

Reflections



Society of Abidance in Truth

April . May . June . 2014

Invocation

(Unmoving) Hill, melting into a Sea of Grace, have mercy (on me) I pray, O Arunachala! 17

Fiery Gem, shining in all directions, do Thou burn up my dross, O Arunachala! 18

Shine as my Guru, making me free from faults and worthy of Thy Grace, O Arunachala! 19

Do not continue to deceive and test me; disclose instead Thy transcendent Self, O Arunachala! 32

Vouchsafe the knowledge of eternal life that I may learn the glorious primal wisdom and shun the delusion of this world, O Arunachala! 33

Unless Thou embrace me, I shall melt away in tears of anguish, O Arunachala! 34

What value has this birth without knowledge born of Realization? It is not even worth speaking about, O Arunachala! 46

Unless Thou extend Thy hand of grace in mercy and embrace me, I am lost, O Arunachala! 51

I am a simpleton devoid of learning. Do Thou dispel my illusion, O Arunachala! 58

Be Thou my stay and my support lest I droop helpless like a tender creeper, O Arunachala! 72

Thou hast administered the medicine of confusion to me, so must I be confounded! Shine Thou as grace, the cure of all confusion, O Arunachala! 76

I am a fool who prays only when overwhelmed (by misery), yet disappoint me not, O Arunachala! 78

Who was it that threw mud to me for food and robbed me of my livelihood, O Arunachala? 88

Bless me that I may die without losing hold of Thee, or miserable is (my fate), O Arunachala! 96

Hill of Patience, bear with my foolish words, (regarding them) as hymns of joy or as Thou please, O Arunachala! 107

O Arunachala! My Loving Lord! Throw Thy garland (about my shoulders) and wear this one (strung) by me, O Arunachala! 108

- Verses from Bhagavan Ramana's Sri Arunachala Akshara Mana Malai

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The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From Letters from Sri Ramanasramam)

Human Effort

April 4, 1947

A devotee who was a frequent visitor to the Asramam arrived two or three days ago. Ever since his arrival he has been looking all round the hall frequently. I was expecting him to ask Bhagavan some questions. This afternoon he sat near Bhagavan and slowly commenced asking questions: "Swamiji! Everyone in this hall is seated with his eyes closed. Do all of them get results?" "Certainly! Each person will get results according to his thoughts," Bhagavan replied humorously.

Question: Vasistham also says the same thing. In some places it is stated that human effort is the source of all strength. In others it is said that it is all divine grace. It is not clear which of them is correct.

Bhagavan: Yes, they say that there is no God other than the karmas of the previous birth, that the karma done in the present birth in accordance with sastras is known as purushakara, (human effort), that the previous and present karmas meet for a head-on fight like rams, that the one that is weaker gets eliminated. That is why they say one should strengthen purushakara. If it is asked what is the origin of karma, they say, such a question should not be raised as it is like the eternal question: which is earlier, the seed or the tree? Such a question is for mere argument and not for deciding finally what is what. That is why I say, first find out who you are. If one asks "Who am I? How did I get this dosha (fault) of life?" Then there will be Self-realization. Dosha will get eliminated and shanti will be obtained. Why even obtained? It (the Self) remains as it IS."

In Vasistham, in the Second Canto of Mumukshu Vyavahara, there are slokas containing this bhava (import):

कोऽहं कथमयं दोषः संसाराख्य उपागतः ।
न्यायेनेति परामर्शो विचार इति कथ्यते ॥

विचारात् ज्ञायते तत्त्वं तत्त्वाद्धिश्रान्तिरात्मनि ।
अतो मनसि शान्तत्वं सर्वदुःख परिक्षयः ॥

ko'haṁ kathamayaṁ doṣaḥ saṁsārākhyā upāgataḥ ।
nyāyēneti parāmarśo vicāra iti kathyate ॥
vicārāt jñāyate tattvaṁ tattvādviśrāntirātmani ।
ato manasi śāntatvaṁ sarvaduḥkha parikṣayaḥ ॥

“Who am I? How did this faulty samsara come into being?” Such investigation is known as the Path of Enquiry (Vichara). By Vichara Reality is understood, and such understanding brings repose in the Self; then follow tranquility of mind and cessation of all sorrow.”

Regulating Sleep, Diet and Movements

April 6, 1947

Yesterday, a devotee asked Bhagavan, “Swamiji! One has to meditate in order to enquire about his self. When I sit for meditation, I go to sleep. What can I do? Is there any way out?” Bhagavan replied, “First learn to be awake when you are in the wakeful state. Then we can think of the sleeping state. We dream of many things even when we are awake. We must learn to guard ourselves against them in our waking state. All that we see about us is a dream. We should wake up from this dream world.”

A Bouquet of Precepts

April 9, 1947

Yesterday morning, a group of Andhras arrived, and started questioning Bhagavan within ten minutes of their arrival.

Question: “Bhagavan teaches us always to know ourselves. He should kindly teach us how to know ourselves, and bless us.”

Bhagavan’s reply: “The kindness is always there. You should ask for something that is not there, and not for something that is there already. You should believe with all your heart that the kindness is there. That is all.”

Another said: “In the Vedic recitations that are conducted here daily,

they say, “thasya sikhaya madhye paramatme vyavasthithaha. What is “sikhaya madhye” (in the middle of the summit)?”

Bhagavan’s reply: “Sikhaya madhye means, in the middle of the summit of the fire and not in the tuft of the hair of the Vedas. It means that the Paramatme resides in the centre of the fire of Knowledge that is generated by churning of the Vedas.”

Question: “In what asana is Bhagavan usually seated?”

Bhagavan: “In what asana? In the asana of the heart. Wherever it is pleasant, there is my asana. That is called sukhasana, the asana of happiness. There is no need for any other asana, for those who are seated in that one.”

Another said: “The *Gita* says, sarva dharman parithyajya mamekam saranam vraja (discard all dharmas and seek refuge in Me). What are the dharmas that are conveyed by the expression, sarva dharman?”

Bhagavan: “Sarva dharman means all the dharmas of life. Parithyajya means, having discarded those dharmas. Mamekam means, Me, the Ekaswarupa (the only one Self). Saranam vraja means, take refuge.”

Question: “The expression, hridaya granthi bhedanam, occurs in *Sri Ramana Gita*. What is meant by it?”

Answer: “That is what I say, going away, exit, extinction of all vasanas, destruction of the ego, I, destruction of jivathva, destruction of the mind, and so many other names. All mean the same thing—mano nasanam (destruction of the mind) is hridaya granthi bhedanam. The word jnanam also means the same thing—some technical word for the sake of recognizing.”

When the conversation started, an attendant switched on the fan, finding it to be stuffy in the hall. Bhagavan got it stopped, remarking “why this?” and turning to those nearby said, “Look here! Many people ask how anyone can continue to engage in performing karma after he has become a jnani. In reply to that question, in the olden days, they used to quote the potter’s wheel as a comparison. As the wheel turns round and round, the pot emerges. Even after the pot is finished and the turning of the wheel is stopped, the wheel does not stop revolving for some time longer. In these days we can cite the example of the electric fan. We switched it off, but it did not stop revolving for some time after. Similarly, even after one becomes a jnani, he does not give

up the physical body so long as actions which he is destined to perform with it remain unfinished.”

Suddenly a little baby of about eight months began to prattle “Thatha, Thatha” behind my back. When Bhagavan heard those sweet words, he lifted his head and asked who it was. I said, “It is our little child Mangalam.” Bhagavan is very fond of babies. He said, “Is it she? I thought it is some other girl. Has she already begun to call out “Thatha, Thatha?” The child continued to say, “Thatha, Thatha.” Bhagavan said to those nearby, “See this wonder! Children first begin to say the word “Thatha” which means “than than.” “Thanthan”—it is its own self—it is the same with our minds also. The word “I” comes out first, automatically. Only thereafter the words “you,” “he,” etc. are uttered—just as all other words follow the word “thatha” in the case of little children. It is only after the feeling “aham” “ego” comes that the other feelings follow.”

It was nearly 9 o’clock, and so Krishnaswamy turned on the radio to verify the time. After the clock struck nine the radio ended with the words “namasthe to all.” Bhagavan smiled and said, “The radio announcer says, “namasthe to all” as if he and they were different. Is he not one of them? It amounts to this, that he is saluting himself also. They do not realize that. That is the strange thing.”



Temple Seva

Temple Seva, held once each month at SAT on Saturday morning, is a wonderful opportunity for devotees to care for the temple and its grounds, attend to repairs or enhancements, clean the interior of the temple, tidy up the temple gardens, etc. Seva begins with silent meditation and spiritual instruction from Nome in the Satsang Hall. Below are transcripts of spiritual instruction given by Nome from previous Temple Sevas.

January 18, 2014

Our devotion to Sri Bhagavan shines with a profound spiritual joy. The service that we do in this temple is part of that joyous devotion.

The joy is of the very nature of Brahman, the Self. Engaging in the offering of service shows us that Brahman is the offering; Brahman is the thing offered; it is Brahman that is offered in the fire of Brahman; Brahman alone is attained by those who abide in the samadhi of Brahman action.

Devotion dissolves the ego notion; and wherever, whenever the illusion of the ego subsides, the joy that is Brahman, the joy that is Ravana, the joy that shines in your heart, is evident. The joy is not only in what is accomplished, but found shining in the very act of accomplishing. And yet it stands transcendent of all these things as well. Let us remain absorbed in That.

February 15, 2014

Seva means service. It can also mean worship. And since the God that we worship here is none other than the Absolute Self, it becomes for us a form of meditation. So while we are laying tile on the floor of the mandiram, we are absorbed in the substrate. While we are changing the lights we are absorbed in that which is self-luminous and ever shining. If we fix a switch, we are absorbed in that which is without alteration. The unchanging, the eternal, the ever luminous, the substrate of all, the solid existence which is the blissful Supreme Reality, is what this temple is all about. And the truth of that lives in the hearts of those who engage in such seva.

March 8, 2014

We freely give and happiness shines.



Satsang

Knowledge

November 4, 2012

Om Om Om

None: Being is immovable and eternal. Consciousness is unchanging and infinite. Such is the real nature of the Self. In this lies the permanence of Self-Realization. (silence)

The unchanging, infinite Consciousness is itself the Knowledge that constitutes Self-Realization. It is not something lost or acquired, but rather the very nature of your Being, which neither comes from anywhere nor goes anywhere. For the perfection of bliss, all that is needed is Self-Knowledge, the self-revelation of this Consciousness. (silence)

In Self-Knowledge, the revelation of the unmoving and the unchanging, lies deep peace, absolute peace, silent peace. It is unaffected by the illusory world. It is unaffected by the illusory body. It transcends modes of an illusory mind. The one thing to be sought, it is actually innate. By Sri Bhagavan's instruction and with his Grace, dive inward, inquiring to know who you are. Cast aside every objectified conception, so that the self-luminous Consciousness rests in its own nature as it is. (silence)

If anything appears, it is known in and by the luminous Consciousness. If nothing appears, that nothing is known by the same luminous Consciousness. It is the only knower in all the apparent knowers. It is the only actual Knowledge in all the apparent knowledge. Nothing has an existence apart from That. In That, though, That alone exists. Consciousness is truly the Self. As there are not two or more selves, but only one Self, how can ignorance be sustained? The peace of the Self is always there. Ignorance alone seems to veil it. Knowledge destroys ignorance. This Knowledge is Self-Knowledge. Inquiring to realize this as your very nature, you find ignorance to be nonexistent. The Vedas declare, "Prajnanam Brahma" – Supreme Knowledge, or Consciousness, is Brahman.

Do you comprehend? If this is understood, by what light is it known? If you think that you do not understand, by what light is that thought known? The Consciousness is invariable, inescapable, and changeless. The Consciousness is the Supreme Knowledge. Inquire and know yourself as That and that That alone is the Reality. Reality means that which exists; there is no question of anything else.

Questioner: Thank you Master. Everything has to begin with the knowing of it. That can leave one without any support for individual existence. The wonderful part is it also leaves one lost in the Infinite.

N: The Infinite, which is the support of all, has for itself no support. It is not in need of a support. It is self-evident and self-existent.

Q: If it were imagined there were anything else, it would have to begin with knowing. There is no getting past the knowing, and so it reverts to the same thing.

N: Since there is no getting away from the knowing and since the knowing is of a nonobjective nature, the nature of the “I,” how can there be bondage? (silence) Since Knowledge is all that there is, how could there be duality? Since Knowledge is the Self, where is there scope for an individual? The individual has no knowledge and certainly does not know the Infinite. It is the Infinite that knows about the individuality and still knows, in the same way, when there is no individuality. This knowing Consciousness is unchanging. The individual is neither born nor actually destroyed. Just the unchanging Consciousness exists. (silence)

Another Q: As I was coming in Satsang I asked myself, “How am I approaching coming in Satsang? What is my intention? How about, if, for the length of the event, I were to meditate more intensely than I have ever meditated before and just see what happens?” When I started to inquire, I saw that the way that I was approaching inquiry was not to find a conclusive, doubtless answer to that question. When I try asking that way, the first thing that is there is the tendency for doubt. I asked, “Who is that one that is doubting, where is that coming from, what is that?” When I ask like I want a conclusive answer to this, it surely creates a much sharper edge to the discrimination.

N: Alright. Of what is the doubt?

Q: That doubt is of an individual that thinks he can't realize the Truth.

N: So, the doubt is that you cannot realize?

Q: Yes.

N: But of the existence of the doubter you are very certain? You have no doubts about him?

Q: No doubts about the doubter?

N: His existence.

Q: His existence. (laughing) No, I just run into myself when you ask the question. You framed the question for me to ask myself in a way that I could sort something out. How do I learn to answer the question for myself?

N: What do you mean by “yourself”?

Q: That would be the one who doesn't know and keeps asking questions.

N: Still, there is only one of you. How do you define yourself? Even in the very question, “How do I do this on my own or for myself?” what is the supposition? As defined by bodies existing in space and time? Such definition is insubstantial and actually, entirely false.

Q: I have to make up a second to do that. If I just stay with my Self, it doesn’t happen.

N: Doubt the definitions of the doubter. Your existence is never doubted. Such is not possible. The doubt as described by you may arise, “Maybe I cannot realize. Maybe I can,” but the Existence, or the Consciousness that knows of such doubts, is quite beyond them. Inquire at the depth of that Existence. Inquire by the light of that very Consciousness. The Knowledge is neither lost nor acquired. (silence) As far as how to approach is concerned, ardently, humbly seek the egoless state. It is the only real state that there is. (silence) When you come to satsang or to the temple at any time, what do you expect to experience? If it has to do with Self-Knowledge, it is nonobjective in character.

Q: If I come to the temple approaching it from an ego standpoint, I am actually coming to get rid of that standpoint.

N: Alright.

Q: It often is not that until I am actually in satsang, and I can see it from another direction.

N: That other direction is more your direction than what you take to be your direction.

Q: (laughter) You said in your discourse that what we seek most is innate.

N: That is right.

Q: So, I ask myself, “What is the most innate thing about me? What is the essence?”

N: There is nothing comparative. There is only one thing innate.

Q: It is clear it is not definable, and it is clear that the definitions do not mean anything. There are inconsequential occurrences of what I am not.

N: That which is innate is Being, only Being, Being which alone exists. It is not born, and, for it, nothing is created. It is indestructible, and

there is, for it, no other. Inward-turned, seek ardently to know That. That is truly your Self. That, itself, is the Knowledge of itself. Being is Knowledge.

Now, whether you understand this fully or not, by what light do you know?

Q: I am reading Annamalai Swami's book, "Living by the Words of Bhagavan." Yesterday, I read about the classic example of the rope and the snake. He says that only the rope exists. Go deep into the Heart and just be that rope; the snake does not exist. It is only the Being, only that Light, which is that Knowledge. The snake, this world, this individual, these vasanas: nothing exists. It is just one existence; that's it. The Vedanta talks about an indirect knowledge, and, in "Talks," Bhagavan speaks of it as paroksha jnana. With constant contemplation there are glimpses of what being in that state is. Only by the nididhyasana, the constant meditation, can one get into the sahaja samadhi. It can be done only by constant inquiry, coming back again and again. I spend so much time thinking I am going to do this next and I am going to do that next. But does it really exist? Does that time even exist? Why do I spend any energy on that?

N: Yes, what truly exists? Certainly, the Knowledge of Existence, its own Knowledge of itself, is never indirect. It is always aparoksha-anubhuti, not indirect experience, direct knowledge. Sravana, manana, and nididhyasana---listening, reflection, and deep continuous meditation---and the result of samadhi are spoken of, to lift one's vision from the snake to the rope. There is no rule that it must occur serially. It may, but it can just as well be simultaneous. After all, it is Being's Knowledge of Being and not knowledge of something else. It is not something lost or acquired. Just as there is only the rope and never a snake, so there is only the Self and never an individual, or a mind, or a world. As ignorance has no root and has no existence, can we really speak of stages of its dissolution? Yet, out of compassion, wise sages have described it as such, for the benefit of spiritual aspirants who seek to know this very Self. In the end, you find there is only a rope, and there is no snake. What is true at the end is true all through. There was always only a rope and never a snake. There can be no stages of reality, no degrees of reality. Likewise is it pertaining to the snake. There can no degrees of unreality. The Real is completely real, and that alone is your Self. The unreal simply does not exist. So, if the question arises, "Why should I

spend time with the unreal?" following Sri Ramana's advice, inquire, "Who spends time with the unreal?" If an unreal ego spends unreal time in an unreal illusion, has anything actually happened? Of course, it is imperative to continue the inquiry, so that this Knowledge is absolutely certain.

Q: There are different parts of it. The "I" is different in different situations.

N: In what way is it different?

Q: In the way that the one I am believed to be is different or seems to be different.

N: In what way different?

Q: Sometimes, I think that this is my responsibility, or, sometimes, I think that this is a meditation on something formless. What I take myself to be is different.

N: But, the one who takes himself, is he different? What he takes himself to be and what objective definition is appended to his identity may change. Such does not change according to the situation. Situations are dreamed according to the identity, that is, the definition, but, for whom are the definitions? Is he one thing at one time and a different thing at another time?

Q: That would not make sense, because those objective things change.

N: The changing, objective things must be seen from some unchanging vantage point. Otherwise, you would not know about them.

Q: Yes, I do not feel that I change. Objective things change; those assumptions, about myself or about whatever, change. Actually, there is something constant.

N: What changes cannot be your Self, for you exist before, during, and after the change.

Q: Yes, that is continuous and does not break into pieces like those assumptions of myself.

N: Even the first difference, that you are something other than the Self, is not constant. Your existence, though, is constant. In delusion, the sense of "I" is projected on to various imagined things, various

thoughts, starting with the notion “I,” and they extend into every other notion of “this.” The “this” comes from the “I.” From where does the “I” come? (silence)

Q: So, that is what you mean.

N: As long as the “I” appears, trace its origin; find the source of “I.”

(Missing portion of dialogue)

N: Self-Realization is undoubtedly of supreme importance. It is the very purpose of life. Upon Realization, it is found not to be an event or an occurrence. It does not happen. It is. For one who realizes the Self, nothing remains of him but the Self. For the Self, nothing happens. It just is as it is, for all eternity. The individual, for whom things happen, does not survive. Self-Realization is characterized by an absence of “I” and “my.”

Q: So, would it be right to say that the purpose of the individual is to seek Self-Realization?

N: If the individual exists, his purpose is to seek Self-Realization. If, inquiring to know oneself in order to attain that Realization, he is found not to exist, the purpose is fulfilled.

Q: (missing question)

N: No, that is not the meaning of the verse.

Q: Then, I got it wrong.

N: The purpose of the verse is to point out that Existence, though not discernable by the senses, is undivided and alone is real. By inquiry, come to know yourself as just this Existence. It is one without a second, that is, without “I” and without anything else whatsoever. If we say that it is the same in all, it is alright. If we inquire, “For whom is the all?”, we understand.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses from the Chandogya Upanishad.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil from chapter 37 verse 1 of the Song of Ribhu.)



Satsang

How Many?

June 16, 2013

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: How many of us are here? Only One exists. Individuality is an illusion composed of nothing. It is nothing. The Existence of that nothing and that which knows that it is nothing are the same. Only One exists. Such is the Self. Such is Sri Ramana. If we are bodies, we are many. Are we bodies? Without limitation in terms of the bodily definitions and attributes, only One exists.

The historians say that, in the earlier years, there were very few with Sri Bhagavan and later there were many. Actually, there was only One, and that One is Sri Ramana. That One is the Self, and it cannot be measured or counted. Similarly, how many are you? How many selves are there? Is there one to be called “the Self,” and is there another to be called “yourself”? Your Existence is only One, the very same One. If the Existence is only One and that one Existence is the Self, the very same as Sri Ramana, where is there scope for ignorance? Who could be ignorant? Where there is no scope for ignorance, where is the scope for bondage? Who would be bound? (silence)

The one Self alone exists eternally. How could there ever be another? How many are there? How many are you? The one undivided Existence is. The cessation of the imagined conception of another is clear Knowledge. To know how this is so, inquire deeply within yourself, “Who am I?”

Questioner: Thank you Master. I am contemplating on your instruction regarding release of individuality as an antidote to complacency that might take the form of, “Releasing individuality may not be quite so urgent if I could just push away this bondage, suffering, mortality, and all that.” Actually, they would snap right back even if they could be pushed away, because that is their source. So, there is nothing short of the entire inquiry.

N.: It is not only their source; it is what they are. Bondage, samsara,

illusion, ignorance, suffering, and ego are all synonymous. The relinquishment of the false individuality, or ego, consists in the inquiry that discerns if it exists to begin with. It is the experience of all that, if egotism diminishes, suffering, bondage, etc. also diminish, and freedom and happiness shine. Conversely, if the ignorance of egotism increases, suffering, bondage, and delusion increase.

Q.: The illusion might take the form of, "It's ok to have things turn out alright in life. I had better get them to turn out alright in life before I can give full energy to my inquiry."

N.: Why not give full energy to the inquiry and have everything in life turn out right? When we say it should turn out right, we mean that we should be satisfied, we should be happy. How to be happy? That is the question. If happiness depends on objective circumstances, will you ever be satisfied? If happiness is of the very nature of your Being, will you ever be dissatisfied? Be sure that everything works out right. For that to be, you need to know what everything is. If there is just one Existence, beginningless and endless, everything is always alright. One should not neglect the attainment of the purpose of life, or Self-Realization, for the sake of some temporary illusion. If you discern the true purpose of life and dedicate yourself completely to that, everything comes out right.

Another Q.: It seems that, and it also has been experienced by many, that there is great value in not only the inquiry, "Who am I?", but just simply, "Am I?" because one identifies generally so strongly the "I" as being the body-mind system.

N.: However it is expressed in words, the essential inquiry is what's important.

Another Q.: With the feeling of egoism, I have concerns, expectations, and hopes. Everything is tied to that feeling. So, I should look at it and dissolve it. Whenever I see myself, I have to be constantly resolving it. I am not free of those expectations and hopes. I can now see that all of them are centered on the individual, because of which I am not free of those things.

N.: If you are not the individual but are actually the real Self, all of your desires and expectations turned outward towards objects are actually a search for yourself. To dissolve the ego, simply discern what it is. If a rope has been misperceived as a snake, all that is necessary for

us is to bring light in and see exactly what it is. In this case, it is yourself, so the light is nonobjective vision.

Q.: Consistent inquiry is constantly, consistently trying to dissolve this individual.

N.: Consistent inquiry is in keeping with constant Knowledge. Where there is constant Knowledge, where is the scope for ignorance? The nature of constant Knowledge is pure Consciousness that has no interruptions. If there are apparent gaps in true Knowledge, for whom are those gaps? Can such be for the real Self? If not, can they actually be for another? Can you be another self? Like this should be the manner of inquiry. Who am I?

Another Q.: I don't know who could just think of inquiry once, come up with one answer, and be an instantly illuminated soul. It is a process of evolving for me. It gets better. As I read more, I can do it better.

N.: The more you turn inward the better it will be.

Q.: That is what I think.

N.: What is important, when attempting to inquire, is to actually inquire. (laughter) Repeating thoughts of any kind is not the actual inquiry.

Q.: I am inclined to look up the word "inquire" in the Oxford dictionary or Webster's dictionary, but it is expensive. So, I don't think I'm going to.

N.: Your Self costs nothing. (laughter) It is Self-inquiry, after all. Though it costs nothing, it is worth more than all the treasures of this world.

Another Q.: It seems that there are not multiple selves, but my belief is that there are multiple. I have a story line to, you know include it. The story is something with bodies and relationships. It is like a novel. I do not even know if it is true, because my memory is not that hot.

N.: It is a novel subject to continuous editing. (laughter)

Q.: The weird thing is that believe in it. I think that this really occurred.

N.: When you believe something is---either it has actually occurred or it exists in some way---from where does that belief derive? It cannot come from the object, because the object keeps changing. At one point

in time, one object is taken to be real and, at another time, another. The sense that it is real, that it exists, is the same. From where does that come?

Q.: I do not know. In a certain sense, I know, but I need to clarify that because I assume it comes from the objects.

N.: But it obviously does not.

Q.: Yes, it cannot come from the objects.

N.: So, from where does it come?

Q.: It would not be a body. It would not be a thought.

N.: The body and the thought are just other objects.

Q.: They do not form the weight of that belief.

N.: When a thought seems as if it is recurring or as if it is real, from where does that sense of existing or reality come? It cannot come from momentary thought.

Q.: Yes, because that is already objective. The belief has to come from something deep-rooted.

N.: That which is deeper than thought is you. Since you are innately deeper than thought, existing as just Existence, it is inappropriate to define the Existence in terms of anything conceived in thought.

Q.: When you ask me that question, it feels good to reflect. My vision was incorrect. It was the thinking that that was an object.

N.: So, your story cannot be written after all, can it? The story has a beginning; you do not have a beginning. The story is about something, but you are not something. A story comes to an end; you never come to an end. Some of the story you remember, some of the story you do not; the Self is not an object of memory or forgetfulness. So, how many are you?

Q.: It cannot be multiple. I cannot say that I know that, because I feel that I am going to believe in it again.

N.: Who is the "I" in those statements?

Q.: It is connected to bodies and thoughts.

N.: Bodies and thoughts do not constitute identity. Who is it that

thinks he does not know? If there is only one Existence, there can be no non-Knowledge at any time. You are not an ignorant one, and ignorance is not for you. If we are not bodies, there is only one Self, One Existence. How could "I" be ignorant? The one Existence is the undivided Consciousness.

Q.: So, the mistake is just the identity; all it is, is just the identity. There would not be anything other than that.

N.: All of the bondage is only ignorance. All of the ignorance is only misidentification. The entirety of the misidentification is composed of one assumption.

Q.: It boils down to one assumption, because that is the connecting dot. That is the point that we have to clearly see.

N.: The search for that point is like seeking for a corner in infinite space.

Another Q.: Would you say that inquiry and renunciation are the same?

N.: The essence is the same.

Q.: For me, there is a theme of right living: what is the right way to proceed, what to do, what not to do, the right thing to do, the wrong thing to do, the right way to live, and the wrong way to live. It seems that inquiry just wipes that all away.

N.: Inquiry reveals that you are not the performer of action.

Renunciation is the detachment born of the profound Knowledge of the nature and source of happiness.

Q.: So, it is not renunciation of things.

N.: It is renunciation of egotism.

Q.: This week, there was an incident with the car dealership. It became very clear that they were ripping me off for a lot of money. I caught it before it happened. I bought the part online and installed it myself in thirty seconds for twenty five dollars. They were trying to charge me five hundred and keep the car for a few days. I was happy that I caught it and was able to do it myself, which was rewarding, but a rage came up after that. I thought of the theme of the moral thing and the not moral, the corrupt action and the right way. I went to the dealership with the

force of ten universes behind me, very calmly sat down, and let them have it, in a calm way, but very direct way. It stayed with me for a few days.

N.: Regardless of the form of the communication, did you lose your peace at any point?

Q.: With that sense of power for those few days, there was no fear whatsoever. I saw the huge, supposedly powerful dealership as just a total charade. There wasn't any fear at all. I enjoyed that power. I wanted to ask you about that.

N.: Real power lies in the wisdom that shows you detachment from all things in this world. They tried to take your money and your time. You do not have to give to them your happiness, as well.

Q.: Does that mean not following through with going in to talk to them about it?

N.: Not necessarily. Whether you talk to them or not, for peace and happiness to be unbroken, there must be complete detachment.

Q.: Where was the attachment?

N.: If you are unhappy in any way, there is attachment. If there is no confusion regarding happiness, detachment is there.

Q.: It was seeing that this dealership was ripping people off over and over.

N.: They may be, but are you going to lose your happiness over that?

Q.: A while ago, I saw a guy in a store stealing a whole bunch of stuff, putting stuff in his pants and under his coat.

N.: Did he work for the same dealership? (laughter)

Q.: I was in the aisle. There was another guy in the aisle watching the whole thing. The first guy loaded up and left the building. He had all this stuff in his clothes. The other guy next to me ran after him and wanted to tell the manager. It just didn't bother me at all, but this other situation did bother me.

N.: Not being bothered by something because it concerns somebody else and not you is not to be equated with detachment. Detachment is really a deep knowledge of what is peace, what is happiness, and what is true. It cannot be called detachment just because some-

body else's property is stolen; then, when it is your property that is stolen, you are upset and suffer.

Q.: Earlier, I would have run after the guy or gone to the manager right away, but there was no movement to do that. It did not seem that he was doing anything wrong necessarily, whereas I would have thought so prior to that.

N.: Why did you think he was doing nothing wrong?

Q.: It is not that I did not think he was doing anything wrong. It was clearer who was playing all the parts, in the moment.

N.: What do you mean by, "who was playing all the parts"?

Q.: Just the oneness of it all, I would say.

N.: If one God is playing all the parts, that same God that is involved in stealing the items also makes the report about the items stolen and apprehends the thief.

Q.: That brings me back: is there a right way to live?

N.: Honestly.

Q.: That is broad.

N.: To that, add the ingredient of choosing the way of living that best supports your spiritual practice.

Q.: If you put it that way, I probably never would have returned to the dealership at all. It would just be excess energy for no reason. It not where I want to put my energy.

N.: Whether you spoke to them or not, you would still need to know the deep source of unalterable peace and happiness and abide firmly in That, as That.

Q.: So, the circumstances make no difference. It is not about the circumstances at all.

N.: What do you mean by "the circumstances make no difference"?

Q.: Picking out individual objects and focusing on them. It is really about identity.

N.: From your true identity comes forth everything that is true, good, and beautiful. In light of this, what is right and what is not are easily discernable.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil from Chapter 5 of the Song of Ribhu.)



From The Ramana Way

The following articles appear in the November and December 2013 issues of "The Ramana Way," a monthly publication produced by the Ramana Maharshi Center for Learning in Bangalore, India. RMCL has been producing monthly publications entirely devoted to Sri Ramana and His teaching since the early 1980's. Sri A.R. Natarajan dedicated his life and his family's life to the cause of Bhagavan Ramana. Sri A.R. Natarajan was absorbed in the lotus feet of His Master in 2007. His daughter, Dr. Sarada Natarajan, continues in his legacy, keeping the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning and "The Ramana Way" alive for all Ramana devotees. May the devotion and wisdom from which these articles are written "jump" off the pages and into your heart. Please visit them at: www.ramanacentre.com

Editorial

by Dr. Sarada Natarjan

Most of us do not believe we are the body. We are quite ready or sometimes rather keen on having changes made in the body to bring it in conformity with our image of ourselves. We may want it to look fairer, thinner, stouter or taller than what it is. We may want the nose to be sharper, more hair on the head, the color of the hair to be different and so on. All this only to suit the image that we hold of our self. Evidently, the body is only a part of that image and not the very self.

It could be a house that we carry along with us. a living tenement it appears to be, but it is subject to my whims and fancies. Sometimes it

withstands the pressure that I bring on it to achieve my ends, like overloading a construction with more floors than it can take. Sometimes, when the pressure is too high the body buckles even as houses fall like packs of cards to the on rush of flooding waters.

Of course the body is very much seen as “mine.” Very often what happens to the mine affects me far more than what happens to “me.” I can take what I call my pain to a certain extent but not that of a dear one even to that extent. We often get into scrapes on account of our attachment to the people and things that we hold dear. Thus pain to my body would surely affect me if I believe it is one of the very important things on the list of my possessions. However, if I do recognize that the body is only one of my beloved possessions and not I myself, then surely my perspective is bound to change radically.

Many of us have heard repeatedly the dictum that “I” is not the body. Some of us accept this statement at an intellectual level though not at an emotional level. Some of us do make it a spiritual practise to remind ourselves from time to time in various ways that “I” am not the body. There are surely many pointers in our daily experience that lead us to this conclusion and reaffirm its veracity. Nonetheless, we do not go into the full implication of the statement or the thought “I am not the body.” If I am to make such a statement, then who other than the body could make this statement? We may glibly say that the mind is making this statement. Yet, can the mind say “I” and can it say “I am this” or “I am not this,” if it has no form of its own in the first place? Can that which is formless declare, “I am this”? Equally, can that which is formless declare, “I am not this”? That which is formless would simply be, as it is. It cannot have any experience of being this or that. When it does not have any experience of being this or that, how can it go on to deny being this or that? Only one who believes she is “Sarada” can tell herself, “No, I am not Sarada, I am Indu.” Only one who thinks he is human needs to tell himself, “No, I am the Supreme, I am not merely human.” Only one who believes that she is limited needs to tell herself, “I am not limited.” This is why Ramana asks us in *Forty Verses on Reality*, “Does a man go on declaring, “I am a man”?”

Hence, if I tell myself “I am not the body,” then evidently there is an “I” that can be defined as an entity, which in turn has identified with the body and is now seeking to separate itself from the body. But how can it separate itself from the body when it is itself the perpetuator of the body-image. If the body image is completely negated then what remains

of the "I"? Who or what can then remain to say, "I am not this"? In effect the thought "I am not the body" is also only a thought for the very one who holds the body image. Is it not Sarada herself who says, "I am a body. I experience the world on account of this." And is it not that very Sarada who says, "I am not this"? It is not the body that says, "I am the body." It is the mind that says, "I am the body." Hence by saying "I am not the body" one cannot be rid of the body idea.

However, remembering "I am not the body" will give the mind the strength and the eagerness to enquire into its own true nature. When one is consumed by this fire of enquiry then one will no longer think that one is or is not the body but would keenly seek the source of that entity which makes either of the assertions. Then the validity of the body image will be questioned every time it rises in any form. If that thought or recognition is taken to its logical conclusion through intense enquiry as Ramana did as a boy of sixteen by witnessing the absolute end of the body and then going on to the all important questions, "Who is it then who witnesses this end"? then at that point the body image will vanish completely. With it all other possibility of thinking will also vanish and perfect silence alone will remain. As Sri .A.R. Natarajan writes, "We have only to open the window of our mind and allow our hearts to become captive to the immense silence of Ramana."

Insights Into the Ramana Way

Where has the Passion Gone?

by A. R. Natarajan

D: To see the glory of god divine sight is needed.

M: Alright. Find out Krishna and the problem is solved.

D: Krishna is not alive.

M: Is that what you have learnt from the *Gita*? Does he not say he is eternal? Of what are you thinking, his body?

D: I want a living guru who can say the truth first hand.

M: The fate of the guru will be similar to the fate of Krishna.

Talks 336, p. 305

Satyamangalam Venkatarama Iyer comes for a couple of days to Virupaksha cave for the darsan of Ramana. He sees before him Lord Siva incarnate. Inspired poetry flows freely and we taste its ever increasing beauty, as *Ramana Stuti Panchakam*. Ganapati Muni Sees the Brahmana Swami and straightaway recognized in him consciousness vast and pervading, like the great God Vishnu. Later from 1907, he becomes Ramana's disciple enjoying the rapturous beauty of Ramana till his mahasamadhi in 1936. One has only to turn to chapters eleven and eighteen of the *Ramana Gita*, the *Chatvarimsat* and the *Epistles* to see how deeply he was soaked in the enchantment of Ramana. F.H. Humphreys is on his second visit to Ramana in 1911. Following this visit he is so intoxicated with bliss that he does not care if he is bitten on the way by many rabid dogs which keep barking at him.

Muruganar becomes Ramana's bonded slave at their very first meeting. He could never keep away from Ramana's physical presence enjoying every second the glory radiating from Ramana's body. He would keep playing endlessly the eye-meeting game with Venkata "the eye of his eye." Thirty thousand verses were not enough for him to pour forth his love for the timeless and eternal one. Narasimha Swami comes to Tiruvannamalai to write a biography of Seshadri Swami and is unable to resist Ramana's charms. He stays on for years at Sri Ramanasramam and ends up writing an appealing biography of Ramana. Paul Brunton comes in spite of himself only to become a powerful exponent of the Maharshi and his message. Subbaramayya with his frequent visits becomes Ramana's chief priest enjoying unrestrained freedom. The saintly Munagala, the childlike Devaraja Mudaliar, the midnight chronicler Suri Nagamma, the diarist Cohen, the humble Viswanatha Swami, the ever happy Kunju Swami, the gentle Swaminathan, the correct Chadwick, the inspired bard Sadhu Om and the editor Osborne all keep presenting before our mind's eye the Atmic power and mind-bewitching enchantment of Ramana. How completely they could be his! There was never a second thought. Hence their blissful state.

Why is it that we are unable to partake of the same relationship with Ramana? Why do we not feel his continuous presence, which he has asserted? If we do not enjoy Ramana's presence the same way in which the vast galaxy of devotees had done during his life in the body, does not the fault clearly lie with us? If we do not fall head over heels in love with him we have to find out why. For one thing, it seems that we do not care enough for the inner life. The compulsive interest which

many seekers had in the search for truth, in the strong urge to be free from the karmic cycle, seems to be absent. The deep motivation which used to spark the fire of renunciation is missing. One has to be wary and keep away from the vast number of allurements which modern technology is offering: T.V., the video, and so on. The strides in chemotherapy, in environmental hygiene, etc., have made us feel less dependent on the divine. Apparently the situations in which we have to throw up our hands in helpless prayer are becoming far less. We imagine that we are bosses of our circumstances and ignore the real power behind us.

While all this has undoubtedly corroded faith and bolstered the ego, it is precisely this kind of situation which Ramana, as the modern teacher of the age, has taught us to deal with. By pinpointing everything to the mind he has made it unnecessary for anyone to make the kind of sacrifices which the spiritual seekers of the earlier era were called upon to make. There is no need to give up work. There is no need to do this or that. There is only one thing to be done and that is to understand the nature of the mind. If one makes his outlook right he deals with the world with the eyes of wisdom. What needs to be tackled is the mind which in any case one has to do irrespective of his faith in the guru, irrespective of his beliefs, irrespective of his egocentric way of life. And for this, one has to set in motion the inner-current of meditation. This can be done even if the time allocating is minimal, say barely fifteen minutes. For those fifteen minutes would work wonders as Ramana told Humphreys. One will come to possess unconscious power, the power to handle the changing relationships, ideas and circumstances in life. If one can add to his meditative mood by linking oneself with the undercurrent of meditation set in motion through brief but intense sessions earmarked for it, it would be reinforced. Can anyone be less demanding than this? Is it not up to us to rekindle the lost fire, the lost enthusiasm for the search when so little is asked in exchange for so much?

Also we have to examine why there is the constant need for the physical presence of the guru. So much has been dinned into us about the necessity for a living guru, meaning that the guru must be in flesh and blood that we don't pause to consider the exact stature. Was he ever the body in which he sported? Is he not eternal? Besides has not Ramana often said that the guru's work is within, meaning that the guru is present always as the inner guru? When Dilip Kumar Roy asked Ra-

mana why he emphasized the need for a guru even though he himself did not have one, Ramana replied that it all depends on what one means by the term guru. Is he always an external physical presence? Ramana added “Have I not composed verses on Arunachala regarding it as the guru?”

True, the great manifestation of God-head like Ramana takes the human form because that is the best way by which human beings can be attracted to a guru. At the same time they have an alternative purpose of proving that one’s identification with the body is the primal error. Ramana would time and again point out that one felt separated from him only because one identified him with his body. Be it when he joined in the singing of “Ramana Sadguru,” or be it when he consoled devotees who had to go far away physically, he would stress the universality of his presence. One could always relate to him for he was not the body.

Even granting the need for physical communication with the guru it is also necessary to remember that the physical frame of Ramana was only apparently time bound. Though his body was interred on the 15th of April 1950, in the holy place where Ramanaeswara mahalingam is worshipped, he continues to live physically in a very real sense. Is there any photograph of his which does not speak? And there are so many of them. Often one finds it impossible to turn away from those lustrous, serene and peaceful eyes. Can we help being captivated by the smile on the countenance? How can it mean so much to so many unless the life force is present in the photograph which compels attention and makes one feel that he is very much there as if in flesh and blood. So why not let the photo do its work? When one has the living presence of Ramana, and his direct path to Self-knowledge why should one dissipate it and let go the unique chance? We have only to open the window of our mind and allow our hearts to become captive to the immense silence of Ramana.



Jewels from the SAT Temple Bookstore

The SAT Temple bookstore contains an abundance of classic Advaita Vedanta in its purest expression, with emphasis on the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Adi Sankara, Ribhu, Ashtavakra,

Dattatreya, Vasistha and many more who have kept Advaita Vedanta alive for millennia.

The following is an excerpt taken from Sri Ramanasramam's exquisite 8 volume set of "Arunachala's Ramana, The Boundless Ocean of Grace." It contains the sublime story of our Sadguru, Bhagavan Ramana and His teaching, and is available for purchase in the SAT bookstore. No further introduction has been included here as Sri Ramanasramam has expressed clearly below the nature of this 8 volume set.

Arunachala's Ramana, The Boundless Ocean of Grace

"Most comprehensive book on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. The author has brought all the anecdotes, conversations, interesting incidents from every published source under a single set of eight volumes. This eight volume set is a treasure trove of wisdom for spiritual seekers. Available in Tamil and English."

***From
"Arunachala's Ramana,
The Boundless Ocean of Grace,
Vol. II***

***Can a Cracked Egg be Hatched?
T.K. Sundaresa Iyer's Reminiscences***

It was the early hours of the morning in the old hall, Bhagavan had had his bath and went to the farther end of the hall to take his towel that hung from a horizontally suspended bamboo, at one end of which a sparrow had built her nest and laid therein three or four eggs.

In the process of taking his towel Bhagavan's hand came against the nest, which shook violently, so that one of the eggs fell down and the egg was cracked. Bhagavan was taken aback, he cried out to Madhavan, the personal attendant. "Look, look what I have done today!" So saying, He, too, the cracked egg in his hand, looked at it with his tender eyes, and exclaimed: "O, the poor mother will be so sorrow-stricken, perhaps angry with me also, at my causing the destruction of her expected little one! Can the cracked eggshell be pieced together again? Let us try!"

So saying, He took a piece of cloth, wetted it, wrapped it around the broken egg, and put it back in the mother's nest. Every three hours He would take out the cracked egg, remove the cloth, place the egg on his roseate palm, and gaze at it with his tender eyes for minutes together.

What was He really doing at this time? How can we say? Was he sending with those wonderful looks of gentle Grace life-giving beams into the cracked egg, putting ever newer warmth and life into it? That is a mystery none can solve. Yet he kept on saying: "Let the crack be healed! Cannot this be hatched even now? Let the little one come from this broken egg!"

This anxious concern and tenderness of Maharshi continued from day to day for about a week. So the fortunate egg lay in the nest with its wet bandage cloth, only to be fondled by Maharshi with divine touch and benign look. On the seventh day, he takes out the egg, and with the astonishment of a schoolboy announces: "Look what a wonder! The crack has closed, and so the mother will be happy and will hatch her egg after all! My God has freed me from the sin of causing the loss of a life. Let us wait patiently for the blessed young one to come out!"

A few more days pass, and at length one fine morning Bhagavan finds the egg has been hatched and the little bird has come out. With gleeful smiling face radiant with the usual light, he takes the child in his hand, caresses it with lips, stroking it with his soft hand, and passes it on for all the bystanders to admire. He receives it back at last into his own hands, and is so happy that one little germ of life has been able to evolve in spite of the unhappy accident to it in the embryo.

Ah, what concern for the meanest of creation! Is it not the heart of the real Buddha which shed first tears of anxiety at the crack in the eggshell and then tears of joy at the birth of the new born babe? Could the milk of kindness ever be seen or conceived of sweeter than this?

The wonder here is that the bird understood enough to sit on the egg, even after it had been handled by man. Who really knows how far the understanding of a "beast" can carry her towards the truth?

Above Orthodoxy and Unorthodoxy

Kunju Swami speaking about Bhagavan's view on orthodoxy said:

In the kitchen they had cooked some dishes with plenty of onions.

The onion peels that were thrown out got scattered and began flying all over. Bhagavan, who happened to notice this during his walk, said, "Better collect them all and bury them under the ground. The orthodox cannot stand the thought that in Swami's Asramam onion is eaten!"

When Asramam Vedapatasala was started in 1938, Krishna Ghanapatigal was appointed as its teacher. He was very orthodox. In the dining hall, the practice was that only after serving the Brahmins, the non-Brahmins and Bhagavan were served. During the second serving, as the food had already once been served to non-Brahmins, it was considered polluted. Krishna Ghanapatigal felt unhappy and gently made this known to Bhagavan. Bhagavan, straightaway instructed that Ghanapatigal should be served food separately inside the kitchen, before food was served at the dining hall. He did not stop at that. Thereafter for some days before entering the dining hall for lunch, He would enquire whether food had been served to the Vedic teacher!

Viswanatha Swami's brother, who had been arrested for participating in the freedom movement and had just been released from Vellore prison, came to the Asramam. His parents were very orthodox. At the dining hall he sat down with the non-Brahmins. He was reminded by a few that he should go and sit only with the Brahmins. He told them in a loud voice: "There is no difference of caste or creed in the presence of Bhagavan." In his voice, one could discern an anticipation of approval from Bhagavan.

Quite surprisingly for him, Bhagavan reacted differently! With a tinge of anger in His voice, He said: "Oho! Has he transcended all limitations so as to do as he pleases? Will he eat at home seated along with non-Brahmins? Why this proclamation of equality only here? One should be normal and behave as one would at home. To be natural is the best form of discipline."

Another version: Bhagavan observed. "In this place, only for me there is no class distinction. So, place a leaf for him near me." Hearing this, Viswanatha Swami's brother was shocked. Needless to mention, that he went and sat with the Brahmins.

Can anyone classify Bhagavan either as one upholding orthodoxy or as one recommending reform?

Bhagavan In the Kitchen

Echammal's cooking was never very good; it would not contain vegetables and spices in proper proportions. To Bhagavan her devotion was more tasty than her preparations and so he never complained, but some who could not relish the food casually hinted at this now and then. After hearing their complaints repeatedly, Bhagavan said, "I don't know. If you do not like the food you need not eat it. I find it quite good and I shall continue to do so."



From The Temple Archives

November 26, 2013

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your generous donation to SAT and for your kind offering to Dakshina. May the revelation of the Truth of the Self ever shine within you as your natural state of absolute Knowledge. In such true Knowledge, may you ever abide transcendent of the body, its attributes and activities, free and ever in bliss. Abiding in the Self, as the Self, the Being-Consciousness that is One without a second, you will thus remain ever at peace.

Every yours in Truth,
Nome

November 26, 2013

Thank you Nome!!!

You are Grace manifest as a teacher who abides in and as the teaching. You are my guiding light. In the light of your instruction and example, all doubts are dissolved and questions answered. The Truth

is revealed every time I listen to you speak. I can think of no greater blessing than to bath in the teaching that reveals the Truth from a teacher who is what he reveals.

Thank you again and again,
Love,

[This message was from a family member of a devotee of Sri Ravana in India. Nome's succinct reply follows.]

December 20, 2013

Dear sir,

My father had been to Ramanasraman on 20th. Usually when he goes, he sees all the devotee friends with enthusiasm, but he did not see like that. He used to run in the entire ashram and also take part in serving Narayana seva and also serve in the dining hall. He is not enthusiastic and avoids. He knows "There is nothing," but he has not got his "Be" stage back. Could you come to my father's rescue?

December 20, 2013

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Sri Bhagavan's Grace is always present. Your father has only to recognize this truth to be at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,
Nome

[A seeker in Canada asked about the Maharshi, statements in Ribhu Gita, prayer and worship, and meditation. Here is the response.]

December 20, 2013

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

You have fairly well answered your own questions pertaining to

prayer, worship, etc. in the second paragraph of your message.

To clearly, correctly understand the meaning of the passages of Ribhu Gita and the state of the Maharshi, it is imperative for you to transcend the misidentification with the body. If you remain with the misidentification with the body, confusion, perplexity, and doubts in the mind are sure to arise due to the misinterpretation based on actions. If the misidentification with the body is abandoned by profound Self-inquiry, you transcend the action orientation of the mind, and the true significance of these passages etc. becomes clear.

Meditation ought be upon the nature of the meditator, which is Self-inquiry. Concentration on respiration may lead to temporary calmness of mind, but, being an objective process, cannot result in Self-Knowledge. Similarly, modes of the mind such as "doing nothing" and "just trying to be," which leave the ego-notion unexamined and assumed, do not yield Self-Realization. There is no substitute for actual Self-inquiry. It alone does not include the illusion that one is trying to transcend.

Far more important than the amount of time the body is in a particular posture, such as seated, is the inner depth of meditation.

For the Self, which is eternally undifferentiated Being-Consciousness-Bliss, there are not two states of meditation and non-meditation. It is wise to intensely strive to realize this Self, which is Brahman. As Realization consists of Self-Knowledge, how else is it to be revealed except by the continuous, profound inquiry to know the Self, "Who am I?"

May you ever abide in That, as That, which is worshipped in the hearts of all, which illumines the meditations of all, and which, indeed, alone is the Self, the One without a second.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The Canadian seeker asked about his observation of his desires, aversions, and emotions. This is the reply.]

December 22, 2013

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Observing the emotions, desires, and aversions, etc., be sure to discern the actual thoughts that constitute them and the

misidentifications that are the basis of those thoughts. The inquiry, "Who am I?" destroys the misidentifications including their root, which is the ego-notion or assumption of individuality.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker questioned about sadhana and silence. Here is the response.]

January 3, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The silence of the primordial Guru Dakshinamurti, of Sri Bhagavan, and of other such sages is of the nature of eternal, absolute Being. Sri Ramana declares it to be that in which no "I" arises. In that in which no "I" is ever born, no world is ever created. It is certainly free of any mental mode and transcends both activity and quietude of the mind.

Actual Self-inquiry consists of Knowledge, which is innately thought-transcendent. The nature of this nonobjective Knowledge is Consciousness, which is egoless and infinite.

As long as there seems to be a world, an "appearance," a "reaction," a "thought," a decision to inquire or not, a sankalpa (fixed idea, volition, concept, desire) to "abide" or to do otherwise, or someone for whom these pertain, it would be wise to deeply inquire.

The keen discrimination of the eternal and the transitory, the immutable and the changeful, may be helpful for making your approach nonobjective.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The next day, the same seeker asked about nonobjective inquiry. This is the response.]

January 4, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Discern even more clearly. That which is objective is not the Self, and the non-Self is unreal. Thoughts, inclusive of those that you refer to as “reactions,” are objective; there is no such thing as a nonobjective thought. Silence, Self-Knowledge, which is abidance as the Reality, Brahman, is that in which thought and all of the differentiation imagined in thought do not exist. To view such as a mode or state of mind experienced by an individual, who is the root imagination, is only to conceive a thought of such, which cannot be the Reality, the Self, itself.

When, by constant, profound inquiry, the false assumption of “I” ceases, that which appeared as the inquiry is found to be the perpetual, nonobjective Knowledge. The end is the means. Inquire into the nature of the inquirer. The Self is one alone.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker in the UK requested clarity regarding several questions he had concerning death, karma, and how he wished to help his recently deceased father. The questions can be inferred from the replies given here.]

January 5, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Clarity is by knowledge. The answers to your questions are different according to the perspectives assumed in the mind or if the orientation is that of transcendent Knowledge. If the perspective is discrete, distinct entities (vyasti), the jiva-s possess their separate karmas, which each jiva must individually resolve. If the perspective is a collective aggregate (samasti), there is a connection or mingling of the jiva-s and their re-

spective karmas. In either case, the distribution of the fruition of karma is said to be by Isvara, and the different perspectives are comparable to various views conceived within a dream. In transcendent, true Knowledge of the Self, “the jiva is Brahman alone, not another,” jivo brahmaiva naparah (Adi Sankaracarya). This is the Knowledge of Reality, which alone constitutes Liberation. It is this that is revealed by Advaita Vedanta, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, and other sages. In this Knowledge of the Self, which is Brahman, there is neither creation nor destruction, neither birth nor death, no one for whom there could be karma, no karma, and no results of karma. The Self, which alone exists (kaivalyam), is the only existence there really is, the only self that actually exists. The Realization of the eternal, infinite Self is complete, permanent freedom from all suffering, grief, the three kinds of karma, etc. and is unending peace.

In light of what is mentioned above, here are succinct answers to your particular questions.

1) According to one perspective, each jiva’s karma is distinct, and the living person cannot assume the karma of the deceased. According to the other perspective, there is no such sharp division, and there are means, rituals, etc. said to affect that karma. The truth is, because the Self is not a body and not the individual ego, there are no distinctions such as life and death, you and he, etc. Inquire for whom is life, for whom his death for whom is karma, for whom is papa, who is he, and who are you?

2) According to one perspective, the pains undergone by the body, during life and in dying, serve to diminish the karma. According to another perspective, there is not necessarily a connection between the pains of the body and the karma adhering to the jiva. In truth, the Self is neither a body nor a jiva. The Self is untouched by karma, unassociated with a body, and not tainted by the body’s experiences of pleasures and pains. Inquire, “For whom are the pains? If I am not the body, who am I?”

3) The rewards of being honest and kind are primarily of a spiritual nature, and these are thus to be treasured. The material circumstances and bodily ease or hardship do not measure or reflect that which is of spiritual value. Suffering is equated with pain only by those who misidentify the Self with the body. Without such misidentification, though the body may still feel pain, one does not suffer.

4) Whatever spiritual practice is done, not a drop of it goes in vain.

Seeing to your own Self-Realization, or Liberation, is the way for the liberation of all. Since you already know, as you mentioned, that the world is an illusion, inquiry that reveals the unreality of the individual and the reality of the Self will readily show you how this is so.

5) Communication between the living and the dead may be possible, though I cannot recommend anyone to accomplish this for you. If, though, you turn within to know the Self that you really are and that is the very Being of your father, you will not merely communicate, but you will be him, as the one, immortal, absolute Self.

6) Offerings for a Siva Temple, giving to and doing good for others, etc. are of tremendous spiritual benefit. There are no boundaries for such benefit. Adhere to that which is true, good, and beautiful, and all will benefit from the results of such.

Though these answers may not be precisely what you had in mind when you posed the questions, it is hoped that you find them helpful. Deep meditation upon their significance would be wise, if the perfection of the clarity of the Knowledge of the Self, the Reality, is that which you seek.

May you ever abide in That, as That, which is unborn and immortal.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A reply to a seeker:]

January 10, 2014

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Deeper understanding and bliss are indications of being on the right path. Be certain to keep your discrimination, the inquiry, upon the real nature of the Self. The destruction of misidentification by Self-inquiry is for the purpose of the revelation of the true nature of the Self.

Emphasis on a "now" moment is not necessarily wise, for time is unreal, and the "now" is an objective conception. The conception of a "now" moment usually includes misidentification with the body and the senses and the ignorant belief in an external, existent world. Moreover, there is not the least trace of a "now" moment in deep sleep, but you

still exist. This existence is ever the same. Know yourself as the Existence, and be free from the delusion of supposing that you are what is thought. If even the thought of "I" is not true or you, how could any other thought be true? The imperceptible and inconceivable Self is alone the reality and your identity. In this Realization is eternal, silent bliss.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A reply to a seeker who asked about silence:]

January 16, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Namaste.

Absolute silence, mauna, is that in which no ego "I" appears. This is the "state," actually the very nature, of being That, the Self, which is pure Being as it truly is and in which nothing else has ever come to exist. This is the silence of Dakshinamurti, Sri Bhagavan, and described in "Self-Knowledge." The words of Self-Realized sages should be recognized as undifferentiated from the silence.

If you abide free of the least trace of misidentification, such is true mauna.

The best explanation of silence is silence, itself.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[This is the response to a seeker who asked attention and constant inquiry.]

January 25, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Even when the mind's attention is very much concentrated on a task or is involved in learning, you still know that you exist, though there may not be a thought about it. At the depth of the knowledge of existence, the inquiry can be continuous.

Learning thus presents no obstacle to Self-inquiry. Be certain not to misidentify with thought or to regard thought and its content as real.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker asked questions about Self-inquiry and the mind in relation to a passage in the book "Who Am I?". Here is the reply.]

February 8, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

That which appears as an embodied individual is known as a mind. It is not your true identity. Your true identity is the Self, of the nature of formless Being-Consciousness-Bliss. The assumption of "I," which is but a bare supposition born of imagination, cannot stand alone but depends on some form, such as the body, in order to have even the appearance of some existence. By the term "subtle body" is meant a transmigrating entity, and "soul" indicates the spirit or Self with the superimposition of false individuality. If one persistently inquires into the nature of the mind, it subsides because it has no true existence, and only pure Consciousness remains.

Similarly, if one inquires into the nature or source of the "I," which in delusion appears as if an embodied individual, he finds the Heart, which means the quintessence of Being. Absolute Being is alone truly the source of the "I" and mind, and they cannot exist apart from That. In truth, they are not real, and the Self alone exists.

If one constantly contemplates the significance of "I," one abides as what the "I" truly is, which is the Self. Because all ideas depend on the "I" notion, liberation from the false individuality is freedom from all

thought.

The inquiry, "Who am I?" is directed toward the nonobjective knowledge of yourself. Your existence is only one. In illusion, the same Self appears as if a mind or as if an individualized existence. By inquiry, the illusion is dispelled, and the very same existence remains as it truly is. This is Self-Knowledge. The knower is only one and of the nature of unalloyed Consciousness. The mind is not a second knower. The Self is undivided and is free of illusory differentiation such as higher and lower.

So, inquire, and thus abide in happiness and peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Every yours in Truth,
Nome

[The reply to a seeker who wrote about an experience of bliss]

February 9, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Bliss shines upon, and proportionate to, the diminishing of the ego notion. Continue to make your approach nonobjective. In truth, the ego does not exist, and that which does not exist is not capable of doing anything. Inquiry reveals the Self to be absolute Being alone. For the sake of the fullness of immortal bliss, joyfully discern and eliminate misidentification. When ignorance is seen to be only ignorance and nothing more, it ceases forever. Nothing is as fascinating as the Self, and no worldly pleasure can compare to the inner bliss of Self-Knowledge. Inquire deeply and continuously so that there is steady abidance in the Self, as the Self.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The answer to further questions from a seeker regarding "Who Am I?"]

February 12, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. It is the nature of the “I” that asks, “Am I looking for in truth or in thought?” that is the focus of the inquiry.

The entire world, inclusive of the examples mentioned by you, is in the mind. Thoughts constitute the mind. Thoughts neither know themselves nor declare their own existence. You know them or say that they are. What is the nature of this “you”?

Yesterday’s response to you explains the Heart. The Self, which is God, is infinite, omnipresent, and location-less, for your true nature is bodiless.

To discern from where the sense of reality, or identity, derives, questioning within, “For whom is this? Who am I?” is the tracing to which Sri Bhagavan alludes.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A reply to the same seeker who mentioned that he thought of himself as dense in his attempt to understand Self-inquiry]

February 15, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. You are not dense. The mind is so accustomed to the objectifying outlook that, when told to inquire and know yourself, you overlook the nature of the inquirer or yourself and attempt to know the Self as if it were apart from you as an objective topic of study. Self-inquiry is nonobjective knowledge.

The Self is only one and has no parts. Your Existence is absolutely singular. This is true regardless of whether you mistakenly conceive of yourself as an individualized “I” or know yourself as the Self you really are. So, there is no choice to be made, for there are not multiple selves or parts of yourself. Multiplicity is only in thought. You are not a thought. Seek to know the knower who is unknown by any thought.

Similarly, Consciousness is the only knower, and the mind is not a second knower. True Knowledge is in and of the sole Existence-Consciousness.

You may find it helpful to read Self-Knowledge and Saddarsanam and an Inquiry into the Revelation of Truth and Oneself.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A portion of a reply to a seeker]

February 24, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

It is good that you have an interest in Siva, who is understood according to the depth of the devotee. As you view yourself, so you view Siva.

Yes, the names have deep significance.

One who, with a heart full of devotion, remains awake to the Truth of the Self and free from the dreams of illusion, beyond the three states, absorbed in the auspicious, abides as Consciousness inherent in which is the power to destroy all ignorance and illusion and remains as the residual Absolute Being, finds perfectly full Bliss in the eternal, self-luminous great night of Siva (Mahasivaratri).

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[In answer to a few questions about Self-inquiry:]

February 24, 2014

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Regardless of whatever thought appears, be intent upon the knowledge of the Self. Trace your sense of identity to its source, which cannot be a thought.

The Self does not come from anywhere. It is ever existent.

All, including the mind, are not separate from the Self, but the Self is undivided and without parts.

Who is it that would follow a thought? Find out his nature. You are not a thought and cannot be determined by thought. You are thus inconceivable. Who are you?

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome



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...

Gnana Prakash & Jayalakshmi: painting & laying tile in the Mandiram, cleanup after retreats and pujas, providing meals for events; Bob Haber: keeping the bathrooms clean, watering plants, sweeping the walkways & parking lot, cleanup after events, cleaning the temple, set-up for events, helping with flower arrangements, general maintenance around the temple; 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 & atmotsava, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Raman Muthukrishnan: running the bookstore including mail order service, maintaining the SAT website, mastering recordings of events at SAT, assisting with the building of the Mandir embellishments, providing prasad after satsang; Sangeeta Raman: helping with the bookstore mail order, organizing things around the temple, providing meals at retreats, providing prasad after satsang & atmotsava, leading kirtans at atmotsava, organizing special events including singing, recitation, and chanting, painting & laying tile in the Mandiram; Wimala Brown: providing

meals at retreats and prasada after satsang and at atmotsava; Ganesh Sadasivan: organizing special events including singing, recitation, and chanting, preparing meals for retreats, working to create the Mandiram; Dhanya Sadasivan: preparing meals at retreats and special events, working to create the Mandiram; Eric Ruetz: editing and mastering recordings of satsangs and special events, providing meals at retreats, securing the temple; Jim Clark: lighting candles at meditation events, decorating Murtis with flowers, preparing meals at retreats; Richard Clarke: helping with book orders from India; Steve Smith: providing meals at retreats; Advait Sadasivan, Janani Chandran & Sruti Prakash: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play, helping out when asked; Sheila Hillman, providing prasada after atmotsava and satsangs; Carol Johnson: transcription; Anandi Muthukumarasamy: beautification of the temple, providing prasadam after satsang and at atmotsava, cleaning the temple; Ribhu Chandran: providing play time and lots of smiles & giggles; Sabiha Vyas: providing prasadam after satsang and at retreats; Scott Roney: overseeing and building embellishments in Mandir, property and Temple maintenance, building altars, & assisting wherever needed; Sivakumar Chandran: assisting with the building of the Mandir embellishments, property and Temple maintenance, assisting wherever needed, maintains recordings for online bookstore, uploads satsangs on YouTube and Vimeo; Prema Roney: providing prasadam at special events. Grant Summerville: transcription.



Sri Sadisvara Mandiram

Everything we do at SAT has the direct purpose of evoking devotion in the heart and inducing the immediate experience of the Self. This purpose is fulfilled by all the events held at SAT—satsangs, meditations, Ramana darshanams, atmotsavas, temple sevas, special events, retreats, and publications. This purpose is also fulfilled by the design of the Temple itself including the deities and symbols used throughout the Temple for worship and meditation. SAT has the good fortune of already housing the Temple deities Dakshinamurti, Nataraja, Lingodbhava, Ardhanariswara, and Lingam, which are worshipped regularly at SAT

events. To complete the Temple, deities Ganesha and Subramania (Skanda) are to be added. Devotees endeavor to build a proper shrine for these deities downstairs in the front entry to the temple. The “Sri Sadisvara Mandiram” would also include Nandi and an additional Lingam to the one that is already situated in the Inner Shrine outside the Satsang Hall. In addition, murtis of Ribhu and Adi Sankara will take their place in the Satsang Hall near the front Ramana altar next to the dais.

The “Sri Sadisvara Mandiram” will provide an atmosphere in which devotees visiting the temple may experience puja, engage in pradakshina, listen to vedic chanting, read scripture, and worship.

To find out more about this holy endeavor and if you are inspired to sponsor this project, visit the SAT website at:

satramana.org and then click on “Sri Sadisvara Mandarim” located in the sidebar menu. One new blog has appeared showing the progress of the Mandir.

Om Namah Sivaya