

Disciple: Although I have listened to the explanation of the characteristics of inquiry in such great detail, my mind has not gained even a little of peace. What is the reason for this?

The Maharshi: The reason is the absence of strength or one-pointedness of the mind.

Commentary by Nome:

. . . A mind caught in its own vasana-s, or tendencies, is regarded as weak by the wise. A mind devoid of vasana-s remains focused upon the Knowledge of the Self and is regarded as strong by the wise. To wallow in the unreal is weakness; to rely on the Real as one's support is true strength. . . .

- Vicharasangraham, Essence of Inquiry, SAT Publication





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The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi



from LETTERS FROM SRI RAMANASRAMAM

March 27, 1943

Bhagavan's First Manuscript (31)

When I was copying out Part II of these letters, beginning with 'drishtiṁ jñanamayim kritva,' I did not know where exactly the stanza occurred. I, therefore, went to the Asramam a little earlier than usual to ask Bhagavan. Bhagavan was seated at leisure, and I approached and enquired in what book the stanza was to be found. He kindly told me that it was in the "Tejobindu Upanishad" and that Sankara has written the same thing in his Aparokshanubhuti of which the relevant stanzas were:

दृष्टिं ज्ञानामयीं कृत्वा पश्येद् ब्रह्ममयं जगत् ।
सा दृष्टिः परमोदारा न नासाग्रावलोकिनी ॥

drṣṭiṁ jñānāmayīm kṛtvā paśyed brahmamayaṁ
jagat ।
sā drṣṭiḥ paramodārā na nāsāgrāvalokinī ॥

दृष्टुं दर्शनं दृष्टीनां विरामो यत्र वै भवेत् ।
दृष्टिः तत्रैव कर्तव्या न नासाग्रावलोकिनी ॥

drṣṭuṁ darśanaṁ drṣṭīnāṁ virāmo yatra vai bhavet ।
drṣṭiḥ tatraiva kartavyā na nāsāgrāvalokinī ॥

"Which means," said Bhagavan, "that the aim (drishti) is not to concentrate on the tip of the nose or between the eyebrows. It should be to concentrate on the place where all the attributes of the seer, the seen and the act of seeing are dissolved. The meaning is that, when the aim 'jñanamaya,' that is Realization is attained through meditation enabling a man to understand his own nature and to see the way to be united with the Supreme Spirit, then the whole universe appears to be full of Brahman."

The 'Aparokshanubhuti' was in the library, but I hesitated to take it from there as I have to ask somebody to get it. At the same time, I did not remember the stanzas in full and was wondering what to do. Sensing the situation, Bhagavan asked one of the attendants to take out Palaniswami's small notebook which was in the drawer. The attendant took it out, shook the dust off it and handed it to me. It is a very small notebook, written in Malayalam characters. Bhagavan took a pen and paper to write. I murmured, "There is a copy of the 'Aparokshanubhuti' in the library, I think."

"Why bother"? said Bhagavan, "I will write it out myself." And so, saying, he copied the two stanzas from the notebook. I was overwhelmed with joy and asked him, "Have you copied the stanzas of Sankara as they are, or have you just written down their meaning in stanzas of your own?"

"I merely copied them from the book," said Bhagavan.

"In most of the small books written by Sankara, the stanzas have been copied in block from the Upanishads. Palaniswami asked me to copy out and give him some stanzas of Sankara, but where were notebooks or paper with us at that time? I collected every scrap of paper I could, stitched them together into a notebook, wrote out the stanzas and gave them to him. In this small notebook, selections from about ten books of Sankara have been written."

"So, this is the first book?" I asked.

"Yes," said Bhagavan, "At that time we had nothing but a pot; we did not have even a towel then. In the early days of our stay in the Virupaksha cave, Palaniswami alone had a towel to wrap around him. The cave had no iron doors then, it had a wooden door with a wooden latch. We used to bolt it from outside with a small stick, go around the hill, wander hither and yon, return after a week or ten days, when we would open the door with the help of another stick. That was our key at the time; no need to keep it anywhere! This notebook was the only article we took with us. As Palaniswami wore a towel, he used to fold the book and tuck it into his waist. That was enough for us. This book was the first beginning of our (book) family," said Bhagavan laughing.

"Did you write this from the Nagari script?" asked another devotee.

"Yes," Bhagavan told him, "And that, too, only because Palaniswami asked for it. At that time, and even afterwards, I did not write anything of my own accord."

"Why does Bhagavan require to do all this? He does everything for the sake of others," remarked the questioner.

"Yes, that is so," said Bhagavan, "and of the 'family' that has grown since then, this book is the first." And he showed the book to us all. ॐ

Satsangs with Nome

What is Real?

Satsang, January 31, 2021

Om Om Om
(Silence)

Nome: What is real? Self-Knowledge is the Knowledge of Reality. It transcends sense perception and mental conception. It puts an end to all the imagined bondage and limitation—the causes of sorrow.

What is real? What is real must always be so. What is always so? Existence. Existence is real. It is not inert but rather Consciousness. Innately, it is perfectly full. So, in this Knowledge lies great happiness.

What is real? It cannot be known with outward vision. It reveals itself to the inward-turned. Turning inward means the relinquishment of erroneous conception, that is, the supposition that constitutes ignorance. So, to know what is real, turn inward. Make your vision nonobjective. What is unreal cannot know the real. Consequently, your nature must be real. What is your nature? Who are you? If ignorance vanishes by such inquiry, the Reality comprehends itself.

The Reality that is Existence is never modified and is always indivisible. Indivisible, you cannot separate yourself from it. You are That, and there is no alternative to That save illusion, which has no actual existence.

If you so much as inquire to know your true nature, ignorance disappears. With its disappearance, all difference vanishes. Existence knows no difference. If that which does not exist apparently sees difference, how can such be real?



What is real? It is not something to be attained anew. Rather it is ever the case. By the destruction of the veiling ignorance by inquiry, Knowledge of Reality shines without obstruction.

Is the individuality real? Find out. That there is someone to be ignorant is the fundamental ignorance. It seems to be but has no starting place. When examined, it ends, and, in what remains, ignorance cannot rise again. It is impossible. Therefore, know the Self, yourself, the only real Self there is. With knowledge, you will find that just as the individuality is false, likewise is the connection with the body and the existence of a world. What is real?

Questioner: You mentioned, “nonobjective vision”. What is the inner striving that is happening, the inner practice that is happening?

Nome: Outward-turned vision results in the conception of the world being real and ex-

ternal to oneself. Inward-turned vision examines whether that premise is true or not. Outward-turned vision supposes the senses to be real. Inward-turned vision questions that supposition. Outward-turned vision supposes that what you think is the truth. Inward-turned vision reaches beyond thought, is more interior than thought, and hence is nonobjective. Outward-turned vision imagines what is unreal and is itself a product of what is unreal. Inward-turned vision is contrariwise. It uproots the very basis of ignorance. Ultimately, inward-turned vision is the self-luminous Consciousness for which the knowledge of Truth is innate. Inward-turned vision, therefore, alone can reveal Reality. It alone constitutes actual experience. Outward-turned vision, because it is based in the unreal, cannot possibly do so. Is it clear now?

Q: Maharshi has said that desireless-ness is liberation. I need to develop that single mindedness for liberation.

N: Desire is born out of ignorance. When ignorance is found out to be ignorance and not true knowledge, it subsides. So it is with all bondage. Actually, liberation is your natural state. It is the Reality as it is, and it is conceived of as a state only from the standpoint of illusion. Realizing all bliss lies within, it is natural to be one-pointed. Such single-mindedness is a great asset for liberation.

Another Q: If one achieves the state of one-pointedness, it does not automatically dissolve the illusion, does it? Does it dissolve one's attachment to the illusory thing that we are in?

Nome: First attain single-mindedness. Then say.

Q: There is an impression that one has things that need to be done. Is that also part of the illusion?

N: What is it that truly needs to be done?

Q: I don't really know. But this illusory thing goes on.

N: Realizing the real needs to be done.

Q: Does that involve disengaging oneself entirely from activity?

N: Activity pertains to a body. Are you the body? If you are not the body, you cannot possibly be the performer of action, whether that action appears as active or inactive.

Q: There are times when I am doing things, and I am just watching myself do it. I don't necessarily feel "I am doing this". It is hard to explain.

N: Yes, ignorance is difficult to explain. Illusion does not make sense.

Q: It really doesn't; that does not seem to stop me from being in it all the time.

N: Rest solidly in the knowledge that your Being is not the body. That will resolve most, if not all, questions regarding activity.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English from the Bhagavad Gita and in Tamil from the Song of Ribhu.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti



Permanent Self-Knowledge

Satsang, Feb. 7, 2021

Om Om Om
(Silence)

Nome: Blissful Self-Knowledge is permanent. It is because it is not a sensory perception or a mental conception, and it does not belong to the individual or ego. Indeed, it is the diminishing of the individual or ego that precisely determines the depth of the spiritual experience.

Self-Knowledge is the knowledge of Existence, and, as Existence always is, so the Knowledge al-

ways is. That is, the Knowledge and your real Being are the same thing. They are one.

You exist, and you know that you exist, and the knowledge is never separate from the existence itself. Thus, spiritual experience does not come and go. Rather, the ego seems to come and go according to the rise and fall of delusion.

That which is truly deep is the unbroken substrate, which always is. What is permanent is real. What is impermanent is unreal. The discrimination between the eternal and the transitory, the real and the unreal, is the discernment of what is the Self and what not.

The ego does not grasp this knowledge; rather, Knowledge shines where the ego disappears. As the ego never actually exists, so the Knowledge of Being does not ever cease to exist.

Look to that which transcends the senses and the thinking mind. Use the innate knowledge of Existence as the means to realize itself. Existence is eternal; the Knowledge of the Self must be of the same nature. Consciousness is self-luminous and does not require anything extra to know itself; likewise Self-Knowledge.

The eternal Knowledge of the Self, of the Truth, does not come to someone; rather, it is you. Find it as already existing within yourself. The Knowledge is the self-luminous revelation of Existence. It does not happen or reveal itself to the individual. The individuality is purely illusory. Without individuality, what are you? Inquire and you will know.

Questioner: In the book, The Essence of Spiritual Instruction, Maharshi says, "Offered to the Lord, done not with desire; that is the way to Liberation". Even Gita mentions not to crave for the fruits of actions. I do not want to have a worldly attitude. There is another verse that says offer mind, action, everything to the Lord. Could you please elaborate on that?

Nome: Everything should be an offering to God. All your activities should be offered to the Lord, as the verse says. That means you do not retain the fruits of the action, the idea of "I am acting," and the notion of the individual actor. All that should be given to God, which, in reality, is Brahman. As it is with actions, so should it be with the entire scope of experiences. Your experience of anything should be an offering to the Lord. The Lord is Brahman, which is indwelling. So, the entirety of the experiencer along with his experiences are offered and are not retained by anyone. If this is the orientation, how could the ego survive? Without the survival of the ego, how could ignorance be maintained or even conjured up? You may wish to read Eknath. He goes into this quite a bit.

Q: So, making an offering is equivalent to removing the ego. Continuously, I have to keep removing the position of the individual.

N: Is there any difficulty to maintain the inquiry continuously? Thoughts are always discontinuous. Knowledge of the Self, not being a thought, is continuous. The offering is in Knowledge, and this Knowledge is sacred, indeed, the most sacred. One who abides in this Knowledge is holy; indeed, he is holiness itself.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English from the Bhagavad Gita and in Tamil from the Song of Ribhu.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti



Correspondence with Nome

[A reply to a seeker in the UK:]

November 1, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. If the objective portion of the thought "I" is negated, what remains? Is that truly a thought? If such "I" is constant, incessant, what exists? Nonobjective Knowledge of your true Being, the only Self that actually exists, is abidance in the Self.

Continue to happily inquire so that all misidentifications dissolve and vanish, and the innate peace will shine forth forever.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[To another seeker in the UK these explanations were sent:]

December 2, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Self-inquiry is always the profound introspection signified by those words, "Who am I?" but not necessarily thought of in or expressed by those words.

Meditation upon the source and nature of happiness is part of the same inward turning, for Being is Bliss. Thus, the Self is referred to as Saccidananda (Sat-Chid-Ananda), Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

By deep inquiry is meant transcendent of thought and consisting of

nonobjective knowledge. By thorough inquiry is meant the complete removal of the false assumption of an ego and all its attendant notions and tendencies. This is the dissolution of all the misidentifications and attachments that seem to obscure the innate happiness and peace.

May you deeply and thoroughly inquire so that you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, free and perfectly full of your own true nature.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[In the course of replying to a seeker, Nome said:]

December 13, 2021

The slow deterioration of your mother's body is to be expected, for the inherent transience of all things makes such inevitable. The Self, though, remains unchanged. Abide steadily in the Knowledge of the Self.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A response to a perplexed seeker's questions regarding Self-inquiry:]

December 19, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. It would be wise to deeply examine the true nature of who it is that thinks of these choices. Self-inquiry is of the nature of nonobjective

knowledge. This is knowledge of your very Existence. This Existence, which is Consciousness, is only one, and, being indivisible, immutable, and forever unmodified, it is never apart from itself. Inquire in just such a manner that what is indicated here is experientially discerned beyond thought.

The "I" thought is the ego, the false assumption of being an individual being. If presently you misidentify with that, discriminate, inquiring to know the Self that you truly are. The sense of existence should be traced to its source. Knowledge of the Self is constant; Self-inquiry is continuous.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The next day, the same seeker wrote again. Here is the reply.]

December 20, 2021

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Who is to hold onto what? Inquire. Existence is already fully existent. Another does not exist. The answer to your questions is contained in the previous email response sent to you. You may find it helpful to reread it, perhaps several times, until it makes sense to you.

May your inquiry be deep and nonobjective, so that you abide steadily in the Knowledge of the Self, the One without a second, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A response to a seeker in Singapore:]

January 2022

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. If by Self-Knowledge is meant the undifferentiated Realization of Being that is utterly nonobjective and absolutely devoid of individuality, how could there be beyond or otherwise and for whom?

It transcends all words and thoughts. Pure Consciousness alone exists. Who supposes otherwise? Continue to inquire until the Knowledge of the Self is self-evident and without any alternative.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[In reply to a seeker who was anxious:]

February 2, 2022

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. That which exists everywhere at all times, which is eternal, for which there is neither birth nor death, which is of a nature that is perfectly full, is the Self, the One to be worshiped, meditated upon, and realized in a state of identity. Thus, anxious thoughts disappear.

Bhagavan carries all. Such is his grace. Devotion reveals it within.

Have a safe trip to India.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

The Ribhu Gita

Chapter 3, Verses 33-37

With Commentary by Nome from a
Boundless Wisdom Event held on
March 4, 2011 at the SAT Temple

the Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om
Om Namah Sivaya

33. The beginning and the end are only Consciousness. If a thing exists, it is always full of Consciousness alone. If there is Brahma, he is only Consciousness. Vishnu is only Consciousness, indeed.

The beginning and the end are only Consciousness. If a thing exists, it is always full of Consciousness alone. Consciousness is the very nature of Existence. Existence is the nature of Consciousness. The two terms, Sat-Chit, Existence-Consciousness, have as their significance one ineffable, inconceivable Reality. That is pure Existence, apart from which nothing is. Pure Existence is the nature of Consciousness. To determine this for yourself, it is necessary to inquire, so that you realize what your true nature is. Turning within, you find that your Being is inextricable from Consciousness. The Consciousness should not be misinterpreted as a way of relating or a means of knowing. Rather, it is pure Knowledge itself, or the essence of the knower. Just as Existence is not to be mistaken for apparent forms, so Consciousness should not be mistaken as a means of knowing or as a state or condition of the mind.

If there is a beginning, something follows; if "I" arises, "this" follows. Before the beginning, there is just beginningless Being-Consciousness. During the beginning, there is just this very same Consciousness. After the beginning, there

is only the same Consciousness. This should be understood experientially. By examining your experience, you can know the Truth of which Ríbhú speaks. Before the beginning is Consciousness. This is self-evident, for there must be that by which the beginning is known. Before the beginning, there is Consciousness, and the beginning is also Consciousness, whether you are considering the beginning of your mind or the beginning of the universe. What change has occurred? If, before the beginning, there is only Consciousness and the beginning itself is only Consciousness, has there actually been a beginning? If the beginning is only Consciousness, whatever follows the beginning is also only Consciousness. Then, many are not many, and differences are not actually differences. All is the nature of Consciousness, which is our very Being.

The end also is only Consciousness. However destruction or death is conceived, what remains afterward is only the ever-existent Consciousness. Will Consciousness put an end to itself? Is that possible? The beginning and the end, birth and death, are mere concepts within the mind. What exists all through, before the beginning, as the beginning, after the beginning, before the end, as the end, and after the end is just the same, homogeneous, undifferentiated Consciousness. Before your mind arises, there is just Consciousness. After the mind dissolves, there is just Consciousness. There is nothing else to constitute the beginning of your mind but the same Consciousness. There is nothing else to bring it to an end but the very same Consciousness.

“If a thing exists, it is always full of Consciousness alone”. What is it that truly exists? It is not mixed with something else. There is only one Existence. Existence cannot mix with what is nonexistent. The Real and the unreal do not mix, for one is real and one just does not exist. What is real – what is existent – is of the nature of Consciousness. If you determine that your nature is this Existence-Consciousness, you see everything else, so-called, as the very same Existence-Consciousness. The idea of difference or otherness thereby vanishes. If a thing exists, it is always just full of Consciousness. The Consciousness is the Existence. Distinguish the Existence from the form of the appearance of the thing. Having determined what the Existence is, which is unformed Consciousness, then you can know the nature of that thing, which is through and through just the same unformed Consciousness. Then, form is really not a form and creation not really creation, just as birth is not really birth. All that is there is the ever-full, ever-the-same Existence or Consciousness. What do you know about anything? What is your experience of anything? All that you experience of a thing is actually contained in the knowing of it. What is the nature of that knowing?

To the degree the ego notion vanishes, the innate bliss of Consciousness shines. Find out by deep inquiry the nature of Consciousness. From where does the bliss come? Does it come from manifested things? From where does the experience of a thing come? Does it come from the thing or the knowledge of it? If it comes from the knowledge of it, what is essential in order to know Reality as it is, is to discern the essence of that knowledge. You know about the manifested life through your thoughts of it. What illumines those thoughts? Similarly, you know about manifestation at all through your senses, which appear in a given state of mind. That does not declare its own reality; you know it. If the nature of “you” that knows is discerned, you find it to be pure Being-Consciousness; that is also your Bliss.

The Consciousness that remains is alone real. “If a thing exists, it is always full of Consciousness.” A thing means anything, from a subtle thought to a gross object. If you have the idea of “This is real,” the idea itself is full of only Consciousness, apart from which it has no existence. Likewise is it if you entertain the thought, “This is not real.” Even the thought is only full of Consciousness, apart from which there is no existence whatsoever. The nature of this Consciousness is not formed into anything, a thought or an object of any kind. If a thing exists, it is always entirely full of Consciousness. If it does not exist there is no question about it. If it exists,

what actually is there? Consciousness so pervades it that there is nothing else left to be called "the pervaded."

Who is the one who perceives the rose or anything else? He is only Consciousness. It is only a wrong assumption that he exists as some other kind of knower, some other kind of entity, as "I," some kind of individual, an ego or a mind, etc. From that one come forth all the suppositions of differentiation. If, inquiring into his nature, he is found to be only, entirely, always just this Consciousness, why then, what is this talk of roses? The emphasis in the verse in saying, "If a thing exists," is not to give any emphasis to things actually, supposedly existing, but to point out that there is only Consciousness. Within the scope of Consciousness, which is infinite, there can be nothing else. If Consciousness is absolute, it is not in relation to anything else. The very idea of anything else is absent. So, one who knows himself, his own Consciousness, alone knows what all is, yet there is not a trace of all.

Before the beginning, or before birth, there is only Consciousness, and the beginning itself is made of only the same Consciousness. So, there is really no change at all. It is not really a beginning. What can be said about that which follows? Can belief be apart from the Consciousness that knows it? Consider all your beliefs. Don't they rest on the Consciousness which illumines them? Something is not defined by the forms of any experience. For that something, which is actually the invariable Existence, there is no such thing as an experiencer and his experience. There is just one invariable Existence. Consciousness should not be treated as if it were something objective to you. It is your own. It is you. You have no beginning and no end, and, if there appears to be a beginning, that is also only you. If there appears to be an end, that is also only you. You exist endlessly and without a beginning.

34. Rudra and the deities, also, are only Consciousness. Likewise, men and beasts and the gods and demons, Guru and sishya (disciple), and conscious knowledge are all only Consciousness, indeed.

If there is Brahma, he is only Consciousness. Vishnu is Consciousness, indeed. Rudra and the deities, also, are only Consciousness. Likewise, men and beasts and gods and demons, Guru and sishya, and conscious knowledge are all only Consciousness, indeed. Just as all things are actually only pure Consciousness and not anything else at all, likewise the powers or forces that seem to determine and move all things – from creation, to sustenance, to destruction and any other way conceived – all of that is only the very same Consciousness. It is not one thing operating on another; there is just Consciousness. It is divine. It is everything. It is the power you see manifesting as creation, sustenance, destruction and in other ways, yet it remains entirely transcendent of all these. In relation to all things, it has supreme power. When not considered in relation to things, but as itself, power becomes a meaningless word.

The "Guru and sishya, and conscious knowledge are only Consciousness, indeed". For us, Sadguru is Sri Ramana. The very same Self spoke to Nidagha in the form of Ribhu, ages ago. What is his nature? Certainly he is not a mere body, and, just as certainly, he transcends the forms and boundaries of the mind. Ribhu declares that the nature of the Guru is Consciousness, infinite, eternal, unmoving Consciousness and nothing less. The Guru reveals, by the light of his own Consciousness, the disciple's nature, and that true nature is the very same Consciousness. The revealing of that which constitutes the Knowledge expressed in the spiritual instruction is just that same Consciousness. This is true Knowledge. It is not merely knowledge as if it were something learned, a topic of study, but the Knowledge is of the nature of pure Consciousness. The Consciousness which you are is the Knowledge. The Consciousness is the real Self of the disciple, apart from which he has no other self. The elimination of the belief that he has

another kind of self is the purpose of the instruction. With the disappearance of that imagination, his real nature shines as identical with the Consciousness that is the nature of the Guru – the infinite, the eternal. Supreme Consciousness reveals to Consciousness the nature of the supreme Consciousness, with a Knowledge that is constituted of the very same Consciousness. No wonder it is unfailing.

To truly comprehend the depth of what Ribhu is imparting, inquire to know Consciousness. Cease to regard Consciousness in terms of sensations and thinking, just as you cease to misidentify Existence with a body or a mind. Cease to regard Consciousness as sensing or thinking, and, with none of the attributes of sensing and thinking superimposed upon the Consciousness, see what it is. Consciousness is the abiding Reality, without there being anything else whatsoever. That should be known as your Self; That should be known as the Reality.

35. The seer and the seen are only Consciousness, as are the knower and the knowable and what is fixed and what is not fixed. All things wondrous are only Consciousness. The body is only Consciousness, indeed.

“The seer and the seen”, “the knower and the knowable”, “are only Consciousness”. What makes up the subject? What makes up the object? Because the subject is most frequently misidentified with either the senses or the thinking mind, he mentions both the seer and the knower. What is the nature of the seer? What is the nature of the knower? Distinguish the knower from the known, so that you do not imagine any of the attributes or characteristics of the known as being part of the knower. What remains of the knower? Cease to superimpose any of the seen upon the seer, and what remains of the seer? Something unformed, unborn, imperishable, without boundary or limit, which never changes, and that is pure Consciousness. All of the known exists only for the knower; that is, the known has no existence independent of the knower. All that is seen does not exist apart from the seer. Whatever the nature of the knower is, whatever the nature of the seer is, so it is so for the known and the seen. The subject and the object, the apparent “I” and the apparent “this” are the ever-same, the ever undivided Consciousness.

“What is fixed” and what seems “not fixed”, what seems steady or firm and what seems malleable and changeable are “only Consciousness.” The things you think are steady are really just made of pure Consciousness, and everything that seems changing and unsteady is also the same Consciousness, whether you regard such things as in the world or as in your mind. Consciousness is beyond definition as a knower and the known, a seer and the seen, fixed or certain and something uncertain or malleable. If such appear, it is all that. In itself, it has none of that.

“All things wondrous are only Consciousness. The body is only Consciousness, indeed.” Consciousness is certainly not a body. You have only to inquire as to who you are to discern this. Yet the body has no existence apart from Consciousness. Can you see that your nature is Consciousness, not a mere body, and that everything that you previously regarded as a body and a world and such is only of the nature of Consciousness, without the Consciousness actually being transformed into anything else; there is just one existing Consciousness, and That is you?

36. A līṅga is also only Consciousness. So, also, are cause and effect. Form and formlessness are also only Consciousness; so, also, are papa (demerit) and punya (merit).

“A līṅga is also only Consciousness.” The līṅga represents Siva. The līṅga is only Consciousness. The symbol used for worship, considered embodying the very nature of Siva, is only Consciousness. The word līṅga also means a mark, a characteristic, or characteristic sign. It is that by which one specifically knows something, by its mark, by its characteristic. Whatever that is

– for whomever, wherever and whenever – it is only just Consciousness. The real characteristic of anything is just Consciousness. One who realizes this fact that Consciousness alone exists also understands the real significance of the Siva Lingam.

If a temple seems to be a special place, dive deep into what makes it special. If you see a lingam, the sign of Siva, dive deep into the significance of it. If you truly dive deep into such, you dissolve in such and you become absorbed in such. The root for the word lingam is said to be li, which means to rest upon or dissolve into. The more deeply you inquire to know your Self, the more these things are clearly understood. They do not become less significant by diving deeper; their true significance becomes clearer.

Consciousness should not be confused with mere relative perception, or relative awareness. If it comes and goes, such as coming while awake and disappearing while in deep sleep, it is not the Consciousness. Consciousness is perpetual, ever-uninterrupted, changeless, and measureless. It has no states, phases, or conditions but just is. It is without a subject and an object. The subject shines in its Light, the object shines in Its Light, but its Light is undiminished when the subject and object disappear. By subject and object are meant the sense of “I” in your experience, which you regard as your identity, and “this,” the entire objective sphere of your experience.

Though you can imagine a beginning for the body and an end for the body, you cannot actually imagine a beginning of your Existence and an end of your Existence. While you can imagine a beginning for your mind and even an end for your mind, it is not possible for anyone to imagine a beginning to his Existence and an end to his Existence. That Existence is Consciousness. Consistent inquiry puts an end to the repetitive ignorance, so that you cease to mix up the changeful, which is not you, with the changeless, which is you. If just that much is accomplished with certainty, everything is fine.

“So, also, are cause and effect;” that is, the cause is only Consciousness, the effect is only Consciousness. Regard the effect as everything manifested, everything perceived in your waking and dreaming states. Regard the cause as the basis, such as what is experienced in deep dreamless sleep. The cause and the effect are both only Consciousness. Regard God as the cause; regard the entire universe as the effect. The nature of God and the universe is just the ever-same, undivided Consciousness. If the cause is only Consciousness, it cannot cause anything different than itself. The effect is the cause appearing as something other. All that you experience at any time is just the Self.

“Form and formlessness are also only Consciousness;” so also are demerit and merit. It is quite evident that what is formless is of the nature of Consciousness. What form does Consciousness have? Inquire into your own Consciousness. What form does the Consciousness itself, not what appears as the known, have? Look, as it were, from this formless Consciousness, and then say what form is. Formlessness and form are both just Consciousness. When there is no form, Consciousness exists. When you seem to be in the midst of experiencing or perceiving a form, in actuality there is only Consciousness and no second thing. The Consciousness is untransformed; immutability is its nature. Whether imagined as a form or experienced as formless, the Consciousness is, and nothing else is.

Merit and demerit, of what are they made? Where are they stored? Obviously, it is wise for the aspirant to do that which is meritorious and stay clear of demerit. But where do these actually exist? Of what are they made? They appear to be stored in the mind. Of what is the mind made? One who knows Consciousness as it is and realizes it to be himself is entirely beyond the scope of merit and demerit. He is bodiless, action-less, and mind-transcendent. This is great perfection that nothing can stain or flaw and nothing can improve.

37. Duality and Nonduality are also only Consciousness; so, also, are the Veda-s and Vedanta. The directions and the directionless are also only Consciousness; so, also, are the guardians of the directions.

When you think you perceive duality, what actually is there? The perception is not apart from the perceiver. Though the perception can appear as one of duality, the perceiver remains only one. Since the perception has no existence apart from the perceiver, that also is only one. No matter how multiple the appearance may appear to be, the existence of that is only one. If the appearance disappears, the same existence still is. This Existence is Consciousness, whether you misperceive it as duality or recognize it as nonduality, it is still only one undivided Consciousness. There is no secondary existence and no other type of consciousness. If we say nonduality is only Consciousness, then what the duality is made of is only the same Consciousness. Then, duality is not really duality; only one Consciousness is. Its nonduality transcends the idea of such.

“The Veda-s and” the “Vedanta”: the Knowledge expressed in them, preserved in them, and revealed in them is only the same Consciousness; Consciousness is that Knowledge. If we think of the Vedas as scriptural works and the Vedanta as a set of teachings contained in the Upanishads, that also is only Consciousness, for there is nothing in this entire world that is other than Consciousness.

“The directions and the directionless are also only Consciousness.” All of space is only Consciousness, and the location of Consciousness is everywhere. If you abandon the idea of space and location due to transcendence of the body, there is still just Consciousness, location-less or directionless Consciousness. It pervades all space, yet it is space-less. In the same way, it pervades all time, yet it is entirely timeless. It pervades the universe, though it is world-less. It is the nature of you, though it is entirely “I”-less. What Ríbhú reveals to Nídagha is the Truth. It is eternal Truth. This eternal Truth should realize itself within you.

Om Namah Sívaya

(Silence)

Om Shantí Shantí Shantí Om ॐ



॥ श्री ऋभु आरति ॥
॥ śrī ṛbhu ārati ॥

जय देव जय देव
ऋभु-ऋषि-नाथ सच्चिन्मय-रूप
शिव-ज्ञान-बोधक सद्गुरु-नथ
जय देव जय देव

(जय देव जय देव...)

jaya deva jaya deva
ṛbhu-ṛṣi-nātha saccinmaya-rūpa
śiva-jñāna-bodhaka sadguru-natha
jaya deva jaya deva (jaya deva jaya deva...)

Victory O God! Victory O God!
Ribhu, Lord among Rishis, of the nature full of Existence-
Consciousness,
The one causing to know the Knowledge of Siva, the true Guru Lord,
Victory O God! Victory O God!

भस्मरुद्राक्षैः भूषित नाथ
भस्मीकृतवासनाविद्या चाशेष
शिवकीर्तनशिवचिन्तनशिवध्याननिरत
संसारसागरतारकनाथ
जय देव जय देव (जय देव जय देव...)

bhasma-rudrākṣaiḥ bhūṣita nātha
bhasmīkṛta-vāsanāvidyā cāśeṣa
śiva-kīrtana-śiva-cintana-śiva-dhyāna-nirata
saṁsāra-sāgara-tāraka-nātha
jaya deva jaya deva (jaya deva jaya deva...)

O Lord decked with holy ash and rudrakshas,
With vasanas (tendencies) and ignorance reduced to ashes
without remainder,
Engaged in praising Siva, thinking about Siva, and meditating
upon Siva,
O Lord who helps to cross the ocean of samsara,
Victory O God! Victory O God!

विधिमानसपुत्र विदेहमुक्त
विधिदैवयत्नेभ्योविदूरचित्त
कैलासनाथात्कैवल्यविद्यां
कैलासशिखरे करप्राप्तनाथ

जय देव जय देव

(जय देव जय देव...)

vidhi-mānasa-putra videha-mukta
vidhi-daiva-yatnebhya-vidūra-citta
kailāsa-nāthāt-kaivalya-vidyām
kailāsa-śikhare kara-prāpta-nātha
jaya deva jaya deva (jaya deva jaya deva...)

The mind-born son of Brahma, the one liberated out of the body,
Whose mind is far away from injunction, divine will, effort [and such],
O Lord who obtained the Knowledge on identification with the Supreme
From the Lord of Kailasa on top of mount Kailasa,
Victory O God! Victory O God!

केदारशैले पुण्यप्रदेशे
यदा निदाघादिकृषिभिरीडितः
लोकहितार्थं परमरहस्यं
शिवस्वरूपं व्याकृतनाथ
जय देव जय देव

(जय देव जय देव...)

kedāra-śaile puṇya-pradeśe
yadā nidāghādi-ṛṣibhir-īḍitaḥ
loka-hitārthaṁ parama-rahasyaṁ
śiva-svarūpaṁ vyākṛta-nātha
jaya deva jaya deva (jaya deva jaya deva...)

On mount Kedar, the holy place,
When requested by Nidagha and such sages,
O Lord who expounded the nature of Siva,
The Supreme secret, for the benefit of the world,
Victory O God! Victory O God!

ब्रह्मैव सत्यं ब्रह्मैव नित्यम्
ब्रह्मैव सर्वं ब्रह्मैव शिवः
नामानि रूपाणि सर्वाण्यशेषं
नास्तीति तत्त्वबोधकदीप
जय देव जय देव (जय देव जय देव...)

brahmaiva satyaṁ brahmaiva nityam
brahmaiva sarvaṁ brahmaiva śivaḥ
nāmāni rūpāṇi sarvāṇy-aśeṣaṁ
nāstīti tattva-bodhaka-dīpa
jaya deva jaya deva (jaya deva jaya deva...)

O Light who teaches the truth,
“Brahman is Reality, Brahman is eternal,
Brahman is all, Brahman is Siva,
All names and forms without remainder do not exist,”
Victory O God! Victory O God!

– by Ganesh Sadasivan

Siva's Cosmic Dance



CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS REFLECTIONS

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.)*



23. Añcitam

When one becomes curious about one's identity within and realizes that the Self alone exists, the Self manifests in everything around one, leaving one agape in Bliss.



54. Uromanḍalam

As inquiry progresses, one's bhakti towards the Guru or God blossoms.



41. Daṇḍakarecitam

The shield of dispassion for worldly pleasures protects one from the attacks of samsara.



67. Vivartitakam

Isvara, in his ocean of compassion, takes the form of a Guru and comes down to Earth to rescue the devotee from the hell of worldly existence.



80. Mayūralalitām

An enlightened being radiates bliss like a peacock with its feathers completely opened.

where one's mind revels (in the thought of siva) irrespective of restrictions of time, place or location, there he will attain by sheer contemplation union with siva by becoming one with siva himself. (ch. 1, v. 30)

the self, which is unsullied by blemish, the very embodiment of existence-consciousness-bliss, and all perfection, is neither born nor dies nor partakes of sorrow. (ch. 2, v. 6)

just as a pot filled with sea-water immersed in the sea carries only the water from the same sea (looking as though it were different), so also the intelligent soul from the birthless brahman. (ch. 10, v. 59)

– Siva Gita, Trans. by Dr. P.K. Sundaram, The Centenarian Trust, Chennai

SAT Retreats 2022

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 Sri Sankara (Adi Sankara), such as those contained in **Svatmanirupanam** and **Advaita Prakarana Manjari, Avadhuta Gita, Ash-tavakra 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 27-29 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. It is this Self-Inquiry that yields Self-Knowledge. The retreat provides much time for silent meditation in addition to the instruction.

The Self-Realization Retreat: August 26-28 This retreat focuses on Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings contained within **Atma Vidya, Ekatma 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 11-13 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:
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Or, visit the SAT website at: satramana.org › Events › Retreats

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Om Namah Sivaya



*Common be your prayer; Common be your end;
Common be your purpose; Common be your deliberation.
Common be your desires; Common be your hearts;
Common be your intentions; Perfect be the union amongst you.
- Rig Veda, X, 191-3, 4*

- Universal Prayers, by Swami Yatiswarananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1977