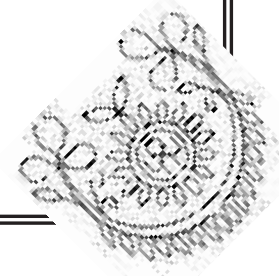
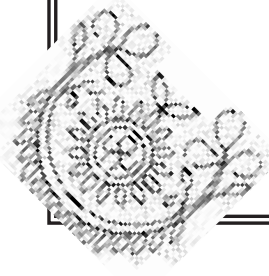


REFLECTIONS

April-June 2008

Society of Abidance in Truth





Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

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Invocation

*Eternal One! You create, protect, and destroy;
Confer on me what is everlasting;
Grant the requests of your devotees;
Protect them from sorrow.*

*O my teacher! When I sought refuge in you,
You spoke of the great unspoken state.*

*O Deathless One!
Bestow on me true bliss,
Inspire me
To be drowned in the flood of joy.*

*He who shines as Existence in the Heart,
Who rose as the hill of Fire,
Burns to dust the ego of devotees,
Awakening their natural Silence.*

~ Muruganar: Sri Ramana Devamalai

The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From Day by Day With Bhagavan)

A visitor asked: I have been visiting various shrine in a pilgrimage and worshipping various images. What exactly is God's true form?

Bhagavan: The only thing to know is that there is an entity who is in all these forms but who is not these forms. We see the One in the many. We see the One as many, the Formless in the forms.

In answer to a visitor, Bhagavan said: Find out to whom is viyoga. That is yoga. Yoga is common to all paths. Yoga is really nothing but ceasing to think that you are different from the Self, or Reality. All the yogas—karma, jnana, bhakti and raja—are just different paths to suit different natures with different modes of evolution and to get them out of the long-cherished notion that they are different from the Self. There is no question of union, or yoga, in the sense of going and joining something that is somewhere away from us or different from us, because you never were or could be separate from the Self.

Bhagavan: Mukti is not anything to be attained. It is our real nature. We are always That. It is only so long as one feels that he is in bondage that he has to try to get released from bondage. When a man feels that he is in bondage, he tries to find out for whom is the bondage, and, by that inquiry, discovers that there is no bondage for him, but only for the mind, and that the mind, itself, disappears or proves nonexistent when turned inward, instead of outward toward sense-objects. It merges with its source, the Self, and ceases to exist as a separate entity. In that state, there is no feeling either of bondage or liberation. So long as one speaks of mukti, he is not free from the sense of bondage.

D.: When I reach the thoughtless stage in my sadhana, I enjoy a certain pleasure, but sometimes I also experience a vague fear that I cannot properly describe.

Bhagavan: You may experience anything, but you should never rest content with that. Whether you feel pleasure or fear, ask yourself who feels the pleasure or the fear and so carry on the sadhana until pleasure and fear are both transcended, duality ceases, and the reality alone remains.

There is nothing wrong in such things happening or being experienced, but you must never stop at that. For instance, you must never rest content with the pleasure of laya experienced when thought is quelled but must press on until all duality ceases.

D.: During sadhana, I feel that something in me is going up. Is that right, or should it go down?

Bhagavan: Never mind whether anything goes up or down. Does it exist without you? Never forget that. Whatever experiences may come, remember who has the experience and thus cling to “I” or the Self.

D.: I have never been able to understand Bhagavan’s explanation as to how ajnana comes about.

Bhagavan: Ignorance of what?

Bhagavan: You can have, or rather you will yourself be, the highest imaginable kind of happiness. All other kinds of happiness that you have spoken of as “pleasure,” “joy,” “happiness,” and “bliss” are only reflections of the ananda that, in your true nature, you are.



Sri Ramana Maharshi's Self-Realization

Satsang, July 16, 2006 (in honor of July 17th)

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome.: “If one can only realize at heart what one’s true nature is, one then will find that it is infinite wisdom, truth and bliss, without beginning and without an end.” What is Sri Ramana’s Self-Realization? (Silence)

When even Dakshinamurti could express this only by Silence, what else can be said about it? (Silence)

Where all words and thoughts turn back, unable to grasp or comprehend, that is this Realization. The Realization is nondual, so it is the very nature of the Reality, itself, which is without a beginning and without an end.

The Unborn, the Imperishable, is the Self, and the one who has realized the Self is only that Self and nothing else. Realization entails not having even a trace, even a possibility of a trace, of anything other, whether such be the notion of “I,” which is the false assumption of individuality, or any kind of “this,” which is the notion of an objective thing.

The Realization is nondual, yet beyond the conception of “nondual.” It is infinite, yet beyond any conception of “infinite.” It is the Self, yet beyond any conception of a self. It is utterly transcendent, yet it is without the idea of anything else existing over which to be transcendent.

Listen to what the Maharshi has said. “This is Liberation or Enlightenment or Self-Realization. The individual being, which identifies its existence with that of the life in the physical body, as “I,” is called the “ego.” The Self, which is pure Consciousness, has no ego sense about it. Neither can the physical body, which is inert, in itself, have this ego-sense. Between the two, that is,

between the Self, or pure Consciousness, and the inert, physical body, there arises mysteriously the ego-sense, or “I” notion, the hybrid, which is neither of them, and this flourishes as an individual being. The ego, or individual being, is at the root of all that is futile and undesirable in life. Therefore, it is to be destroyed by any possible means. Then, that which ever is alone remains resplendent. This is Liberation or Enlightenment or Self-Realization.”

When that which alone is and is ever shining remains, without a trace of the imagined ego, such is Self-Realization. Inquire within yourself as to what it is that is called “I.” When you think “I,” to what are you referring? Is it to the body? He has already declared that the body does not have an ego. To what does “I” refer? Is it to something connecting the pure Consciousness with the body? Is it to an individual being who seems to inhabit the body? That is just the mysterious hybrid. It rises and disappears based upon its own imagination. It is not that which ever is and which alone is. So, to what does “I” really refer? Know this within yourself. If this is known, the knower, what is known, and the knowledge, itself, are identical. This leaves no trace of the possibility of ignorance or the illusions imagined within that ignorance.

The Realization is of the nature of the Reality, so it neither comes nor goes. It is the “I”-less true “I.” That which does not come or go is the Reality, and, thus, the Realization, which is egoless, is not something that occurs to the individual. The individual is nonexistent. When this known and the innate Being shines without delusive obscuration, such is called “Self-Realization.” It is not an event or occurrence. It does not happen. It is not in time. That which is beyond time, space, and the individual is what is real. That is the Unborn and the Imperishable. That is the abode of infinite Wisdom and Bliss, for that is the Truth.

Having realized the Truth and abiding perpetually as the Truth, the Maharshi, out of compassion for those devotees who approached him seeking the Truth, has recounted the Realization in terms of something that happened only to show them that which is transcendent of all time, occurrences, space,

and the “I.” Listen to what he recounts. It appears as if an event, but really it is about eternal Truth. It appears as if something happening, but really it is about that which is. It has no arising and disappearance.

“It was about six weeks before I left Madurai for good that the great change in my life took place. It was quite sudden. I was sitting alone in a room on the first floor of my uncle’s house. I seldom had any sickness, and, on that day, there was nothing wrong with my health, but a sudden, violent fear of death overtook me. There was nothing in my state of health to account for it, and I did not try to account for it or to find out if there was any reason for the fear. I just felt that I am going to die and began thinking what to do about it. It did not occur to me to consult a doctor or my elders or friends. I felt that I had to solve the problem myself, there and then.

“The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inward, and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words, ‘Now, death has come. What does it mean? What is it that is dying? The body dies.’ And, at once, I dramatized the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out, stiff, as though rigor mortis had set in and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to the inquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed, so that no sound could escape, so that neither the word “I” nor any other word could be uttered. ‘Well, then,’ I said to myself, ‘this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes, but, with the death of this body, am I dead? Is the body “I”? It is silent and inert, but I feel the force of my personality and even the voice of the “I” within me apart from it. So, I am Spirit, transcending the body. The body dies, but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. That means that I am the deathless Spirit.’

“All this was not dull thought. It flashed through me vividly as living Truth, which I perceived directly, almost without thought-process. “I” was something very real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with my body was centered on that “I.” From that moment onward, the “I,” or Self, focused attention on itself by a powerful

fascination. Fear of death had vanished once and for all. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on.”

Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on. For one who has realized, there is no second, no other state, and no possibility of another state. There is no “I” but the one true Self. Being unconnected with the body, that Self-abidance is forever, without birth and without destruction.

In this recounting, it seems as if an event occurred, but what actually happened? It is Knowledge, but not mere thought-process. Though the story begins with someone inquiring, what is revealed is just one “I” that is Being and no individuality. Nothing happened to the individual; the individual vanished.

Similarly, turn your own mind inward. The transitoriness of the body that was then perceived is common to all. Perceive this for yourself. With the birth of the body, did you begin? With the changes of the body, did you change? With the actions of the body, do you act? With the perishing of the body, do you die? In this way, question within yourself. What pertains to the body, and what is truly your identity?

If you recognize your thoughts behind, that is to say, more subjective than, the body, continue to inquire to determine what is the “I” behind all those thoughts.

In the inquiry, the inquirer dissolves. His identity is absorbed. What remains is that which alone exists for all of eternity.

“The Self alone exists, and the Self alone is real.” If that is realized, it is perfection. “The Self alone exists, and the Self alone is real. Verily, the Self alone is the world, the “I,” and God. All that exists is but the manifestation of the Supreme Being.” The emphasis here is not so much that the Supreme Being changes into all of this, but that all that exists, whether cognized as the individual, as the world, or as God---anything--- is only that Being, which is Supreme. One Existence is, at all times everywhere. Always, everywhere, you are. Timeless, spaceless, and location-less you are.

Bhagavan says, “There are only two ways to conquer destiny or to be independent of it. One is to inquire whose this destiny

is and discover that only the ego is bound by it, and not the Self, and that the ego is nonexistent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, realizing one's helplessness, and saying all the time, "Not I, but Thou, O Lord," giving up all sense of "I" and "mine," and leaving it to the Lord to do whatever He likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as complete, so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is the love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation. In other words, complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through Self-inquiry or through bhakti marga."

Egoless abidance is the natural, true state. Dissolution of the ego is spiritual practice, whether this takes the form of inquiry or surrender. It is not inquiry so that I can be something. It is not surrender so that I can obtain something. Such would be merely a larger, imagined ego. Surrender is effacement, or dissolution, of the ego. The inquiry is a destruction, or dissolution, of the ego. Without such dissolution, some unknown destiny, the effects of the previous ignorance of the ego, manifesting as karma, seems to roll the ego about. The individual who identifies with that ego is perplexed accordingly. The only thing that can be done for Liberation from that delusion is, as the Maharshi reveals, the bringing about of the destruction of this ego-sense, which is only imagination. Inquire and see that the ego and his experiences are not real, or recognize the supreme power of God and abandon all care for the ego, without claiming anything as "I" or as "mine." Then, all attachment is gone. So, unhappiness has been removed, and peace is preserved, because, without the ego, you abide as the changeless, absorbed in That.

"Our real nature is Liberation, but we imagine that we are bound and make strenuous efforts to get free, although, all the while, we are free. This is understood only when we reach that state. Then, we shall be surprised to find that we were frantically trying to attain something that we always were and are. An illustration will make this clear. A man goes to sleep in this hall. He dreams that he has gone on a world tour and is traveling over hill and dale, forest and plain, desert and sea, across various continents, and, after many years of weary and strenuous

travel, returns to this country, reaches Tiruvannamalai, enters the Asramam, and walks into the hall. Just at that moment, he wakes up and finds that he has not moved at all but has been sleeping where he lied down. He has not returned after great efforts to this hall but was here all the time. It is exactly like that. If it is asked, 'Why, being free, we imagined ourselves bound?' I answer, 'Why, being in the hall, did you imagine that you were on a world tour, crossing hill and dale, desert and sea?' It is all in the mind, or maya."

The ego and the samsara, the dream character and his dream adventures, are entirely in the mind. It is maya, illusion, which is the stuff of imagination. You are not now other than the Self, and you are not at a distance from the Self. You are always the Self, abiding in the Self. Put an end to imagination. That is all that is required. There is no obstruction to Self-Realization, for there is no other thing to obstruct. There is no distance to Self-Realization, for there is no separate self that ever broke apart from the one real Self. You have no second identity. Just put an end to imagination, and such is called "true Knowledge." In Knowledge, there is no bondage and no suffering, because of the absence of ignorance.

Bhagavan says, "In a sense, speaking of Self-Realization is a delusion. It is only because people have been under the delusion that the non-Self is the Self, and the unreal the Real, that they have to be weaned out of it by the other delusion called 'Self-Realization.' Actually, the Self always is the Self, and there is no such thing as 'realizing' it," like an activity or an occurrence. "Who is to realize what and how, when all that exists is the Self and nothing but the Self?"

"Self is only Being; not being this or that. It is simple Being. Be, and there is the end of ignorance."

(Silence)

Such Wisdom, such Grace, such Truth truly taught, such Silence.

(Silence)

If you have a question about yourself, what you have heard, or “realizing,” at any point, please feel free to ask.

(Silence)

Q.: Listening to the Maharshi’s Realization, I can see that it involves the ultimate discrimination of the body’s transience. I hold on to trivial things. I have been very busy with a number of things.

N.: The entire universe is like that. (laughter) It is for a relatively short time.

Q.: Compared to the solidity of the Self. I have some good meditations, which is why any remaining ignorance stands out. Any attachment to the desire for things to go a certain way, well, not matter what job I get, it will not determine my happiness. Some of the less challenging jobs would allow me time for meditation, while the more challenging ones would allow for less time for seated meditation.

N.: Whatever would be the situation, would you be in it? Are you the one that acts? Either see that there is a greater power that does everything, and your own body is but an instrument in it yet with which you have no connection, or realize that there is never anything really going on, for there is neither the experimenter nor the object of experience, neither “I” nor this world.

Q.: I was having meditations on just what you described. Reality is uncaused and is shining. I ask myself how deep is this state, and it becomes more absorbing. It is very deep! Nothing is going on, and then I think that I must act.

N.: Is that the same “I”?

Q.: Definitely not.

N.: Are there two “I”s in the one of you?

Q.: (Quiet for awhile). There are not two. There seems as if there are two when there is that belief.

N.: Does that seeming to be two occur to another, a third, one?

Q.: (laughing) We could celebrate as a big party. (laughter)

N.: Does the idea of two occur only to the second?

Q.: It occurs only to the second and not to the first.

N.: So, the notion of an ego occurs only to the ego and not to the real Self. If, to begin with, the ego is not there, how does the notion arise at all? If we say that the real, eternal Self is abiding and then another one appears to arise, but the appearance of arising appears only to it and not to the real Self, that is to say that it is its own delusion, how can it start? Such would require it to pre-exist itself, which is absurd.

Q.: Yes. From my own experience, I can see that it does not exist much of the time.

N.: Does it, then, exist any of the time? Can it exist at one time and not at another? If the Self is the Self, it is always the Self, and that Self is its own Liberation, which is its own natural state. If the Self would be an ego, even if but for a moment, it would always be the ego, or always be endowed with an ego if it were its characteristic, but such runs contrary to your experience.

Q.: Right. That would be a continuous ego.

N.: A continuous ego or samsara is not your own experience. How can something that is discontinuous actually be existent? How can that which is existent actually ever be discontinuous? How can it be diminished in any manner or at a distance or separate from you?

Q.: You are saying that even in the circular thinking of illusion, which never occurred, the only thing that is really shining the entire time is the Self. Even in the samsaric suffering that appears as an ego, mind, desires, etc., that is actually not going on.

N.: Only the one Self is everything, but that one Self does not actually become anything. Only the one Self is being misperceived as the ego and its samsaric cycle of thinking of birth and death. This is the explanation. Who perceives it as such? This is the inquiry.

Does the misperception have the misperception? Is that possible? The True Self is pure Jnana, Knowledge. It cannot

have ignorance. The Maharshi said it “is pure Consciousness and has no ego-sense about it.”

Q.: This, as always, is said from the depth, because anything real must be experienced from the real. Right?

N.: That is true. The unreal can actually neither experience nor be experienced.

Q.: (quiet for awhile). Given that, even if there were that circular multiplicity going on, inside that that there would be... (pauses) In the Maharshi’s case, there was instant depth. He went from wondering about the body to Realization quickly in the same meditation. Even inside the circular thinking, it can be dissolved like that (snaps fingers) because it has no substance. Is this what you are saying?

N.: It is because one is never inside any circle. The snake can disappear because there is no snake; there is only a rope.

Even the idea of “instant,” to which you alluded, pertains only to the individual caught up in that cycle. Only such a one can think in terms of here and there, now and then, and instant or gradual, but the Self has nothing to do with that.

Earlier, you were alluding to the fact that the Real alone can know the Real. The Self alone knows the Self. The non-Self never knows the Self, because the non-Self does not exist and has no knowing capacity. So, the non-Self does not quickly or slowly come to a Knowledge of the Self. There is Knowledge, which entails absorption of identity, or the restoring of it to its right place. The bondage and the one who is bound are not real.

There is nothing inherent in the maya to retard one’s spiritual practice, for depth and intensity of inquiry are what determine it.

Q.: That depth is there always.

N.: It is where you are.

Q.: There is the need to eliminate the belief in the unreality. It is amazing that one could sit or lie down and have such a deep, complete meditation, yet, in a certain sense, this must happen all of the time.

N.: In the sense that whoever realizes ultimately realizes in the same essential manner. It does not mean necessarily lying down on your uncle's floor. What is realized and the realizing are always the same. In the context of the story, that this occurred in this manner is incredibly wondrous. That the Realization should be with this one inquiry and that there be steady absorption, or abidance, from that time onward are very wondrous.

Q.: There was such clarity. He did not have any idea of difficulty in realizing. That is sure.

N.: He was concerned with death, turning the mind inward, and "Who am I?" and not anything else.

Q.: There was an immediacy, too.

N.: There was urgency and immediacy. There was utmost directness in the inquiry. The absorption, or abidance, was absolute and complete.

It is not likely that many, if any, will duplicate the manifest experience of Sri Bhagavan, yet what was realized, the actual, interior Knowledge, which was inquired into, is essential for all.

Another Q.: Hearing the account of Sri Ramana's Self-Realization, I start to think of my Self-Realization. I ask who it is who is going to be realized and who it is who is apparently unrealized. I find that I make up somebody who is unrealized. There is not really somebody who is in that state. It is just a habit to make that up and keep the momentum of it going. There is really nothing that keeps me from stopping that imagination.

N.: How will you cause it to cease?

Q.: (quiet for a while) The only way is to figure out who it is occurring for, who seems to be doing and who seems to be thinking.

N.: Yes, find out who you are and examine finely, with precision, the ways in which you misidentify, that is, the forms in which the "I" seems to appear.

Q.: Doing that now, there are flickers of forms starting to arise. I think that I am already too late at that point. I missed for whom they are arising.

N.: You never miss. It is not a race in time.

Q.: Ok.

N.: Except in the sense that all things are transient, and you should realize before that transience culminates in expiration, before (laughing) the transience expires. If the transience expires, it is fine, but you will not want to be identified with the transitory things.

It is never too late. In whatever form it is appearing, it is that “I” notion that still manifests as such. It is not that it came and went and has left a trail behind it. It is there as the trail. If you find that there is some form of a definition as a mind, as a body, as the conglomerate of these things, as some attribute, as with some activity, as with some quality of these things, inquire then and there. Ask yourself if you can be these things and why do you take yourself to be these things. Who takes himself to be these things?

Q.: That is very direct.

N.: The same true Self constantly exists. There is no such thing as catching it too late.

Q.: To say that it is too late is saying that, for some moment, the Self is not there. It is a mysterious blank.

N.: It is equivalent to saying that the Self ceases to exist and the ego takes over, and then the ego ceases to exist, yet the ego’s habits continue. How can the tendencies continue without the ego-notion? How can the ego stand up on its own without the existence of the Self?

The idea of “too late” is as ridiculous as the idea of “too soon.”

Q.: This takes the idea of time out of it.

N.: (Silence)

Another Q.: In Ramana’s awakening story, the idea of cause and the idea of time seem to be totally absent. From the outside perspective, it seems like an accident with no previous cause. Elsewhere he has said that his sadhana must have gone on in some other form. The story, though, seems so accidental.

N.: Divine, but not accidental.

Q.: Nothing appears to have led up to it for Venkataraman. Time and cause seem to play no part. I remain puzzled about it.

N.: The story of his Self-Realization is really a timeless one, isn't it? It is not a mere accident. It would be better to say that the entire world was an accident or a mistake.

Q.: That could be said about anything, couldn't it?

N.: Hmm, hmm. From another perspective (laughing), an accident is what an atheist believes in. (laughter) He still has belief; he just calls it an accident.

Q.: We can, though, dispense with time and cause in the consideration of what Realization is, can't we?

N.: Perhaps, that is why the Maharshi has not stated a cause, but he has spelled out the process of Self-Realization and the inquiry that yields such Self-Knowledge. Because it is Truth and does not pertain to the individual, but transcends the individual, it is timeless. Because it deals with Reality, it has no other cause.

So, the story is actually a universal one and an eternal one.

Q.: So, looking for any sequence in time or cause is simply an illusion?

N.: It is better to look to what he imparted and revealed, which is the truth of it.

Q.: That is to be free of imagination.

N.: If one is free of imagination, the story becomes one's own, but then one has abandoned all other stories about oneself.

Thus, we see a similar story with Naciketa, in the Kathopanishad, with his interview with death and in the case of Markendeya when, for him, Siva gives death a kick in the chest. It is always the same old story. (laughter)

Another Q.: Listening, I felt that the Maharshi was not trying to get anyone else to follow in his footsteps in a physical sense. I am attempting to see who it is that he was speaking to and how and why. I am placing myself as the recipient of his advice rather than trying to duplicate it. It is like speaking to someone who is

confused, upset, or even insane, there is an entire gradation. It is as if he were very clearly saying that it is not necessary to see it that way. The one who hears that must want to stop seeing it that way and feel a resonance with the advisor, so that there was more trust and belief than there was in that person's previous assumptions. None of the logic that is within the delusion would be helpful. If a crazy person thought he was Napoleon, he would not get out of his delusion by starting to act like Napoleon. He would need to stop the entire thing. He may see some of the dream wind down through detachment; he trusts, in this case, the Maharshi and wants to see the Reality the way it is. He does not try to know through this thinking mechanism that the illusory character had. He just tries to know with his heart directly.

N.: That is true. We can see the value in a having faith in Sri Bhagavan and his instruction. We can also see the entirely erroneous nature of the illusion. It is just delusion. When the jiva meets with Sri Bhagavan, the ego has met its Waterloo. (laughter) The action, or karma, of it is destroyed. The belief in it is destroyed. You may speak of it as winding down, but, really, it is the disappearance of a dream.

Q.: The new Knowledge is a matter of straightforwardness. This is what the recipient supposedly moves to. This is instead of being self-deceiving.

N.: Because he intensely desires it. Thus, the desire for Liberation, which becomes the desire for Self-Realization, or Self-Knowledge, once one knows that Liberation lies within. So straightforwardness, or honest inquiry, is in the light of knowing the secret of Bliss, where happiness lies. Knowing that Bliss lies in That, one makes every effort for it, quite naturally. The effort consists of the destruction of the previous delusion. Faith in the Truth, faith in the Sadguru, and faith in his instruction and in his example are of tremendous assistance. In light of that, effort is applied to the dissolution of one's own delusion. When delusion is gone, Napoleon has disappeared. The individual and his bondage prove to be unreal.

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil and English of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's Five Verses on the One Self.)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om



From Yoga Vasishtha

(From previous issues)

Sri Rama asked Vasishtha: Without in any manner deviating from the Vedic injunctions, the nonattached sages, who are of great eminence, formulated and bestowed upon us the Sastras (Scriptures). They were pure, with unalloyed virtues. They were the enjoyers of divine bliss. They were the upholders of the principle of Oneness, and they were the great ones who realized the Self. They are known as sadhus (those who are true, righteous, virtuous, unerring; sages, saints, holy persons). The actual experiences of these sadhus and the Sastras are the two eyes for the rest of the people. All actions should be guided by these two. The wise are critical of those who do not follow these two and who thereby suffer troubles and sorrows.

It is said that the subject and the action are interdependent. Each follows the other. Every action has a performer, and every performer has an action. This is what the Vedas and other Sastras have said. It is like the principle of the seed and the sprout. Like the sprout from the seed, by karmas is the jiva born, and, as the seed and the sprout, by the jiva are karmas born. By his vasanas (tendencies), the jiva is thrown into the cage of samsara, and, by that, he obtains the resultant experiences.

You said that, without karma, the seed of birth, the jivas are born from Brahman. Is this not contrary to what the Vedas and Sastras say? The karta (performer of action) and karma (action, the doing) produce the result. The world is the result of cause and effect, of karma and birth, so why do you reject this doctrine? In Brahman, which is devoid of illusion and causeless, all the pleasures and their experiences are the result, which is in the form of the creation. Is it not so? Then, why did you abandon them and leave them out? If karma is useless, there will be no fear of hell and such. Then, there will be chaos. The idea that

might is right, like the larger fish swallowing the smaller fish, will prevail. Complete ruin will be the result. So, please tell me, will the deed performed be fruitful or not?

Vasishta replied: Rama, your question is right. The activity relating to the mind is the seed of all karmas. It alone bears results. In the first creation, the form of the mind was born from the Supreme Brahman. It was only then that the karmas of the jivas became manifested. The jivas became egotistical according to the vasanas of the past births.

Just as the flower and its fragrance are not different, so the mind and action are not different. The wise declare that karma prompts one to do action and that the vibration or manifesting of activity (kriya) is karma. The cultivated mind is the support for action. Therefore, karma is just the mind. Be it on the mountain, in the sky, in the ocean, or in heaven, karma has its result without fail. The karma of a person is his effort of either this life or a pervious life. The good self-effort will never go in vain. There is no question of a result from an action not done. There is no question of the principle of might is right here.

Just as there cannot be the eye-ointment without the black color, so upon the vanishing of the transient phase of karma, the mind, which is the form of karma, vanishes of its own accord. (Or, upon the vanishing of the transient phase of the mind, which is karma, the form of the karma vanishes of its own accord)

The cessation of karma is the cessation of the mind. The destruction of the mind is possible for the realized, and it is not so for the rest. Just as fire and heat always remain combined, so the mind and action always remained mixed together. If one is gone, the other will go at once. The mind obtains the form of manifestation (vibration, sphurana). By refraining from actions not enjoined by the Sastra and by performing actions commanded by the Sastras, it changes into dharma (righteousness) and adharma (unrighteousness). The karma, by the result and experience of that, obtains a form of motion and thus becomes the mind. Thus, the mind and action mutually become the cause for each other and exist in the world known by the two names citta (mind) and karma.

Rama, thinking is the mind. The nature of thinking is to be vacillating always. It is the mind the does the actions, right or wrong, prescribed or prohibited. All the jivas, without exception, reap the results of their actions.

Rama then requested Vasishta to inform him of the real form of the mind, with its strong sankalpas (concept, fixed idea, volition) that have both animate and inanimate forms.

Vasishta replied: Rama, the form that was first created by the Supreme Self, which is the infinite and the omnipotent, and around which spreads the illusion, is the mind. The mind is the idea that is the differentiation (or, doubt) in “daily affairs,” which is between the Real and the unreal and which remains in the form of thought (or, memory). In the Self, which is the nature of Consciousness (Cit), the idea of “I do not know” and that by which the false impression that the non-doer is the doer appears is the mind. Just as there cannot be a virtuous man without virtues, so, likewise, there cannot be a mind without the power of karma, which is only a false creation of the nature of motion. Just as fire and heat cannot be separate, so the actions and the mind, and the mind and the jiva, cannot be separate. As the entire world, the mind spreads. The mind has sankalpa for its body, and this has the nature of giving the result, which is of the nature of illusion and causeless, filled with many creations and vasanas. Wherever, whenever, and whatever form the mind creates, by that and by its nature to have results, this form the mind obtains.

For the tree of vasanas, karma is the seed. The movement of the mind is the trunk. The peculiar and different actions are its branches. The fruits are the experienced results of the actions. This is the perspective given by the Sastras. What the mind thinks, the senses and the organs of actions carry into practice. Thus, the mind can be said to be karma, or action. The mind, buddhi (intellect), egoism, chitta (mind, memory), karma, kalpana (imagination, forming in the mind), samsrti (the world, the course of transmigration, the passage through states, mundane existence), vasanas (tendency), vidya (knowledge), yatna (exertion, volition, trouble), smriti (remembrance, thinking, bearing in mind), the indriyas (senses), prakriti (manifested nature),

maya (illusion), kriya (activity) and all other particular terms and expressions are different names for the power of Cit (Consciousness) when it identifies itself with outward objects.

Rama then asked Vasishtha regarding how these particular, different false expressions of the pure Consciousness came into existence.

Vasishtha replied: Rama, when pure Consciousness is mixed with avidya, ignorance, it obtains a form of manifestation (vibration), thinking, and obtains many forms due to vikalpa (differentiation, doubt, imagination). Then, it is called “mind.” Knowing, with certainty, the past and the present and the changes of objects, deciding that the object is like this, the mind is called “buddhi” (intellect). It is called ahamkara, egoism, when it possesses attachment to the illusory body and creates, by itself, false impressions of the truth. This is responsible for all the troubles and dangers in the world and is the cause of bondage. It is called “chitta” when it leaves one thing and remembers another and is without discrimination. It is called “karma” when the caitanya (awareness, intelligence, sentience) has movement as its main principle and shows only that which is false as it employs itself in carrying the body and limbs of the performer of action, who is the result of the form of movement. It is called “kalpana” when the Cit (Consciousness), in a moment, leaves aside its fullness and nature of its perfection and creates ideas of separateness and desire. It is called “samsrti” when it acts in the antahkarana (the inner organ, the mind) according to the decisions of the seen or unseen past or from what was just previously seen. It is called “vasana” when it possess the subtle influences of objects experienced, even very subtle like space, in the form of imagination and is full of subtle actions (karmas). Pure Consciousness, the supremely pure Truth of the Self (parisudhatmatattva) is alone real and true. Dualism is the result of utter ignorance. *(to be continued)*



From the Temple Archives

[The following letters were composed by Dr. H. Ramamoorthy during early 1994, or late 1993, through 1995. They were written to Sasvati and dealt primarily with matters related to publication of sacred texts that he, with Nome, was translating. What are presented here are passages that deal with the SAT temple, which Dr. Ramamoorthy referred to as the “Ashram,” the relation of SAT and its teachings to the ancient Vedanta tradition and Hindu tradition, and the history of what was occurring at SAT at that time among those who were actually involved in the teachings and practices. Of the first of these letters, only the last page survives.]

...I am happy to learn that you will be returning to India in February, for however short a period.

You would be visiting the spots where the *Ribhu Gita* was read out to the youthful Ramana, and where he asked the *Ribhu Gita* to be read out to devotees later.

It is not just a coincidence that you have come to deal with the invocatory Sanskrit text of the translated *Ribhu Gita*, and the Sanskrit text of Sankara stotras, and travel with these (of which you are the original computer person) to Tiruvannamalai and to Chidambaram and to Bangalore where the publication of the stotras may bear fruit.

It has been a long time in the coming.

You are from India, and now born in America, returning to India, after however long a period, participating in the team taking back a combination of the riches of both countries, for the benefit of a wider world.

As you tread the region of the Ribhu-Ramana confluence, and the Chidambaram Abode of the Lord of the Cosmic Dance (invoked at the end of every chapter of the Tamil *Ribhu Gita*),

and other hallowed ground in India, the earth beneath will feel the joy of the footfalls of the returning daughter.

Truly yours,

H. Ramamoorthy

[This next letter was written after Sasvati's return to the USA]

3/14/94

Many thanks for your letter on return from India. I am very happy that it turned out to be a memorable trip, and you felt quite natural to be there.

It is a blessing that you stepped into the heaven of Bhagavan's bodiless presence, and that you have brought it back with you to Santa Cruz. It will now be a part of your normal self, and be with you wherever you may be.

I am delighted to read that you feel your true spiritual home is India--which presents diverse facets to different visitors.

These experiences and memories are something special and valuable in the history of the Ashram. And I think they should not be allowed to fade out in the flow of time down the decades.

It will be a great service to the spiritually thirsty community here, not only for now, but also in the years to come, if you make a permanent record of the experiences and emotions and reactions, the anxieties and the disappointments, the unforeseen and the unforgettable, the flights of thought and the flood of memories of this trip for all the party, in the manner of a personal story.

It is of such stuff that history is recorded for posterity. Decades hence there will be a surging interflow of spiritual currents between the East and the West, and your trip will be a significant milepost, though it may not be so evident today.

I would request you to consider recording your visit as a personal experience, which will be of interest not only to the people in USA, but also to Indians. There will be enquiries about it in Ramanasramam or Bangalore Center and other

such places, even after many years, as we now are trying to dig out hard-to-find records of a previous century.

If you could put down your thoughts, as and when they pop up, in random phrases and words, not necessarily chronologically, and gather these and send them to me, we can try to make a booklet out of these, which you can go through and brush up to see that it is alright.

It can not only be published in USA, but I can set about making a Tamil translation of it, and try to get it published in India, where there will be a sizeable avid readership, to learn about the impressions of well-informed Americans on a spiritual tour to India, a none too common occurrence.

I could also try to have excerpts of the story serialized in some leading popular Tamil magazine, which will help in spreading it wider in easily digestible installments.

Do you think I have been successful in selling the idea to you? Or do I see a smile of amusement? Not impressed?

Please take your own time to think and reply.

[Then, the letter discusses a number of personal items related to the creation of some wedding invitations and about his niece]

I am grateful for the intentions you have expressed about creating the wedding invitations. I consider it auspicious that an auspicious occasion is being initiated at the Ashram.

It has taken some time to reply to you letter. This letter has been in my mind ever since I received you letter but has come to be recorded only now.

Ever Yours in Truth,

H. Ramamoorthy

[The final letter presented here shows the kinds of literary work that was in progress, both translation and original works. All of thee stotrams referred to by him, as well as the “brief note”

mentioned at the end of the letter, are included in SAT's upcoming publication, *Advaita Devatam*

July 20,1995

I am in receipt of your letter of July 11, enclosing

Daksinamurti Dhyanam

Daksinamurti Stotram

Daksinamurti Varnamala .. all with diacritical marks

Daksinamurti Astakam

Daksinamurtyupanisat

and *Ganesa Pancaratnam* final proof

I have gone through these and noted in pencil the corrections on individual pages, which will be the basic source for carrying out the changes.

I have also given a separate summary sheet of the corrections with page nos. line nos. and catchwords for corrections in respect of all the above, except for *Ganesa Pancaratnam* where I have noted down the summary on the front page itself. These are only a cross check to the original individual page corrections. I hope the corrections will be clear enough for you to follow.

In respect of *Daksmamurtyupanisat*, I would suggest that a further proof after carrying out the corrections may be sent to me, as there are various types of changes to be made.

I have indicated the beginning and end of verses in *Daksinamurtyupanisat* by the marks/and//and also giving a number to each of these, which are reflected in the English transliteration.

There are a couple of corrections indicated in respect of the Sanskrit text also, and I hope you will be able to carry them out, with the help of numbers (of template) given. Besides, Master Nome may also review whether any of the corrections in Sanskrit text should be shown in footnotes as variant readings.

I am happy to learn that Master Nome is working on a new edition of *Self Enquiry* which will contain his commentary. One

of the important ways in which the life work and thoughts of persons of spiritual greatness is preserved for the benefit of posterity is by printed works as is for example the case with Bhagavan's works and *Talks*, and Sankara's commentaries. Master Nome's works should also be available for a wider circle over time; and it is a good thing this is happening.

I am awaiting *Svatmanirupanam* with diacriticals after you have done with *Daksinamurti*.

We are all quite well here. There are no plans in the horizon for traveling to California in the near future. I hope you had an inspiring Guru Purnima celebration

With lots of love.

Yours in Truth,

H. Ramamoorthy

As regards *Daksinamurti Astakam*, I enclose a brief note which Master Nome may like to incorporate suitably in the Introduction. Perhaps he has already taken note of this.



Announcements

Appreciation

A big thanks to all who are helping our temple shine as a sacred sanctuary of nondual Self-Knowledge. A special thanks to Raman Muthukrishnan, Ganesh Sadasivan, Dhanya Nambirajan, Kathy Rogers, Ryan Shaw, Tim Frank, Myra Taylor, Bob Haber, Eric Ruetz, Wimala Brown, and Clark Coffee for their selfless efforts in caring for the temple, preserving the teachings, and helping with retreats and other holy events.