

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Om Namah Sivaya



Reflections ॐ SAT Temple ॐ April . May . June. 2025

Contents

Letters

From Sri

Ramanasramam: page 3

Satsang with Nome:
page 5

Ever Yours in Truth:
page 8

The Ribhu Gita: page 11

Jaya Ramaṇa Sadguru
Ramaṇa: page 17

Who Am I? The Nondual
Self Inquiry Retreat 2025:
page 20

Siva's Cosmic Dance (108
Karanas): page 27

Retreats at SAT in 2025:
page 30

Publisher: Society of Abidance in Truth (SAT
Temple), Editor: Sasvati Nome.

Contributors: Grant Summerville,
transcription of Ribhu Gita events; Sangeeta
Raman, transcription of Satsang events;
Raman Muthukrishnan, transcript of March
2025 retreat; Ganesh Sadasivan, Jaya
Ramana Satguru Ramana; Anandhi
Muthukumarasamy & Janane Sivakumar,
108 Karanas

1834 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA
Ph: 831.425.7287 email: sat@satramana.org,
www.SATRamana.org
REFLECTIONS
April, May, June 2025
Copyright 2025



Painting by
Anandhi

The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

from Letters From Sri Ramanasramam (1970 ed.)

WHERE IS THE SWAMI?

September 11, 1948

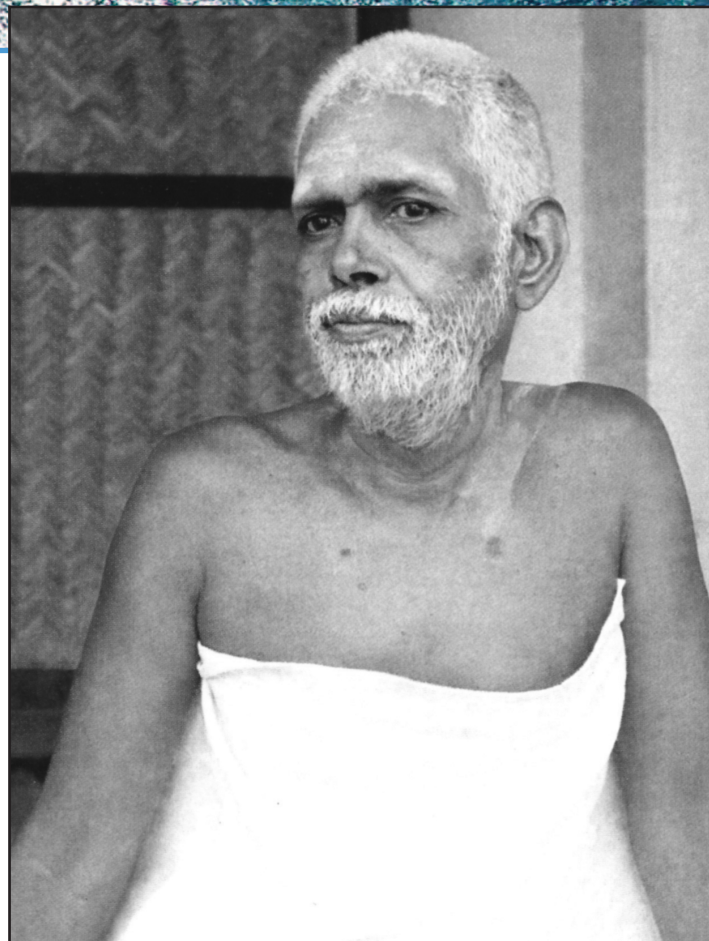
After Bhagavan told us yesterday that he does not now have that happiness which he enjoyed when he was sleeping on an earthen platform, some devotees went to Skadasramam after obtaining Bhagavan's permission and, on their way back, saw the Virupaksha Cave. On returning to the Ashram they asked Bhagavan if the earthen platform referred to yesterday was the same as that which is now in the verandah there, and whether it was a fact that Bhagavan himself constructed that platform.

Bhagavan: "Yes, that is a fact. We all thought that it would be convenient for visitors to sit on. So I built it with stones and mud. It was only some time later that it was cemented."

I said: "Is it a fact that while the platform was being constructed some stranger came and enquired of Bhagavan where the Swami was and Bhagavan sent him away saying that the Swami had gone somewhere?"

Bhagavan said, "How did you come to know of that?" and laughed. I replied that Echamma had told me about it. Thereupon Bhagavan related the incident to us as under:

"Yes. It is a fact. One morning I arranged the stones, prepared the mud and was building the platform. Some stranger came there and asked me 'Where is the Swami?' There was no one else besides myself. So I said, 'Swami has just gone out somewhere.' He again asked, 'When will he return?' I said, 'I don't know.' As he was afraid it might be a long time for the Swami to return, he began descending the hill when he met Echamma coming up, who asked him why he was going down. When he mentioned what had happened, she asked him to accompany her saying she would show him the Swami. Echamma came up, put down inside the cave the vessel containing the food she had brought with her, prostrated before me, rose and told the stranger, 'There he is. He is the Swami.' The man was surprised and, after prostrating before me, said to her, 'Is he the Swami? When I came here a little while ago, he was building the platform. Not knowing who he was, I asked him



“Where is the Swami?” and he said “The Swami has gone out somewhere.” I believed him and so started going back.’ Echamma thereupon began teasing me for misleading him. Then I said, ‘Oho! Then do you want me to tie a board round my neck saying I am the Swami?’”

Devotee: “It seems you misled people in the same way even after coming here?”

Bhagavan: “Yes. That is true. We did not have many buildings then. We had only this hall where we all are now sitting. Even this was originally constructed as a kitchen with a chimney. Our Shanmugam Pillai, father of Gopala Pillai, and several other devotees insisted on having a hall for Bhagavan to sit in, and said that the construction of a kitchen could wait. The chimney that had already been constructed was therefore dismantled and the building was converted into this hall. Between this hall and Mother’s temple there used to be a thatched shed for a kitchen and by its side near the black neem tree there used to be the store room. That also was a thatched shed. Daily, we used to get up early in the morning and cut vegetables. One day while I was thus cutting vegetables keeping the door of the store room open, and all the others had gone out on different errands, two or three people who were going round the hill came into the hall and, finding the couch empty, came round to the store room. They were people who frequently visited the Ashram. What has that got to do with it? My head was wholly covered with a bed-sheet and as I was cutting vegetables, my face was not visible. ‘Sir, Swami is not on the couch. Where is he?’ they asked me. I replied saying that he had just gone out and would be back in a little while. They thereupon went away without waiting as it would be too late for them to go round the hill. Some one here noticed that and asked me why I had misled them. ‘What else to do?’ I said. ‘Was I to tell them that I was the Swami?’ Such incidents happened quite a number of times.”

When I mentioned all this to a devotee, who has been in the Ashram from very early days, he said, “Not only that. You know there used to be a swami by name Dandapani. He was stout with a big paunch and with an ochre-coloured loin cloth. He had a stentorian voice. Bhagavan therefore used to say that it would be a good thing to keep him at the doorway during the Krithikai Festival of Lights so that people who came in crowds could take him to be the Swami, prostrate before him and go without troubling Bhagavan. Bhagavan has thus always been anxious to avoid publicity.”



Satsang with Nome

Who Are You?

January 7, 2024

Om Om Om
(Silence)

Nome: Your existence is changeless, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss. It is without beginning and without end. It is free of differentiation. Bodiless, it has neither birth nor death. It is indivisible. It is not individualized, and it is not embodied. Immutable, it is forever. It is self-luminous—that is, the Self knows itself as you know your existence. It has no qualities. Qualities pertain to objects. Attributeless, the Self is nonobjective.

To know it as it is, you must make your vision nonobjective, inquiring to know the Self. You are neither a perceived nor a conceived object, not a thing, not a thought.

Who does not know the Self? Brahman, is self-known—that is, it knows itself, and you are that Brahman. Is there another kind of Self? The Self is only one, always.

If you abandon the tendency to conceive of yourself as an embodied individual, the truth regarding the Self, that is, Brahman, is self-evident. Only the Self knows the Self. Another, not being the Self, cannot do so. Only that which is unalloyed Existence can know itself. Only Consciousness, which is self-luminous, can know itself.

Who are you? Beyond the perceptible. Beyond the conceivable. Such is the Self.

Questioner: The discourse was very helpful. You mentioned “changelessness,” but I am changing all the time. The senses are deteriorating. Eyesight is not very good. I keep asking for higher strength in my glasses, because I can’t see. So, I become frustrated from time to time. I was tasked with getting a little battery out of a plastic thing. I expected it to take ten seconds. I should have allocated five minutes to open it. Being frustrated is total body misidentification. I have expectations to function and do tasks. When those are not met, I become frustrated.

N: Doing has to do with the body. Are you the body? Frustration arises when you think your happiness is dependent. Can objects make you happy? Do circumstances determine your happiness or not? Does Brahman become frustrated? Do you regard yourself as something other? Otherness is dualism and a misconception.

Q: So, what would have been better was to inquire. To be able to inquire and to know that inquiry is necessary is a blessing.

N: If the Self is not known as it is, inquiry is necessary. Self-Knowledge is happiness. Existence is bliss. If the one who deludes himself, so that he thinks he is ignorant re-

garding this, inquires to know his own true nature, all otherness vanishes, illusion is gone, and, with it, the disappearance of the individual or ego.

Another Q: Thank you for the very inspiring discourse. It feels that what is conveyed is so deep. The words are understood, but the meaning is not comprehended, to the fullest depth because it’s still in the mode of conception and perception. What was said was very interesting that one is not a thing because it’s not perceived, nor a thought because it’s not conceived. When I hear the words, it feels that freedom is right there. It’s felt, but the weight of the mind is too heavy. To give up the tendency of conceiving oneself as an embodied being requires a knowledge deeper than just words, and that seems so difficult.

N: Yes. It requires depth. At what depth do you feel that you exist? Certainly, you do not depend on sense perceptions to know your existence. Similarly, thought is not required to know the Self. Listening, reflecting, deeply meditating upon the Truth, upon the knowledge of the Self—what in you resonates with this?

Q: That it is true.

N: Is listening the words or is listening something deeper? When you reflect upon the instruction, is it just a memory of words? Or is remembrance more a matter of abidance? Such is stated in the initial verse of Saddarshanam, “Abidance is the remembrance”. When you deeply meditate and become absorbed, is it merely words?

Q: Knowledge is gained. I can very clearly see the things that used to make me feel miserable and undergo a lot of suffering, but after listening, those things don’t

have the power to make me suffer any more. Because it's not just words; it's translated somehow into knowledge.

N: How do you know the Self? How do you know when you are happy?

Q: It does not require a thought.

N: That which is happiness knows itself. That which is consciousness knows itself. You seek Knowledge. That is right. You are the Knowledge. It is not something possessed that could be lost. Existence is Consciousness. Consciousness is supreme Knowledge. If there is any doubt regarding such, seek to know the nature of the doubter. If the one who is supposedly ignorant is found, his ignorance is gone. Can you really forget yourself? The Knowledge is innate, the same as Existence.

Another Q: Are desireless, inconceivable and imperceptible the same?

N: Find out.

Q: I feel that there is difference. If I just know "I am Brahman, I am", there is no distance and no direction. It is everywhere.

N: Does the Self have a location?

Q: The Self is everywhere. Can it be everywhere and no place?

N: Then, there is no chasm to cross to reach the Self.

Q: No. Ribhu in the Ribhu Gita talks about profoundly deep meditation. I just don't know what "deep" is.

N: To know yourself beyond thoughts is depth.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti



Correspondence with Nome



[A seeker raised several questions related to death, attaining freedom from the body, and such. Here is the response.]

January 17, 2025

Dear ,

**Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Namaste. The Self is eternal Existence, transcendent of all bodily states, beginning and end, life and death. Abidance in Self-Knowledge is Liberation from all of the bondage, which is mere imagination, the result or product of ignorance. Complete freedom from misidentification with the body is to be found by Self-inquiry, and is not dependent upon or determined by, bodily state or condition. If this is realized, your question no longer arises.**

Doubts or questions regarding transmigration are resolved in the same way. If there is birth, there is death and rebirth and such. Were you born? For whom is birth, death, and such? What is her nature?

Reading the chapters on jivanmukti (liberation in life) and videhamukti (disembodied or bodiless liberation) in Song of Ribhu may be beneficial.

The body, itself, is innocent in all of this. Do not mistake it for the Self. Cease to think that you are in it. Do not hate it or harm it. Cease to conceive it as yours, your possession. If thought of as borrowed, who is the divine lender?

**Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome**

[A seeker asked, "Please, Nome, tell me what is Cosmic Consciousness?]

February 8, 2025

Dear ,

Namaste. "Cosmic Consciousness" is indicative of the infinite nature of the Self, either containing the entire universe or as the illimitable unmanifest source of the entire universe. It transcends all the forms it contains and pervades; indeed, its nature is formless.

**Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome**

[The same questioner asked about meditation. This is the reply.]

March 1, 2025

Dear ,

**Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Namaste. For Self-Realization, meditation upon the nature of the meditator, which means Self-inquiry, is the best.**

Depth, not duration, matters most for meditation.

**Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome**

[Here is the reply to some other questions asked by the same seeker.]

March 3, 2025

Dear ,

**Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Namaste. Sitting and moving pertain to the body. Meditation pertains to that which is transcendent of the body. "Your life" is an illusion based upon the ego and misidentification with the body.**

Meditation for Self-Knowledge is explained in every meditation event at the SAT temple and the recordings of the same. So, listen attentively, reflect deeply, and profoundly meditate.

***Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome***

***[A seeker asked about being alone
and loneliness. Here is the response.]***

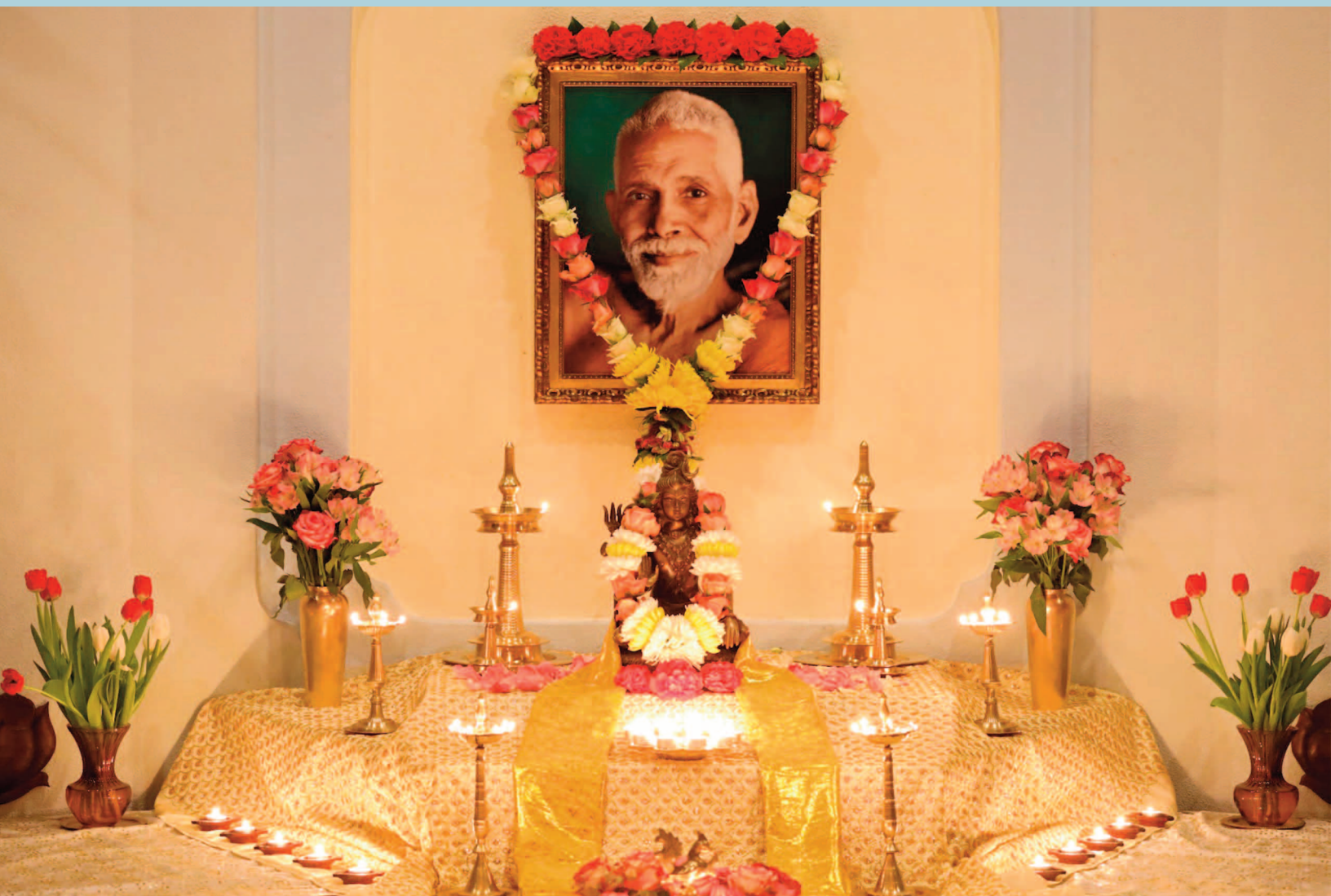
March 10, 2025

Dear ,

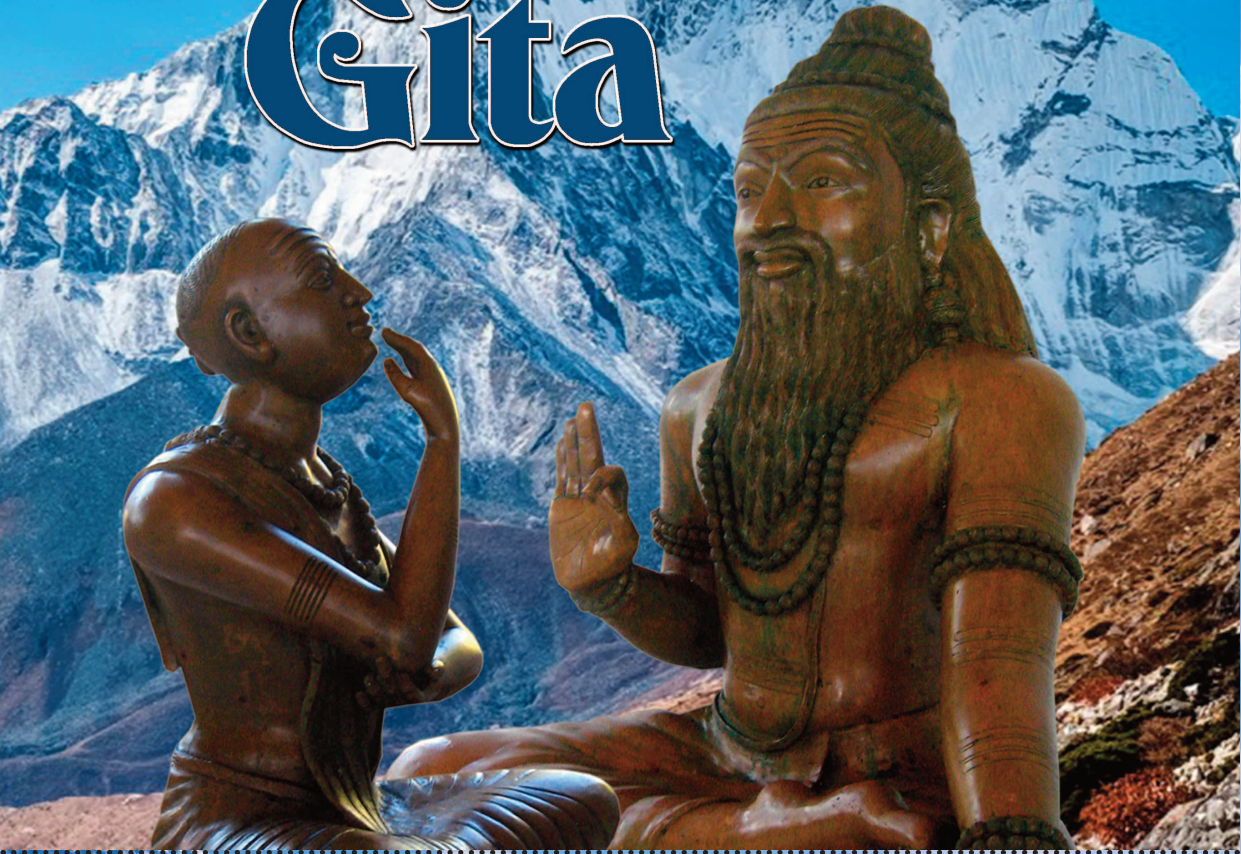
***Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Namaste. You are never alone. God***

***is ever there. Bhagavan is always with
you and in you. I am always with you
and within you. The Self is One with-
out a second but is never lonely.***

***Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome***



Ribhu Gita



Chapter 5, Verses 1-6
Commentary by Nome
Boundless Wisdom, April 13, 2012
Ribhu-Nidagha Dialogue

Om Om Om

(Nome): Om Namah Sivaya. Chapter 5, entitled the Determination of the Phenomenal World Being the Void and the Nonexistence of All - prapanca-sunyatva-sarvanasti nirupanam.

Ribhu said:

1. I shall tell you about the world being void. It has been equated to the horns of a hare. This knowledge is rare in all the worlds. Listen with an attentive mind.

Why should he speak about the world being void, being unreal? It is in order to reveal the Reality of the nature of absolute Existence. As long as illusion is superimposed by imagination upon the Reality, it will not be realized as it is, and one's bliss will be obscured to that extent. If the illusion is discarded, the real nature of Existence becomes self-evident, and the realization of that is supreme happiness and peace.

"I shall tell you about the world being void. It has been equated to the horns of a hare". Quite obviously a rabbit does not have horns. He equates the world, the manifested sphere of experience called the universe, to the horns of a hare. What is indicated thereby is that the unreal is entirely unreal. There are no degrees of unreality, just as there are no degrees of Reality. Reality is purely Existence; the unreal is non-existent. Its meaning is utterly unreal, utterly nonexistent. It does not mean that there is no Existence; there is Existence, and it is realized as it is when the delusive notion of it being a world is discarded.

"This knowledge is rare in all the worlds". This phrase carries a twofold meaning. The first is obvious: it is common in samsara to take the illusory world, or samsara, to be real. So, it is rare to find one who is discriminating, discerning the real nature of Existence, and who transcends the illusory notion of an existent external world. This is rare; the Knowledge of such is rare. It is bestowed by those sages who have realized the Truth, absolutely as it is, and found in rare scriptures such as this one. There is a secondary meaning of "This knowledge is rare in all the worlds". This Knowledge belongs to that which is world-transcendent. That which is world-transcendent within you is the real Self. This Knowledge of the Reality of the absolute Self, or Brahman, inclusive of the unreality of the world, is for the Self and is not found within the context of the worldly illusion. Nothing in the illusion knows the illusion to be illusion. Only that which is beyond it. That which is beyond it is your innermost Consciousness, or real Self, and it is from that the Light of discrimination pours forth. For such discrimination to pour forth, listen with an attentive mind".

2. This phenomenal world, whatever little one hears or sees of it, the form that is seen, and the form of the seer are all like the horns of a hare.

How much can you see with your eyes? Very little. How much can you hear with your ears? Very little. Even if you wrongly assume the world to be an external reality, how much do your eyes and ears perceive of it? Very, very little. If we consider absolute Existence, transcendent of the form of the world, how much do your eyes and ears perceive? So little. What, then, is Real? All of these verses that negate the "reality" of the world prompt you to know that what actually exists is the Reality of Brahman.

"This phenomenal world, whatever little one hears or sees of it", is "like the horns of a hare". The world is "like the horns of a hare." What is Real? What actually exists? Meditate on this: if the world is completely unreal, what actually exists?

"The form that is seen, and the form of the seer are all like the horns of a hare". By "the seen" is meant the objective aspect of your experience. The form of "this" is unreal. What is the existence that is erroneously conceived as the form of "this"? The form of the seen is dependent on the form of the seer. According to the definitions attributed to the seer, so the seen is apparently perceived. The form of the seen is unreal – nonexistent---and the form of the seer is also so. You exist; what form do you take to be you? What is the form of the seer? Whatever form you mistake to be you is just like the horns of a rabbit; it is not really there. Likewise is it with the mirror-like image of the seer in the form of the seen. The form is not really there, it is another rabbit horn. Meditate on this. If the form of all that you see is not the case and the form attributed to the experiencer or seer is not the case, – 'this' and 'I' – what exists; what actually is? There is Existence, but it is not the form of the seer or the form of the seen. There is Existence, but it is not the little bit that you see or the little bit that you hear, etc. through the senses. In short, Existence is not an object of the senses; It is to be known by Self Knowledge. So, abandon the form, or the tendency to misidentify as the form of the seer and know your Self, and then say what is there.

3. Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect, egoity, and light are all like the horns of a hare.

All the forms constituting the exterior, described here in the traditional elements, and all the forms that you regard as the interior, your mind, intellect, etc. – all these are a bunch of rabbit horns. What is the Existence that is misperceived as the material substance of the universe? What is that Existence that is misconceived as an intellect, a mind and ego – or the false sense of individuality? What is that Existence? If you think of it in terms of the mind, intellect, ego, etc. and think of it in terms of the elements or matter of the universe, you do not see it for what it is, you do not know it as it is. If you would cease to think of it in terms of physical and in terms of what is subtle, like the mind, what would you know? What would exist? There is not a world external to the Self to be experienced. There is not a mind, intellect, etc, constituting an interior. There is one indivisible, undifferentiated Existence, or Brahman, and any other conception is just dreaming of rabbit horns.

4. Destruction, creation, existence, the world, the galaxies, merit, demerit, victory, and delusion are all like the horns of a hare.

The cosmic and the personal are, like the horns of a hare, unreal.

"Destruction, creation, existence, the world": everything you experience in the world is subject to the threefold change of creation, existing or sustenance, and destruction. Indeed, the world is nothing but that process. Apart from those processes, what world do you experience? On the vast scale, with all the creation taking place,

all the existing going on, and with all the destruction that happens and will happen – that entire world or universe---is not real. What is real? However vast the play of illusion, the nature of Brahman, the real Self, is far vaster. What is it from which this illusory creation arises? What is it that remains when all is destroyed? What is that which exists all the time, as the substrate of the illusion of the existence of the universe of forms? What is the Reality? That infinite and eternal Existence – world-transcendent – is truly the Self. You should not imagine yourself to be anything less. If you do, you are just dreaming of rabbit horns.

“Merit, demerit, victory, and delusion are all like the horns of a hare”. One’s own merit and one’s own demerit are virtue and sin. These are not real. Delusion and victory over delusion also are not real. That which exists has neither merit nor demerit, but is quite beyond all such considerations and is purnam – the perfect fullness. That which is real, which is truly the Self is innately free of delusion, being of the nature of Knowledge. In the highest view, being of the nature of Knowledge it was never bound in delusion,so, it does obtain victory over delusion. Merit, demerit, delusion, and victory over delusion are all spoken from the apparent, supposed personal perspective,but the person himself does not exist, and his considerations, his states and his attributes, are similarly unreal. What exists? What is your Self? The Self, which is the Infinite and the Eternal, is also most intimate – the innermost of the inner. What is this Self, this pure Existence? Inquire to know this.

There is no distinction between cosmic creation, existence ,and destruction, and the same with the mind. On what basis could you make the distinction? Primarily, from the misidentification with the body. If, though, you are not the body, what happens to the conceptions of interior and exterior – microcosmic and macrocosmic? Likewise is the case with the rise and disappearance of the mind and of the universe.

If the form of the seer is the body, the form of the world is the seen. The form of the seen and the form of the seer are both like the horns of a hare, meaning utterly unreal. In the Knowledge that you are not the body, where is the world?

Both the body and the world exist only in the mind. They exist in a waking state of mind; in another state they do not exist. That which comes into and goes out of existence is not truly real. They are not existent at all, but are made of the stuff of imagination. That which is real always exists and fully so, not more at one time and not less at another. Just as the real is always fully so, the unreal is also only so; fully unreal. The unreal is not even a little bit real. So it is with the mind, its states, the body, the world, and all else. There is Existence and its Knowledge of itself is the supreme wisdom, or supreme Knowledge. After all that can be negated is negated, it remains. To know that to be the Reality always and now ,too, is essential.

5. Desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, delusion, love, steadfastness, and Guru, disciple, instruction, and such are all like the horns of a hare.

“Desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, delusion” are not real things. They are rabbit horns, and they arise in the mind that is stuck on rabbit horns, insisting rabbit horns are real. The more the insistence on the reality of such rabbit horns, the more there is the tendency for desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and delusion. Such represent obstructions on the spiritual path, but they are not real. If one determines the source of all the power or force in these derives, their utter unreality becomes apparent. If one discerns the source of happiness, all these – desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and delusion – cease to exist; they were just rabbit horns and nothing more. They are the forms of ignorance, but ignorance has no substance. Its only apparent substance is what you give to it, your belief in it, your conjuring it up. It is an illusion with no substance. That which truly exists is perfectly free of all such attributes.

“Love, steadfastness, and Guru, disciple, instruction”; What is it that is perceived as love? What in practice is considered steadfastness? Is it not the self-existent, continuous Existence of Brahman? Yet to say that Brahman would have the attribute of steadfastness would be absurd, because it transcends the individuality entirely. Similar is it with the guru and the disciple. What seems to have the form of a disciple? Is it not the disciple’s aim to get beyond that form and realize his true nature, which is the absolute, perfectly full Existence of Brahman? The form of the guru is not what the Guru is. He is quite beyond all that. Because he is quite beyond all that, he is capable of showing the disciple how he also is entirely beyond all that. Where there is just one absolute Existence, the infinite and eternal Brahman, how can one speak of there being in that a guru and a disciple, steadfastness and love, and other such things? How much less could there be the various forms of ignorance and delusion? What truly exists? What in truth are you? This is what is to be realized.

6. “I,” “you,” “the world,” and all other such notions, the beginning, the end, and the middle, the past, the future, and the present are all like the horns of a hare.

“I”: what does it mean? However the “I” is defined determines the definition attributed to the “you” and the world. Sri Bhagavan says, “Only when the first person arises do the second and third persons rise.” If there is the rise of “I,” there is the rise of “you” and “it.” Who am I? The superficial meaning of “I” is the individual, but that is not real. Right where your apparently individualized existence is, is the true Existence that is not individualized at all. Inquire deeply within yourself, Who am I? to realize this. If you understand that whatever you regard as “I” is nothing but the horns of a hare, what remains of you? What remains is what you truly are always. What is that? It is ever-existent. It knows itself, so it is called Consciousness. The realization of it is the highest Bliss. If it is falsely assumed to be the ego or individual, you, the world, and all other such notions seem to follow. Such is just one rabbit horn after another. The real Existence is worldless, without you, without “I,” free of all such false division, and free of all such imagined notions. Realize the Self as It is.

“The beginning, the end, and the middle are like the horns of a hare.” Everything objective has a beginning. What is before the beginning? Everything objective – your

mind, your body, your world –has an end. What is it that is after the end? It exists all through the middle as well. Before the beginning, all along, and after the end, it is. Terms such as beginning, middle, and end make no sense in application to It. What has a beginning, a middle, and an end is not real. The beginning, the middle, and the end are not real. The ever-existent, the timelessly existent, is real and is your Self. Realize this by inquiring, “Who am I?”

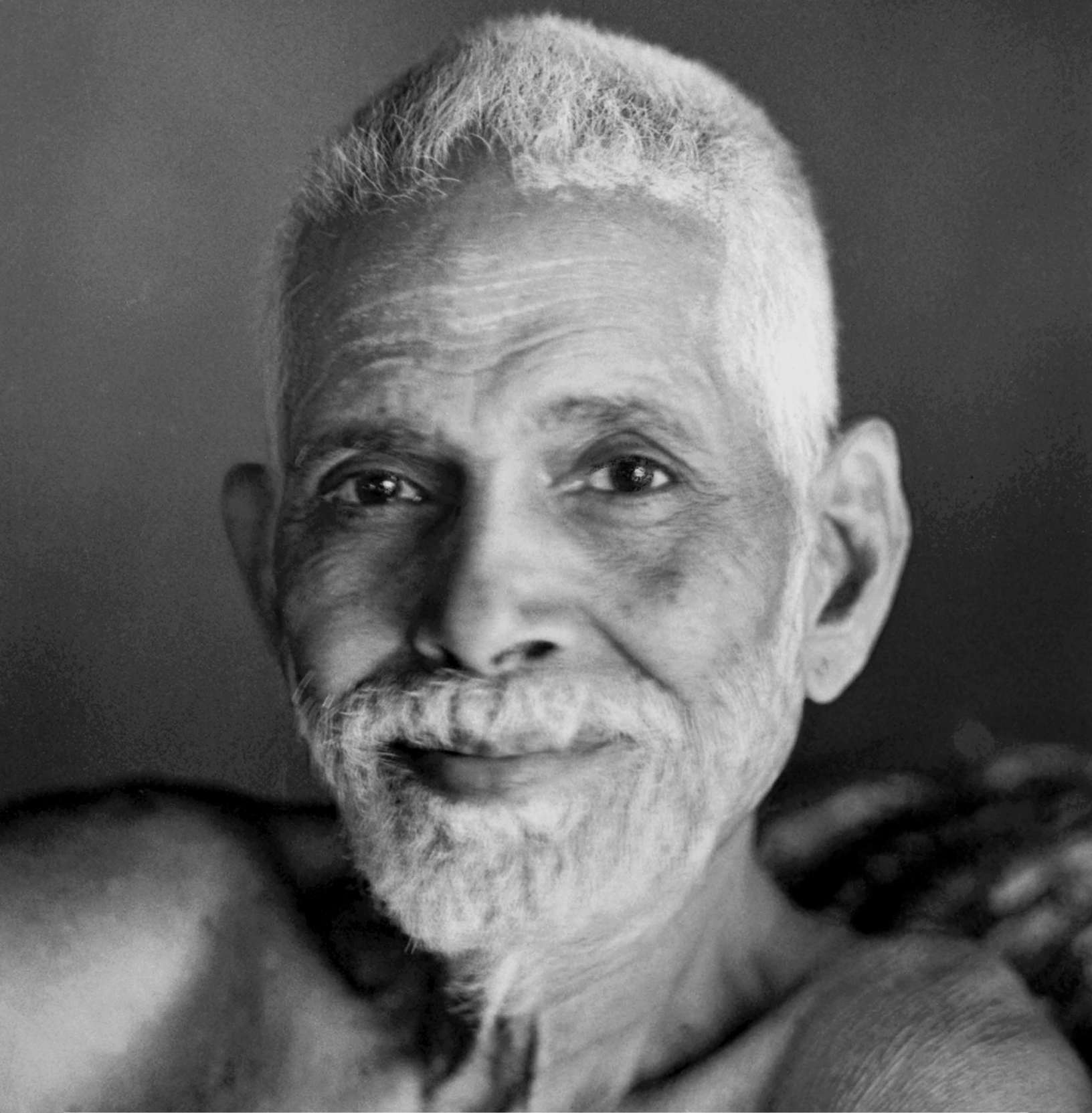
“The past, the future, and the present are all like the horns of a hare”. The past, the present, and the future are just dreams within your mind, dreams of rabbit horns. The past does not actually exist, nor the future and, most certainly, the present is likewise not real. If they were real, they would be always, but they are not. If they were real, they would be self-evident; but they are not; they do not know themselves. Something else knows them. If you trace that something else, Consciousness, to its real nature, to its source, the Reality shines for itself, timelessly. That has no past, no present and no future; It just is as it is, always.

“I,” “you,” “the world,” and all other such notions, the beginning, the end, and the middle, the past, the future, and the present are all like the horns of a hare. What exists, what are you? The question is asked, ‘What exists?’ so that the Real comprehends Itself. If you consider that to be apart from yourself, such is an objective conception, the world, which has been negated. The direct means to know Reality is by a profound, immediate inquiry to know the Self. There is nothing between yourself and your Self. If the Self is known, Reality comprehends itself, for the Self is Reality. If you think of the Self as being some small thing, or particularized thing, listen to, or read and reflect upon the significance of these verses again. Such is not the Self, but just a bunch of rabbit horns. Now, it is assumed that everyone here knows that rabbits do not have horns, or else you misinterpreted the entire evening’s instruction. Inquire, know the Self and no more rabbit horns will ever disturb you.

Om Namah Sívaya

(Silence)

Om Shantí Shantí Shantí Om ॐ



जय रमण सद्गुरुरमण
jaya ramaṇa sadguru ramaṇa

जय रमण सद्गुरुरमण
परमपावन गुरुरमण

भक्तजनप्रिय भास्करवदन
भवभयहरण मङ्गलचरण
भक्तिज्ञानविचाररसामृत
ब्रह्मानन्दसदाशिवशंकर

जय रमण सद्गुरु रमण
परमपावन गुरु रमण

दण्डकमडलुभस्मविभूषित
पण्डितपामरभेदविवर्जित
चञ्चलमानसचलनस्तम्भन
अरुणाचलशिव चिन्मयरमण

jaya ramaṇa sad-guru ramaṇa
parama-pāvana guru ramaṇa

bhakta-jana-priya-bhāskara-vadana
bhava-bhaya-haraṇa maṅgala-caraṇa
bhakti-jñāna-vichara-rasā-mṛta
brahmānanda-sadāśiva-śaṅkara

jaya ramaṇa sad-guru ramaṇa
parama-pāvana guru ramaṇa

daṇḍa-kamaḍalu-bhasma-vibhūṣita
paṇḍita-pāmara-bheda-vivarjita
cañcala-mānasa-calana-stambhana
aruṇācala-śiva-cinmaya-ramaṇa

Victory to Sadguru Ramana, the supremely
holy Ramana

Whose face shining like sun is dear to
his devotees,

Whose auspicious feet removes the fear of
mundane existence,

The nectar of essence of devotion, knowledge
and inquiry

The Bliss of Brahman, the eternal Siva,
the beneficent

Adorned with a stick, kamandalu,
and holy ashes

Who does not differentiate between the learned
and the nonliterate

Who arrests the motion of the moving mind

Arunachala Siva whose remembrance is holy

- by Ganesh Sadasivan



Who Am I?

The Nondual Self-Inquiry Retreat March 14-16, 2025 Day 1

Session 1

Om Om Om

Knowing the Self is being the Self. To what does your identity belong? What is the true significance of "I"?

In Self-Knowledge, being is the knowing. It is neither an activity nor a mode or condition. The Self is something entirely formless. It is unborn, and it is never destroyed. It cannot be measured. It cannot be captured in thought. It cannot be divided, and it has no parts. The Self ever is just as it is.

Self-Knowledge is simultaneously the discernment of your identity and the seeing of reality. Who is to know the Self? The Self alone can do so. Nothing other than the Self can know it. Who are you who seek to know the Self? Who are you?

The introspective, deep, steady poise that discerns one's true nature is the Self-inquiry.

Sri Bhagavan says:

Every living being longs always to be happy untainted by sorrow, and everyone has the greatest love for himself, which is solely due to the fact that happiness is his real nature.

Every living being longs always to be happy. Where is happiness to be found? If it is something that comes, it will go. If it appears, it will disappear. As such, it will not be always, but you want happiness always. You do not wish for happiness partially. You want it fully, completely. How is one to have happiness always untainted by sorrow? If you abide in Self-Knowledge, there is no ignorance, which alone is the cause of suffering.

What you regard as yourself is loved most dearly. He says this is solely due to the fact that happiness is his real nature. Your Existence is happiness. You yourself are the happiness, so that the search for happiness is only a search for yourself. As no one ever loses existence, the existence that one is, the Knowledge of the Self yields completely full happiness that is never lost. What is your real nature? If not known, happiness seems as if veiled. If it is known, happiness is complete.

Sri Bhagavan says:

Hence, in order to realize that inherent and untainted happiness, which indeed he daily experiences when the mind is subdued in deep sleep, it is essential that he should know himself.

Happiness seems as if tainted by the addition to it of ignorance. The ignorance is composed of misidentification. Happiness is inherent, not something to be obtained from elsewhere and not something to be attained anew. Rather, it exists as Existence. Happiness, the Consciousness that knows, and Existence are the same.

When the mind is subdued in deep sleep: There is neither the perception of objects nor the thought of anything. Yet, in that state, you are perfectly full. When the mind is subdued, the innate happiness shines forth to itself.

Hence, . . . it is essential that he should know himself. For obtaining such knowledge the enquiry, "Who am I?" in quest of the Self is the means that is excellent.

The means and the end have to be of an identical nature for sadhana to be successful. That which shines as the end, Knowledge of the Self, itself manifests in practice as the inquiry, "Who am I?"

What is the inquiry? What is Self-inquiry? It is the introspective nonobjective abidance as the real Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

Who are you? What are you considering yourself to be? What are you truly?

What are you not? Anything but the absolute Self. Verify this by a process of negation of the confusion regarding reality, identity, and happiness. If the confusion is gone, you are satisfied. That for which you always yearn you are, and what you are will never be lost.

Inquire, "Who am I?"

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.

Session 2

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.

You cannot meditate upon the Self as if it were an object, but what you can do is negate everything that is not the Self. Then, what remains, self-known, self-luminous and non-dependent, is just the pure Self as it is, of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

Proceeding from gross to subtle, Sri Bhagavan describes the inquiry to know the Self.

"WHO AM I?" I am not this physical body, nor am I the five organs of sense perception; I am not the five organs of external activity, nor am I the five vital forces, nor am I even the thinking mind. Neither am I that unconscious state of nescience which retains merely the subtle vasanas, being then free from the functional activity of the sense-organs and of the mind, and being unaware of the existence of the objects of sense-perception.

He commences by describing the nature of this inquiry, "Who am I?" "I" is not objective. "I" is not apart from you. "I" is self-existent. The inquiry does not consist of repeating the thought, "Who am I?" or the words to oneself, "Who am I?" It is the quintessential introversion that is indicated. This is to be truly inward turned. To what do you turn inward? The "I." I am not this physical body. What you are, what is signified by "I," is not the body. Anything that pertains to the body, from birth to death, does not pertain to you. You are not the body. You are not in a body. Truly, you do not possess a body. If you did, it would be with you always, but that is not the case. Bodiless, you are formless. Bodiless, you are without action. Bodiless and being without action, you are without the fruits, the results, of action. Bodiless, you are without location. The idea that something is happening to you, or for you, is also based on the body-misconception. Who am I? Inquiring thus, realize you are not this physical body. You are never young. You are never old. You never move. You never change. You do not decay, because you are not the body.

How many ideas do you have that are based upon the misidentification with the body? Without the misidentification with the body, none of those ideas are yours, nor can they be sustained. If you can turn within beyond the body, then turning within beyond anything else is quite easy.

Nor am I the five organs of sense perception. The organs of sense perception are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, etc. To know that you are not these things, nose, ears, etc. is simple. Regarding the five organs of sense perception, it is really the senses or the sensing to which one should direct one's inquiry and rise above. You are not seeing, hearing, etc., nor are you one who sees, hears, etc. Seeing is just as objective as the object seen. Hearing is just as objective to you as the sounds heard. Likewise is it with all the other senses and the sensations. They are not you. They are not yours. Without the sensations, the senses, do you know that you exist? If you do so, then what is the nature of this senseless existence? (laughter)

You are not seeing, and you cannot be seen. You are not hearing, and you cannot be heard. Completely beyond the sensations, the five senses, you are. Since your only knowledge of the world comes through the sensations, you are beyond the world, as well. Bodiless and world-less, sense-transcendent, who am I?

Nor am I the five vital forces. Prana is the name given to the animating life energy by which the body moves. Since the animating life energy has various functions, they are counted as five. We can just as well say one thing appears as five. Whether you count one only or you count five, the one or the five do not apply to you. You are beyond prana, and thus, beyond life and death. Without a body, without senses, and without prana, who am I?

Questioner: I see that I'm not a sensing entity, but I still know about the senses. I think because I know about them that somehow, I'm connected to them. Does knowing equate to identification as that thing? Why do I have the tendency to move in the direction of misidentifying with something that I'm not?

Nome: The very fact that you know it means you are beyond it. Then, if the nature of the knower be known, you are all, and there is nothing that is not you. Then, there is no more "I."

Q: Yes, there's no "I" among the all.

N: How you could be all is best known and understood by one who is bodiless and senseless.

Q: Coming to your senses is a whole different thing than.

N: You sense only yourself in the guise of that.

Q: I sense only myself in the guise that it's some kind of object or thing.

N: Yes, but if the Self never becomes an object, how can the question regarding the senses arise at all?

Q: It would because I misidentified with the body. That's the heart of it. Without that, then I become senseless.

Inquiring, I just dive deeply into "I" asking, what is it? I feel that I exist; It's "I" penetrating into itself to where there's no inquirer left. There's not something trying to find out anymore, and it arrives at just deep silence. Any notion of individuality has dissolved.

N: Who dives into what?

Q: Existence dives into itself, which seems to indicate that there's some idea of something diving into something else, but it's diving into itself.

N: When the supposition of two or more is nonexistent, that is the silence.

Q: So, if I want to know what inquiry is, I just actually have to inquire.

N: That is right. The only way you can know it is to abide in it. The only way you can know what inquiry is, is by inquiring.

Q: So, there's no concept, method, or idea that captures what inquiry actually is. I think that's what I was sort of looking for. I was looking in the wrong place, I think.

N: You were thinking that it is something that you think. But Sri Bhagavan says, nor am I even the thinking mind.

Q: It just feels so natural when the identity gets removed that I'm used to misidentifying with. It's such a stroke of grace.

N: You are not the thinking mind. You are not what is conceived in the mind, nor are you the mind itself. You do not depend upon the mind to exist. You do not depend upon the mind to know that you exist. If you are not at all what you think, not any of the thoughts, then who am I? If you are not what is thought of, and you are not even the thinking itself, then what is the nature of your Consciousness, your Existence? Without thinking I am like this, I am like that, what is your nature? The Self is not a thought, is not a group of thoughts, is not determined by thought, and is undefined by any thought. Nothing of what you conceive touches you.

Neither am I that unconscious state of nescience which retains merely the subtle vasanas, being then free from the functional activity of the sense organs and of the mind, and being unaware of the existence of the objects of sense perception.

What is described here is any causal state, such as the state of deep dreamless sleep. He refers to it as an unconscious state of nescience, of ignorance. And which retains merely the subtle vasanas, the tendencies of the mind, which become unmanifested when you are deep asleep, and, when you wake up, they resume their activity again; they are same tendencies or vasanas that were there before. You are not the tendencies or the tendency container. Nor are you one who makes tendencies. In an unconscious state of nescience, the manifestation of the tendencies subsides, leaving them only in seed form. The state itself is without senses, and it's without the content of the mind, without thinking.

Sri Bhagavan then says:

Therefore, summarily rejecting all the above-mentioned physical adjuncts and their functions, saying “I am not this; no, nor am I this, nor this,”—that which then remains separate and alone by itself, that pure Awareness verily am I. This Awareness is by its very nature Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss).

Therefore, rejecting all—how do you reject all? It is by not lending it the sense of reality and identity. What is rejected is the misidentification with the physical adjuncts, the body and the senses, etc., and their functions doing, seeing, hearing, thinking. If it is a “this”, “this” is something objective. You cannot be the object of yourself. Not this, not this. Stand free of any kind of this, gross or subtle, by the discriminating inquiry thus shown. Abide as the Self, not as the not-Self. Abidance is deep knowledge. Where your knowing and being are the same, that is the deep knowledge, that is the abidance. Who abides as what? The inquiry itself is quite beyond such duality.

That which then remains separate and alone by itself, not connected with anything else; alone by itself, for it, in it, there is no other; that is, for the Self and in the Self, there is nothing else, neither a being created nor a world created; that which remains separate from all the illusion and alone, one without a second, by itself, self-existent, self-known, that is awareness, pure, free of delusion. That is the real significance of “I.” Do not be mistaken about it. By its very nature, the Self, the awareness mentioned is Sat-Chit-Ananda, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. It is one Reality that is described as such. It is not triadic. It is not made of three parts — an existence part, a consciousness part, a bliss part. One and the same thing is referred to and is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

Session 3

Things known are such only in the mind. The instrument by which they are known is the mind. All of the activity of all these things occurs only in the mind. If the mind subsides, what becomes of the objects and their activities? Certainly, viewing yourself as an object engaged in various activities is delusive. The world is not an objective reality.

Sri Bhagavan says:

If the mind which is the instrument of knowledge and is the basis of all activity subsides, the perception of the world as an objective reality ceases. Unless the illusory perception of the serpent in the rope ceases, the rope on which the illusion is formed is not perceived as such. Even so, unless the illusory nature of the perception of the world as an objective reality ceases, the Vision of the true nature of the Self, on which the illusion is formed, is not obtained.

The analogy is that of a rope appearing in dim light as a snake. There is not really a snake present. There is no birth of the snake. There is no destruction of the snake. The snake is not a real thing, but, as long as you see it as a snake, you won't see the rope. If light is brought in, the snake-illusion vanishes, and the rope is revealed to be the only thing present, the only thing existing all the while. It is like this with the world. Consider the world to be the entire objective sphere of your experience. The only thing that exists is the Self, which is Existence itself. It is only an illusion, imagination, that makes one not see the rope and see only the snake, to not see the Self and see only the world. If the world is not an objective reality, what is it? Can it be a partial reality? Is there any such thing? Can the rope be part snake? If the very mind itself is abandoned as being unreal, as being not the Self, then how could the perception of the world, which occurs only in the mind, survive? It could not. As long as you take the world to be a real thing, the realization of the Self will seem to be at a distance. When the unreal is known as unreal, the real is immediate, with no distance between yourself and the Self. The reality, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, exists. It is real. Just how real? Completely so, eternally so, having nothing beside it, having nothing else within it, existing as Existence itself. And just how unreal is the unreal? Completely so. The Self is reality without an alternative.

Another Q: On the unreality of the objective world, one observes multiple minds and even though

those multiple minds appear in one's mind or my mind, it is observed that, if the mind is withdrawn in the state of deep dreamless sleep, the experience is that the objective world goes on for the other minds. I keep thinking about my mother who passed two years ago. Her world and her objective world may have, because her mind may or may not continue without the body, but she had an objective reality of the mind. The world is continuing even though she is not there. That's one of the things it's hard to shake off, the objective reality of the mind, because it seems to continue for the others.

N: Others are conceived within oneself. Multiple minds are for your mind and do not appear outside it. When you are in deep sleep and there is no world being perceived, you do not say that it is continuing as long as you are in that state. You say so only from the waking state. And that in turn is according to the measure of the body. You don't know multiple minds. You know multiple bodies and assume a mind separate in each one. All of that is only in the mind according to the state of the mind. If it were a dream state, who would be other dream minds? Do the other dream minds think this up or do you? (laughter) The answer to the question is to be found only by knowing yourself beyond the mind. Therefore, your mother's existence is the same now as it was then. No one is born. No one ceases to be. But you will think otherwise if the world is supposed to be real.

Q: To know oneself beyond the mind, beyond the senses, beyond the prana, beyond the body, the way is not to give it the reality and the identity. The experiential knowledge of oneself is beyond the mind. It is very hard to shake off these sensations. They seem to persist even in meditation, even if one has a very clear view that it is unreal. These sensations, the vital force of pranic movements, all give a notion of some objective reality.

N: Is the unreality of the senses a sensing experience?

Q: It cannot be.

N: Spiritual knowledge is not determined by sensation. The senses do not prove it, and the senses do not disprove it. Spiritual knowledge is inner knowledge, not sensation and not thought. As a concession to the aspiring meditator, in order to ease the understanding of the Truth, he showed the right way to practice. It is said that the mind should be turned within and thereby realize the Self. Such realization is then described as belonging to or realized by the buddhi, the intelligence, the intellect, sharply focused. The mind is to be turned within. What is that which is within? And what is the nature of the one who turns within? Knowing this, you find that the Realization is of the nature of Absolute Knowledge, and not a thought, not the intellect. It is permanent, and it is inherent in you. There is no difficulty for the innate.

Q: Thank you.

N: Unless the illusory nature of the perception of the world as an objective reality ceases, the vision of the true nature of the Self on which the illusion is formed is not obtained.

Upon what is illusion formed? Upon what does superimposition occur? It is unreal and cannot be formed in the unreal. The snake is formed only on the rope, not on nothing. The illusion that is the entire world is based on something, but that something is never truly modified into a world. The world and the perceiver of it are imagined in something entirely real. How real? Entirely. The superimposed form of the world is unreal. How unreal? Completely so. There can be no mixture of the unreal and the real. Indeed, the mixing of the real and the unreal is the very definition of ignorance. It could not be so.

Another Q: I more clearly see the distinction between what's going on in my head and what is. What is going on in my head is just a fabrication of my mind, is in the realm of opinions. They are twisted thoughts and mistaken impressions. I find it easier to catch myself doing that and stopping that and saying I am just making all of this up. It's not even happening. Then, those things just stop. Thank God. So, is this legitimate? It seems to be helping me. I can't say that I can get past, at this point, the sensual reality, seeing and hearing.

N: When you sleep, you often dream. While dreaming, you are endowed with a dream body and dream senses. You also have a dream mind that has opinions about other dream characters and dream objects and dream events. Are they real?

As long as it's in the dream, as long as you are in the dream, you're prepared to say they are real or you experience them.

Q: When I dream, I know I'm dreaming, at the same time. I'm aware that this is a dream while it's happening, and I can repeat experiences.

N: Then apply the same approach to the waking state. The waking state is very similar to the dream state. There's a subject and an object inhabited by beings and things, all of which are just dream stuff. The dream state makes up the dream content. The waking state is determining the waking content.

Q: My problem is I have a rather abrasive personality to start with. If I try to do anything about my waking state, I don't want to annoy. Other people aren't there really.

N: Are other people, including yourself, there in a dream state?

Q: No, they aren't.

N: So just as you ceased to mix yourself up with the dream objects, dream occurrences, and dream characters while waking up, do the same now.

Unless the illusory nature of the perception of the world as an objective reality ceases, the vision of the true nature of the Self on which the illusion is formed is not obtained. What do you think? Do you think this is important?

Detach and disidentify from the unreal and thereby arrive at the Realization of the Self.

Another Q: Namaste. Could you please shed some light on when the dissolution of mind happens for a disciple who abides in Self?

N: The dissolution of the mind comes when you cease mixing up your identity with it. Dissolution of the mind also happens in other states, but such is not permanent, like sleep.

Another Q: Is it not enough that the mind abides in the Self with the Self-inquiry? When the mind arises, its very nature is to misidentify, right? So, the mind also has to be trained to identify with the Self when it arises apart from Self-inquiry? Self-inquiry is only putting the mind back to its source.

N: The inquiry that discerns the real nature of the Self alone is sufficient. The idea that there is an existent mind, and the entirety of its content, is based on misidentification, which Self-inquiry alone destroys.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti. Om

(Continuation of this retreat transcript will continue in following Reflections.)



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.)



95: Avahitthakam

With an enigmatic heart, one surrenders to the Divine, who gracefully unveils the eternal secret that all forms and phenomena are manifestations of a singular, non-dual source.



96: Nivesam

Gloriously mounted on the elephant of divine wisdom, one transcends the dualities of the mundane world, effortlessly gliding into the boundless unity of all existence.



97: Elakākrīḍitam

In the playful dance of the lamb, one discovers the joyous essence that underlies all creation, revealing the indivisible oneness that pervades the universe.

SAT Retreats 2025

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 30-June 1, 2025

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 29-31, 2025

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 14-16, 2025

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.



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.