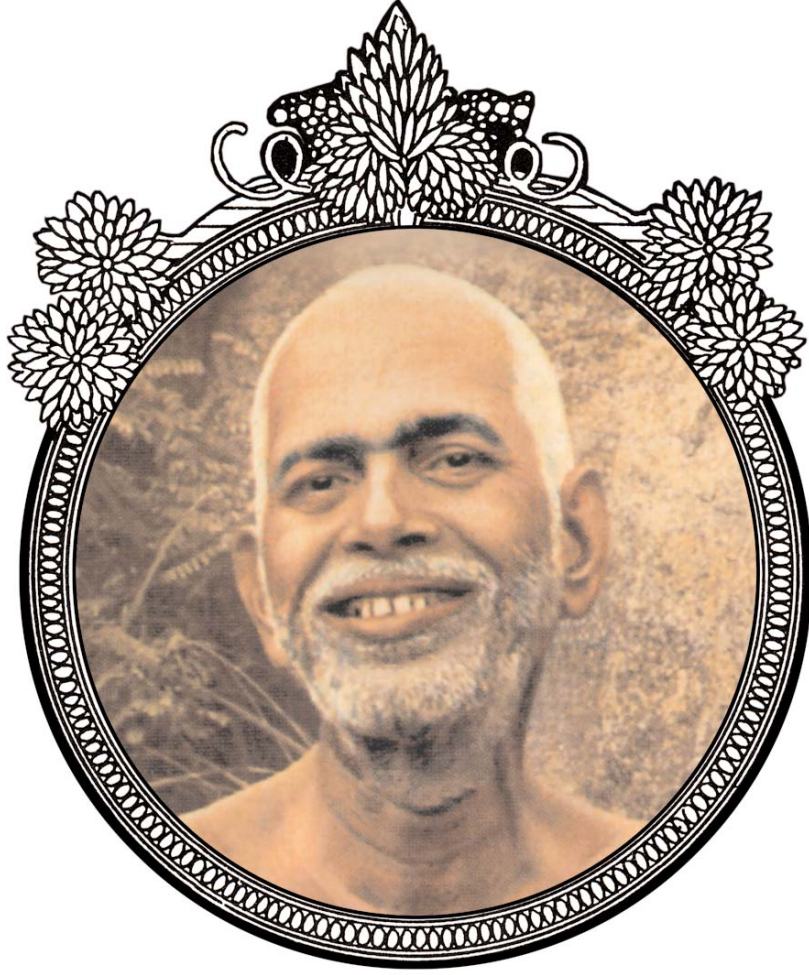


Reflections

April May June
2009



Society of Abidance in Truth



Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

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Reflections, April, May, June 2009

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Invocation

I bow to Him by whose glance the bondage is turned into Liberation and the Knower realizes himself.

Jnanadeva, Amritanubhava 2:2

The darkness of ignorance is transformed into the blessed daylight of Self-Knowledge at the touch of the Sun of His Grace.

Jnanadeva, Amritanubhava 2:10

He is indescribable in words, which become silent in His Oneness that tolerates no duality.

Jnanadeva, Amritanubhava 2:28

Ah! Sadguru! How should I treat Thee who art so mysterious? Thou dost not allow Thyself to be determined by any conception.

Jnanadeva, Amritanubhava 2:37

The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From *Day by Day With Bhagavan*)

7/12/46

When the post arrived, it brought a letter with news of the death of L. Sarma's first daughter-in-law. This led Bhagavan to speak of death. He said: "The dead are fortunate. It is only those who are left behind who feel miserable. It is our constant concern to bear the burden of this body and look after its needs. Day in, day out, this is our occupation—bathing, eating, massaging our legs, and so on—no end to it. When we die, it takes four persons to carry this body, yet we carry it about constantly without even stopping to think that we are doing so. We can easily lift a heavy stone under water, but, as soon as we take it out we find how heavy it is, and, in the same way, we don't feel the weight of the body as long as a chaitanya or life force permeates it.

"Deathlessness is our real nature, and we falsely ascribe it to the body, imagining that it will live forever and losing sight of what is really immortal, simply because we identify ourselves with the body. It says in the Upanishads that the jnani looks forward eagerly to the time when he can throw off the body, just as a laborer carrying a heavy load looks forward to reaching his destination and laying it down."

7/16/46

A visitor asked Bhagavan what one should do for the betterment of atma.

Bhagavan: What do you mean by atma and by betterment?

Visitor: We don't know all that; that is why we come here.

Bhagavan: The Self or Atma is always as it is. There is no such thing as attaining it. All that is necessary is to give up regarding the not-Self as Self and the unreal as Real. When we

give up identifying ourselves with the body, the Self alone remains.

Visitor: But how is one to give up this identification? Will coming here and getting our doubts removed help in the process?

Bhagavan: Questions are always about things that you don't know and will be endless unless you find out who the questioner is. Though the things about which the questions are asked are unknown, there can be no doubt that a questioner exists to ask the questions, and, if you ask who he is, all doubts will be set at rest.

Visitor: All that I want to know is whether satsang is necessary and whether my coming here will help me or not.

Bhagavan: First you must decide what is satsang. It means association with sat or Reality. One who knows or has realized sat is also regarded as sat. Such association with sat or with one who knows sat is absolutely necessary for all. Sankara has said (Bhagavan here quoted the Sanskrit verse) that in all the three worlds there is no boat like satsang to carry one safely across the ocean of births and deaths.

7/18-46

This morning, questions were put by a visitor, by name S. P. Tayal.

S. P. Tayal: I have been making sadhana for nearly 20 years and I can see no progress. What should I do?

Bhagavan: I may be able to say something if I know what the sadhana is.

S. P. Tayal: From about 5 o'clock every morning I concentrate on the thought that the Self alone is real and all else unreal. Although I have been doing this for about 20 years, I cannot concentrate for more than two or three minutes without my thoughts wandering.

Bhagavan: There is no other way to succeed than to draw the mind back every time it turns outwards and fix it in the Self.

There is no need for meditation or mantra or japa or dhyana or anything of the sort, because these are our real nature. All that is needed is to give up thinking of objects other than the Self. Meditation is not so much thinking of the Self as giving up thinking of the not-Self. When you give up thinking of outward objects and prevent your mind from going outwards and turn it inward and fix it in the Self, the Self alone will remain.

S. P. Tayal: What should I do to overcome the pull of these thoughts and desires? How should I regulate my life so as to attain control over my thoughts?

Bhagavan: The more you get fixed in the Self the more other thoughts will drop off of themselves. The mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, and the I-thought is the root of all of them. When you see who this “I” is and whence it proceeds, all thoughts get merged in the Self. Regulation of life, such as getting up at a fixed hour, bathing, doing mantra, japa, etc., observing ritual, all this is for people who do not feel drawn to Self-enquiry or are not capable of it. But, for those who can practise this method, all rules and discipline are unnecessary.

At this point K. M. Jivrajani interposed: Has one necessarily to pass through the stage of seeing occult visions before attaining Self-Realization?

Bhagavan: Why do you bother about visions and whether they come or not?

K. M. Jivrajani: I don't. I only want to know so that I shan't be disappointed if I don't have them.

Bhagavan: Visions are not a necessary stage. To some they come and to others they don't, but, whether they come or not, you always exist and you must stick to that.

K. M. Jivrajani: I sometimes concentrate on the brain centre and sometimes on the heart—not always on the same centre. Is that wrong?

Bhagavan: Wherever you concentrate and on whatever centre, there must be a you to concentrate, and that is what you must concentrate on. Different people concentrate on different centres, not only the brain and the heart but also the space

between the eyebrows, the tip of the nose, the tip of the tongue, the lower-most chakra and even external objects. Such concentration may lead to a sort of laya in which you will feel a certain bliss, but care must be taken not to lose the thought “I Am” in all this. You never cease to exist in all these experiences.

K. M. Jivrajani: That is to say that I must be a witness?

Bhagavan: Talking of the “witness” should not lead to the idea that there is a witness and something else apart from him that he is witnessing. The “witness” really means the light that illumines the seer, the seen and the process of seeing. Before, during and after the triads of seer, seen and seeing, the illumination exists. It alone exists always.

K. M. Jivrajani: It is said in books that one should cultivate all the good or daivic qualities in order to prepare oneself for Self-realisation.

Bhagavan: All good or daivic qualities are included in jnana, and all bad asuric qualities are included in ajnana. When jnana comes, all ajnana goes, and all daivic qualities come automatically. If a man is a jnani he cannot utter a lie or do anything wrong. It is, no doubt, said in some books that one should cultivate one quality after another and thus prepare for ultimate moksha, but, for those who follow the jnana or vichara marga, their sadhana is itself quite enough for acquiring all daivic qualities; they need not do anything else.



Undifferentiated

Satsang, April 6, 2008

Om, Om, Om (Silence)

N: Undifferentiated and, thus, doubtless is Being, which is the real Self. Every doubt, every notion of illusion, is based upon some false supposition of differentiation, as if that which alone is could become two or other than what it is. A doubt is always

of differentiation, and the resolution of the doubt is always the relinquishment of the supposed differentiation.

Thus it is with questions and answers. The explanations in the teaching are, in one sense, based on the differentiation, yet the purpose of them is the dissolution of that very differentiation.

The primary differentiation is the assumed identity as an individual, "I." This assumed differentiation is integral to every other differentiation, such as a conception of a mind, a conception of a world, or the conception of anything else. The dissolution of the world and the subsidence of the mind are the abandonment of this false differentiation. It cannot be negated in an objective fashion because such presupposes the differentiation as existent, and that is the very thing that one wishes to abandon.

Abandonment of differentiation is the Realization of the Truth. The direct approach is the inquiry into your own nature: Who am I? This inquiry does not presuppose differentiation and then attempt to explain or transform such. The inquiry asks if there is any such differentiation, and, since the way is subjective and not objective, the inquiry is, "Who am I to perceive some difference? Who is it that perceives a mind, and who is it that supposedly perceives a world?"

The undifferentiated state is the state of Reality. It is innate. (silence)

The natural, or innate, Self does not transform itself into anything else. There is nothing else to act upon it to transform it into something that it is not. (silence)

If your desire is to realize the Supreme Truth, to know Reality as it is, find within that which has no birth, no death, no change at any time, which does not undergo any kind of modification or transformation, and which does not enter or exit anywhere. The one who finds that is himself that. It is not that you become Brahman, but, rather, Brahman is what you are. Such is the immutable Self.

If differentiation appears to persist for you, inquire for whom it is. Who am I? Upon inquiry, there is Self-Knowledge. In Self-Knowledge, you realize that, not only does differentiation not persist, but it did not start. That which truly is always is just as it is. (silence)

Q.: In feeling your instruction, I hesitate to put my question in words, lest they be abstract, for your instruction does not feel abstract. Any obstacle can be said to be a doorway. Any suffering tells me where not to go. Many qualified-nondual teachings describe the path in terms of becoming. The image is that of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. If a butterfly tries to comprehend its nature from the premise of being a caterpillar, it will never do so. The inability to comprehend causes me to drop the image of becoming altogether. The futility reached by the mind's attempt to comprehend prompts a more subjective inquiry.

N.: The idea of becoming is that of arriving at a state in which you are That. That is the Self. The Self is already existent. So, it amounts to saying that you become what you are.

Perhaps, the supposition is that there is someone apart from the Self who will be transformed in some way into That. What you are, the Self, though, always is the case. Knowledge reveals it. It does not transform you into it.

The purpose of analogies such as that of the caterpillar and the butterfly is to point out one's real identity. The same one which is a butterfly later appears as a caterpillar earlier. The identity does not change; only the form does. Take that much and dive inward. Do not suppose a transformation of Existence.

Q.: So, the butterfly was always a butterfly.

N.: What is it that appears as both caterpillar and butterfly? What is it that appears as the aspirant and the realized being?

Q.: The knower who says, "I am limited," and the knower who could say, "I am unlimited." The commonality is the knower.

N.: Is the nature of that knower limited or not?

Q.: If the second is ever possible, it could not be limited in the first. Otherwise, all the spiritual teachings would be a cruel hoax.

N.: So, does the limited become the unlimited, or is it that the unlimited really is and the limited is only an illusion?

Q.: It must have always been unlimited if it should ever become unlimited.

N.: Then, there is no limited one. Limitation is only an illusion. If you inquire to know who you are, the unlimited knows itself as it is, free of the imagined limitations.

At a point in practice, it may seem as if a limited being reaches for an unlimited Being, but the very nature of Being is to be without limitation. It is formless and imperishable. It is changeless. So, inquire into the very nature of the one who is supposedly limited, and you find only the unlimited. (silence)

Another Q.: I ask myself from where I could start the inquiry. Can it start outside of myself? That assumes something has broken off from me, and I cannot start from there.

N.: You must start with the nature of the starter.

Q.: The inquiry cannot really start from some place else. Do I actually start? (laughter) When I really inquire, it does not actually start. It is as if it is over before it starts.

N.: (Silence)

Q.: Inquiry is great because it does not have a beginning or end. It requires nothing outside. It does not require anything. It does not depend on anything else to kick it off or to know how to do it. It does not require understanding, and it has the best reward.

N.: (Silence)

Another Q.: I inquire as to what is seen when Consciousness looks at Consciousness. Considering the Maharshi's analogy of the movie and the screen, do I look into the projector? It seems to be a painful thing to do. Should I bend the projector so that it shines back? From childhood, I remember a way of tricking the body so that one thing feels like two. Without looking at it, when I place a thin pencil between my crossed fingers, it is perceived as two objects. Now, it seems to apply.

N.: In what way does it apply?

Q.: I am misinterpreting one thing to be many things.

N.: Such as the misinterpretation of the senses determining reality?

Q.: (laughing) Yes.

N.: By your senses alone do you know of the body and the world, yet you have given an example in which clearly the senses give the wrong information. Knowing this, how could you continue with the assumption that whatever you sense is in any way real?

What was painful about the movie analogy?

Q.: The painfulness of the light if I looked into a projector.

N.: The movie is only an analogy given by the Maharshi to indicate the insubstantiality of both the subject and the object in your experience. A movie is projected upon a screen. A picture of a king is projected and, before the king, is enacted some drama. The drama and the king are both illusory. They have no substance, and only the screen is there. The king is the equivalent of the subject or experiencer. The drama he sees is equivalent to the entire objective experience, from subtle thought to the forms of the world. All the differentiated imagery has no substance. The screen alone is there. It does not become wet when the image of water is projected on it, and it does not burn when fire is projected. It is not affected by anything that is projected. The screen is analogous to your Being. Just as the screen does not become the images, so Being does not become an individual with a mind, a body, and the senses. Just as the screen is unmoved and unaffected by whatever is projected on it, so your Being is unaffected by the events of the world, the birth, life and death of the body, the movement of the senses, and the movements and shapes of your thoughts. As the screen is there prior to the movie, during the movie, and after the movie is long gone, so Being exists before, during, and after this universe. To realize the truth of this is not painful for anyone.

To discover your real Being as it is, inquire into the very nature of Being, which is also Consciousness and Bliss. Abandon the misidentification with the body, the mind, the ego and such. No longer mix up the screen with the images.

Another Q.: You have taught that Self-inquiry is nonobjective. Even if objective, the intent would be right, but the depth comes from the nonobjective.

N.: That's right.

Q.: If fully nonobjective?

N.: Then, the intention is fully fulfilled. Even if objective conceptions are initially mixed in with the inquiry, the intention will set everything right. If the intention is to know oneself, one does not stop.

Q.: I am thinking in terms of mental and physical attempts. The essence comes from the depth. Any attempt to inquire and to know myself must be completely internal and not outward-turned.

N.: Yes, the inquiry is entirely internal. It is more internal than even the mind. Nevertheless, any spiritual effort put forth, whether the effort be physical or mental, is worthwhile and bears fruit. For complete Self-Realization, it must be entirely internal and entirely nonobjective.

Q.: Yes, it is similar to the teaching that was being read on Friday. It is just a removal of that ignorance. I can give a few examples of my own ignorance. I take Sudafed to try to keep the sneezing down. Because I believe in thought and the mind, when it alters my mind, somehow I feel that my state has changed.

N.: Does it do anything for the sneezing, or does it leave the sneezing as is and you think about it differently? (laughter)

Q.: Before the Sudafed, it was out of control sneezing, but, afterward, it definitely improved, so at least I can sit here without making a big noise every minute. (laughter)

N.: I thought someone was blowing a conch shell. (laughter)

Q.: I can see that I associate myself with the physical and mental alterations.

N.: In what way does it have to do with yourself? You existed before the sneeze, you existed after the sneeze. You existed before the Sudafed and after the Sudafed.

Q.: It seems that there is a certain clarity associated with the Knowledge of that Existence.

N.: Yes. Is that affected by a sneeze or some medicine?

Q.: No. But the ignorance seems like the trouble in this case. It is the identification.

N.: How can you identify with a sneeze? (laughter) How could you possibly be a body? Or, considering the mind in its various modes, how could you possibly be that when your Existence is continuously the same.

Q.: Yes, that makes sense.

N.: Your Being did not commence at birth and will not cease with the perishing of the body. Your Being did not begin with a particular mental mode or state. It will not end when a state changes.

Q.: Yes, that is so true; it is so important.

N.: Is the clarity of Self-Knowledge to be equated with the acuteness or dullness of the intellect? The sun shines, and the light falls upon a small piece of mirror. According to the condition of the mirror, the reflection will be bright or dull. Does that affect the original sunlight? The mind, or the intellect, shines by reflected light. Its form is like the mirror. The original sunlight is your Self. That which so shines so that you can see the clarity or the un-clarity of the intellect is the real Knowledge. That is pure Consciousness. That is what you are. This is truly nonobjective. As the body is objective to the intellect, so the intellect is objective to the inner Consciousness.

Q.: Yes, this helps. It is so important. Thank you. It helps to clarify this. If I take up any state, any change of state, or depend on the clarity of my mind in a sattvic state, then I associate that clarity of the Self, of Consciousness, with that sattvic state, which may be less cluttered than a tamasic or rajasic state of mind.

N.: That is so. But still you are beyond the gunas, beyond those qualities. That which shines so those qualities can be recognized is itself beyond the qualities. That is pure Consciousness. That is what you are. The mind has qualities, the senses have qualities, and the body has qualities, yet you are without qualities. You are just Consciousness. So, if you are afflicted with the illness of illusion and transmigration this is

recommended. Ten out of ten jnanis who cross the stream and count themselves on the other side recommend this “medicine.” (laughter)

Q.: It should be instantaneous medicine. There is no waiting because this is the Self.

N.: This is your Self, so it is timelessly true. What do you think? Should one give up clarity for the sake of the sinuses? (laughter)

Q.: That does not make any sense.

N.: No it does not.

[Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from Gaudapada’s Karika on the Mandukya Upanishad and verses from the Kaivalya Navaneeta.]

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om



From Yoga Vasishtha

(Continued from previous issues)

3:97:11

Upon the vanishing of the mind, there is no confusion about what is done. (or, The mind destroyed is not suitable for any act of wandering (whirling around). Liberation is thus, it is declared. That which is named a living being is not born again.

Sri Rama said: Worshipful Bhagavan, you have previously declared that living beings born are of three kinds of persons. The cause is that their minds are of a good or not good (true or not true) nature. (or, Worshipful Bhagavan, you have declared that living beings born are of three kinds of persons. The chief cause is that their minds are of a good or not good nature.)

Tell me how, from the pure Consciousness, the Truth free of an intellect, the mind has arisen and has become the extensive picture of the wondrous universe.

Vasishtha said: There are, indeed, three spaces, Rama that exist extensively within: the mind-space (citta-akasa), the Consciousness-space (cid-akasa), and the world-space (elemental space) (bhuta-akasa), threefold.

They, here, indeed, are common to all, everywhere, indeed, existing (present). The power of the Truth of pure Consciousness, certainly, has come to attain (gone to reach) the nature of “as existence.”

That which exists as the outer and inner, awakened as (known as) existence and non-existence, the pervader pervading the entirety of the elements (beings) (the pervader of all the elements combined), that is declared to be the Consciousness-space.

That which is placed in all the elements, superior [to them], of a nature that impels (causes) darkness, by which this is spread, that is declared to be the mind-space.

With the enjoyment of the spheres of the ten directions, that which is of an uninterrupted form, is that which is of the elemental nature, which space is the dwelling place of wind, that which gives water, and such.

Both the space and the mind-space arise from the force of the Consciousness-space. Consciousness is the cause, indeed, of all, just as the day is of the activities of the animals.

“I am inert, I am not inert,” thus, is the ascertainment of the tarnished consciousness, and it is that which, indeed, is known as the mind, and by that the space and such are conceived.

For the un-awakened self, the sphere of the three spaces is formed in the imagination, imagined (arranged) for the purpose of spiritual instruction, but there is no sphere for the awakened.

The One, alone, the Supreme Brahman, is all and of the form of all.

The sphere of the awakened is the eternal without causing confusion (or, without causing parts).

Speech (lit., by speech) bursting forth (with the appearance) of duality and nonduality, arranging (or binding together) and inserting [such], is for instructing the ignorant alone and not at all for the awakened.



From the Temple Archives

[The first letter presented here is from a devotee of Sri Ramana in India. Nome's response follows, which, in turn, is followed by the response from this devotee.]

Friday, January 9, 2009

Dear sir,

I am in Sri Ramana Bhagawan since 1999. I belong to Vellore, and I frequently make visits to Tiruvannamalai. I will be attending Jayanthi also on 11th Jan 09. Usually I prefer to serve food in the dining hall. Sometimes, even the petty matter when people speak to me affects my mind, and it takes a long time to vanish.

I helped one of the members of Ramana Ashram in CMC Hospital when he was brought, and, after some time, I asked him whether I can stay in his house during Jayanthi, and he said it is not possible. This affects me for sometime, and, after a short or long time, I became alright.

Kindly let me know what sort of formula I should practice.

Wish you Ramana Jayanthi.

Yours in Sri Ramana,

Monday, January 12, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

To be a devotee of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is a great blessing. Nothing in the world can compare with this blessing.

By inquiring to know the Self, by His Grace, the Knowledge of the Self is realized, and, in that, there is lasting peace and happiness. Disturbance in the mind is not due to outer circumstances or causes but to the adherence of the mind to its own delusive notions. Overlooking the innate happiness of the Self, one seeks for it elsewhere and needlessly suffers, for no one else can give you the happiness that is truly yours. If, knowing the Self, you find that Being is Bliss, nothing will perturb your peace or have the capacity to cause you to suffer. Therefore, it is essential to know that happiness is within and to inquire to know what that “within,” the Self, is.

The Maharshi’s instruction regarding this is found in the book, *Who am I?*

When a tendency appears in the mind, search for the thoughts that constitute it. Trace those specific thoughts to the definitions you hold of yourself. Then, inwardly determine the falseness of those definitions. Trace the misidentifications to the primal false assumption of “I.” Inquiring, that supposed “I” will vanish, because it is unreal. That which remains is actually the ever-existent.

It is not the real Self that becomes upset. Is there another self? Existence is only one. So, inquire into the nature of any other supposed self. This will resolve all.

I hope that you find the above helpful. It is simply a reiteration of what Sri Bhagavan has taught. Please feel free to write again if you wish to do so.

May your inquiry be deep, and, by Sri Ramana’s Grace, may you abide in the Knowledge of the Self and thus in perpetual peace and bliss.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

Dear sir,

Thank you very much.

I had been to Bhagawan Jayanthi, and I served as a volunteer. I also chanted Veda Parayanam.

Thank you very much.

I will keep in touch with you whenever I have a problem, and I could not control it.

With regards,

Yours in Sri Ramana,

[This message was one among several sent by a seeker in the USA, some of whose correspondence appeared earlier. Nome's response follows.]

Friday, January 16, 2009

I've been having obstacles arise in my inquiry lately. I get the method of inquiring into the subject of those experience. Mainly fears. Not so much desires lately. Seeking happiness within, a happiness that is beyond the body, and all worldly circumstance, correct?

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

Obstacles call for more applied effort and more depth of inquiry. Examine to determine the ideas constituting the obstacle and inquire to free yourself of those ideas.

Fears may be said to be the inverse of desires. One who knows that happiness is within does not fear its loss, and one who knows the unborn and imperishable Self does not fear the loss of existence. The Upanishad declares: "Where there is a second there is fear." A second is any dualism, inclusive of the notion of an existent ego.

May you ever abide as the bodiless, egoless Self, the One without a second, thus to dwell in perpetual happiness and peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This next selection is from a seeker who, living at a considerable distance, for several years has been listening to recordings of sastang, though he was unable to be physically present. Nome's response follows.]

Friday, January 23, 2009

Namaste, Master, with joy to receive your personal note. Thank you. I humbly put a few questions to you for clarity and understanding. Sri Bhagawan used to say that controlling the mind is like leading the run-away cow to shed with a bunch of green grass in the front. My mind loves to go to pasture to graze on the sweet memories of days of childhood and youth in the land that is far away now. What do I use as a bunch of green grass to bring it back in the shed of my Self? Bliss, peace, etc., are, more or less, just words at this stage. Happiness of deep sleep is more or less unknown on account of bad back, frequent bathroom trips, and other age related blessings.

The second question is about my addiction: is reading too many advaita books a roadblock in any way? I read them because, at the time of reading, I feel like I am reading a letter from a relative from home or reading a map of some well traveled familiar land.

I am very, very confused about the importance of being in the physical presence of Guru for removal of vasanas.

I appreciate very much your kindness in taking the time to respond. Namaste.

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The "grass" in the Maharshi's analogy represents the innate happiness. This Bliss is identical with Being. The analogy demonstrates the discrimination regarding how to turn the mind inward. The roving cow, or mind, is in search of the happiness, but, seeking it externally, does not obtain that which is desired, which is pure happiness, but rather finds trouble due to its own activities. So, the mind-cow must be returned to its right place

and persuaded to remain there. Two approaches present themselves. One can attempt to forcibly restrain the mind-cow with a tether and such or, if shown the luscious green grass of happiness, which indeed was all that it ever truly wanted, the mind-cow will naturally remain at peace in its true place within. If forcibly restrained, the mind-cow will be out of trouble for the time being but also awaiting the opportunity to go outward again. If it finds happiness within, which is the path of Knowledge, it remains without the tendency to return to delusion.

You need not conceive what the “grass” could be. You have sought happiness at all times save those in which you were actually happy, such as in deep sleep. The desire is another proof that the happiness of the Self exists. It is an intuitive search for your own Self.

Your knowledge is deeper than what you state in your message. Though saying that peace and bliss are only words for you, still you desire what they signify. Such desire has even prompted your question. The desire is due to an inner knowledge that your natural state is full of peace and bliss, and you are not satisfied unless your experience is that perfect fullness. Bliss is your very nature. Convinced of this, practice the inquiry to realize the Self as it truly is. Thus you will be happy regardless of the conditions of the body.

You need not eliminate the sweet memories. Just become keenly aware of the source of the joy reflected in them.

Books of Advaita Vedanta pose no obstacle. Yes, like a letter from your true home and a map of a familiar land are they. Be sure to deeply inquire as you read so that you vividly realize within you what they proclaim.

The Guru is not a body, just as you are not a body. His presence is really the Existence of the Self, which is infinite and eternal. The value of satang has been proclaimed by the wise for ages. Inner association is what is essential.

I hope that you find what is mentioned above helpful. May your inquiry be deep so that the profound, happy Knowledge of the Self shines in your heart always.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[This is a letter from Nome in response to a seeker. The questions can be inferred from the answers contained in the response.]

January 30, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Diligence and intensity of practice are important. If your mind wanders to various kinds of thoughts, discern the motivation. What are you looking for in them, and in what is that found? The seeking for happiness, the attempt to know what is real, and search for identity are the same. Such is fulfilled in the Knowledge of the Self.

Being is Bliss. Being is not an activity, mode of mind, or any object. It is timeless and spaceless. It is eternal and infinite. In it, the mind dissolves in the Knowledge of the mind's nonexistence. It is not merely that the mind exhausts itself; that would result only in temporary quietude, just as sleep follows waking activity. Inquiry may be said to return the mind to its source, and pure Consciousness remains. In this return, all of the mental tendencies of ignorance are eliminated by clear Knowledge, just as darkness may be said to be eliminated by light. Likewise, the here and now of the waking state are similar to that in a dream. The Self transcends the past, the present, and the future. One destroys the illusory ignorance by inquiring as to what one's real nature is (the significance of "Who am I?"). Sri Ramana's instruction is to make one's vision nonobjective.

What you have mentioned concerning love is clear. All that has been stated previously about happiness and peace applies to love, as well. In its essence and fullness, it is the undivided nature of Being, the One Self.

May your inquiry continue to deepen so that mind-transcendent, blissful Self-Knowledge shines unveiled entirely, so that you are ever at peace and your life is suffused with the long-sought love that is, actually, within you always.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[Another response to the same seeker.]

February 3, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Lasting peace is found only in the immutable. The transient and changeful cannot provide it. Such is secure only if you are identical with it, for then no separation is possible. That is the Self. “Tat Tvam Asi” (That you are) declares the Chandogya Upanishad. If this is conclusively realized within, fear and suffering vanish, and you remain as the Peace, itself, regardless of the condition of the circumstances of the world, the body, senses, etc. Steady, deep inquiry reveals this Knowledge. Practice with your best effort, undaunted by apparent obstacles, endowed with humility in light of the vast Truth you are attempting to realize and the magnitude of the holy, gracious sages such as Sri Ramana Maharshi, and with your heart filled with joy because of the freedom at hand and the freedom to be free, is advisable.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[The next three selections are responses to the same seeker]

February 5, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. You may wish to question how much emphasis you place on the mind’s thoughts, especially the self-centered ones. The Self is beyond all of them. Even from the point of view of a manifested universe, of what importance are the tense, troubled ideas connected with one tiny pseudo-personal entity the duration of which is less than a blink of an eye in universal time? The rigid repetition of an idea or set of ideas is not worthy of you whose nature is of the divine and the eternal.

Peacefulness, equanimity, equal vision, steadiness, courage, honesty, love for all beings, humility, absence of ego-concern,

fortitude, introspective vision, wisdom, and such are the natural characteristics of those who aspire for the highest, Self-Realization.

May you, by contemplating what is indicated above and by reflecting upon the teachings of wise sages, be at peace within.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

February 6, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

The analogies given by Sri Bhagavan concerning the train and the luggage and the temple tower and the carved figure pertain to the unreality of the ego and the falseness of the conception of being the performer of action.

Activity is not bondage and is not the cause of suffering. The “I am the doer” idea is limitation and causes suffering. Mere cessation of bodily actions does not yield Liberation. If inaction is grasped with fear as the cause, the fear will only intensify or endure. The result is indolence and not spiritual peace. In such a mode of mind, concepts about external sources of happiness and suffering, and misidentification of the Self with the body, are delusions left intact.

Action without attachment, as taught in *Bhagavad Gita*, *Yoga Vasishtha*, and other holy texts, is correct. Such is easily attained by those who know the source of happiness within. They then inquire to realize the Self as bodiless Being. Being beyond the identification with the body, they remain at peace and free even when the body acts. The body acts; the Self abides still.

You may wish to continue to consider what was mentioned in a previous email regarding self-centered thoughts.

It may also be helpful to consider what you presently regard as a troubling situation for yourself contrasted with the phenomenal hardships faced by other people around the world. It may provide some perspective.

The *Gita* declares, Let a man lift himself up; let him not lower himself.

Surrender is to God. Giving up in frustration and reacting by entertaining a mental mode of apathy has nothing to do with the deep devotion in which the perfect fullness shines.

The above is mentioned in the hope that it will clarify, inspire, and encourage.

May your meditations be deep and the spiritual freedom that you find suffuse the entirety of your life.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

February 12, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

A good approach to spiritual practice, in the understanding that its joy and freedom are surpassed only by the final Realization, is that no kind of bondage is insuperable, being only illusory, and the true Self is ever present, yet whatever time is required to completely destroy the bondage is happily well-spent.

As you deepen the inquiry, the distinction between activity and inactivity of the body, senses, etc., will completely disappear, for the Self is ever the same, unborn and imperishable.

It is not difficult to correctly, precisely pursue realization of the Self, for every step you make in that direction reveals peace and bliss, just as, contrariwise, a step into delusion yields the suffering that reminds one to go back the way she came. The Grace is always there; one has only to inquire to experience it. In one sense, the efforts made are infinitesimal in contrast to the magnitude of Grace, the Truth of the Self, of the nature of Sat-Cit-Ananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss). So, it is a case of Grace for the sake of Grace. That is the real Existence; the ego is nothing at all.

May your inquiry continue to deepen so that you abide steadily in the Self, as the Self, the self-luminous Reality.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a message from a SAT member on a visit to India, especially Arunachala. Nome's response follows.]

Monday, February 16, 2009

Hi Nome,

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

It's so wonderful that the Self is ever fascinated with it's revelation.

One thing that continues to puzzle me is the almost complete lack of any sign of "self-inquiry", here. It's about as popular here as on the Pacific Garden mall in SC. But in *Talks with Ramana Maharshi*, it can be found in almost every one of Ramana's responses to questions. I just don't know how people can miss the very essence of his teachings. I went to a couple of events here where self-inquiry was being taught, but it was totally on the mind/conceptual level. The people leading the events had clearly not done inquiry themselves. I don't say that to be derogatory; they just didn't know what inquiry truly is. I probably wouldn't have any idea either, if I hadn't had the fortune of your guidance. I can remember my very first satsang at SAT. When you said those words "who am I", it rang like the "Liberty Bell" in me. Somehow, I knew that was the fundamental question I had never asked. And then your repeated instructions and Ramana's Grace opened up the Self to MySelf. I'm not making claims of knowing much about Inquiry, but I at least have had "the taste" and know where my freedom lies. You once said that inquiry is the very last thing that people will do. They'll do everything else, first. Oh well, I'll just keep inquiring until realization, and then maybe the answer to this puzzle will be known. Maybe the puzzle will disappear along with the seeker.

Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagaavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste.

It is difficult to ascertain the spiritual practice of another, especially when such concerns Self-inquiry, which dissolves the very notion of the individual who practices. It is entirely internal Knowledge, which may not be measurable in outer ways. Moreover, those who earnestly, intensely inquire and who revel in the blissful, nonobjective Knowledge of the Self may not engage much in social interactions during which others might take notice of them, and certainly they would not make a big deal of “themselves.” This is so because of the egolessness of Truth, the self-evident nature of the Self, the eternality and infinity of the Self, the immensity of His Grace, the perfection of the Sadguru, the perfect-fullness of the innate Bliss, the secondless nature of the infinite Consciousness, and the immutability and absoluteness of Being, among other reasons.

What the Maharshi reveals is clearly self-evident to those who discern within. The one who does not inquire does not exist.

The essence of the inquiry is Knowledge. The Knowledge is the nature of the knower. Thus, the Upanishads declare, prajnanam brahma, Supreme Knowledge is Brahman, and ayam-atma brahma, this Self is Brahman. It is to be conclusively realized, as is indicated by aham brahmasmi, I am Brahman, and this is revealed by the consistent instruction by a great rishi (Maharshi), which is summed in the phrase tat tvam asi, That you are. The method of practice is ko’ham, who am I? Steady abidance in the essential Knowledge of Being, for which there is no alternative, is nonduality and timeless Silence.

Continue to deeply inquire so that the self-luminous nature of the Self shines clearly free of any illusory veil, thus to abide in bliss and peace always.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[Another message to the same SAT member]

Sri Ramana's Grace is boundless. Knowledge of its nature is Bliss.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[Another two responses to the seeker to whom was sent the series of responses earlier]

February 18, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your recent messages.

Peace is of the very nature of the immutable Self. Misidentification appears to disturb it or veil it. Self-Knowledge, revealed by Self-inquiry destroys the misidentifications, which are only ignorance and not true.

Repression does not succeed in the destruction of ignorance. It is like holding a piece of wood under the surface of water. As soon as the hold is released, the wood bobs to the surface again. Likewise is it with the suppression of thoughts, inclusive of those that you refer to as emotions. Without true Knowledge, they reappear. Of course, indulgence in the delusion is also unsuccessful and represents no true freedom. Sri Bhagavan says that such is like pouring kerosene on a fire in the attempt to extinguish it. Neither side of the dualism can substitute for actual inquiry to know oneself.

The intensity in any bondage or suffering derives from you. Turn that into the intensity for Liberation, and, applying it to fervent, keen inquiry, you will pass beyond all suffering and bondage. If you discern the causes of the suffering, which are invariably one's own misidentifications and attachments, you can abolish it in the blissful realization of who you really are.

Cessation of thinking is not the same as Knowledge of the Self, or Self-Realization, though, in the latter, the nonexistence of thought is self-evident. Thoughts may stop in deep sleep, in

some anesthetized states, etc., but such does not result in Self-Realization. Self-Realization transcends every state and mode of mind.

Health and sickness pertain to the body. They are unrelated to the Self and to spiritual practice.

If you suffer from loneliness in any form, the answer lies within. All are only in the Self. The Self is never lonely, though it exists without another. Practice so as to completely dissolve the misidentifications and their concomitant differentiation, and thereby your joy will be full and unending. Self-inquiry is the practice. Surrender on a path of deep bhakti (devotion) can bring the same result as the path of jnana (Knowledge) because of its dissolution of the ego, attachments, and such.

The tradition of Vedanta describes practice in terms of sra-vana (listening), manana (reflection) and nididhyasana (profound meditation). Listening, or receiving spiritual instruction, usually occurs in satsang. In addition, the reading of appropriate books can assist in this. In the present time, it seems, CDs and DVDs can also assist, as described by you. The general advice is that the seeker should do all that is possible to support the essential introspection, making the first two continual and the third continuous.

I hope that you find the above helpful and that you find the imperishable bliss within you.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

Friday, February 27, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The innate happiness is ever-existent as it is the same as Being-Consciousness. It shines clearly whenever the ego subsides. Realization of the egoless nature of the Self is peaceful bliss without beginning or end.

Ignorance of one's own nature alone gives rise to the illusion of bondage with its consequent suffering and the fear that is born of dualism.

As the Self is not the body, it never does anything, no matter what is apparently done by the instruments of body, speech, and mind.

Where there is no notion of an individual self, the notion of another vanishes, and divine love shines as the indivisibility of Being.

Though I may not respond to all of your email messages, I do, indeed, read them. You are welcome to write whenever you wish to do so. When it may be helpful, I respond in writing; sometimes silence is the best answer. You seem to be retaining the responses, either electronically or with a print out. This is wise. You may find that by re-reading previous responses, there is more contained in them than what was apparent at first glance. That which is subtle becomes more obvious by virtue of one's own deepening inquiry.

May your meditation be profound so that you experientially verify just how true the Truth is, its infinite vastness is revealed as your sole identity, and its eternity abides as your steadiness.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a message of questions from a seeker who has attended a few satsangs and other holy events. Nome's response follows.]

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Namasthe Nome,

Please clarify the following doubts.

1. When I am doing meditation, so many thoughts are rising. All thoughts are disturbing me a lot, when enquiring; one thought after another one rising. So, the total time I have spent watching all the thoughts. I am not able to concentrate on enquiry. Some thoughts are very bad. Why are bad thoughts rising? I couldn't think like this in a normal time. So, due to bad thoughts, I feel guilty.

2. How is one to get Self-realization by practicing meditation, prabtha karma, or guru guidance?

Namasthe,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for you message.

Thoughts appear in meditation only to be traced to their source. If the source is traced, you will not be disturbed. Disturbance is due to misidentification and considering the thoughts as real in both their content and as existent entities.

Even with what you term “the bad thoughts,” determine the definitions of yourself that form and shape them and then inquire to liberate yourself from these false definitions (misidentifications). The thought then subsides permanently. In this manner, the illusion becomes the seed of its own destruction. The inquiry leads to the very nature of the “I.” Inquiry as to the nature of that reveals egoless Being, which is the true Self.

If meditation is upon the nature of the meditator, the Self is realized. This is the guidance of the Sadguru, Sri Ramana Maharshi. All three categories of karma, including parabdhya, dissolve in the inquiry to know the Self. The Guru’s Grace and guidance are ever present. One has only to practice to the very best of his ability, and all will come out right.

May your meditation be deep so that the innate blissful Knowledge of the Self, which is Sat-Cit-Ananda, shines without obscuration, and thus you abide in steady peace.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[This is a message from seeker who met Nome in Bangalore in 1994 or 1995 and who has carried on some correspondence since then. Nome’s response follows.]

February 20, 2009

Namasthe Sri Nome,

Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya !

Regarding self enquiry: I was practising only japa for some-time, but I could have put efforts on enquiry. Now the only way that I can meditate that looks possible for me is that I can do only the Maharshi’s way. The way where I can return from the

worldly thoughts and hold on to the I. No other meditation is possible for me.

My doubt in the path of enquiry is if it is fine to meditate without the feeling of devotion in the process. At the moment, the enquiry method appears as a process to unravel my clarified mind or the innate happiness. But devoted meditation does not happen.

I am able to stay without initial thoughts, but I am unable to dive within or have a better, more clarified experience.

Maybe, if I proceed patiently, I might be able to proceed with more clarity.

Bhagavan says that once the grace takes hold, it never lets go of its prey. Is that true for a samsaric person also? We are struggling in the path.

Sometimes, the attention is focused and concentrated, and, at other times, it is more of an expanded / vast mind. I am not sure if I am able to put my question in words. My query is that is it better to have a concentrated focused attention or to go with the flow of experience?

When I came to this path, Bhagavan appeared to me so livingly, while I was just returning to waking state and bestowed the experience which you call infinite Consciousness, but all that I let pass away.

With Yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. In the practice of inquiry, be sure that the focus is upon the inquiry as to your very nature, your true identity, and not merely reduction of thoughts.

Would it have ever even occurred to you to inquire were it not for the Maharshi? Humbly contemplating with gratitude upon that will suffice to cause devotion to well up from within.

Bhagavan said that, once one is within Grace, he will never be forsaken. He also said, though, that the aspirant must strive to the best of his ability. Only by that does he come to realize the fullness of this Grace.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[Here is a message that was sent to a SAT member as he was preparing for a trip to Arunachala and Sri Ramanasramam.]

January 1, 2009

Dear ,

Your time in India is sure to be wonderful for both of you. While I know that you will be very much involved in the filming and photography aspects, the time spent in silent meditation in the various sacred places and spent slowly ambling through the ancient temples will be especially profound. Take the time to slip inside the Timeless. With all the things to see, be sure to dive deep into the seer. With all that is to be heard, be sure to be absorbed in Sri Bhagavan's eternal Silence.

Om Namah Sivaya

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A response sent to the seeker from Bangalore mentioned above, in December 2008.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message and greetings.

What you have stated about turning the mind inward, Self-inquiry, and Grace is clear. Yes, intensely seeking within for your true Self, Grace is abundantly evident. The Grace, itself, does not depend on punya, merit, for it is of a transcendent nature, beyond cause and effect. Nevertheless, spiritual efforts enable one to experience knowingly that Grace. I am unsure as to what you are referring by "Praptha;" if "prapta" is meant, Grace is beyond attainment, and if prarabdha is meant, Grace transcends karma, which is jada, inert, as explained in *Upadesa Sara, Talks*, etc.

Though just reading books is not a substitute for inquiry and devotion, the reading of sacred passages and the teachings of the sages can be useful for one engaged in the practice of inquiry and devotion. Always, depth is far more important than quantity.

If you intensely, deeply inquire into the apparently individualized existence of the experiencer, the individuality, being unreal, will vanish, and only the real Existence, the Self, will remain.

May your inquiry be deep and continuous so that, by Bhagavan's Grace, steady abidance as the Self is yours, the perfect fullness.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[From the same seeker in India. Nome's response follows.]

October 25, 2008

Dear Sri Nome,

Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya !

Namasthe.

In practicing the enquiry, the questioning of who am I cuts off the mind from the thought mode and gets back to the attention to the Self or the I feeling. By saying inquire deeply or continuously, do you mean to say questioning to the point of returning to the source? I can sense it is inquiring, and, if I examine the I which experiences all these, the ego disappears, and the attention is brought to the I feeling. By holding onto the I feeling (the substratum) thus holding onto the pure Self. Is this the way to practice?

And is the way of holding on directly to the pure Self enough to lead me on? For me who has read about Bhagavan, whenever there is an awareness of an experiencer, the questioning "Who is that?" automatically arises, and the attention is brought back. But still there is an experiencer.

Please let me know if the latter is enough to lead me onto the direct path.

With Yours in Sri Ramana,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

What you have stated about the inquiry is correct. You then say that there is still an experiencer. Who is he? All objective experience depends on him, appearing and disappearing with his rise and subsidence. Therefore, his nature can be neither the body nor the thoughts constituting the mind. Can there be two selves, one that is the real Self, nondual and undifferentiated, and another who is an experiencer? Your existence is singular and undivided. Therefore, inquire into the very nature of this "I," even if it seems as if an individual experiencer. The individuality, being false, will vanish, and the Self alone will remain.

With earnestness in inquiry, you will be illumined by Bhagavan's Grace and find that the inquiry is of the nature of Knowledge. That is the depth, and that is continuous.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[A still earlier message from the same seeker, with Nome's response]

September 28, 2008

Namasthe Sri Nome,

Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya.

Thank you for always graciously obliging and replying to my mails.

In the process of enquiry, can we directly turn the attention to the I feeling and try to hold onto the pure Self and thereby increase the strength of the mind to hold onto itself?

Is the attention or holding onto the I itself enough for fructifying into deep enquiry and thereby diving within effortlessly?

Another query is that while I am meditating in the normal way sometimes I am able to reach a higher plane in the head where the meditation is fruitful and more peaceful and fulfilling.

There has been an experience in such a way. Is there any yogic interpretation on this?

Sometimes, if I do mediation, I tend to miss japa. Is that fine? Bhagavan, if I recollect, has said dhyana is better than japa. I don't prefer to do japa after dhyana.

I am not an advanced seeker or maybe we should not judge at all. But I am just trying to practice while living in the world.

It is only grace that liberates, but, to reach that perfection, we need to apply effort, since I am living in this world and am stained by its impurities.

Yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Thank you for your message.

Yes, you can certainly directly inquire to know the Self. When you attempt to "hold on to the pure Self," who is attempting to do so? Inquire into his nature. Are there two selves? It cannot be so. What is the significance of "I"?

There need not be any concern whether the diving within is attended with effort or seems effortless. With all of your effort, practice the inquiry to know yourself. That which is found to be the only Self, One without a second, is innate and natural, and abidance as that indivisible, real Being is referred to as effortless.

Regardless of whatever yogic experiences may occur in the course of sadhana, keep your focus on Self-Knowledge. For whom are these experiences? Thus, inquire.

Dhyana is subtler than japa. If, engaged in that which is more interior and subtler, you find that that which is less so drops off, it is alright. May your meditation be upon the nature of the meditator.

Practice earnestly, deeply, and continuously. There is no point in measurement. How could you measure the distance between you and your Self? Such distance is merely imagined. Abandon misidentifications and know the Self as the Self truly is. It is eternal.

If you relinquish the misidentification with the body, the idea of “living in the world” will vanish, even though the body will remain active. The bondage and suffering that are the consequences of that delusive idea disappear with it.

Grace is infinite and ever present. Those who apply their best spiritual efforts are absorbed in it. It is he who strives who, by Grace, is liberated from all of the imagined bondage and knows the real Self.

May your inquiry be deep so that your happiness and peace are full and remain always.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[This is a message from a seeker who had recently emigrated from India to California and who had recently attended a retreat focused on *Saddarsanam*. Nome’s response follows.]

November 19, 2007

Pranams to Master.

This retreat has done a lot of good for [name deleted] and me. We will be attending satsangs and retreats in future.

I do have the following spiritual queries:

1. Consciousness is the known. During the quest, ought we to focus on the Known or the knower, the seer?

2. When the knower knows the known, does the knower disappear?

3. When the query takes us to the Consciousness, is there a cessation of the query?

4. Over the years, I have almost given up all and have been taking for granted that I accept what comes by. I am just used to submitting onto God, for God decides all and His Will prevails in all. I have not put my mind onto the Self-enquiry, but have sort of resigned onto God. As I cannot take in much, I attempt or leave my mind open or vacant so as to be in a restful state.

I would like to get guidance from Master as regards the above, and am immensely blessed to have Master’s guidance.

Seeking Master's blessings,
with prayers and pranams,
humbly,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

In response to your questions:

1. An idea about consciousness is the known, as is any other idea. Consciousness, itself, is never known objectively, but is ever the nature of the knower. The known depends upon the knower, even to appear. The essence of the knower, which is Consciousness, does not depend on the known in order to exist. It is self-existent and entirely real.

2. When the knower inquires into the nature of the knower, the known (the objects, including thoughts) disappear and the individuality or form of the knower also disappears. Pure Consciousness, which cannot be divided into knower and known, alone remains.

3. The essence of the inquiry is Knowledge. When Consciousness is realized as it truly is, the inquiry is consumed in it and may be said to cease. Who inquires into what when all that exists is the one Self alone?

4. Surrendering utterly to God will also yield the same result, but such surrender must not stop with the detachment brought about by recognition of God's omnipotence, but must proceed still deeper so that the ego notion is abandoned entirely in the revelation that God alone exists.

I hope that the above is helpful for you. It is good that [name deleted] and you will be able to attend future retreats and sat-sangs, too.

May you ever abide absorbed in God, who is pure Consciousness, and realizing That as the one Self, be happy and at peace always.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[An earlier message from the same seeker, with Nome's response.]

September 17, 2007

Pranams to Master Master.

I have benefited much from Master's teachings and am happy to be reminded of Self and true nature.

Now, there is a major concern, which I would like to bring forth before Master:

A longtime friend [name deleted] has returned from Indian trip and through her, [name deleted] is drawn towards Kaleshwar (a youngster who follows Sridhi Sai Baba) and Kaleshwar teaches Mysticism, Sakthi, healing powers, etc., and advocates his disciples to go out and preach.

I have made it clearer that Bhagavan's teachings are full and complete for us and that there is no need for us to go to any other Gurus.... I have expressed that I am not interested in Kaleshwar and we have Maharshi's direct path and Grace aplenty and we are full and complete.

I foresee some complications (conflict) if [name deleted] proceeds onward. However...I have pointed out to her that there is no need or any necessity for us to have any other Gurus or go to any other path. As for me, I am with Maharshi, and Maharshi's teachings appeal much to me. There is nothing else to look for externally.

As far as my understanding goes, Bhagavan has certainly not advocated disciples to go out and preach.

What is bound to happen happens, and nothing is in our hands. Therefore the best course, as Maharshi says, is to remain silent.

I humbly place this issue in Master's hands and let things resolve on its own.

With prayers,

yours truly,

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Namaste. Thank you for your message.

It is not necessary for me to offer any comments about what others may be teaching, saying, preaching, etc. In highest Truth, neither they nor their activities exist. Considered as if such were real, it could be assumed that someone somewhere benefits in some way from such.

That highest Truth is revealed by Sri Ramana Maharshi with supreme clarity. He is what He reveals. His teachings and Grace unfailing put to an end all of the imagined bondage.

For those interested in a variety of phenomena, there are any number of teachings and meditations, but for those whose hearts desire the certitude of complete Liberation from all of the samsara, who yearn for Realization of the Supreme State, the Self, the path shown by Sri Ramana is the way, and He is the Sadguru who brings such a seeker from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, and from death to Immortality.

By remaining steady in your one-pointed faith in Sri Bhagavan and practicing as he instructs, you do the highest good. You can advise and set the example, but cannot command. As you have indicated, all this is in the hands of the Supreme, which is He. The Sadguru knows what is best and when and how to do it. To remain silent means to abide without giving rise to the ego-notion.

May the depth of your devotion so shine in your heart that the Knowledge of the Self shines Self-evident.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,

Nome

[This is a message from a disciple of Robert Adams. In previous years, after the passing of his teacher, he had sought some advice from Nome on the telephone and in correspondence. Nome's response follows.]

October 11, 2006

Master Nome,

Maybe I can formulate my conundrum better:

It was my first awakening experience that there was no I, therefore there was no thou, no other, therefore no world. All were concept only, but there is no one to have a concept.

There is no inner no outer, existence nor non-existence, nor Void nor lack of Void, time or timeless. They were all concept, illusions only apparently real.

I saw that the self-illuminated Void that I had meditated on for years again was just an object, an experience, a phenomenon and therefore not real. What I was was beyond the Void.

I had looked within to find myself, but there was no within or without, therefore it had been a mistake to look only within because consciousness is everywhere, within and without. I wondered why all the sages said to look within when there was no within.

Though I did not see this clearly, I also saw that consciousness itself was an illusion, a concept, yet not a concept that I held, but a concept nowhere attached.

Robert never told me, but he told others that I was getting close to enlightenment.

Yet, all of this knowledge occurred in the waking state, not the dream or deep sleep states.

My second awakening occurred a few weeks later. When waking from a dream, I saw that I was not touched by either dream or waking, therefore, I also was not touched by sleep. These were all added onto me and were false. The three states were false-phenomenal realms imposed on me, who was without attribute and unknowable. I knew I was only because I saw that that which was, was not I, yet I observed all of existence, which I knew was unreal. Only I was real and I didn't know that I directly, I was not an object to be known.

What I was, was not consciousness or lack of consciousness, nor the three states, nor the world or lack thereof. I was not touched by existence. Consciousness was about existence and I was way beyond that.

At this point, Robert said I was enlightened.

But all these years one thing bothered me. Ramana and Robert both always said all that there is, is consciousness, the One consciousness.

Everyone talked about the Self as being self aware. I do not understand this viewpoint. I do not know myself, but I am myself and cannot be self-aware.

The self-illuminated inner space, the self-luminous Void also was an illusion, yet understood by whom?

All the years since then I felt I was missing something. I did not see how Ramana could be right when he did not say that the ultimate was beyond consciousness.

Was it the knowledge that I was not consciousness nor the world an awareness beyond consciousness? If so, why did Ramana not say it? Robert told everyone that everything is consciousness and existence of the universe was unreal. But once he told me that even consciousness did not exist. Were both talking about world consciousness, observation and knowledge of phenomena and I was aware, whatever I was, of that?

Robert spent 17 years wandering in India to make sure he did not miss anything.

Where is the mistake here? It is obviously conceptual, but what is the mistake?

(Name deleted)

Dear ,

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Your have expressed very well your spiritual experiences that, being of the nature of the nondual, are necessarily ineffable. Perhaps I can offer a few comments that may be helpful.

If by consciousness is meant perception, sensory or mental of any kind, it is unreal. Consciousness is devoid of the unreal. If the question is what are perceptions and thoughts, they are only Consciousness. Yet, Consciousness can never be modified to become such, for what is mutable is unreal, and the unreal does not exist. Existence cannot become nonexistent. It just is as it is always. So, if the question is what is Consciousness or Who am I?, the silent answer is the realization of eternal identity as That. The Real alone ever is and the unreal has never come to be is the self-evident Truth.

The known is only the knower. Who is the knower? Inquiring in this manner, Knowledge is self-revealed. That Knowledge is only unalloyed Consciousness, which is Being. For this, ignorance is impossible.

The same holds true for the self-luminous Void. Abandonment of the objectifying outlook is what is beneficial. "Within" signifies nonobjective Being. Thus, the advice of the

sages. It should not be interpreted in terms of space, the body, or even the thoughts, modes, and states constituting the mind.

As you may recall, the Maharshi, in *Saddarshanam*, negates both the world and the awareness of it. All that is “this” and “I” is illusory. The supposed connection (experience, perception, conception, etc.), is equally illusory for there cannot be a real connection between the unreal and the unreal. Illusion is that which is not. The unreal has never come to be. There cannot be any connection between the Real and the unreal for the Real is and the unreal is not. For the Unborn there is no creation.

The best course is to know the Self. Such Knowledge is nonobjective. It is that in which Being is Knowing. Being-Consciousness-Bliss is neither an entity nor an activity of any kind. Therefore, there can be no concept of attainment or its opposite in the absence of any individual for whom these could be.

Upadesa (spiritual instruction) is given in accordance with the needs of the seeker. The essential teaching as revealed by Dakshinamurti and Sri Bhagavan is this silent Knowledge. Sri Ramana has said, “Silence is that in which no ‘I’ arises.”

Actual experience of true Knowledge is essential. Whatever terms are used for expression, it is important to actually know oneself. Whatever be the conception, it will be negated, even if it is a spiritual conception. There is, though, no need to continue conceiving and negating. The original meaning of the wise sages of “Self,” “Being,” “Consciousness,” “Void,” “Brahman,” “Siva,” and such should be directly known. It is that which is self-known, self-luminous, undefined, beyond all states, ever the same, and alone existing.

In the Knowledge of “I” the assumed conundrum is easily dissolved. One should truly inquire, “Who am I?”

I hope that you find the above helpful. I trust that you receive such friendly advice as it is intended. Your determination to be thorough is wise. Do not stop until the Truth is always self-evident and without an alternative. As always, you have a warm, open invitation to visit here at the SAT temple. Please feel free to write again if you are so inclined.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[A response to another seeker, March 6, 2009]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your messages.

A pleasant sensation minus the happiness essence associated with it is meaningless for all. The happiness is what all desire. The Self is this happiness.

Pain represents no suffering for those who know the Self to be bodiless.

It is in the very nature of bodies to move toward what is pleasurable for them (e.g., food when hungry, rest when exhausted, absence of pain) and to move away from what is painful (e.g., alleviation of pain, treatment of wounds and sickness, etc.) Such, in itself, is not bondage. He who misidentifies with the body suffers in the bondage of the cycle of pleasures and pains, and births and deaths. He who knows himself as the Self abides liberated from all that and is ever happy and at peace. The same holds true for being in the company of another or not.

The reference to pranayama (affecting the animating life energy by regulation of the breath) by the Maharshi is an allusion to what Adi Sankara explains in his *Aparoksanubhuti* ("Direct Experience"). Therein he describes the raja yoga (the royal yoga) in 16 steps, which is a more detailed and expanded form of astanga yoga (eight-limbed yoga). Pranayama is explained in Jnana (Knowledge) terms as exhalation of the misidentification with the body (deham naham, The body is not I), inhalation as Ko'ham (Who am I?), and retention as So'ham (He am I; "He" refers to Siva). While it is fine to meditate in this manner with the breath, the original intention of the spiritual instruction by Sri Sankara and Sri Ramana is purely that of Jnana, referencing the breath in a symbolic way only.

The passage to which you refer is, perhaps, from the *Katha Upanishad*. The recitations in Sanskrit and English toward the conclusion of satsang are from several sources. Some are from various Upanishads, some are from *Bhagavad Gita*, *Ashtavakra Gita*, *Avadhuta Gita*, and similar traditional scriptures. Usually, chapters from the *Ribhu Gita*, in Tamil and English, are recited during retreats at the SAT Temple. You can easily determine

which text is being recited, and sometimes even the section or chapter, by referring to the catalogue of recordings for the date of any particular satsang.

May your inquiry be deep so that Self remains revealed in all of its perfection.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome

[This is a response to a message from a person who was visiting Tiruvannamalai and had recently begun to read Sri Ramana's teachings and attempt to practice Self-inquiry. She had listened to a few recordings of satsang at the home of SAT members there and expressed an intention to visit for satsang during an anticipated visit to California. Her questions can be inferred from Nome's response, given below.]

March 16, 2009

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

You may find that reading and meditating upon the significance of the preamble and initial paragraph of Sri Bhagavan's "Who am I?" answers your question about bliss and the body perfectly. His instruction about Bliss that appears later in the same holy text would also be of immense benefit. In addition, but not as a substitute, appropriate passages from *Self-Knowledge* may be found helpful for you. [Names deleted] may have that book with them.

Bliss is identical with Being. As Being is formless, eternal, not dependent on causes, bodiless, and of a self-existent nature, so is Bliss. Bliss is indivisible. There are not different kinds of bliss, just as there are no divisions or types of Being. The apparent false multiplicity is due only to delusive superimposition of limitations. If one misidentifies with the imagined limitations, bliss is correspondingly limited, as for example, in the case of misidentification with the body.

Even the most pleasant sensations are minute in contrast to the Bliss of the Self. They are transient, unsteady and can change character at any moment to pain, etc. The profound Bliss of Self-Realization is not like that.

Who is it that knows about the body, the right side, the shifting of mental attention, the surges, the obstacles, leaving and returning, etc.? What is her nature? It cannot possibly be a body. Inquire within to know yourself.

Self-inquiry is of the nature of Knowledge that is neither perceptual nor conceptual. It is not a mere change in mental attention. True Knowledge transcends thought and the various modes and states of mind. The means of practice must be of the same nature as that which is to be realized. In Self-inquiry, the end manifests as the means. The Self is eternal. Self-Knowledge is eternal. It is evident that mental attention is not eternal. The Maharshi says that what is not eternal is not worth seeking. Inwardly seek to know yourself. Inquire into the nature of the inquirer.

Yes, if while you are visiting California, you find the opportunity to attend satsang at the SAT temple, you will be warmly welcome.

Absorbing yourself in Sri Bhagavan's teachings and ardently practicing them will certainly yield the highest result. May your inquiry be deep, so that, with the false assumption of individuality (ego) and misidentification with the body abandoned, you abide in the Self as the Self, undifferentiated Being-Consciousness-Bliss, the unborn and imperishable, thus to remain always happy and at peace.

Ever yours in Truth,

Nome



Our Hindu Heritage

DID YOU KNOW?...

Rg means: Praise (in hymnal form)

Sama means: Hymns to be sung (or put to music)

Yajur means: Sacred formulas

Atharva: Is a proper name for a lineage of Rishis

The scope of the Vedas is vast and voluminous, containing thousands of verses, hymns, and chants that deal with every aspect of the human experience, from the most mundane (practical realities of life) to the loftiest (devotion to God and Knowledge of God). The RG VEDA is a collection of 1,028 hymns and 10,600 verses in all, organized into ten books or mandalas.

The SAMA VEDA is a collection of over 1,500 chants derived from hymns of the Rg Veda applied to a melody. The YAJUR VEDA is a collection of chants mostly derived from the Rg Veda, used during sacrificial rituals. The ARTHARVA VEDA is a collection of 760 hymns, 160 of which are in common with the Rg Veda. The Artharva Veda is the “Knowledge of the Atharvans and Angirasa” (two lineages of Rishis).

ADVAITA VEDANTA, our lineage, deals specifically with the Knowledge portions of the Vedas (the Upanshads).

WHAT DOES UPANISHAD MEAN?

Adi Sankara said that “Upanishad” derives from Sanskrit roots that mean near, with certainty, to destroy, to attain, or to loosen. By the word “Upanishad” is denoted the Knowledge of the thing to be known. Knowledge is called “Upanishad” because it destroys the seeds of worldly existence such as ignorance. The Knowledge of Brahman is called “Upanishad” because it makes the seekers of liberation attain the Supreme Brahman. It is that Knowledge which loosens the multitude of miseries. There are 108 Upanishads unevenly distributed throughout the latter portion of each of the four Vedas and hence referred to as Vedanta (highest, final Knowledge—end of the Vedas).

THE UPANISADS ARE THE PORTION OF THE VEDAS THAT DEALS SPECIFICALLY WITH SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

Advaita (nonduality) reveals the identical nature of one’s self and the Absolute. Vedanta means Knowledge. Thus, Advaita Vedanta is nondual Knowledge of oneself. There exist four approaches to Vedanta teaching, and, although Vedanta means

Knowledge, three of the four perspectives adhere to dvaita (duality). The four approaches are: duality, qualified duality, qualified nonduality, and pure nonduality (Advaita). All perspectives, with the exception of Advaita, contain some form of dualism (separation). Advaita Vedanta declares the identity of Brahman and the Self.

UNQUALIFIED, QUALIFIED, DUALISM, NONDUALISM, WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

Unqualified dualism is sheer dualism without any exception. The view is that God is one thing and oneself another. The two are regarded as distinct and different in every respect. One practices to establish some relation to God, but there is never union or merger with God. In qualified dualism, the view is that the Self or God is one thing and oneself another, but there is some sameness due to relation. The Self may be regarded as one's source, just as a spark has fire as its source to which one will eventually return, but it is not regarded as the same as the fire itself. The practice aims at the strengthening of the relation with God. Qualified nondualism, is the view that the Self is of the same nature as oneself. The relation is as a glass of water and the ocean. They are both water but different. The practice is one of attempting merger or union, and the Self is viewed as a greater intelligence and all-pervading presence. In unqualified nondualism, there exists only One Self or God. Union is ever the Reality, as there was never division at any time. All differentiation is regarded as superimposition, imagination, or ignorance. In pure unqualified nondualism (nonduality), there is no embodied individual, and, so, not a world perceived by an individual. The Self, or God, alone exists, eternally. The practice, through Self-inquiry, is to realize the unreality of individuality. Once realized, God alone is.



Announcements

Thank You...

The selfless service we do here to help maintain the temple is prompted by the love we have in our hearts for this teaching. We do not desire acknowledgement for such. We would, though, like to thank all of the folks who perform service at our temple...

Bob Haber: keeping the bathrooms clean, watering plants, sweeping the walkways, cleanup after events, cleaning the temple; Kathy Rogers: maintaining residential rentals, overseeing property repairs, organizing retreats, providing meals at retreats, cleaning the temple, arranging flowers; Michael Polam: maintaining the “meditation garden” behind the temple; Ryan Shaw: maintaining the temple grounds gardens; Tim Frank: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Myra Taylor: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, providing Prasad after satsang, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Stan Rice: providing spiritual bookmarks and pamphlets for the bookstore; Raman Muthukrishnan: running the bookstore including mail order service, maintaining the website, providing Prasad after satsang; Sangeeta Muthukrishnan: helping with the bookstore mail order, organizing things around the temple and providing meals at retreats; Wimala Brown: providing meals at retreats and Prasad after satsang; Jennifer Birnbach: providing Prasad after satsang; Dhanya Nambirajan: singing during special events, providing meals at retreats, cleanup after pujas; Ganesh Sadasivan: organizing special events including singing, recitation, and chanting; Eric Ruetz: editing and mastering all recordings of satsangs and special events, providing meals at retreats, securing the temple; Jim Clark: securing and maintaining safety at the temple, lighting candles at meditation events; Richard Clarke: providing incense for the temple and helping with book orders from India; Nome: temple grounds maintenance, writing books, administrative stuff, general help wherever needed including spiritual guidance; Sasvati: preparing books for publishing; Advait Sadasivan: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play.

Upcoming Events...

Adi Sankara Jayanti: April 29th at 6:30 p.m. Prasad will be served at 6:30 followed by puja, readings, recitations, and devotional chanting in praise of Sri Sankara.

The Self-Knowledge Retreat: May 29th through May 31st. This retreat focuses on the Maharshi's "*Origin of Spiritual Instruction.*"

Garage Sale

SAT is holding a garage sale on Saturday, May 16, 2009. If you have items you wish to sell and would like to participate, please contact the SAT office so we may set up a table for you on the day of the sale. We will advertise on Craig's list so if you have special items let us know so we may list them.

This is a fund-raiser and we ask that you donate half of your proceeds to support the Temple. Of course, you may donate more! This is a great opportunity to get rid of all the clutter, make a little money, support your Temple, and have fun with friends!

So clean out the garage, closets, cupboards, shed, porch, trunk of your car, toy box, drawers, yard, under the bed, and all the places "stuff" seems to collect, and bring it to the garage sale!

Remember, your donation is tax deductible.