared that God, Guru, and the Self are one.

Realize that One by, full of devotion, deeply inquiring, "Who am I?"

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker wrote:]

Dear Nome, I try my best to keep following your instructions, and there is a

sense of peaceful witnessing most of the time. I read in "I am That" that Nisargadatta Maharaj describes the witness as the last remnant of illusion and the first touch of reality. I experience that to be so; there is a sense of reality on the horizon, but I have not conclusively realized it. From the witness experience, neti neti is effective to not get entangled in objective experience, but how do I discern reality from here?

Yours in gratitude,

[Here is the response.]

February 8, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. It would be wise to inquire for whom is the present non-discernment of reality. What is his definition and what is his true nature?

The Self is only one. That is the only Reality, the indivisible, unalterable Existence. Therefore, there is neither the individual nor his state. To assume they are existent is to suppose the nonobjective to be objective and to imagine the unreal to be real.

The true nature of the witness is Consciousness alone. Its ineffable, imperceptible, inconceivable, nonobjective nature and the inquiry that reveals it are indicated by neti neti, not thus, not thus.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, full of happiness and peace without end.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[In answer to the doubts and questions of another Canadian seeker:]

January 24, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. If the misidentification with the body is abandoned, the tendency to associate the inaction and immobility of the body with spiritual experience will cease.

One should realize the Existence of the Self that transcends all states of mind.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The same seeker asked Nome's opinion of a contemporary spiritual teacher, and Nome replied:]

February 12, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Rather than form opinions about others, it is wiser to know oneself.

May you be absorbed in profound Self-inquiry, so that you abide in Self-Knowledge, full of happiness and peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The same seeker wrote]

Thank you very much for your reply! I will heed your advice. I believe in the Truth as expounded by Sri Bhagavan. Yet I am puzzled because I don't feel I could just dismiss other religions and their "revelations" as being false and in vain. They must have some truth to them, after all, I see how many of their devotees are so sincere and honest in professing so. I am trying to understand how Hindu Dharma can be true (in terms of ideas of the Self, Advaita, etc) and also other religions can be true. The Buddha expounded non-self, was he merely incorrect? Or is there some more nuance to truth which allows both non-self and Sat to be true?"

[Here is the response.]

February 14, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. As long as you are in the realm of ideas, there will be perplexity. Beyond ideas, you will find Reality to be self-

evident. The Self is true; the ego is not true. Realize this within first, and then you can decide the meanings of the various religions, if you feel so inclined.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome ॐ



The Ribhu Gita

Chapter 3, Verses 6-14

With Commentary by Nome from a
Boundless Wisdom Event held on
November 6, 2010 at the SAT Temple

the Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om
Om Namah Sivaya

All the lamps are lit tonight in celebration of Deepavali. It is a celebration of light, which we understand as Self-illumination, the Knowledge by Consciousness of Consciousness. The name of the holy day means a row of lamps, but it is one Light. Some say that the celebration is that of divine Rama's return, accompanied by Sita, after rescuing her from the multi-headed Ravana, to his divinely established abode. Some say that the occasion celebrates the uniting of Lakshmi, the power that is behind all that is fortunate, with Vishnu, the all-pervading One. Some say that the event celebrates the return of Vishnu, having incarnated to bring under control the demon named Bali, in his unmanifested state to his true celestial abode. Still others say that the event celebrates the destruction of a demon who was creating mayhem, the ego, by Krishna, or by Krishna's wife.

About this celebration, Sri Bhagavan composed a verse, the English meaning of which is, "To search and slay the sinner, the naraka ego corrupted by the thought that one is the naraka form, the false body tenement, and to shine as the true Self is Deepavali, indeed."

The symbolism in the stories is quite evident. If the ego is destroyed and the "I am the body" conception abandoned, you shine in spiritual illumination, absorbed in That, abiding in That, as That itself.

Ribhu says:

6. Whatever is uttered by words is entirely illusory. There is no doubt of this. So, also, is whatever is imagined by sankalpa or thought of by the mind.

Such is the power of the great Rishí that he can, using illusory words, reveal the Truth, by saying so. Everything in your experience for which you have a word or a description is not at all existent. They are illusory descriptions, illusory names, for illusory things. There is absolute Existence, Brahman, which is the real Self. It is not named, and it is not a name. If, inquiring to know the Self, you discern your true nature, it will be found to be entirely ineffable. Everything that can possibly be described, about it or about anything else whatsoever, is not at all real. Similar is it with **whatever is imagined by sankalpa or thought of by the mind**. Everything about which you have a fixed idea, “I know it as such,” whether it is something subtle or something sensed or gross, is not true. The thing itself is not there, and your idea about it is as illusory as the illusion to which it refers. A fixed idea, a concept, **sankalpa** is only a more rigid version of a flimsy, whimsical idea. Ideas are not the Truth. Thought is not the Truth. The Truth is the Self. What thought could you have of your Self? You cannot possibly be a thought. Whatever is thought of by the mind is an illusion. The implication is that if you seek to know Reality, you must find that which is beyond words and thoughts, which words and thoughts cannot touch. You must seek that beyond the domain of the mind, for whatever the mind thinks is only an illusion. It is the stuff of imagination. Reality is thought-transcendent, mind transcendent, and its Knowledge of itself is no sankalpa. It is not a fixed concept, and it is certainly not a whimsical thought. The Knowledge of Reality is of a transcendental nature. It shines as the Light of the self-luminous Consciousness—the innate Light, the continuous Light—that is real Knowledge.

There is no doubt of this. If it would be in words, your understanding might be contradicted. Look more deeply than words. If it would be in ideas, thoughts, concepts, or something dreamed of within the mind, it could perish, it could be contradicted, it could be uprooted, and it could be overshadowed and lost. How could one be truly certain about something said, and how could one be truly certain about a thought? That from which he declares all that is spoken and all that is conceived as illusory, is itself not an illusion. Beyond words and beyond thought, you are certain of your Existence. This is your true identity and the one place in which there can be absolutely firm Knowledge.

7. What little is decided by the intellect, what little is led along by thought, and whatever there is in this quintuplicated world are all illusory. This is certain.

What is decided by the intellect and what little is led along by thought. Where do your thoughts lead? They may seem to go on and on, but where do they lead? It is very little. The Truth is incredibly vast, and where thought meanders and leads to is very little, very, very little. What the intellect decides is very small. Spiritual Knowledge, which is true Knowledge, is of the innermost self-luminous Consciousness. Thought does not lead there. Thought is nothing there. The decisions reached by the intellect are meaningless there. Indeed, one who aspires to Liberation, for Self-Realization, should know that the conclusions drawn in the intellect are in no way a substitute for spiritual Knowledge. The intellect may think something is so about spiritual Knowledge, or about the Truth and may think another thing is not so. Of what little purpose is it? Of what little value is it? It has nothing to do with the Truth. Where the intellect is not and its conclusions are not, and where thought is not and where thought leads is not, there the Truth shines. It shines in you as soon as you turn inward to inquire and stand beyond the intellect, its decisions, thought, and where thought leads.

Whatever there is in this quintuplicated world. **quintuplicated world** means the entirety of the manifested universe; its fivefold nature is constituted of the traditional five elements, or five states of manifested matter. It is to be understood as the entirety, including subtle and gross, of the universe. Of what nature is this? It is an illusion. Its formation and its apparently

solidified state are an illusion. Illusion seems solid only so long as one believes in it. The intellect makes a wrong decision and believes in an ego, and it believes in “this.” This sends thought traveling out in all directions within the mind itself. The result is a world, which is apparently solid. All of that is illusory.

This is certain. For one who knows Reality, the illusory nature of everything, from the mind to the world, is entirely certain. There is no doubt about it. From where can you draw such doubtless certitude? From the Existence; from Consciousness. About that which perceives the world there is great doubt but of the Consciousness that knows the perception, there is no doubt. About thoughts, there may be doubt; there ought to be doubt. About the intellect’s decisions and ideas there may be doubt; there most certainly should be doubt. Of that which knows thought, knows the intellect, remaining unchanging, unseen by them, of this Consciousness no one has any doubt at any time. If this Consciousness, by its own light, knows its own nature thoroughly, this is certainty. In the light of the certain Knowledge, every other idea, or conception and so-called perception, is known to be an absurd illusion. Realize this for yourself by discerning the nature of your own Consciousness.

8. Whatever is heard by the ears and observed by the eyes, the eyes themselves, the ears, and the body are all illusory, indeed. There is no doubt of this.

What is heard by the ears and observed by the eyes refers to all of the senses. That is illusory and not the real Existence. The real Existence remains unseen by the eyes and unheard by the ears. It is un-sensed. The eyes, the ears, and the body are products of the senses. We may regard the verse as applying to the senses themselves. The senses do not determine Reality. Even in their own sphere, the senses are not dependable, and they are utterly inadequate to know pure Existence, pure Consciousness. The senses are illusory and what is experienced through them is only illusion. Therefore, if you want to know Reality as it is, cease to depend on the senses and, with sense-transcendent Knowledge, inquire as to who you are. The senses seem to occupy a place in the body, yet the body itself is known only through the senses, apart from which one has no experience of a body. To know your Self, trace your Existence—the Consciousness that now shines—to what it is, beyond the body and beyond the senses. The very basis of higher spirituality is bodiless-ness. The very basis of spiritual Knowledge is transcendence of the senses. If you retain the idea that the senses determine reality, determine what is, you arrive at erroneous conclusions, even in the name of wisdom. If you abandon the identification with the senses; if you cease to regard the senses as telling you what is real, then Self-Knowledge is of easy access. All that is said in the scriptures—such as Ribhu Gita and elsewhere—about the unreality of the world and no birth and no creation becomes quite clear. If you retain the misidentification with the senses, these teachings remain incomprehensible. If you abandon the misidentification with the senses, these teachings become the self-evident revelation of Truth.

The senses are entirely unreliable. They are completely inadequate for showing you formless Existence. They are entirely inadequate to show you the unformed Consciousness. They cannot give you bliss. Even at their own level, it is only an act of the magic of the mind that believes that they are consistent; because the senses are changeful all the time. Anyone who has even so much as seen a mirage once in his life should know better. Apart from the five senses, the sensations, what contact do you have with the experience of a body? Within the imagination of the mind, one kind of imagination is called sensation, which has various permutations of different kinds. Those sensations become further imagined as the sense objects, No one ever has experienced a sense object. One has experienced only the senses. One has never experienced

the senses, though, but just the mental cognition or mental idea about them, like the senses in a dream. They are illusory, but you are not an illusion. "All this is illusion" does not mean Existence is illusion. It means Existence is to be known in a way different from all "this." If the belief in all this being real is dispensed with by the instruction, "All this is illusory," the actual nature of Existence will shine to itself without obstruction, and that is perfection.

9. Whatever is pointed out as "this" or imagined as "this"—whatever object is thus known—all is illusory. There is no doubt of this.

The object can be subtle or gross. It is its objectivity that should be questioned. Its very existence should be questioned. What **is pointed out as "this"** is only **imagined as "this."** Deeply meditating to know the Self, contemplate the entire sphere of experience known as "this," the entire objective portion of your experience. It is all that is manifold; in that which is nonobjective, there is no multiplicity. It is all form; the nonobjective is entirely formless. Whatever is pointed out as "this," be it a place, a time, a thing, an activity, an experience, an event, an object, a sensation, a feeling, a thought, whatever is objective in any way whatsoever, should be known as illusory. It is illusory because it is changeful. It is illusory because it has no independent existence; its existence is entirely dependent on the perceiver. It is illusory because, in truth, it does not exist in any way whatsoever. The Reality is the Self. The Self is the nonobjective. There is no multiplicity of what is nonobjective. Therefore, the Self is One alone.

There is no doubt of this. In the nonobjective Knowledge of the Self lies absolute certainty. The idea of a "this," in whatever form it takes, is always doubtful. The certitude of true Knowledge lies in its utterly nonobjective nature, so that the Reality is identical with the Consciousness that knows it. It is absolutely One, without the least possibility of differentiation.

10. "Who am I?" "What is that or this?" "I am He." These and other such sentences are unreal. Whatever happens in this world, all is illusory. There is no doubt of this.

Having pointed out the utterly nonobjective nature of the Truth and shown that all that is objective is an illusion—unreal, he now addresses even those statements associated with the highest Truth.

"Who am I?" The meaning is intended to reveal nonobjective Knowledge.

"What is that or this?" It is the search for Reality, what is.

"I am He"—So'ham, is a statement of identity with the Supreme, the absolute Consciousness.

These and other such sentences, other statements of wisdom, such as the mahavakyas, etc. These **are unreal**. The sentences are unreal. The words composing them are unreal. The thoughts composing "I am He," "Who am I?" etc. are not the Reality. The message of "Who am I?" and "I am He" is something nonobjective. So, we do not grasp the sentence, and we do not grasp an idea about what these signify. We proceed directly, by interior nonobjective Knowledge, to that which is indicated by such statements. The statements themselves, though, are not real, and the thoughts pertaining to such are not real.

Whatever happens in this world, all is illusory. The world is an illusion. Grasp the significance of that. The world is an illusion, and, thus, anything that happens in it is an illusion. By the world is meant the entire objective sphere of experience.

Question what you regard as yourself. Your view of the world is not what it is. Those erroneous ideas of it bear a striking resemblance and connection to ideas you have about yourself. If you address what you regard as your identity, the ways in which the identity is projected outwardly will also be rectified.

There is no doubt of this. The certainty of Self Knowledge is of the self-luminous Consciousness. It is more certain than anything of the world. In the world, you can never be too certain; there is always room for doubt. That which is beyond the world is doubtless. The world—the sphere of objective experience—is an illusion, and what appears within it is an illusion. It is just like the dream sphere of experience, which is an illusion, imagined in your mind. What happens in your dream is as illusory as that sphere of experience; it is not at all real. There is something real, but it is not of the world, and it is not in the world. It is right where you are. Having abandoned the identification with the body and given up the senses as the means to determine reality, you can know exactly where you are, that is to say, who you are.

11. All that is to be practiced, all that is to be kept secret, and all causes are illusory. The term “all beings” is also illusory. There is no doubt of this.

The Knowledge is said to be **practiced**, and the Knowledge is said to be held secret. But the Truth about Knowledge is quite beyond the idea of being practiced as if it were of some utilitarian nature, and the truth about Knowledge is neither secret nor otherwise. These views depend on an individual who looks at the Knowledge; that individual is not real.

All causes are illusory. If there is “I,” and if there is “this,” there is a cause for “I,” and a cause of “this,” but, if there is no “I,” and if there is no “this,” what could possibly be ascribed as a cause? If there is suffering or bondage, there is a cause of suffering and bondage, but, if bondage never truly existed and if suffering is entirely illusory, how could there be a valid or real cause? Even Liberation is thought of as having a cause, such as the various practices. If, though, Liberation is simply the nature of the innate self-luminous Self and neither attained nor lost at any time, how could there be a cause for it? If this universe is, there is a cause. If all is illusory, how could there be a real cause for an illusion? The Reality is without causality. It neither causes another nor does anything cause it.

The term “all beings” is also illusory. There is no doubt of this. The idea of beings, all beings, your so-called self included, is a curious combination of Being plus some limiting adjunct appended to it. When you think of “all beings,” you think of being divided or distributed among so many bodies, each body apparently having a mind, a soul, or a spirit. Even if you think “all beings” are of one kind, you still have the idea of “all beings.” That is illusory. If the misidentification with the body is gone and if you do not use the senses to determine reality but know reality by inner Knowledge in which the Existence-Consciousness illumines itself, knows itself, then, where are “all beings”? There is Being, but no such thing as “all beings.” You are not a being, he is not a being, she is not a being; there is Being, not ‘a’ being. One Self alone exists.

12. All differences and differentiations and all sankalpa-s are illusory. All defects and their differentiation are entirely illusory. There is no doubt of this.

One Consciousness is. One Existence is. Differences are merely a product of imagination. The differences are not real; they are based on the illusion of “I” – “I am like this; I am not like that.” Then, everything else is seen accordingly. All the differences are not real and the differentiation—the process by which differences are imagined or drawn—is not real. The cause and the result are both illusory. To know Reality, abandon such.

All sankalpa-s are illusory. Every concept, every fixed idea that is the result of differentiation, the imagining of the differences, is not true.

All the defects and their differentiation are entirely illusory. Your real Being is perfectly full Brahman. The defects, the limitations, are entirely imagined. Because they are only imagi-

nary, you can set yourself free of them by knowing their illusory nature. What remains is the perfect fullness. What remains has no doubt of its own nature. If you are a body, if you are senses, or if you are a mind or an intellect, there are plenty of defects. If you are not any of these things, your nature is pure Consciousness, and there is nothing wrong. There is no defect and nothing missing.

The defects that can be observed, such as the mistakes in the mind etc., and the mistakes committed in action etc., are entirely of an illusory nature. They have their root, or their causes, in illusion. In ultimate truth, the entire appearance, the whole defect, the idea that there is something wrong or off in some way, is an illusion. What exists is unalloyed Being-Consciousness-Bliss, which is infinite and eternal. You are That. But consider yourself to be a thinker, a perceiver, a doer etc. and what appears to be real, there are defects all over, wherever the differentiation is. The truth is where the ego is not.

13. “The protector is Vishnu,” “Brahma is the cause of creation,” “Siva is the destroyer,” and other such statements—all these concepts are illusory. There is no doubt of this.

Not knowing oneself, one formulates some idea about God, such as **“The protector is Vishnu,” “Brahma is the cause of creation,” “Siva is the destroyer,” and other such statements.** This applies to any statement you make of God without knowing your Self. Such are just illusory concepts. If the Self is known, God is known as God is. Vishnu has no idea of, “I am the protector.” Siva has no idea of, “I am the destroyer.” How does Vishnu know Vishnu? How does Siva know Siva? How do you know your Self?

Get to the source of inner experience by inquiring within yourself, “Who am I?” The words and the thoughts corresponding to those words, “Who am I? are not the actual inquiry or Knowledge. It is the nonobjective introspection indicated by the question, “Who am I?” that reveals the luminous Knowledge.

14. Ablutions, prayer, penance, fire oblations, daily studies, worship of deities, incantations, lineage, and good company, are all illusory. There is no doubt of this.

All the worldly has been negated. Here he addresses the forms of various spiritual practices. Their intention and their aim are not illusory, but the form of their appearance is not the Reality. Ribhu wants you to see the Reality as it is. It has no differences, no “I,” this, and the world. If there is “I,” and if there is a world, all this which is described applies. But in the Reality, which is absolute, “I”-less and world-less, how can we speak of such things even of the holy things, let alone anything else?

All that is uttered in words is illusory. Without stepping into the illusion, the great rishi Ribhu uses the illusion to destroy the illusion, by revealing that there is no such thing as illusion and that the one Reality alone exists. All the while, he abides just as That.

Om Namah Sivaya. ॐ

॥ श्री रमणविभक्ति स्तोत्रम् ॥

॥ śrī ramaṇa-vibhakti stotram ॥

Stotram using declensions of the word Ramana

रमणोनाम ऋषीन्द्रः परमगुरु
रमणं ज्ञानतरुं भावयहृदये ।
रमणेनैव विमुक्तोऽसि भवभयाद्
रमणायार्पित चित्तेन सह चर ॥

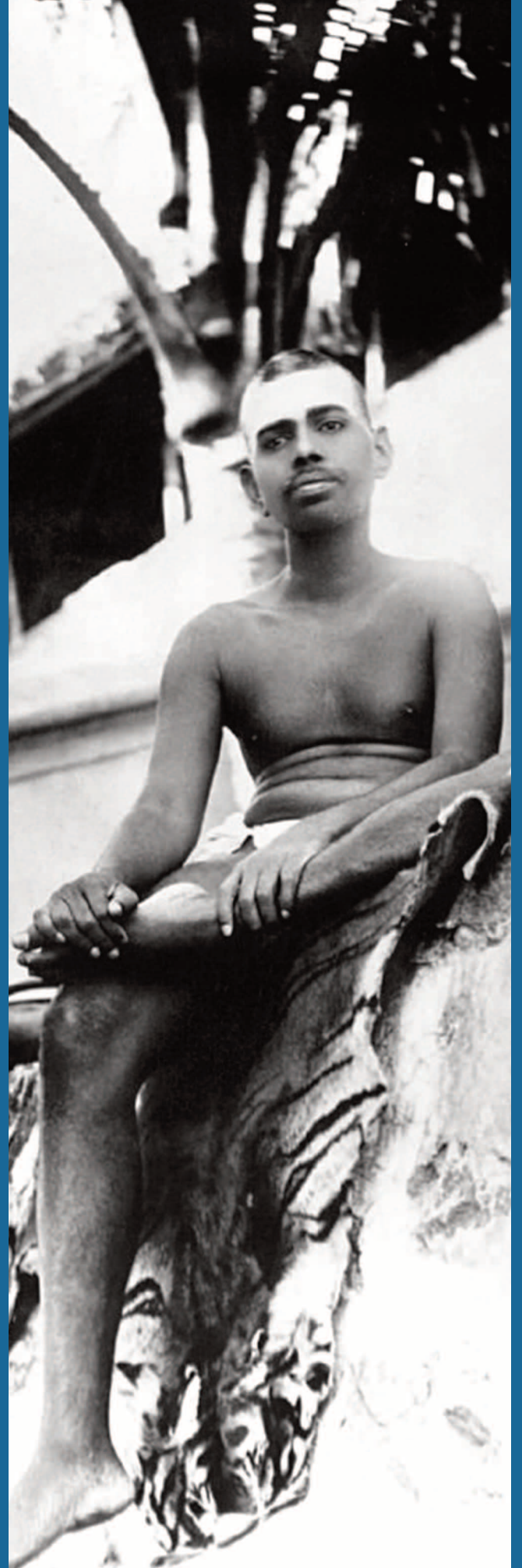
ramaṇo-nāma ṛṣīndraḥ paramagurū
ramaṇaṃ jñāna-taruṃ bhāvaya-hṛdaye ।
ramaṇenaiva vimukto'si bhava-bhayād
ramaṇāyārpita cittena saha cara ॥

The chief among Rishis, the Supreme Guru
by name Ramana.

Worship in your heart, Ramana, the tree of
Knowledge

You are liberated from the fear of mundane
existence by Ramana

Move about with a mind offered to Ramana





रमणादन्यगतिर्नास्ति नु सततं
रमणस्याम्बुजपादे मम हृदयं ।
रमणेषुस्थित भक्तिर्हि भवतुमे
रमणानन्दकृपासागर नम ॐ ॥

ramaṇād-anyagatir-nāsti nu satataṁ
ramaṇasyāmbuja-pāde mama hṛdayaṁ ।
ramaṇe-susthita bhaktir-hi bhavatume
ramaṇānanda-kṛpā-sāgara nama om ॥

There is no other path/refuge than Ramana,
indeed
My heart at Ramana's lotus feet
May my devotion in Ramana be unshaken,
indeed
O Ramana! the blissful ocean of
compassion!, prostration, OM

– by Ganesh Sadasivan

ॐ

Siva's Cosmic Dance



The 108 karanas, as described in the fourth chapter of the Natya Shastra (a Hindu treatise on the performing arts), are synchronized dance movements with each posture displaying a particular mood. They are performed to spiritually enlighten the spectators. The Natya Shastra states that one who performs well the karanas created by Mahesvara will be freed of sin and go to Mahesvara. A few Hindu temples exhibit the karanas in the gopuram, the entrance tower to the temple. Lord Siva or Parvati are depicted displaying the karanas.

A number of interpretations are written regarding the karanas, however, there is no universally accepted analysis, leaving each person free to interpret the karanas in a manner that most inspires him or her. Here, we introduce an interpretation by Janane Sivakumar to accompany the production of the 108 paintings of the karanas as painted by her mother, Anandhi Muthukumarasamy, and adorn the walls in the Lotus room of the SAT Temple. Her interpretation is garnered from the descriptions of the movements as found in the 3 volume set of "Karanas, Common Dance Codes of India and Indonesia," by Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam, M.A., Ph.D. Each painting is numbered and titled.

Anandhi uses quartz crystals, 24k gold foil, and metallic paints to adorn each painting, yet, due to the limitations in the medium of photography, the images presented here are not able to capture the sparkling characteristic of each painting, which give them a stunning quality. *(Continued in subsequent Reflections.)*



1. Talapusapapuṭam: With love, I praise the Lord of compassion for enabling me to go on this path.



3. Valitorukam: With an inward turned mind, one finds an everlasting, youthful joy.



2. Vartitam: With the intensity of blissful and steadfast inquiry, all attachments resulting in jealousy and anger are destroyed.



4. Apaviddham: Through continuous inquiry into concepts of jealousy, anger, desire and aversion, indifference results, thereby revealing the peaceful nature of the Self.



5. Samanakhama: Only with an inward, steady calm mind can inquiry commence.



7. Svastikarecitama: In the path of Knowledge, the means of attaining knowledge and the final revelation are of the same blissful nature.



6. Linama: With detestation for worldly existence, I pray to the all-pervading Supreme Self to reveal itself to me.



8. Maṇḍalasvatikama: Inquire with complete devotion, whereby the content of thought is cast aside. Thus, petal by petal, the lotus of the heart blooms.



9. Nikuttakam: With the destruction of illusory ideas of self-conceit, ego, pride, and haughtiness, the subtle beauty of the Self is revealed.



12. Ardharecitakam: Through deep and thorough inquiry into the nature of the mind, one realizes that “I am of the nature devoid of foolish conceptions.” (Ribhu Gita).



10. Ardhanikuttakam: Immersed in profound inquiry, one stops binding oneself in self adulation, pride, and ego.



19. Katisamakam: Upon completely surrendering to the Guru, the ego subsides and rests in the Supreme Siva. (Padma’s description focuses on the beauty of the landing process, which my mother and I interpreted as a pose of resting. This gave rise to the formation of the meaning here.)



**Images and Bhajans from special events
held at the SAT Temple may
be accessed on the SAT website at: SATRamana.org**

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Om Namah Sivaya