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Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya Om Namah Sivaya

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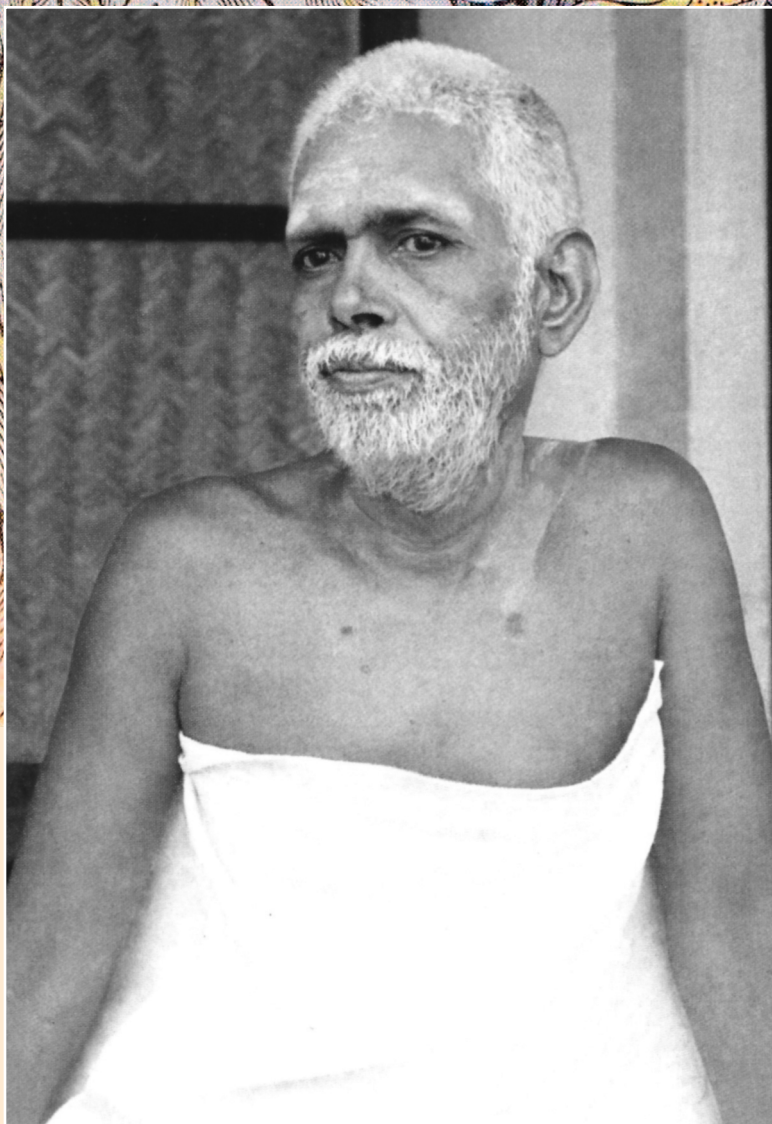
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The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

From
Letters from
Sri Ramanasramam



NAYANA AND THE RAMANA GITA

April 30, 1948

Yesterday afternoon at 2:30, there was a talk about the sloka, "Hridaya kuhara madhye". A devotee asked Bhagavan whether it was written while living at the Skandasram.

Bhagavan: "Yes, it was written while I was there. In 1915 I had to write it on account of Jagadiswara Sastri."

The Devotee: "Is that the reason? In the Sri Ramana Gita it is indicated that Bhagavan himself wrote it."

"No, No," said Bhagavan. "In 1915 Jagadisa was in Skandasram during Chaturmasya¹ and one day he wrote down on a piece of paper 'Hridaya kuhara madhye', held it in his hand and sat down. When I asked him what it was, he said that he wanted to write a sloka, but when he actually began it, only that much he could write. And when I asked him to write the rest, he said he was unable to do so however much he tried. After a time, he went out somewhere, leaving the paper under my seat. Before his return, I completed the sloka, wrote underneath it the word 'Jagadisa' and showed it to him as soon as he returned. He asked me why I had put his name to it. I said that it was because Jagadisa had begun it. He said that if that were so, he should have the paper for himself, and took it away from me and carefully kept it with him. He was very young at that time.

"Some time afterwards, I wrote down that same sloka. I was sitting on a big stone slab near the Ashram and all gathered round me and wanted me to tell them the meaning of the sloka. I acquiesced and explained it to them for some two or three hours. Taking advantage of this, Jagadisa recently wrote a long commentary on it in the same style as had been done on a sloka

of Sankara's. The manuscript has apparently been lost somewhere. When Nayana² wrote the Ramana Gita, he took this sloka as the opening sloka for the second chapter. That is the whole story. I have not written anything unless for a good reason."

"Did you write this sloka at about the same time as Nayana wrote the Ramana Gita?" asked someone.

"No," said Bhagavan, "it was some time later; he wrote in July 1917. But there is an interesting thing about it. In 1913, he asked me some questions and learnt something. When what he had learnt became fully implanted in his mind, he used, whenever he gave a lecture, to recite a sloka extempore and say that it was from chapter so and so, sloka number so and so, in the Ramana Gita. And that was long before he began to write the Ramana Gita. When he bluffed thus, no one dared to call his bluff, for he was a powerful personality, full of resourcefulness. Reciting thus from time to time, he finally wrote the Ramana Gita."

Someone asked, "Had anybody asked where the Ramana Gita was, what would he have done?"

Bhagavan laughed: "Who had the courage to challenge him like that? That was his strong point. Even after writing the Ramana Gita, do you know what he used to do? He used to quote some slokas which were not in the Gita and cite them as examples. If any one had the courage to say that they were not in the printed book, he would say that they were in the Maha Ramana Gita, an enlarged version of the original. He had planned to write that also, but was finally unable to do so. He used to say that he would write a commentary on the "Arunachala Pancharatna", and thereby show off all his knowledge, but that too was never done."

"It seems that Nayana once spoke in the same way on the 'Saiva Siddhanta'," said another devotee.

"Yes," answered Bhagavan. "That was in the early days of his coming here. At that time, he knew nothing of Saiva Siddhanta. The Association of Saiva Siddhantis decided to hold their conference in this place and invited Nayana to preside over it. They also published that he, being a great pandit, would speak at length and authoritatively on Saiva Siddhanta. He was informed of the exact date only four or five days before the conference. On the very morning of the conference he came to me and said, 'These people have asked me to attend Saiva Sabha and speak, but I do not know what that Siddhanta is and what really is its nature.' I thereupon took out a Tamil book, the Siva Jnana Bodha, selected twelve aphorisms from it, explained their purport and then briefly told him the essence of that Siddhanta. That was enough. Being very intelligent he grasped the fundamentals in no time and went to the conference. Able to compose slokas extempore, he recited them with great confidence and then lectured in Tamil so authoritatively that everyone present was surprised at the profundity of his thought and erudition. When Nayana returned from the Conference he said, 'It was not out of my knowledge or capacity that I spoke today. It was all due to Bhagavan's grace. The Saiva Siddhanta which

I have never read appeared to me as though I had had it in my mind all these years'. Such was his intellectual power."

Said one devotee: "It seems that even for the Umasahasram he did not get ready until the evening before the day fixed for its reading."

Bhagavan replied, "Yes. Invitations had been sent out to several people saying that the Umasahasram would be read out at the Apeetha Temple on a certain day, and so many people came even the day before. It was to be read the following morning, and still 300 slokas had to be written. Nayana came to me and said, 'These 300 slokas have to be written before daybreak. How can it be done?' 'Why worry?' I said. 'It will be all right if we sit up after food.' 'Then you must come there,' he

said. All this happened when I was still living on the hill. As desired, I went to the Mango Cave and sat down in a corner, keeping my eyes open all the time. Nayana sat down opposite me, kept four disciples by his side to write and, giving them extempore, each a part of a sloka, finished all 300 slokas by midnight.”

The devotee said, “Is it a fact that Bhagavan kept intently looking on until all 300 slokas were finished, and as soon as they were done, sat up and said, ‘Have you taken down all that I said?’ ”

Bhagavan nodded: “Yes, it was so. I felt that I had dictated all those slokas.”

The devotee further asked, “Is it also a fact that Nayana changed the other slokas several times but never touched even one of the 300 slokas?”

Bhagavan nodded his head in assent and was once more silent.

¹ The Chaturmasya period begins in the month of Asadha (June- July) from the day of Ekadasi called Sayana-ekadasi, in the fortnight of the waxing moon. The period ends in the month of Kartika (October-November) on the Ekadasi day known as Utthana-ekadasi, in the fortnight of the waxing moon. This four-month period is known as Chaturmasya. During the four-month period of Chaturmasya one should practice giving up all food intended for sense enjoyment.

² Kavyakantha Ganapathi Sastri who used to be addressed and referred to as ‘Nayana’.

Satsang with Nome

Existence of the Self
Satsang, Oct. 9, 2022

Om Om Om
(Silence)

You exist. You are existence. The Self is existence without beginning or end. It is existence, eternal and infinite. The Self is changeless existence underlying all changes and never modified. The Self is indivisible existence without parts and all-pervading. It is naturally endowed with an innate knowledge of itself. Existence knows itself, not as something other, but as itself.

You are existence without beginning or end. How this is so remains incomprehensible as long as you misidentify yourself as a body and as a limited individual entity or ego. Abandon the misidentification with the body, cease to assume your individuality, or ego, and the knowledge of the Self is found to be quite natural.

As a body you cannot be infinite and eternal. As bodiless Being-Consciousness-Bliss you cannot not be eternal and infinite. The idea that you are a limited, bound individual is mere imagination. Such imagination seems to be true or real only until it is examined. Clear inquiry to know the Self puts an end to such imagination, such ignorance.

It is only the imaginary, bound individual who seems to not know the Self. The imaginary bound individual is unreal and has no capacity to know the Self at all. The Self alone knows the Self. Existence is self-luminous. Brahman alone comprehends Brahman.

Are you a body? Find out. Are you the supposed individual? Find out. Both with the appear-



ance and disappearance of a body, you exist. That is to say, existence exists. The assumption of individuality depends entirely upon existence, but existence does not depend on it. The real does not depend on the unreal. For truly, the unreal has no existence. Ignorance is for the one who is ignorant. An inquiry to know the nature of the ignorant one will destroy all ignorance.

Don't you always know that you exist? Then, you cannot truly be ignorant; nor can you be a separate existence apart from the existence of the Self. The Self is Brahman alone, and you are That.

What have you been supposing yourself to be? Is it true?

Existence without beginning or end. Repose in the Knowledge of the Self. In this is found immortal peace

Questioner: When you asked the question, "what are you supposing yourself to be?" the observation reveals that the supposition is always with the external, the identification with thoughts,

emotions, the superimposition of I-ness on the things that are observed. Even though one hears the instruction that it is superimposition and misidentification and that thoughts are not real, thoughts are not self-aware, one thought does not know the other, there is the attachment to things. There is a force of habit that makes the mind think that happiness is in the external. You have been very clear that the inwardness of mind starts when one knows that the source of happiness is within. The detachment, the vairagya, of the mind should be such that it does not give reality to the deep emotions. The emotion seems real; for example, the emotion of fear seems real and animate, but all of that is coming from me. The source of happiness seems to be the key. One has to realize more than as just an intellectual conviction that within is the source of happiness. That identification of the source of happiness is still not there for me.

Nome: You are correct. If one knows the source and nature of happiness, he is naturally completely detached from all unreal things. The thoughts now seem as if solid or endowed with power. From where do they get their power? They seem real, but real for whom? Unless you know the source of happiness through and through, you are not thoroughly detached. Without detachment, wisdom does not seem to be steady. Where is the confusion regarding happiness?

Q: It is not felt as innate.

N: Have you ever experienced happiness outwardly? Whenever you have felt happiness, to whatever degree, it has been the shining forth of your own nature. It is only delusion to think this thing has given you your happiness. How do you experience happiness? Do you sense it with your eyes and ears? It is not like that. Always, it wells up from within. The source and nature of happiness are the same.

Q: How can that be experienced beyond just the thought of it? The entanglement of this notion of happiness being outside of oneself seems deep rooted.

N: It is just a thought that happiness is outside. It does not correspond to your experience. If you discern that, you will remain steady in the knowledge of the source of happiness. That happiness is within is not a thought, and it is your actual experience. What object can bring happiness to you? It is like asking what object can bring existence to you. It is unrelated.

The bundle of thoughts is not a reality. Just because something is thought, does not mean it is real. If you know that thoughts do not tell you what is real, true knowledge opens for you.

What is it that you want more than anything?

Q: Peace and happiness.

N: Will peace and happiness come externally? Peace and happiness are of the Self. The Self is already there—Existence without beginning or end.

Q: It seems that one is caught in the flood of maya, as in the story in which Krishna tells Narada about what maya is.

N: Like Narada, you must wake up. Discriminate what is real and what is merely maya or illusion.

Another Q: I was listening to Chapter 8 of Ribhu Gita. In that, you had the listener contemplate on “no sensation.” I don’t think I ever did that before and really having no sensation, no thought and feelings, It was so amazing. We talk about thoughts as an illusion, and thoughts create feelings. But I never thought about thought creating sensations. Then, you said that you are always a videhamukta, whether you have a body or not, forever. I think it was the first time that I realized that the Self could be a joyful, conscious being forever.

N: Jivanmukti is liberation in life. Videhamukti is liberation that is disembodied or death. What is common between them? Mukti. For the mukta, one who is liberated, there is no distinction of life and death. There is just Existence, beginningless and endless. That is perfectly full, is never diminished, and is never destroyed. It is utterly tran-

scendent of thoughts, feelings, and such. There never was a time when you did not exist. There never will be a time when you cease to exist. The perfection is ever-existent.

Another Q: If I am hungry, I eat food. The stomach feels better, but it does not deliver happiness. I come here and hear this teaching, which drives my mind inward. I endeavor to inquire. The attempt to inquire does feel different. I have doubts, thinking that I cannot realize the truth, this is who I am, the mind is all powerful etc.

N: Is any of that true?

Q: Believing in them is not fun.

N: If they were true, you would be satisfied with them, because it is your nature to gravitate to what is real.

Q: They are definitely not happiness.

N: What you regard as happiness, what you regard as identity, and what you regard as reality are all inextricably woven together. They are actually the same thing. Your view regarding happiness is dependent on your view of yourself. Your view of yourself also determines your view of what is real. So, what are you?

Q: The ideas I have are ridiculous.

N: Knowing that, you won't harbor them anymore. It is only when you regard the ridiculous as being worthwhile that you have trouble with it. When you no longer regard the ridiculous as credible, it is no longer there.

Q: I have been endeavoring to inquire instead of believing in those thoughts.

N: The determination to inquire is the beginning of the inquiry. Your determination to set yourself free is the dawning of freedom. Examining your thoughts, you can discern that they are objective to you, you are aware of them. Who you are is nonobjective.

Q: I am trying to realize what you just said. It is very helpful. I have been endeavoring to not dwell in the content of the thought, but to inquire can thought be me.

N: Your determination to inquire is the guarantee that your efforts are blessed with success.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti



Correspondence with Nome



[A reply to a question regarding a passage in Yoga Vasishtha]

February 9, 2024

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. "Work" may be understood as action. For whom is action and for whom is knowledge? Unless this is inquired into and realized, the nature of such may seem perplexing. The ideas of "I do" and "I think"

should be abandoned. The knowledge of the Self that remains, self-luminous and self-evident, leads to liberation. The ignorance regarding the Self can be destroyed by knowledge alone, and this reveals liberation, which in truth is the only real state. Action cannot do so for it is not opposed to ignorance.

The Yoga Vasishtha contains many explanations to meet the various needs of many aspirants. So, it is said that activity without knowledge is just the continuation of samsara, and the body is the instrument for doing so. This cannot result in liberation. It

is also said that contemplation or meditation without manifesting it in this life does not yield the necessary nonattachment, and the mind is the instrument for doing so. The combination of knowledge and detachment is the right approach, the union of jnana and vairagya.

If one is reading Adi Sankara's bhashyas (commentaries), the Upanishads, etc. action (karma) should be understood as also pertaining to various rituals and their place in the purification of the mind in contrast to the Knowledge of Brahman; Knowledge alone is Liberation, and action is incapable of revealing that Self-knowledge. It is transcendent of the body and the mind, action and thought.

I hope that this helps.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A reply to a question regarding desire]

February 29, 2024

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The nature of the one who desires Self-Realization is itself the Reality. How can one not know the Self when one is the Self? Being and Knowledge are one and indivisible.

All effort applied in Self-inquiry is worthwhile. None of it is in vain. Persevere.

In all desires, there is one thing desired. Knowledge of the nature and source of happiness yields the necessary detachment and dissolution of desire.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker was considering cancelling his plans to attend a retreat at the SAT temple. This is the reply to his email.]

March 14, 2024

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. We, the Self, are never separate. The forms of communication, such as speaking, writing, and silence, may change at different times, but the Self, of the nature of indivisible Being, is ever full and ever the same. You say the retreat is only a few days in length, yet the Knowledge that is the content of it is eternal. Even if you think it is only for a few days, would it not be wise to attend for the days that you can? Abidance in the Self dissolves mental modes, such as loneliness, and yields great peace. Even if now you still retain the mode of loneliness, would it be wiser to immerse yourself in the joy of spiritual company with those at the temple? You can reflect on these points and then decide. In the finality, you will find that the one eternal Self exists, and thus you will happily dwell in the Knowledge of the Self.

If you decide to attend, perhaps with some perseverance, you will find a way to arrange the transportation needed. Thank you for the donation for the sacred temple.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker was called upon to be a witness in a legal dispute in which the plaintiff was lying and making false statements about her. She wanted to know how to not suffer with fear and stress regarding the situation. This is the response.]

March 13, 2024

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. It is due to their own ignorance and unhappiness that some people engage in lies about others, whether such is done by themselves or through others.

Nonattachment yields the desired inner strength, equanimity, and fearlessness. Knowing that happiness is within you, you can remain serenely detached from all things, objects, situations, etc. What does it matter if someone utters falsehoods about you if he cannot steal your happiness? What does it matter if someone lies about you to tarnish your name or reputation if you know what is true, as God knows the truth? Your true nature is the perfect Self. Furthermore, this world and what appears to occur in it are merely a transient dream. Knowing this to be so, free from fear, remain peacefully detached. There is no cause for sadness in these illusory events. Do what is necessary without the concept of being the performer

of action. As for one who ignorantly pursues his aims and perpetrates wrongdoing, "What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world but lose his soul?" As for one who wisely seeks the Realization of the Self, she becomes immortal; devoted, she becomes what she is.

Reflecting and meditating on what is mentioned above, may you abide in the Knowledge of the Self, the Supreme Brahman, the one without a second, in unmoving serenity.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome



The Ribhu Gita



Chapter 4, Verses 31-34
With Commentary by Nome from a
Boundless Wisdom Event held on
November 4, 2011 at the SAT Temple

Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om
Om Namah Sivaya.

31. I am the nature of the void and the absence of the void. I am the auspicious. I am the mind. I am without equality or inequality. I am, and I am not of the nature of the trivial.

You exist; Existence exists. Even if there would be nothing objective in your experience, an experience of a void, there is still the existence of the one who knows the void, who knows the nothing. That very One is the existence of the void, of the nothing. If nothing exists, there still is the existence, so that you can say that nothing exists. There is no separation from Existence at any time. You exist as only Existence itself. This Existence, pure, undifferentiated,

which can be described neither as something nor as nothing, utterly nonobjective, is the real nature of the Self, the true meaning of the term "I." "I am the nature of the void;" I am the very Existence of the void. The "nature" may be translated as "the power over," so, I am the power over the void. Or, it may mean "dwelling," so I am the dwelling, the place, where the void appears. Or, it may mean the "origin," so I am the origin of the void. The absence of the void. Within the context of objective vision, there can be something, or there can be nothing. You see this in the display of the three states. In waking and dream, there appears to be something, something is experienced. In deep dreamless sleep, there is nothing, nothing is experienced. The Existence that transcends both something and nothing is alone the nature of that something and that nothing, for Existence is indivisible. It is this Existence, which is the nature of everything and nothing, that is the power of all, for what could be more powerful than Existence itself? Where do something and nothing appear? Only in the dwelling of this unformed Existence, this absolute nature. This same absolute Existence may be regarded as the origin. It is the origin of nothing; it is the origin of something. It just is, the very nature of existence. Tracing this existence, which is your own true Self, the only Existence that you are, the only Existence that there actually is, go beyond something, go beyond the void or nothing, and go beyond even the absence of such. If this is inconceivable, the inconceivable is the nature of your Existence.

"I am the auspicious." The eternal, indestructible Existence is simultaneously Bliss. What could possibly be more divine? What could possibly be more fortunate than realizing it? When you say something is auspicious, it means it heralds in or brings that which is good. What is the highest good? The Self is the most auspicious. Anything else that appears as auspicious, be it a situation, a time, a power, a divinity, and so forth and so on, borrows its auspiciousness from that which is supremely auspicious, the supreme good. By deep inquiry, this should be known as "I." When this is realized, you no longer seek for what is auspicious or happiness, for you have become this auspiciousness yourself, and you are the happiness. Within undifferentiated Existence, which is simultaneously Bliss, which is also pure Consciousness without differences, appears everything. Within appears all of "this."

All of this is perceived only when the mind appears. Of what can the mind be made? It can only be the very same "I," for there is nothing but Existence of which it can be composed. "I am the mind." The Self is not a mind, but, if you consider a mind to exist, it is, through and through, only this very same Existence or pure Consciousness. There is neither a world nor a mind apart. Reality is undivided.

"I am without equality or inequality." If there are two things - two objects, two thoughts, a mind and objects, two beings, a self and a mind, a higher self and a lower self, --- if there are two of anything - there can exist a state of equality or inequality. They are considered to be two things the same or two things different. Where there is only one undifferentiated Existence, how can one speak of sameness or difference? Where there are not two, there cannot be equality; no such measurement can be made. Certainly, there cannot be inequality either. The Existence that you are is so absolutely One that the idea of oneness does not apply. It is so absolutely One that there is nothing to which to compare it. Definition-less Existence should be known as your identity.

"I am, and I am not of the nature of the trivial" Rest there, not in the words "I am" or the thought "I am," but what those words or thoughts signify. The meaning of "I am" - the nonobjective, difference-less Existence - identify yourself only as That and nothing else whatsoever. Then, you abide in your true, blissful state. What is significant and important, and what is trivial? The mind and all of its thoughts are quite trivial. You are of a nature transcendent of all that. Sensations and the body, with their pleasures and pains, are entirely trivial. Your nature transcends that. Indeed, all the things of the world are quite trivial, and you are quite beyond such. If something is truly important, it should be infinite and eternal.

What is truly important to you, even inherently so? It is Existence; your own Existence which is the source of all your happiness. It is nothing small, nothing trivial. Distinguish between the trivial and what is very dear to you. That which is the dearest of the dear is "I am." It is Being that is supremely holy. One who abides in Being, as Being, abides in Truth. This temple is space-like; it has no boundary. Yet, by Bhagavan's grace we have this manifested temple, and it is of such a nature that the distinction between the unmanifested and the manifested dissolves.

32. I am ever devoid of all. I am the amiable. I ever am. I am devoid of numbers like one; nor have I a number like two or a second. I am not.

"I am ever devoid of all." What appears as all comes and goes. What comes and goes is not the Reality. That which knows the coming and going is devoid of coming and going. Similarly, that which knows all is devoid of all. In your nature as unqualified Existence, there is no such thing as all or pieces within all. When the Self is mistaken to be the individual, one who can become a perceiver, all appear, all are perceived. When the perceiver subsides, where else can he subside except into the unmodified Existence? When the perceiver subsides, likewise the perceptions subside. With the rise of "I," all appear. With the disappearance of "I," all disappear. The Reality has no such appearance and disappearance. Identify yourself as Reality, by a profound inquiry to know who you are. Thus inquiring, you realize yourself to be unchangeable Existence. In that, no such thing as all arises. In that, no such thing as all appears and, similarly, no such thing as all disappears. The Existence that you are is forever unmodified; so, I am ever devoid of all.

"I am the amiable". The word for amiable means endowed with satva. It may also mean genuine or natural. Amiable is good, too; we find that agreeable. (laughter) What is completely amiable to you? What is it that is completely agreeable for you? It is not a thing; It is your Self. What is truly satva in nature? Satva may be interpreted as equality with the attributes of harmony, luminosity, etc. It may be understood to be pertaining to what is true. So, I am the satva; I am my Self, that which pertains to the Truth. By genuine is meant that which is solidly real. What is that? It is only our own Being. What could be more natural than your own Existence? Know your own Existence devoid of all superimposed attributes.

"I ever am". Discriminate, using this one sentence, "I ever am." That which you are not, is not ever. In your experience, what is ever, continuously existing without a break, without a beginning and thus without an end? Find that within yourself and know that to be the significance of "I am." I ever am. Can that be the body? Can that be anything sensed? Can that be anything conceived? Yet, there is Existence. You cannot remember a time when it was not; you cannot foresee or imagine a time when it will cease. Not for a moment does it pause. Just nonobjective, unformed Existence is the "I" in the declaration, "I ever am". Know that to be yourself, and be free of any tendency to misidentify with whatever is unreal and trivial.

"I am devoid of numbers like one; nor have I a number like two or a second." The number two is not. Duality is not. Unity is not; one thing and two things - all that is in the imagination. How can the absolute Existence be counted as one thing, or as two things, or anything more? You are not a thing; you are not a duality of things. In the realization of Truth, all that can be counted does not count; that which cannot be counted, counts.

The final phrase in Verse 32 is simply, "I am not". The individual is not; that is the simple fact. There is One - absolutely One that exists; it is indescribable. Aham, "I," is not. Anything other than "I" or based on "I" is also not. When all trace of "I" is gone, what remains? Find this out by profound inquiry, "Who am I?" The deeper the inquiry, the less there is a trace of the "I." When the "I" is utterly not, what remains alone existing is truly "I." This is the case even now; turn within and realize it. Then, your freedom, happiness, and peace will be boundless.

33. I am without differences of reality and unreality. I am without volition. I am without the difference of multiple selves. What is nonexistent in the least, that am I.

“I am without differences of reality and unreality.” To know the Truth, one is advised to discriminate between what is real and what is unreal. Discriminating thus, one finds the Reality is and the unreality is not. For one who has found Reality, who is the Reality itself, there is no unreality to be discerned. As for the unreality, it has no capacity to discern. Thus, the Reality alone ever is and the term “unreal” applies to nothing. Where there is only the Reality and no possibility of the unreal, for Existence is absolutely One, how could there be the differences between reality and unreality? Differences appear as long as there is a choice, as long as there are two. Where there is one absolute Existence, which alone is to be regarded as Reality, there can be no differences, even to the extent of discriminating the Real from the unreal. The instruction to discriminate is expedient only for the purpose of bringing about this Knowledge.

“I am without volition”. Sankalpa means volition; it means any fixed idea, any set concept. I am without sankalpa. What idea do you have? What idea really belongs to the “I”? What you truly have, you must have always; what idea do you have always? If we interpret sankalpa to mean volition, what volition do you have? As the Self, you neither desire anything, nor are you in need of anything. As an unreal ego, what could the will of such an ego amount to? Without ego is to be without volition. Without ego is to be without a fixed concept or a set idea.

“I am without the difference of multiple selves. What is nonexistent in the least, that am I”. Can there be a multiplicity of selves? Multiplicity refers only to that which is non-self. Trace your sense of identity; it is indivisible. No matter how many ideas appear, there is still only one of you, never a multiplicity. Even the ideas of a higher self and a lower self depend on things of the non-self being attributed to the Self. The Self is only One; In that, objects and a supposed subject for them are nonexistent. “I am without the difference of multiple selves, which does not exist in the least; that am I.”

Regarding yourself as having thoughts rather than being thoughts, is alright. Then, one must consider, “Am I a thinker?” When we cease to superimpose thought on pure Consciousness, even thinker-hood disappears. It is inapplicable, it is not true. If you are not a thinker, you cannot possess thoughts.

Multiplicity of selves does not exist. There is no individual to assume the attribute of being a thinker and to entangle himself in thought, superimposing the qualities of thought upon himself. The root that starts that, the seed, is missing. All there is, is the bare ground of pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. When you reap the harvest of a bare ground you have found that which is natural.

“I am without the difference of multiple selves, which does not exist in the least; that am I.” The idea that there is yourself distinct in any manner from the Self ought to be questioned. If you question, it, being unreal, will vanish. The nondual Self alone will remain.

34. I am not myself (aham: I am not I), nor am I another. I am without the body and such. I am without a refuge or a substratum. I am without support.

I am not ‘I’, or “I am not myself”: This is to be known in Self-Knowledge. Your Being is. I am, but not an individual. Non-individualized Existence is the Self; That is the Reality. Realization of it is Moksha, Liberation. “I am”, but I am not an “I.” If you think there is an “I,” if you feel that you are an individual, inquire. Inquire, “Who am I?” Where the “I” disappears, the real “I” remains, blissfully so.

“I am not myself; nor am I another.” Not being an “I,” how could I be anything else? I am not an individual, nor am I anything that can be regarded as “this.” What am I? inquire in this way.

“I am without the body and such”. “And such” refers to everything of a similar quality, such as the body, that is objective, changeful, subject to beginning and end. Ask yourself interiorly, “Am I the body?” “And such” includes the prana, the senses, the mind, the intellect; all these things. Can I be these? Inquire. All these things –“the body and such” – are objective, but you are not an object. All of them change, but you remain the same. All of them have a birth and a death. The truth is you are unborn and imperishable because you are not the body and such.

“I am without a refuge or a substratum.” If you are an individual living being or jīva, seek refuge. Find the refuge in the substratum of all, finding it and finding yourself to be that. All can seek refuge in the Supreme, but where does the refuge seek refuge? That which is the refuge has no need of a refuge. Everything rests upon the solid substrate of the Absolute. Upon what does the substrate rest? Being Reality, it does not rest upon anything. The substrate does not have a substrate. Inquire and devote yourself so that you find the refuge sought, the substrate upon which all are based, is the very nature of “I.”

“I am without support.” There is One that supports all, but does the support need a support? The support-less support of all is the real nature of “I.” Seek refuge in That, and you will realize that there is nothing from which to seek refuge; that is, there is no samsara. There is One that is the unmoving, unchangeable substrate. Inquire and devote yourself in such a manner that you find that the substrate actually alone exists and that there is nothing – absolutely nothing – superimposed upon I, nothing different from it. “I,” “this” and all else rest upon some support. Inquire and devote yourself in such a way that you are absorbed in the support, which requires nothing else to support it, and find that That alone exists. Om Namah Sivaya.

Om Namah Sivaya

(Silence)

Om Shantī Shantī Shantī Om ॐ





॥ श्री गणेशनीरजनस्तुतिः॥

॥ śrī gaṇeśa-nīrajana stutiḥ ॥

सर्वकारणं विघ्नवारणं गणनायकं नीरजनं
sarva-kāraṇaṃ vighna-vāraṇaṃ gaṇa-nāyakaṃ nīrajanam

The cause of all, the remover of obstacles,
The leader of the gana-s, this offering of light to you.

गिरिजासुतम् गुहसोदरं
वरसदीश्वरवल्लभं
करुणाकरम् गुणसागरं
गणनायकं नीरजनं

giriajā-sutam guha-sodaram
vara-sadīśvara-vallabham
karuṇā-karam guṇa-sāgaram
gaṇa-nāyakam nīrajanam

The son of Girija (Parvati), the brother of Guha (Subramanya),
The one very dear to the revered Sadisvara,
Who bestows compassion, the ocean of good qualities
The leader of the gana-s, this offering of light to you.

पूर्णमोदकसुखभक्षकं
पाशहस्तकं भक्तरक्षकं
अङ्कुशोद्धीतं सङ्गनाशकम्
गणनायकं नीरजनं

pūrṇa-modaka-sukha-bhakṣakam
pāśa-hastakam bhakta-rakṣakam
aṅkuśoddhītam saṅga-nāśakam
gaṇa-nāyakam nīrajanam

Who happily eats modaka with purna (rice dumpling with mixture
of coconut and jaggery as filling)
With a noose in hand, protecting his devotees
With a raised goad, destroying the worldly attachments
The leader of the gana-s, this offering of light to you.

मन्त्रबैजिकं ग्रन्थलेखकं
दुष्टवासनाग्रन्थिच्छेदनं
कष्टनाशनं शिष्टपालनं
गणनायकं नीरजनं

mantra-baijjikaṃ grantha-lekhakaṃ
duṣṭa-vāsanā-gran̥thi-chedanam
kaṣṭa-nāśanaṃ śiṣṭa-pālanam
gaṇa-nāyakaṃ nīrajanam

The source of mantra-s, the writer of scriptures,
Destroying the knot of wicked tendencies,
Destroying the difficulties, nourishing the wise,
The leader of the gana-s, this offering of light to you.

नयपूरितं सूक्ष्मदार्शिनं
सिद्धिसंभृतं सर्वसाधिणं
धृढज्ञानगेहनिवासिनं
गणनायकं नीरजनं

naya-pūritaṃ sūkṣma-dārśinaṃ
siddhi-sambhṛtaṃ sarva-sāṣiṇam
dhr̥dha-jñāna-geha-nivāsiṇam
gaṇa-nāyakaṃ nīrajanam

Full of wisdom, with sharp discernment,
In whom all accomplishments are present, the witness of all,
Seated in the abode of firm Knowledge,
The leader of the gana-s, this offering of light to you.

– 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.)



44. Latāvṛścikaṃ

The degree to which one has faith in the Guru and adheres to the instruction, is the degree to which suffering is destroyed.



70. Garuḍaplutaṃ

With the constant remembrance of the illusory nature of control and free-will, abide blissfully enslaved at the feet of the loving lord.



57. Aragalam

Thinking that he is the performer of actions, the fool endlessly traverses through the endless cycles of mental modes, when all the while, the happiness that he was searching for was ever existent as the Self.



87. Karihastaṃ

Oh Lord! Whose magnificence has consumed my mind! Upon seeing your form, I realize the true height of love and surrender. In the way that a child cannot bear to remain apart from its mother, how I can remain apart from you?

Nirguna Manasa Puja



**Worship of the
Attributeless One in the Mind
by
Adi Sankara**

The second edition of Nirguna Manasa Puja is now available at the bookstore.

Because of the generous donations given by devotees at SAT, renovation to the small blue house is in progress. Along with donations SAT's rentals are also an important contribution to supporting the temple.



SAT Retreats 2024

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. Retreats provide much time for silent meditation in addition to the instruction. 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, Ashtavakra Gita, Saddarshanam and an Inquiry into the Revelation of Truth and Oneself, The Essence of Spiritual Instruction, and The Quintessence of True Being*. Familiarizing yourself with or studying these books will enable you to obtain even more from the retreats, which are an experiential immersion in the essence of Advaita Vedanta.

Vegan meals are provided during the 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 24-26 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 Self-Realization Retreat: August 16-18 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 15-17 This retreat is focused on non-dual 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.

REGISTER ONLINE

<https://satramana.org/web/events/retreats/retreat-application-form/>
End of sign-up date is
one month prior to commencement of each retreat.