

Reflections

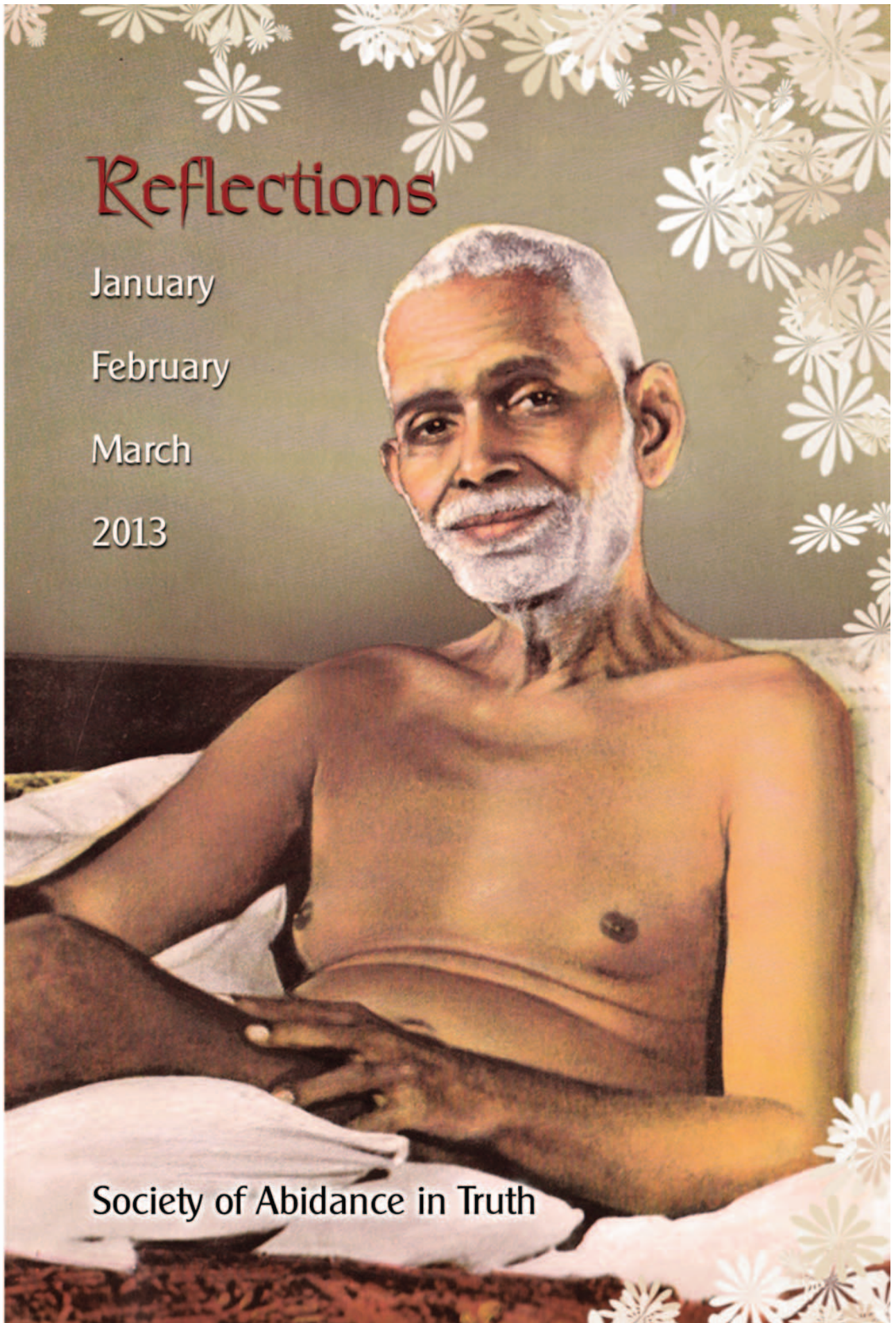
January

February

March

2013

Society of Abidance in Truth



Invocation

*Rid of all nescience by your grace,
Attaining the state of blemishless Knowledge by
your grace,
With all this duality dissolved by your grace,
Ensconced firmly at the apogee of Non-duality by
your grace,
With all the endless travails of transmigration
terminated by your grace,
I, indeed, have attained the changeless Bliss of
Liberation.
By your grace, I have become the eternal
Consciousness-Bliss,
The peerless Supreme Brahman, revered one!*

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Reflections, January, February, March 2013
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The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

(From Letters from Sri Ramanasramam)

August 28, 1946

The “I” is the Mind Itself

This morning an Andhra gentleman requested Bhagavan: “You say the important thing to do is to enquire and find out who I am, but how is one to find it out? Are we to do japam saying, “Who am I? Who am I?” Or should we repeat, “Neti” (not this)? I want to know the exact method, Swami.” After waiting for a while Bhagavan said, “What is there to find out? Who is to find out? There must be some one to find out, mustn’t there? Who is that some one? Where has that some one come from? That is the thing to find out first.”

That questioner said, again, “Should there not be some sadhana to find out who one’s self is? Which sadhana will be useful?” “Yes, it is that that has to be found out. If you ask where to see, we should say, look within. What is its shape, how was it born, and where was it born? That is what you have to see or enquire,” said Bhagavan. The questioner asked again, “If we ask where this “I” is born, the ancients say, it is in the heart. How could we see that?”

“Yes, we have to see the heart itself. If you want to see it, the mind must get submerged completely. It is no use doing japam with the words, Who am I? Who am I? nor by repeating the words Neti, Neti,” said Bhagavan. When the questioner said, that was exactly what he was unable to do, Bhagavan replied, “Yes, that is so. That is the difficulty. We always exist and are in all places. This body and all other attendant things are gathered round us by ourselves only. There is no difficulty in gathering them. The real difficulty is in throwing them out. We find it difficult to see what is inhering in us and what is foreign to us. See what a great tragedy it is!” said Bhagavan.

Some time ago, when a Bengali youth asked similar questions, Bhagavan explained to him at great length. His doubts not being cleared, that youth asked, "You say that the Self is present at all times and at all places. Where exactly is that "I"?" Bhagavan replied with a smile, "When I say you are present at all times and at all places and you ask where is that "I," it is something like asking, when you are in Tiruvannamalai, where is Tiruvannamalai? When you are everywhere, where are you to search? The real delusion is the feeling that you are the body. When you get rid of that delusion, what remains is your Self. You should search for a thing which is not with you but where is the need to search for a thing which is always with you? All sadhanas are for getting rid of the delusion that you are the body. The knowledge that "I am" is always there: call it Atma, or Paramatma or whatever you like. One should get rid of the idea that "I am the body." There is no need to search for that "I" that is the Self. That Self is all-pervading."

As an illustration of this, I give hereunder the words of Bhagavan in Unnadhi Nalubadhi:

"Without the Self where is time and where is space? If we are the body, we have to be bound by time and space. Are we the body? We are one and identical now, then and always; here there and everywhere. So, we are existent without time and space."

December 19, 1946

Atmakaravritti

The Soul: It's Form and Action

The day before yesterday an Andhra gentleman came and handed over to Bhagavan a letter containing the following question: "Some say that the Jnani is in the Atmakaravritti in the sleeping state and others say he is not. What is your opinion?" Bhagavan replied: "Let us first learn to be in the Atmic state, while in the waking state. There will be time enough then to consider what happens in the sleeping state. Is he who is in the waking state not in the sleeping state, as well? Are you now in Atmakaravritti or in the Brahmakaravritti? First tell me that."

“Swamiji! I am not enquiring about myself, but about the Jnani,” said the questioner. “Oh! Is that so? That is all right, but you who are asking the question, first know about yourself. The Jnanis can look after themselves. We do not know about ourselves but we inquire about Jnanis. What does it matter to us whether they are in Atmakaravritti or in Brahmakaravritti? If we know about ourselves, the question about them does not arise,” replied Bhagavan,. “Swamiji, this question is not my own, but is sent to me by a friend,” said the questioner.

“Indeed?” said Bhagavan, “Friends have asked the question. What are we to reply? When we say vritti, duality is implied, isn’t it? But that which IS, is only one. The question then arises, “Without the consciousness of the Supreme Being, how can there be any movement from the past to the present and the future? That is why we have to call it by some name or other, such as Akhandakaravritti (Akhandalimitless) or Atmakaravritti or Brahmakaravritti, just as we say that the river is Samudrakara (the shape of the ocean). All rivers fall into the ocean, get merged, lose shape and become one with the ocean. That being so, what is the meaning of saying of the river that it is Samudrakara? Has the ocean any shape, such as so much depth and so much width? In the same way, people merely say that the Jnani has Akhandakaravritti or Atmakaravritti but, in reality, it is all one. All these are merely replies to questioners, but in the eyes of the Jnani the whole thing is only ONE.”

“Have the Brahmaavid, Brahmaavidvara, Brahmaavidvareeya and Brahmaavidvarishta and others all got a satvic mind?” someone else asked. “It is all the same whether you say Brahmaavidvarishta, Brahmaavid or Brahman itself.” Bhagavan replied. “Like Brahman means Brahman itself. We shall have to say that the above three have satvic minds in common parlance but, in fact, there is no such thing as mind for them. Vasanas themselves are the mind. If there are no vasanas there is no mind. That which IS, is Sat. Sat is Brahman. That is self-luminous. That is Atman, and that is the Self. Names like Brahmaavid, Brahmaavidvareeya, Brahmaavidvarishta are given to those men of wisdom who, by self-enquiry, realize the Truth and remain firmly in that Knowledge of the Self. The day to day actions are said to be in Atmakaravritti or Akhandakaravritti.”

December 20, 1946

Andavane

A telegram was received at about 9 a.m. today informing us that Ramanatha Brahmachari alias Andavane expired in Madras last night. Some one informed me about it as I was entering the hall. Ramanatha joined the group of Bhagavan's disciples when quite young, when Bhagavan was still in Virupaksha cave. After that he never left Bhagavan except for short intervals of about 15 days in the year. This staunch devotee and lifelong brahmachari went to Madras for treatment and we heard the news of his demise within fifteen days. I entered the hall, feeling sad that it had happened the same way as with Madhawaswamy some time earlier, and simultaneously feeling gratified that he had left his skeleton-like body without much suffering. Bhagavan said to me, "It seems that our Ramnath is gone." Once before, when Madhawaswamy died and Bhagavan told me, "Madhawaswamy has gone," and I asked him, "Where to," Bhagavan replied, "Where to? There, leaving his body here." So I did not ask him again this time, "Where to?" but merely replied, "Yes, I have heard so."

In the afternoon at 3 p.m. two ladies, Uma and Alumu, began to sing the Tamil verses "Ramana Anubhuti." Bhagavan told me with some feeling, "Look! These are verses written by Ramnatha himself; there is also another song with the pallavi (refrain) Thiruchulinathanai Kandene. That also was written by him. There is an interesting story in this connection. During my stay in Virupaksha cave, on one full moon day we all started out on a Giri pradakshina. Chidambaram Subramanya Iyer was here at that time. The moonlight was bright and all were in high spirits. They all decided to hold a meeting and each person was to deliver a lecture on a different subject. Subramanya Iyer was elected chairman of the meeting. The first lecture was by Ramnatha. The topic chosen by him was "The Similarity between the Paramatma dwelling in the cave of the human hearts, Lord Nataraja in Chidambaram and Sri Ramana in Virupaksha cave." The chairman allowed him half an hour. There was no end to the points of similarity elucidated by him. When the chairman declared that the time was up, Ramnatha said, "Just half an hour more please." It was a meeting of people who were continu-

ously walking, saying, “A little more time, sir, a little more,” he went on with his speech for full three hours, when the chairman firmly put a stop to his further talking. You should have seen the enthusiasm with which he spoke that day. Subsequently, he summarized the points of the lecture into a song of four stanzas entitled, “Thiruchulinathanai Kandene.” Since the words “Andavane” had occurred in the song several times, Ramnatha himself began to be called Andavane. Pranavanandaji attempted to translate the song into Telugu but the translation did not come out well.

“Oh! Is that the reason why he is called Andavane?” I said and read the song. Though it may not be much from a literary viewpoint, it was pleasant to hear it as it was composed with a fullness of heart. Its purport is as follows:

“I saw Thiruchulinathan* and, being unable to turn back, stood there transfixed. He is the Lord that dances in Chidambaram and that protects the helpless and is merciful to them. The same Thiruchulinathan manifested himself as God in Virupaksha cave on the hill in the sacred Tiruvannamalai.

“Jiva was ruling unjustly in the town called Kayapuri, with the karanas as his subjects and ahankara as his minister.

“After some time, Jiva took up the sword of God’s grace and cut off the head of his minister, ahankara.

“Having so cut off the minister’s head, Jiva stood with God who was dancing all by himself in the cave called Daharalaya.

“He is this Thiruchulinathan; I saw him and stayed there, being unable to get away.”

* Thiruchuli is the village in South India in which Bhagavan was born; it is also said to signify Sri-kara and Om-kara.

January 24 1947

Om-karam—Aksharam

Recently, as I was returning home from the Asramam one evening at about 5 p.m., I heard two young men having some discussion between themselves. One of them said: “I Ques-

tioned Ramana Maharshi very boldly as to what remains after the Omkaram is crossed. He was unable to reply and so closed his eyes and slept. It is all a pose with him.”

Though, at the outset, I got angry at their speaking disparagingly about my Guru, I subsequently felt amused at their foolishness and said in a mild tone: “Sir, why do you decry your elders? Do we know, first of all, what Omkaram is, that we should venture to ask what remains after Omkaram?” The young men replied, “I asked him only because I do not know. Why should he not reply suitably?” I said, “Please do not be impatient. If you ask him once again, with patience, you will know.” They went away that day, but were present in the hall the next day. Unexpectedly, some one else questioned Bhagavan thus: “Swamiji, it is said that Akara, Ukara, Makaras make up Omkaram. What is the meaning of these three letters? What is the embodiment of Omkaram?”

Bhagavan replied: “Omkaram itself is Brahman. That Brahman is the nameless and formless pure SAT. It is that that is called Omkaram. Akara, Ukara, Makara or Sat, Chit, Ananda—any three of these two gouns, is Brahman. Omkaram which is beyond the speech or the mind and which can only be experienced, cannot be described by word of mouth, one cannot say what its swarupa (shape) is.” This reply also served to clear the doubts of the two youths who questioned him yesterday evening.

Similarly, someone or other used to ask Bhagavan, now and then, “What is the form of Akshara? What does it look like? How can we know it?” Bhagavan’s reply to all such questions was: “In accordance with the saying in the Gita, aksharam brahma paramam that which is supreme and permanent is the form of akshara. As for the question how we can know it, the Self is Akshara. That which is indestructible is Aksharam. How to know it? That question would arise only if Akshara were different from the Self. But the two are not different, but only one. That which is, is only one. That is SAT. That SAT is Self; there is nothing else other than the Self. The proper thing to do is to enquire and know who the Self is and to remain in the Self.”



Satsang

Absolute Existence

July 8, 2012

(Silence)

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: Sri Bhagavan reveals the Supreme Reality of Brahman. It is absolute Existence. So, in his spiritual instruction, he graciously reveals his own Existence, his very Being. It is not something that can be objectified. One cannot point to it and say, "It is this, or it is that;" nor is there anything else beside it so that one can say, "It is like this, or it is like that." Rather, that is absolute Existence, indivisible, one without a second. That is the One with nothing else existing whatsoever. It is the reality.

For the sake of immortality and for the sake of bliss, this absolute Existence, supreme Truth, ought to be realized. In this Realization is found perfect fullness and peace without beginning and without end.

How can we realize this? By knowing our own existence. In saying "our own," this does not mean that it is a possession, an attribute, a quality, or any such thing. What is indicated is the truth of your very being. What is your very being? What truly is your existence? Whatever that is, it is that always, without a beginning, without an end, and without a break or interval of any kind.

Seek within yourself to know that which is invariably existent, which is not more at one time and less at another, which is not subject to change, and which is not subject to birth or death.

What you truly are, you are always. What in you corresponds to always? Certainly, this invariable, immutable existence cannot be the body. The body is born, the body dies, and the body undergoes all kinds of changes from growth to decay. The body has all kinds of changeful activities and qualities. Your very ex-

istence is something other than that. If you would realize the Truth conclusively, blissfully, you must know completely the Self's freedom from the body. You are not the body, you are not in a body, and you do not actually possess a body. Any definition regarding your existence, yourself, in terms of the body is simply a mistake, a bit of confusion. That confusion gives rise to a false sense of bondage and consequent suffering. Your true Existence is not bound and is not the body. In realizing this, you liberate yourself from all kinds of suffering.

What is it about you that exists perpetually and not more at one time and not less at another? What is it that exists fully, whether your mind is in the waking state, dreaming state, or deep dreamless sleep state? Certainly, in all those states, the entire content of the mind is found to change and to appear and disappear. This is so for the subtlest notion of "I" to the most formed notion of "this." All of that changes. All of that is imagined in the state of mind to which it pertains. You, though, exist the same throughout. What is this "you"? To mix up and combine, in imagination, the changeless with the changeful, the real with the unreal, the Self with the not-self, is not wise. To keenly discern the Self's innate freedom from the mind and all of its content is the dawn of wisdom.

What is your essential existence? If conceived of as an individual "I," there is a corresponding "this" and all kinds of differences, such as the world, God, and oneself. What truly is the nature of your Self? According to the form attributed to "I," the "this," or objectified aspect of experience, will appear. What form does the "I" actually have? One Existence, absolute and invariable, is misperceived as "I" and as "this," as oneself, God, and the universe. If, by inquiry to know oneself, the "I" notion is abandoned, the "this" correspondingly subsides. All differences vanish, and the one absolute Existence, birthless and deathless, phase-less and unconditioned, remains, known to itself by itself.

Inquire. Trace your sense of existence to its actual nature. Then, Sri Bhagavan reveals his own Existence. Nothing else, and no one else, is involved. He reveals his own Existence within you, as you, the only "you" that actually exists. This is not a body, not a mind, and not an ego, but the true you. Inquire to know yourself.

Q.: There is nothing in the dream world or waking world that could ever reward the assumed individual for having given himself up. There is no proof coming from either of these worlds. Reality is its own reward. It seems important to keep discrimination between the imagined and real.

N.: The Reality is often described as being of the nature of the Sacchidananda—Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Consider absolute Bliss, unveiled and not hidden at all. What more reward could one want?

The sign of Realization, or the characteristic of Reality, is not known in the unreal, whether such be a waking state, dreaming state, or any other state of mind. The mind cannot measure it. The mind cannot know it. Indeed, the mind has no knowing ability whatsoever. The Reality knows itself.

Since it is the ever existent, it is a bit ridiculous to speak of having a reward, as if it were something attained. It, though, is liberation from all of the imagined bondage, so it is known as the supreme attainment, beyond which there is nothing else whatsoever.

Everything else acquired, attained, or obtained in some manner serves a further purpose toward something else, which, in turn, is for something else. The Realization of the true Self is its own purpose. It does not serve another purpose, yet realizing it, all the purposes of life are fulfilled.

Another Q.: How to achieve the Reality?

N.: By knowing oneself. Without Knowledge of the Self, the Reality, or the supreme Brahman, is not realized. By Knowledge of the Self, the Reality stands self-revealed.

The purpose of the scriptures and their meaning, and the purpose of practice and such, is ultimately to know oneself. Oneself should not be considered to be the small, individual being. That is just an imagined limitation, or an idea, superimposed upon the Reality of the Self. The Self should be known as it is.

Another Q.: The Bliss that is an effect of Self-Realization must be known through the body and experienced by the body. Without the mind and body, there will be no bliss, correct?

N.: Your statement assumes that bliss is insentient like an object. Bliss is of the nature of pure Consciousness. It experiences and knows itself free of the mind and free of the body. It is not an effect of realization. It is of the very substance of Realization.

Q.: So, it is not the bliss that comes and goes. It is experience?

N.: What comes and goes is but a reflection or an expression. The reality doesn't come and go.

Q.: There are two kinds of bliss then?

N.: There is one kind of bliss. With superimposed limitations, it seems to come and go. Really, it is the limitations that come and go. Whenever you experience happiness in any form, it is the happiness of the Self shining forth, but the experience is limited to the scope of the limitations you imagine for it. Those limitations are rooted in your misidentifications, which you falsely regard as yourself. If you abandon all misidentifications, Being will stand self-revealed, unbound in any way, and Bliss is Being.

Q.: It is not always obvious when there are misidentifications.

N.: It requires discrimination in order to abandon them. They may seem to be not obvious, but, as soon as you commence to examine any particular one, it stands out as very obvious.

Q.: One will do that only when feeling bad. Correct? There is no impetus to do that otherwise.

N.: The desire for happiness becomes the desire to discriminate or to inquire. Unalloyed happiness alone is our nature. Anything less is completely unsatisfactory.

Q.: Sometimes I feel a depth of presence, but, at the same time, there is a sense of sorrow or sadness. Is that a limitation?

N.: What is the cause of the sorrow?

Q.: I feel the sense of hopelessness.

N.: About what?

Q.: That I can't do this on my own.

N.: Who says you are on your own? Bhagavan is always with you. The idea that you are on your own is another piece of imagination.

Besides, the hopelessness is not true hopelessness. The moment you become dissatisfied, you strive to gain happiness. If you don't strive spiritually, you strive in some worldly way. You are not satisfied until you have complete happiness, because that is your nature. So, your hopelessness is only so called; it is not really hopelessness.

Q.: Because of the push? Because of what inspires?

N.: Because your very nature is happiness, and you won't be satisfied with anything less than your nature. Your nature impels you to search.

Q.: So, even the hopelessness is bliss in disguise?

N.: Hopelessness is a superficial concept. Dive into the depths of Being.

Q.: Not into the depths of the concept?

N.: A concept is not very deep.

From another angle of vision, before deciding that the path is hopeless, first you must do your very best to tread it. Then, you can decide whether or not the path is hopelessness.

Q.: What do you mean by that?

N.: If you make up your mind that it is difficult or hopeless before actually trying, it is not an accurate measurement.

Q.: Trying for Self-Realization?

N.: First, try with all of your heart, all of your introverted mind, with all of your spiritual strength, and all of your devotion. Do that consistently, and then we will see if any hopelessness remains.

Q.: This sounds silly to say, but I will say it anyway.

N.: That's ok. We are up for silliness.

Q.: (laughs) I feel that I have to cross off everything on the

list and get all these things accomplished, before I can take a moment of rest.

N.: What do you need to accomplish? What is on the list?

Q.: Filling all the orders for the business, taking care of the property, and appeasing the tenants.

N.: Yes, some of these things may go on almost endlessly. They are not truly endless, for only the absolute Reality is eternal. Some of those tasks seem to go on and on. You are not going to delay your spiritual practice for that, are you?

Q.: I don't know. I feel separation between that and my spiritual practice.

N.: The same Self is, while engaged in all those things as during other times.

Q.: I know that, too.

N.: If you truly knew that, there would be no separation. If you truly knew the Self, which is ever existent, there would be no difference at any time, no sorrow, and no despair, but only happiness, peace, and real freedom consistently and continuously.

Q.: So, it is not that those things don't have to get done. They still need to be accomplished as tasks.

N.: For the time being. They are not eternal.

Q.: They are not eternal?

N.: They are not eternal. For the time being, they are tasks, and tasks get done. They are not the purpose of life.

Q.: So, I don't need to set them aside in order to realize my true nature.

N.: Realization of one's true nature is not dependent on a particular action, such as doing something or refraining from doing something.

Q.: Doesn't it depend on stopping?

N.: On stopping the ignorance, not the actions of the body

Q.: I don't need a break?

N.: If you take a break from the business that you described, but you don't engage in inquiry, and maintain the same ignorance as before, what good is it? What you need to take a break from is ignorance.

Q.: It is not about being still at all?

N.: According to the Maharshi, stillness means the destruction of all name and form. Understand name to be all that is conceivable, and understand form to be all that is perceptible. It does not refer to being physically or bodily still. A corpse is bodily still. Is it realized for all that?

Q.: Can you say that last sentence again?

N.: A corpse is bodily still. Is it Self-Realized for being still? Spiritual stillness is not to be equated with bodily stillness. In the spiritual sense, stillness means not deviating from your true nature. Since such deviation is only an illusion, it means not straying into delusion, not conjuring up or adhering to ignorance. The sense of "I" remains in the Self alone, and it is not misidentified with a body, as a performer of action, etc., or as an experiencer in the world. That is stillness.

Q.: Bhagavan talks about the true heart being on one side of the chest. When I put my attention on the chest, it seems to bring me back, in a sense.

N.: At no point does Sri Bhagavan advocate meditation on a particular side of the chest.

Q.: But you know the reference I am talking about?

N.: Yes, but you need to look at those references clearly and carefully. He doesn't advocate meditation upon a point in the chest. He advocates meditation upon the nature of the Self, inquiring "Who am I?", in which case, the heart ceases to be considered as something subtle or physical with a location in the body, but, rather, means the very center of one's Being.

Q.: They were talking about it having a specific location, the right side as opposed to left side of the chest.

N.: How are you going to connect that with the rest of the instruction?

Q.: It doesn't work. That's why I am talking about it.

N.: Then, what is the question about it?

Q.: Why doesn't it work, if he speaks about it?

N.: Discussion about various aspects of the yogic lore is not to be equated with the essential teaching of Knowledge. In the portion of *Talks with Sr Ramana Maharshi* that we read last Friday, the Maharshi, in speaking about various descriptions of the heart found in various scriptures, says that such are for those who appreciate only relative knowledge. It is not the absolute Knowledge. That which is really the center of your Being, or the true Heart, has no location and is utterly bodiless. Left and right or up and down cannot possibly apply to it. It is not an object of physical perception or subtler, yogic perception.

Q.: When you say that to me right now, I feel that I am backing up from the body, but the body is still there. So, there is the sense of duality between the unseen me and the body, and the body is perceived.

N.: Perceived by what?

Q.: So, it is a mental concept that the unseen is seeing the seen?

N.: No. That may be accurate, as far as it goes. Why do you think that the seen still exists on its own? It is true that you are the unseen, you are the knower of the body, but you are not the body. That much is true.

Q.: The Knower of the body has no form and no location.

N.: When you add to that the idea that the body is still there, where is there?

Q.: It is still perceptible.

N.: In a world assumed to exist externally from the position of the body? From the position of thinking that the world is external, which is said from the position of the body, you say the body is there. The plain, simple truth is that you are bodiless. The senses, being integral to the body, do not show you reality.

Q.: Yet reality is not somewhere else.

N.: Reality is locationless. Location is an idea conjured up in the mind in the waking state.

Just as you cease to regard the body as yourself, likewise the senses should not be regarded as yourself. Nor should they be regarded as determining reality. The senses cannot show you real Existence.

When you say that the body is there, you refer to sensory perception, apart from which, you have no experience of the body whatsoever. You are not the body, and you are not the senses.

Q.: So, I cannot do any of this?

N.: What do you mean?

Q.: That is the helplessness I feel. I am unable to do anything.

N.: Unable to do anything about what?

Q.: Transcending the body and the senses

N.: Surely, you can. You can inquire deeply and consistently. You can devote yourself to realizing the truth of the Self that transcends all name and form.

Q.: I don't have to stop activities to do that?

N.: Just stop ignorance. If ignorance is there, make an earnest effort to inquire. Examine your experience in the higher light, discerning and discriminating, sifting what is your Self from what is not the Self.

Q.: That is an ongoing practice?

N.: That is the only continuous practice. Every other kind of practice will be caught up in thought and depend on the duality that one is trying to transcend. Consequently, such cannot be continuous.

Q.: Is there never going to be a time when I am not practicing?

N.: Find out.

In the Realization of Truth, in which there are no distinct things as the realizer and that which is realized, there is no practice. Until and unless that is realized conclusively, without the least trace of the possibility of any doubt or difference, one should practice arduously, intensely, and to the best of her ability. It is a practice of knowledge; not action, but knowledge. Knowledge alone yields liberation from all of the imagined bondage.

Q.: This is the kind of inquiry that you want me to do truly. It is inquiry, not doing.

N.: It is not an action, but it does require full effort.

Q.: Which is full concentration?

N.: The entire focus is upon your very existence, to know yourself. For someone who deeply, continuously inquires, every moment is profound.

Q.: True inquiry moment to moment really isn't asking, "Who am I?"

N.: Or it is really asking, "Who am I?"

Q.: But it is done by a constant stream of knowledge.

N.: That is correct. That Constant stream of knowledge manifests as the discrimination that sifts real from the unreal.

Q.: Like a vortex?

N.: It is the end manifesting as the means.

Another Q.: There is a huge benefit in making the inquiry very active. One way is passive and feels deep, but there is another type of inquiry that is more active in asking, "What is my nature?"

N.: The qualities are perceived within the mind. The inquiry is only singular, whether it manifests as diving into the depths or as the hunting down and destruction of the tendencies, misidentifications, and attachments. It is like differentiating between Being and Consciousness.

Q.: The intention is the key. It is so formless, and the end is totally formless. I have to cease ignorance. Discrimination must become finer and finer.

N.: Where do you carry the ignorance? Do you have a bundle of it that you can show me? Do you have an ounce of ignorance, a pound of ignorance, or a mass of ignorance?

Q.: (laughs) Usually it is a mass, but, if you ask me to show the warehouse, I can't. One little idea may be a warehouse when imagined so and look like a mass.

N.: It appears that way. One thought manifests as an entire world.

There is the necessity of destruction of ignorance. What is the ignorance? How can you be ignorant of yourself? Who is ignorant of himself?

Q.: (pauses) Ah, I am not sure. Those are assumptions. (laughs) There is liberation, and there is ignorance. I am on the other side from liberation.

N.: All of ignorance is dependent upon, known by, and contained within one who is ignorant. What is his nature? If we simply inquire into who is ignorant, ignorance ceases to exist, for it is not real.

(Then followed a recitation in Sanskrit and English of verses of the Ashtavakra Samhita.)

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil of Song of Ribhu Chapter 29.)



From The Ramana Way

The following articles appear in the April 2012 issue of "The Ramana Way," a monthly publication produced by the Ramana Maharshi Center for Learning in Bangalore, India. They have 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

The Need for and Nature of Practise

By Dr. Sarada

As the Self ever shines of its own accord effortlessly, the role of effort in awakening to this shining often appears to be suspect. Why make an effort to reach that which already is? Why make the Self into a goal, when we are, in truth, ever established in it? By doing so, don't we, in fact, distance it? We answer this question by countering that, though the Self ever is and is always of the nature of knowledge, for some inexplicable reason, we find ourselves ignorant of this Presence and enmeshed in an illusion that our consciousness is bound to a specific name and form. Our effort, therefore, is necessary not to create knowledge of the Self but to get rid of the ignorance of believing ourselves to be separate from the Self.

Bhagavan has given the example of the sun shining on a bale of cotton and yet not burning it to dust. He explains that, unless a catalyst in the form of a lens captures the sun's rays and pointedly turns them on the cotton, the cotton does not catch the fire of the sun. Even so, although the Self is of the nature of Knowledge, it does not burn away the heavy veil of ignorance unless it is focused on the ignorance through the catalyst lens of self-enquiry.

We do find that, in numerous instances, Bhagavan has stressed the need for effort. He has wondered that people want to become established in the Self the moment they enter his presence, "they ignore the effort involved." In fact, in his "Ap-palam Song" Bhagavan says that we should ever untiring and joyously strive for Self-abidance. To every sincere aspirant, he has almost unvaryingly advocated the need for continuous prac-

tise. In *Upadesa Saram*, also, he points to the fact that the spontaneous, unbroken thought of the Self is superior to meditating on it intermittently. We should strive thus until we are able to “taste the Self as the Self” and remain unwaveringly as the Self. Hence, the need for practise cannot be denied.

However, even if the need for effort is thus conceded, we find that effort to become Self-aware may still be a fallacy especially, since the effort is to be made by the very entity which is preventing that awareness. Bhagavan himself has often pointed out that the ego, or the “false I,” if we may concede the existence of such an entity, will not willingly commit suicide. He has also given the graphic story of the thief-turned-policeman. In his boyhood days, there was a prevalent practise even amongst thieves to give notice to the people they were planning to rob. In accordance with this practise, a thief gave notice to a wealthy gentleman that he would commit a theft in his home on a given date. Well warned, the said gentleman harnessed the service of the police in large numbers, including some plainclothes policemen as well. Despite this, or perhaps because of this melee, the thief not only entered the house, he managed to commit the theft and was about to make good his escape when someone noticed that the robbery had occurred and began to call out “Thief! Thief!”

The alarm passed from mouth to mouth, with people running here and there in search of the thief. For a moment, the thief thought he was well and truly trapped, but, within a second, he too began to shout “Thief! Thief!” and ran with the crowd who was searching for the thief. Thus, he managed to escape. Narrating this incident, Bhagavan points out that, if the ego is assigned the task to tracking and capturing the ego, it will be like asking the thief, himself, to catch the thief. At the same time, it is amply clear that there is no agency other than the ego with which any effort can be made. Hence, the very validity of effort is in question.

Has Bhagavan given us two contradictory instructions leaving us in confusion? This is impossible, as the very embodiment of Bhagavan is an out-pouring of compassion to clear confusion from its very root. Where, then, does the seeming confusion lie, and what is Bhagavan’s answer to it? The confusion appears to be between the need for effort to gain Self-knowledge and the

need to renounce all effort in the awareness that the Self is not a goal, as it is here and now and it cannot be reached by effort, as effort is necessarily only in the mental realm. Bhagavan endorses the fact that effort cannot enter into the realm of the Self. In fact, he even says it is amusing to claim that “I know the Self” or “I do not know the Self” because there cannot be two selves, one that is known and the other that is unknown and needs to be known or is known by the former.

At the same time, in his absolute compassion, Bhagavan is aware that we are incapable of ceasing from effort altogether, such is our addiction to effort. Hence, he prescribes that effort which will by its nature cut away all effort. He blesses us with the magical tool of self-enquiry, which is at once the most intense effort and yet which instantly cuts us off from the realm of effort. How would this be possible? Let us examine the nature of effort as it usually happens and the nature of self-enquiry to understand how it differs from all other effort.

What is effort? Effort is an action initiated and, perhaps, repeated or sustained with a view to achieving a goal. Such action implies that there is a goal that needs to be reached, which may be called an objective or an object, by the one who makes the effort, or the subject. Though the goal is desired by the subject, and the effort is made by the subject, practically the entire attention in any effort is on the object. The effort may be to attain a physical objective like cleaning one's feet or reaching a place, or a mental objective like trying to get rid of an unwanted thought, or trying to hold on to a desired thought. In either case, our entire attention is focused on trying to gain that objective, and that becomes our object. This object is obviously separate from, different from, the subject and not available to the subject at the time of making the effort. It is understood that the object can and will be attained only as the end product of the effort.

What is self-enquiry? It is paying attention to the subject, or rather the source of the subject. Hence, any practise which allows attention to rest on an object would not be the practise of self-enquiry. The question may arise, however, that, when we say self-enquiry is paying attention to the subject, does it not amount to saying that the subject becomes its own object? In Self-enquiry, also, one is striving to achieve the goal of attention on the subject, is one not? This cannot be denied. However,

Bhagavan points out that striving to pay attention to the subject differs from paying attention to an object. He emphasizes repeatedly that, because this effort has no object other than itself, the futility of the effort itself is bound to strike one quickly. Hence, only by making the effort of questioning the very one who makes the effort can all movements of the mind be totally eradicated.

More importantly, when one pays attention to any object, one always assumes that the object is apart from or different from the subject. However, Bhagavan points out that no object exists apart from the subject as the whole world is only in the mind. Further, attention to an object implies that the subject is known and the object is valid as it is currently known. One assumes that I know who I am and I can pay attention to an object of my choice. However, when one tries to make the subject itself one's object through the question "Who am I?" then one begins to realize that not only is the object contained in the subject, in fact, it is astonishing that what one had assumed to be the subject is itself only an object.

When the sword of enquiry cuts down every object that is mistaken to be the subject, one reaches a point of utter helplessness when one is not in a position to call anything the subject, and in this point of helplessness alone is the mind stilled. Bhagavan says it "falls into the Self," recognizing intuitively that it has no existence of its own.

As one pursues the enquiry into one's own nature, one will find that what one terms "subject" and "object" is relative and may be perceived as being subtler and subtler with introspection. When one looks at the body and the mind, the mind, or thought is the subject and the body is the object, as the body is known only by the mind. When one looks further, into the nature of the mind itself, then one finds that thoughts are all objects, and the "I"-thought is the subject that perceives all thoughts. If one carries the enquiry still further and asks "Who am I" or "Whence am I?" or "Where from does the consciousness in the "I" arise?" then one will find that the true subject is the Self alone.

Of course, the Self cannot be called a "subject" because there is no object apart from it. And when there is no object, what can be differentiated as a subject? So, one may say that

the last stop in the “subject-object” divide is the isolated “I”-thought. Therefore, Bhagavan points out to us that the “I”-thought is the subject, and all other thoughts are objects. However, he clearly instructs us that the moment the “I”-thought has been isolated for inspection, one should pursue the enquiry further until it merges in the source. He also reiterates that such a merger takes place not by effort but by the cessation of effort or the upsurge of grace. When the mind again becomes extroverted or pursues an object, once again, attention must be reverted to the source until the mind merges there; this must be repeated till the point when abidance at the source becomes steady and natural.

Does not all this constitute effort? We began by saying that the practise of self-enquiry constitutes turning attention on to the subject and thereby away from the object. The tools for thus reverting attention to the subject are the questions “For whom is this thought?” (For me) “Who am I?” This is a process of recognizing that no thought whatsoever is to be held on to, no matter how worthless or worthwhile the thought may appear to be. This implies that, in the practise of Self-enquiry, one does not dwell on the need for effort. This does not mean that one can dwell on the non-necessity of effort either. If the thought that effort need not be done arises in one’s mind, one must immediately counter it with the question, “Who believes effort is not necessary?” If the thought arises that I must put in more intense effort then that, too, must be questioned with, “For whom is the thought of effort?” As the need for effort is as much a thought as the need to be lazy and not put in the effort, both needs must be offered to the fire of self-enquiry.

The need for continuous practise can never be denied. However, the continuous practise would be to question all needs, including the very need for effort as well and the thought of having made effort or of not having made effort. The continuous practise of self-enquiry makes one sensitive to the rise of any thought; it makes one aware that every movement of the mind is thought. To call something right is thought; to call something wrong is thought. To identify something as good or bad, as wanted or unwanted, as easy or difficult is all thought. To believe something is an aid is thought; to reject something as an obstacle is thought.

In fact, the very recognition of a dip into the Self is also a thought; it is only a recollection of the experience. Hence, elation at the experience would also be a thought that one cuts through self-enquiry. Similarly, sorrow at non-repetition of the merger may also be questioned as a thought, thus going to its source. The persevering practitioner of self-enquiry would, therefore, be extremely wary of holding on to any position, to any thought. On the contrary, every thought would be questioned mercilessly. No movement of the mind whatsoever would be acceptable. In our experience, however, we are most likely to have spells of self-enquiry and in-between spaces when we move with identification to the body. Even at these times, we must try and hold on to the recollection of the Self as the basis of our activity. If not, we must remember that every thought is merely a thought and not give weightage to it.

What is the role played in the practise of relying on grace? Firstly, all effort must be backed with an awareness of its limitation. As Bhagavan has clearly stated in *Upadesa Saram*, action or effort is insentient, lifeless. Not only is it incapable of producing any result (which arises only by the law of the Supreme), action or effort itself is made possible only by the light of Consciousness, which springs purely from the Self. Hence, this effort is capable of taking us only to a point. We must not fail to remember that effort is continuously backed by grace of the Sadguru, and the fruition of effort is completely in His hands. If we fail to rely on grace in this manner at the beginning, middle and end of the practise, then an unconscious attachment to effort could arise; further, the thought that one is the maker of such effort may remain unquestioned or un-tackled. Most important, in this extremely lonely and sometimes fearsome inner journey, where one has to summon the greatest courage of questioning the validity of one's own apparently familiar and comforting existence, one would be left utterly friendless.

On the other hand, reliance on the grace keeps one unaware of the arduous nature of the journey, for one feels like the "first class passenger" whose example is often quoted by Bhagavan. The journey has to be made, the enquiry held on to from moment to moment, but one would feel as if one is allowed to sleep while the guard keeps vigil in order to wake us

up at the appointed hour. The joy in the Sadguru's abundant love would make one oblivious to all other aspects of the endeavor.

Holistic Meditation

The Past is the Present Misery

By A.R. Natarajan

D.: Having heard the truth, why does not one remain content?

M.: Because samskaras (inherent tendencies) have not been destroyed. Unless they cease to exist, there will always be doubt and confusion. Their roots must be cut. They are rendered ineffective by practise as prescribed by the guru.

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In each birth, we bring forward thoughts in seed forms as psychological memories and the marks of experience we have been through. To this opening stock is added a further load of incomplete experiences in the form of more seed thoughts. There is also factual memory required for functioning, be it as a student, as a professional, a businessman and so on. Let us for the time not ponder on what is the source of this factual memory. Rather, let us ask, what about the dead-weight of the psychological and needless experiential memory of the past? Quite clearly it has no use, for it makes for a blinkered or jaundiced view of life. The thought clouds of the past prevent the joy of a spacious mind freed from them. It is not that we voluntarily choose the crowding of thought in the mind, though we do hug some memories, the pleasant ones. Generally, however, we do not wish to be victims of the past. But still we are. Why? Because the thoughts are latent in the heart in seed forms and they keep sprouting up as thoughts. Sometimes, they even become a holocaust. Occasionally, unable to curb them or prevent their sover-

eignty over us, we are devoured by their momentum. Actions follow which we often regret in retrospect.

The question therefore, arises, as to how such memories can be reduced to ashes. How do we prevent their constant overflow into the present? One of the methods suggested is to allow these thoughts to sprout forth. It is only when the seed thought becomes active as an actual thought that one can tackle it. In order to be aware of the rubbish heap within, the rising of thoughts good and bad is necessary. It may be for this reason that when Rangan wondered whether he was actually becoming more ego-ridden, Ramana told him, "If the ego has to go, all that is hidden inside has to come out. When you keep water on a stove for heating, it will boil and spill over, will it not?" In his reminiscences, Venkatakrishnayya recollects the case of a devotee who kept complaining that he had not changed. He told Bhagavan, "I have been coming here for the past several years, but still there has been no progress. I am just as bad a sinner as before." Ramana chided him mildly saying, "How can you be sure as to how far you have traveled?" Because we wish that only auspicious thoughts should arise, we get scared when the ugly side shows up. Let it come up, for what has been hidden comes to the gaze of one's attention. Otherwise, one might be immersed in ego's negative forms, that one is a "sinner," that one is "Impure." A capacity to handle such thoughts as they surface is the best antidote for this negativism.

Then, we also have the time-honored method of cultivating the opposite thoughts, the sacred ones and the strength giving ones. Repeated dose of this medicine would wean one away from enervating thoughts arising due to negative tendencies.

However, it would appear that all these techniques are in the nature of palliatives. The root and branch remedy lies in learning to be Self-aware through vigilant self-enquiry. Ramakrishna Swami, a long-time resident and disciple, was bothered about his predisposition and wanted to know how best its annihilation could be effected. Ramana told him that the tendencies "will themselves be scorched if only you remain as you truly are." Constant linking with the pure Self will serve to dry up the thought seeds, to dry up potential thoughts. They will become lifeless. The mountainous accumulations of past tendencies need not and cannot be tackled individually. The sure way to

make a bonfire of them is to be attentive to the surfacing of thought itself, by focusing attention on its source.

A devotee enquired of Ramana whether it would be sufficient to practice self-enquiry in the mornings or whether it should be always. Ramana told him that it has to be pursued “until one is established in the state of pure being.” Ramana would also repeatedly point out that incessant self-inquiry is possible because it can be practiced in all circumstances. It will be the undercurrent of action, and its benefits, will overflow throughout the waking time. It might be added that the question itself appears to be by one who has not already deeply taken to the path. For, once the taste of the natural state is experienced through self-enquiry, that itself would act as an automatic spur to it.

If it is so simple, why is it not being attempted with full faith and confidence? As Ramana once told Chadwick, the very directness of this method makes one wonder whether it is not a tall claim. Our minds are used to complications, and simplicity is anathema. Hence, we find the tendency of some devotees to question Ramana’s assertion of the simplicity of self-enquiry. A devotee told Ramana, “You say it is easy, but we find it difficult.” Ramana advised him, “Find out who it is that is weighing the paths. Find out who it is that is finding it difficult.”

Another hurdle on the way is the inability to take advantage of the Guru’s grace. Ramana told Rangan that it is difficult to overstate the value of the Guru, “For they weave the yarn and give the cloth ready-made.” But owing to want of sufficient reverence on the part of the disciple, “Grace may become effective only after a long time.” One would do well to remember the identity of the Guru with God and the Self. When you can feel the Master’s presence, “the doubts are easily overcome, for the Master’s role consists in removing the doubts of the seeker.”

Leaning heavily on Ramana’s grace, if one sticks to self-enquiry, then the past can be totally negated. Thereafter everything would be perceived with a new look, with breath-taking freshness and joy.



From The Temple Archives

[A response to a SAT member whose husband was ill.]

March 16, 2012

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

It is important to deeply, conclusively realize that the Self is not the body. This yields transcendence of bodily attributes, such as condition, location, etc. That which remains is the egoless nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Is it not this Self that you love in all whom are loved? Yes, it is without boundary and devoid of separation. Repose in the peace of this true Self, the One who dwells in your heart.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A message from a devotee of Sri Ramana followed by Nome's reply.]

March 20, 2012

Master Nome,

I wanted to thank you for the generous grace with which you showered me at the retreat. To say I am grateful, would be an understatement of such tremendous magnitude that I would rather close my eyes and pranam to you from the depths of my heart.

Having arrived back in New Jersey yesterday, I felt an utter longing for your presence, for the divine. This is only due to your grace. Thank you.

It is superfluous to ask, I know, but yet I must. Please be with me, each moment. Please nurture the longing in me. Please lead me to myself. Please do not allow me to fall by the wayside and wake up one day years from now, thinking that I have wasted my life.

I know that when Bhagavan was asked the same, he replied "You are standing neck deep in water and you ask for water." I know that grace is ever present. I know that grace was present prior to meeting you. Yet, today I feel a hope and confidence that I did not feel previously. So to me, it is as if the grace is anew.

I pray that it may continue to flow. Thank you.
Pranam to your feet,

Dear ,

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

Yes, Grace is ever present. All that is required is for one to be keenly aware of it. Relinquishing misidentifications, one finds himself absorbed in it.

With your sincerity of purpose and earnestness, you are never forsaken. Not a single drop of devotion or effort in Self-inquiry ever goes in vain.

Not only did Sri Bhagavan say that one's situation is like asking for water when he is neck deep in water, but he also said that it is like water itself asking for water.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and thus always dwell in happiness and peace.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[To the same devotee after he related a spiritual experience that he had.]

March 21, 2012

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The experience shows you that your nature is expansive and beyond the limits of the body. Transcendent of the body, silence shines.

The particular form of the experience, such as sensations or loss of sensations, is of a transient character. The Knowledge-essence is of a permanent nature. It pertains to your very Existence, which is continuous and eternal. It is this Existence that is free from the body and bodily limitations. Place emphasis on this Knowledge-essence.

In your thought, “to whom is this experience happening?”, the chain of mental activity manifested due to the undue emphasis on the delusive “person.” If, as the Maharshi instructs, one truly inquires, “For whom is this?” the egoless nature of the real Being-Consciousness, as the only reality, becomes self-evident.

May you ever abide in That, as That, which is the Self, the infinite and the eternal, and thus remain at peace.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A SAT member wrote a message in which appeared these questions: How can God be the doer of the actions of jivas since jivas are imaginary? Similarly, what is meant by the Maharshi's teachings that all activities are actually God's and proceed as God's will? (God willing the actions of unreal beings?)

Here is Nome's reply.]

March 20, 2012

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. I am glad to know the retreat was and continues to be spiritually beneficial for you.

In Reality, the Self, or Brahman, alone exists. In that, there

can be no question of individuals, the world, or a God. Without these, there can be no concept of destiny or free will. This is egoless Knowledge.

If this is not deeply, conclusively realized, a question about manifestation will arise. For those who are perplexed by such, it is pointed out that the entire manifestation is but the imagining within the mind, and the Self is the unaffected, eternal Consciousness that is the witness of the mind and its content. Thereby, the idea of being a perceiver is abandoned. This is ego-dissolving Knowledge.

For those who do not comprehend this and who assume the reality of an external world, the question regarding the power that accomplishes all things arises. For them, it is pointed out that there is only one supreme power, which is of God, the supreme Lord of the universe. Thereby, the idea of the ego's importance is nullified. This is ego-attenuating Knowledge.

One cannot truly know that the jiva is unreal yet still hold that the world, in which actions appear, is real. If the nature of the jiva is discerned by deep inquiry, ideas of both destiny and free will vanish. One Existence alone appears as jagat-jiva-para. One Existence alone appears as God, the witness, and Brahman. This Existence is the Self.

It is hoped that you find the above clarifying. May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, in which there is not the least trace of duality or difference, so that you remain always happy and at peace.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[From another devotee of Sri Ramana, followed by Nome's response.]

April 1, 2012

Dear Master Nome:

Namaskara. After my return from SAT with the great benefit of having met you and received the instructions, by His Grace,

my mind is getting more focused on self-inquiry. I pray never to veer from the path.

Though I understand that self-inquiry must be ongoing all the time, I believe that to always inhere at His feet, at my stage, I should stabilize my practice in the morning and evening, and carry the momentum the rest of the day. I have been successful in spending an hour or so in the evening, and spend more time on weekends. However, I have not been very successful lately to wake up early and practice, and sporadically remember to practice during the day. Your words of wisdom will help.

Bhagawan's image and reading keep me inspired. I am reading Essence of Inquiry, and this work is making my understanding clear and motivating me. Thank you so much.

I appreciate a response at your convenience.

With deep respects,
In Bhagawan,

Dear ,

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

Bhagavan's Grace is ever present, even manifesting as the ability to inquire. If one's earnest prayer is to be endowed with inquiry, certainly all illusion will dissolve for him, and the Self will be self-revealed.

Inquiry reveals Knowledge and consists of Knowledge. Depth, thoroughness and continuity are important. The time of day for meditation is not important. Though it is common to wisely meditate at the commencement of the waking state or shortly thereafter and at the end of the waking state or shortly before, Self-inquiry that yields the timeless Realization of the Self transcendent of all states of mind does not depend on those times.

With the intense desire for Liberation, you will find yourself eagerly seizing every opportunity to dive within. Thereby, as the Maharshi has taught, the Self is readily realized.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self, so clearly, graciously revealed by Sri Bhagavan, Ribhu, and other wondrous

sages, in That, as That, and thus dwell always in peace and happiness.

Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,
Nome

[A message from a devotee of Sri Ramana, followed by Nome's response.]

April 15, 2012

Dear Master Nome,

Om Namo Bhagvate Sri Ramanya.
Namaste and Pranams.

Through the mystery of grace, my practice of inquiry has been happening on a daily basis since my return from the ashram.

How wonderful! I know that this is a function of grace alone, since when I tried to maintain a regular practice in the past, I have found it very difficult. Thank you.

When I sit to meditate, a thought comes up. I inquire, "for whom is this thought?" and finding no response, the thought and the thinker of the thought both disappear. I am left in a silent, peaceful state that feels wonderful. I sit like this for 20 minutes or so and the above process repeats numerous times.

Here is my question:

When I inquire, the thought and the thinker of the thought vanish, I am left in silence. However, I have read that whatever one perceives, is not what one is. I perceive my body, so I am not my body. I perceive my thoughts, so I am not my thoughts, etc. However when I inquire and perceive peace and silence, then by the same logic, this is not me either. So, then, who am I? Is the peace and silence resulting from inquiry also just a phenomenon that must be discarded? Master, would you please clarify, I am confused.

Thank you,
Pranam,

Dear ,

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

When, through deep inquiry, the thinker and thought both vanish and silence alone remains, complete the inquiry by discerning the nature of the one who knows the silence. True Silence knows itself; the Self alone knows the Self.

There is no need to attempt to discard the peace and the silence. Rather, seek to realize the very nature of peace and silence, which is the Self. Sri Bhagavan has declared that Silence is that in which no "I" appears. He also says that peace is of the Self. We should know that peace is rooted in the changeless. Therefore, if one inquires into the egoless, changeless Existence that he truly is, all confusion vanishes, and the nonobjective Truth shines for itself.

It is not necessary to continue with a conception that peace or silence is a transient experience or a state of mind. The peace and the silence exist forever as the very nature of the Self. If such a conception does arise, simply inquire for whom such is and, then, inquiring "Who am I?" realize your very Self to be the ever peaceful, eternally silent Reality.

One who understands that bliss lies within cannot do otherwise than practice continuously.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A question from a devotee of Sri Ramana with Nome's answer.]

April 15, 2012

Dearest Master Nome,

Thank you for being the ever inspiring presence of Sri Ramana. The Grace has been supplying efforts for my Sadhana. However, I am not pleased with myself yet.

While reading Ribhu Gita Ch 2, verse 40, the line... "There

are no gods such as Siva to worship...” shook me a bit. Intellectually I understand that the remover of all obstacles, Ganesha is no different from the most beautiful ever Divine mother, who is no different from the ever gracious Lord Siva, who is no different from my own Self. However, I love Lord Siva, who I believe, manifests as great teachers to remove all ignorance and suffering. Moreover, sage Ribhu himself obtained the teachings from Lord Siva?

Please explain at your convenience.

With deep respects,
In Bhagawan,

Dear ,

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

Grace is infinite and ever present. We need only remain keenly aware of it.

It is natural to feel less than complete satisfaction until the Self is conclusively realized. It is an intuition of the natural state of the perfect fullness of Bliss. It serves as a goad that prompts one to deeper and deeper inquiry and devotion.

The thorough negations expounded by Ribhu must be comprehended in their proper context and by inner experience. Not only is any idea of "Siva" negated, but everything else including the world, all that is subjectively perceived, all that is conceived, and even the individuality of the one who negates. That which can never be negated, remaining resplendent, is truly Siva.

The same scripture that expounds such negation also lauds devotion to the Supreme Siva. Ribhu declares that the source of this highest spiritual instruction that the Self alone exists is none other than Siva. So, Siva and the Self must be the same.

If some idea causes bondage, it is wise to relinquish it and destroy it. If some action is motivated by ignorance, it is wise to renounce it. Who, though, has ever been bound by devotion and its expression? Therefore, the spiritual instruction found in Ribhu Gita is intended for those who, filled with devotion and clear inquiry, are intent upon the Realization of the Supreme Truth. Even

if duality would be imagined during the start of sadhana, the dualism ought to be abandoned and not the sadhana. With the abandonment of dualism, supreme bhakti flourishes, and such becomes abidance in Knowledge.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[In response to a seeker in India who asked several questions about renunciation.]

April 25, 2012

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. I am glad to know that you find Ribhu Gita and the Song of Ribhu to be beneficial.

The true renunciation is the abandonment of the ego and of the concept of an objectively existing world.

Complete detachment, born of the knowledge of the source of happiness, is necessary for Self-Realization. Renunciation may thus also be understood as the expression of such detachment in the form of cessation of those actions that are based upon, or motivated by, ignorance regarding the nature of happiness.

Vows of renunciation, wearing the symbols of sannyasa and engaging in a particular mode of life, etc. or not doing such are according to the temperament of the seeker. The appearance, actions, and condition of the body do not affect the Self. Knowledge of one's true Being, the Self, yields Realization. Actions performed by the instruments of the body, speech, and mind cannot accomplish this. Perplexity over activity and inactivity arises only so long as there is misidentification with the body. Upon inquiry to know one's own nature, this delusion vanishes.

Destiny is an idea of and for the illusory individual, or ego. Grace is the dissolution of that very illusion.

To choose wisely that which promotes the inner realization of supreme Bliss cannot be regarded as a fault.

The effects of polio or any other disease are only for the body and never touch the perfection of the Self, which is unborn and imperishable.

I hope that you find what is written here helpful.

May you ever abide as That, the bodiless and egoless, which is the goal of all renunciation, initiation, and such, which is the ever-existent Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and which is Brahman, and thus dwell in happiness and peace always.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[Two replies to two other messages from the same seeker.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Scriptures and meditation upon what they declare are for the purpose of the revelation within us of that which is imperceptible to the senses and transcendent of the mind. That is Brahman. That alone is the Self.

Bhakti and Jnana are inseparable and not different.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

April 27, 2012

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for both of your messages.

All differentiation is merely imagined and based upon the false assumption of, or misidentification as, an individual or ego. If that vanishes due to clear inquiry, differences are found to be unreal.

If one inwardly inquires as the nondual scriptures, such as those mentioned by you, are read, the experience will be profound. Indeed, the depth is of one's own Self, of the nature of illimitable Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

By deep devotion and clear inquiry, abandoning entirely the objectifying tendency (vasana), abide in the Knowledge of the Brahman-Self. That alone is real. That alone exists. That alone is what you are.

Grace is ever there and always perfectly full.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[In reply to a letter from another seeker.]

May 13, 2012

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your letter of April 27th, which arrived yesterday.

Certainly, you are always warmly welcome here.

Changeless, perfectly full peace is of the Self, in which there is not the least trace of difference, of an ego, of a world, of birth-life-death, of any kind of time, or of any objective notion. This eternal, non-individualized, bodiless Reality, Being, is what you ever are.

The conception of stopping any seeking is a result of lack of clear inquiry, for the illusion of an existent individual is inherent in such a conception. Clear inquiry, though, reveals the nonexistence of the individuality of the seeker, and all that remains of her is Brahman, the real Self, of the nature of undifferentiated Being-Consciousness-Bliss. The Nondual Truth is that for which there is no alternative.

Yes, happy it is to be drawn to, dissolve in, and abide as That, the Self, and such is by Sri Ramana's Grace.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[On June 1, 2012, a devotee of Sri Ramana wrote concerning his consideration of a new job. Toward the end of his message, he wrote, "I have prayed to Bhagavan about it and I get a positive feeling about the move but my wife feels worried and introduces doubt into my mind. I was wishing that I could speak to Bhagavan when suddenly the thought came to my mind that You are an embodiment of Bhagavan. Why should I not turn to you?" Here is the response from Nome.]

Dear ,

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

Nonattachment born of the knowledge that the source of happiness is within is most important. With that, regardless of which occupation is chosen and regardless of the result of such choice, you will be free from worry and will be happy and at peace.

As Sri Bhagavan graciously teaches, you are not the body and, therefore, cannot be the performer of action. You are the immovable Self. In light of this Truth, what is "to be done" and what is "not to be done," for you who are Brahman itself?

Whatever is done without attachment, free of the false notion of being the body and doer, and dedicated in devotion to Sadguru Ramana, the Supreme Lord, is the right way to proceed.

May you, by the Knowledge of the Self, ever repose in the peace that is imperishable.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The same devotee questioned again:]

June 1, 2012

Thank you for your message. It brought tears to my eyes. I

don't know why. I feel a surge of love for something. I don't know what. It is fresh, untainted, exquisite feeling of happiness.

Your reply is understood and yet at the same time a decision is to be made. This body mind creation will enter upon a meeting and be asked for a decision. Is the response already decided? As Brahman, should all thought be abandoned?

If I am not making the decision then who is? What is this body mind going to say in the meeting?

I am not asking you to tell me what I should do, but I am confused as to how I should approach this.

Thank you for your patience with me. It is a blessing for me that I may ask these questions and so clarify my doubts.

In Bhagavan,

[Here is Nome's reply.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. In the initial paragraph of the book, "Who Am I?", Sri Bhagavan declares that happiness is the cause of love and that the Self is this happiness.

Upon meditation on what was mentioned in the previous email, the decision will feel as light as air.

As Brahman, the Self, one should remain free of all concepts. Inquiring, abandon the thoughts and the thinker as not-Self and as unreal notions about unreal things.

If you think that the mind decides, inquire and know for certain that you are not the mind and that its content, in the past, present, and future, does not pertain to you.

If you feel that all is universally ordained, inclusive of the decisions made by the mind and acted upon by the body, remain at ease in the state of non-identification with and detachment from all of that. He carries all and is, indeed, all.

If you think of yourself as making the decision, sincerely reflect on which course of action would best express and support your devotion to Sri Ramana and, detached from the fruits of the action, make your decision as an offering to Him. Thus, as proclaimed in the Gita, Brahman is the offering and that which

is offered, and the one who offers, and Brahman indeed is reached by him in the samadhi of Brahman-action.

In brief, without the ego's intrusion, there will be found no cause for worry. All is alright always. Dive within and realize the ever-existent perfect fullness. It is the Self.

Grace is ever with you and within you.
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker in India wrote asking about the details of the life of Ribhu so that he could better "walk on the path of Krishna." This is Nome's reply.]

June 6, 2012

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

The little that has been described of the manifested life of Ribhu is found in the introductions to the English translations of Ribhu Gita (from the Sanskrit original) and the Song of Ribhu (from the Tamil version), both of which are published by SAT. It is very difficult to ascertain an historical date for him. The Ribhu Gita appears in the Sivarahasya, which is a very ancient scripture, so he must predate that time. Ribhu-Nidagha dialogue also appears in four Upanishads, so he may have flourished in Vedic times. The scriptures state that he is a mind-born son of Brahma and that his Guru is Siva Himself.

Perhaps, we should regard Ribhu's teachings about the Self, Brahman, as the true description of himself.

Sri Krishna declared, "The real ever is; the unreal never comes to be," and, "I am the Self that dwells in the hearts of all." Sri Ribhu's teachings could be regarded as a vast, profound instruction that reveals the ultimate significance of these declarations.

The very same Truth is revealed in the teachings graciously bestowed by Sri Ramana Maharshi.

You are encouraged to read the two books mentioned

above and deeply meditate on their meaning by inquiring to know the Self as it truly is.

I hope that you find what is mentioned here to be helpful. May you, with a heart full of devotion, inwardly inquire and thus realize the Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and thus ever abide in happiness and peace.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker asked about the meaning of the declaration that the world is unreal and is a dream. Here is the reply.]

October 08, 2012

Dear ,
Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. Yes, Sri Bhagavan declares that the world is unreal. So do Adi Sankaracarya, Ribhu and other sages. That all that objectively appears is transient, not self-existent, appears only in a waking state of mind, seems to exist only from the perspective of misidentification with the body and the senses, and is a mere supposition that is utterly dependent on the "I" notion is indicative of its unreality. If the only real "I" is the Self, which is infinite, eternal, changeless, and undifferentiated, how could there be any scope for "this"?

You may find it helpful to read Self-Knowledge, mandala 8 and the chapter entitled Self Revealed. The other chapters in part two of the same book also pertain to your question. In addition, the short book, The Quintessence of True Being, provides a thorough, albeit tersely expressed, explanation of the spiritual instruction that Brahman is real and the world is unreal.

I hope that you find the above helpful. If you inquire within deeply, the profound Knowledge of nondual Existence, egoless and worldless, will shine for you, as you.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[On October 28, 2012, a seeker from Canada, after referring to the Song of Ribhu 44:41-42, asked: Is it absolutely necessary to wear triple stripes of ashes on the forehead and holy ashes all over the limbs as it is said? Is it only for sadhana or else? In the chapter 38, verses 24-27, it is said to renounce all kinds of devotions or habits, etc. It looks to me contradictory to the chapter 44 verses 41-42. Here is Nome's response.]

Dear ,

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

The spiritual instruction stated in Song of Ribhu pertains to Self-Knowledge. So, that which is described in chapter 38, verses 24 through 27, as also elsewhere in the text, should be comprehended in knowledge and not conceived as a particular action. That is, the "casting aside" is accomplished by Knowledge of one's Self and not by some bodily deed. Implicit in the "study of this treatise" mentioned in those same verses is the nonobjective inquiry into oneself, without which such "study" would not yield the Self-Realization sought.

The value of wearing vibhuti (sacred ash) is known by those who do so. Of course, if the significance of the ash as the residuum of Absolute Being, which shines as self-revealed upon the death of the ego and the destruction of the illusory triads, is realized, the rest will be understood, too.

One should "wear" the undivided Knowledge always, with not a "limb" of the mind or experience left uncovered by it.

One thing is absolutely necessary: Self Realization. How else to realize the Self except by the deep, constant inquiry to know the Self? It is wise to engage in whatever you determine to be helpful and supportive of this inquiry.

May you ever abide in the Knowledge of the Self and thus be always happy and at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[On November 09, 2012, in a message, a seeker asked, "What is the best way to approach Self inquiry? When I that I am suffering, I ask myself: who is this sufferer and to whom does this pain arise? What can I do to maintain a steady practice?" This is the reply from Nome.]

Dear ,

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

Your very Being is entirely natural. Inquire by questioning inwardly so to discern this true Self free from whatever you may be accustomed to regard as yourself, such as the body, the mind, or the ego.

Suffering is due to not knowing the source and nature of happiness. Knowing the source of happiness tends to yield steady spiritual practice. Self-inquiry transcendent of thought is completely steady.

Earnestness and an intense desire for Self-Realization are the best approach. More details regarding the approach can be found in "Self-Knowledge" and in the "Requisites" booklet.

May your inquiry to know the Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, be deep so that your happiness is full and your peace is always.

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[In the course of a message, a seeker asked, "Thank you very much for the suggestions when I will be at Ramanasramam. You tell me to focus entirely on Sri Ramana Maharshi with his supreme Wisdom and limitless Grace to guide me. Nome, what do you really mean objectively concerning Ramana Maharshi's Wisdom and Grace to guide me?" Here is Nome's reply.]

November 14, 2012

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Due to Truth Revealed retreat held at the SAT Temple, this is the first opportunity to respond to your message.

Grace is nonobjective, so no objective definition of it would be adequate. Grace is of the very nature of the purnam (the perfect fullness) of Brahman. Sri Bhagavan is always Brahman. The manifestation or not of a body, which is conceived only in the unreal mind of another who does not actually exist as such, for Brahman alone is the only Self, is of no consequence.

If the approach is one of ego-dissolution, what is meant by guidance with Supreme Knowledge and Grace will become clear. Such egoless clarity is natural for those who actually inquire to know the Self.

May your inquiry be deep, thorough, and profound so that you abide in the Self, as the Self, which has not the least trace of individuality or an objectified world, and thus dwell always in happiness and peace

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[In a message dated November 25, 2012, a seeker asked, "I want to be free, but my worries of the future perpetuate my suffering. How can I transcend mental tendencies when they keep arising? Can Self inquiry/Self Knowledge transcend karma of the mind and body?" This is Nome's reply.]

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The Self is perfect Bliss. If this happiness of your very Being seems to be veiled, such is due to ignorance, which is in the form of misidentification. If you examine the mental tendencies that cause you to suffer, you will discern that the root of the tendencies is the misidentification. The tendencies do not arise by themselves; you conjure them based on the misidentification. By inquiry that clarifies the knowledge of your identity, the very root of the tendencies is destroyed.

If you deeply determine the source and nature of happiness, you will be nonattached, and your worry will cease.

By Self-Knowledge one finds Liberation from all kinds of karma.

Steadiness is found by depth and thoroughness of inquiry to know the Self. Perseverance and devotion are great aids to such. You may wish to refer to the sadhana catushtya (four-fold practice) described in the Requisites booklet and in Adi Sankaracarya's Vivekacudamani.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[The same seeker wrote again, finishing her message with, " I always have faith in Bhagavan. I wish I could go see Him in Arunachala and get His Darshan. Please help lead me out of ignorance. Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya. Om Namah Shivaya." Here is the response.]

December 11, 2012

Dear ,

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

When, through inquiry to know the Self, the misidentifications are abandoned, the anxious thoughts that constitute the emotions will subside.

Sri Bhagavans says that A, ru, and na signify Sat (Being), Cit (Consciousness), and Ananda (Bliss) respectively, and achala means unmoving. If you dive within to realize the Self which is of that nature, by His Grace, darshan will be granted in this quintessential true Being. Such darshan is forever.

Faith is the seed of profound, direct experience.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A SAT member who dwells near Arunachala regularly meditates on the holy mountain and wished to know how he could deepen his experience while moving about in that sacred place. He already recognized the importance of inquiry to negate misidentifications and expressed a yearning to identify with the motionless. Here is Nome's response.]

December 15, 2012

Dear ,

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

Existence, which is the Self, is ever unmoving and is always changeless.

From what vantage point do you perceive the movements and changes of the body? That which knows must be bodiless.

What is it that knows the changes of the senses and prana? That must be transcendent of them and unaffected by their changes and motions.

What is it that, unknown by the mind, knows the mind and its motions? That is innately mind-transcendent.

Consciousness, which alone knows, is the Existence, which alone is.

Yes, as the Self ever is, you are able to experience your true identity continuously and forever. The inquiry is the self-revelation of the very nature of your Being, which perpetually is as it is. This is the One without a second.

Inquire. Inquire deeply. Inquire thoroughly. Inquire consistently.

Just as, while walking on Arunachala, above and below there is Arunachala, and all of the motion is only on Arunachala and you do not depart from Arunachala, so it is with the motions of all and the Self.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[To a seeker who asked, “Can you please explain how bhakti yoga is similar to jnana yoga?”, the reply was:]

December 16, 2012

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The similarity of jnana and bhakti is in the dissolution of ahankara (ego).

Ever yours in Truth,
Nome



Each Temple Seva at SAT begins with meditation followed by spiritual advice from Nome. The following advice was given on August 19, 2012 Temple Seva entitled: We Know

Those who inquire know what it is into which they inquire. Those who do not inquire do not know that into which they do not inquire.

Those who meditate know what it is upon which they meditate. Those who do not meditate do not know that upon which they do not meditate.

Those who worship know what it is that they worship. Those who do not worship do not know what it is that they do not worship.

Those who engage in service and devote themselves know what it is that they serve. Those who do not serve do not know what it is that they do not serve.

We know that into which we inquire, who inquires. We know that upon which we meditate. We know what we worship. We know what it is that we serve.



Insights into SAT Board Meetings

Bhagavan Ramana has graced us with the SAT Temple and His teaching. We are exceedingly blessed to be the caretakers of such a gift. Throughout the ages, many spiritual gifts have been bestowed upon humanity by God to guide us to our very Self—to God. These gifts include temples, scriptures, sages and Gurus.

Since its inception, and from recognition of this divine gift, the SAT Temple has been selflessly cared for and maintained by devotees of Sri Ramana. Some of these devotees act as Board members to see to it that the temple is maintained and functions in the highest possible manner. Each Board meeting is spiritually guided by Nome so that Board members make decisions concerning SAT from the highest possible perspective. At the start of each Board meeting, following meditation, Nome instructs Board members on the "position" in which Board members should abide, and from which they make the best decisions regarding SAT in order to uphold this most holy gift. This position is the most lofty and the most spiritual. The following quotes from Nome, which commence each Board meeting, are taken from Board minutes, and are shared here, to allow devotees insight into the view from which decisions concerning SAT are made:

"If we remain steadfast in Bhagavan, Truth remains steady in us. When the Truth is steady in us, we are better able to come up with ways to support our temple." 5/4/08

"Our temple is founded on original Knowledge—Brahman Knowledge. It is blessed by Bhagavan's Grace. It is extremely precious. Scriptures say this Knowledge is rare to come by in all the three worlds. We should remain keenly aware of this." 12/6/09

"Whatever comes to us, whatever happens to us or happens around us, whatever we think is good or bad, all is a blessing from Sri Bhagavan. All is Grace from Absolute Brahman. The

temple is a blessing, everything connected with the temple is a blessing, and although some blessings require hard work while others are like a breeze, it is all the Grace of the Absolute Brahman.” 11/9/08

“Everything we do in the temple should be done in service to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and to the revelation of what he has taught. His teaching is the guiding principle by which we take care of our temple.” 6/8/08

“When we make decisions and initiate activity regarding SAT, we do so for the care and love we have for Sri Ramana’s teaching and for the gratitude we have for Bhagavan Sri Ramana. The perfection that he is, which is to be reached through our decisions and our actions, is not only present then, but also present now and always.” 7/6/08

“Always know that everything we do here at SAT is in Ramana’s hands and we need only to do our best. There is no absolute way to know beforehand what will happen regarding whether people access the teaching now or sometime in the future. But what we can be sure of is our ability to provide a rich treasure of spiritual knowledge to be accessed at any time—now or later. Knowing that it is all in the hands of Ramana relieves us of the burden of worry. We will still do our best by thinking of ways to secure funds so that SAT will continue to flourish, however, we know that it is still in His hands.” 8/10/08

“Whether we refer to such as Grace or the Nature of Reality, there is a perfect fullness, utterly complete, that does not depend on anything—we should keep this in mind. We have challenges to meet at SAT—things we want to accomplish and how to accomplish them. We have the challenge of making people come to know of SAT and sparking their interest to become members of SAT, all the while knowing that peace and happiness are in perfect fullness.” 9/7/08

“Wherever there are good people conducting themselves selflessly and putting this teaching into practice, Ramana’s blessings are there.” Ganesh added... “I feel fortunate to be here—attending satsang and other events and experiencing the bliss.” 10/12/2008

“When we engage in service here in deep devotion to Bhagavan Ramana, everything will come out right. We cannot say beforehand how the road will turn, but we can be sure that everything will turn out right.” 12/14/08

“Being very aware of the immensity of Bhagavan’s Grace and the opportunity to practice and realize is worthwhile to contemplate. Being aware of what is already present here in our own temple and what we have accomplished and the service we provide is worthwhile to contemplate. The value of the atmosphere, the experience, the meditations, the events and pujas, and the scriptures we are able to publish is worthwhile to contemplate. What it means to ourselves and to others to be able to serve in this capacity here is a blessing and worthwhile to contemplate.” 1/4/09

“At the end of satsang today, it was said that if the heart is focused in the right direction everything will turn out right. With a strong practice of inquiry, meditation and devotion, everything is bound to turn out right.” 2/8/09

“In the course of one’s practice, either early on or later in one’s sadhana, there comes a point when one feels he is at the end or the goal, and there is no other place to go or to turn. This is true when one is finding the Truth in one’s heart. The holy temple becomes the place to turn. There is a certain experience of permanence of the Truth one is Realizing. Truth is spaceless and formless, and minds that adhere to It are spaceless and formless. We have a temple in this ages old dream where the mind can return—as a manifest expression—to one’s own Self. Relatively speaking, we have a permanent temple—as one’s sadhana progresses, one has that feeling in his own heart. We see people wandering about like herds of animals. Few are those who recognize the Truth. Fewer still are those who adhere to It. Fewer still are those who practice and Realize. When one arrives at the threshold of the goal, there is a permanence of the Truth. Let’s make our efforts here be consistent with this permanence.” 3/8/09

“Let us always remember that everything, always is guided by a higher power, is accomplished by a higher power, is supported by a higher power, and is pervaded by a higher power.

*Everything we do here is dedicated to that higher power.”
4/5/09*

“The addition of the Ribhu Gita recitation after satsangs is a good thing. We should continue in many ways to make our temple the holiest and most inviting place for people to come to experience the Truth. All that is needed is dedication and good things will pop-up all over.” 5/3/09

“Whatever we are dealing with here at SAT, the gains and the loses, whatever we think is better or worse, it is essential to remain even, equanimous, and detached. All is in the hands of a Supreme power. The wise know this, and this is how we should approach everything we do.” 6/7/09

*“We have many blessings. We are blessed with a temple, we are blessed with a Sadguru and His Grace, we are blessed with spiritual instruction, meditation, inward-turned minds, and holy books. We are blessed with ears to hear and voices to recite. We are blessed in innumerable ways. These are just the manifested blessings, which make up a small portion of the blessings, because the unmanifest blessings are far more. As a board, we must see to it that the manifest blessings continue.”
7.5/09*

“By being keenly aware of Sri Bhagavan’s Grace, we remain undaunted when difficulty arises and humble when there is no difficulty present.” 8/8/09

“We should remain happy in the immensity of His Grace, joyfully engaging in what needs to be done in gratitude for that Grace He has shown.” 9/6/09

“One heart dwells in all temples of the world and according to each temple’s leaning, that God is emphasized. For us, in our temple, by the grace of Ramana, the God present in our temple is Supreme Brahman. Ostensibly, we see images in our temple of Sri Ramana and Siva. Here, devotion is fused with highest Knowledge. Here, in our temple, we find silence, absorption, and absolute Truth. The SAT Temple signifies the temple of Being . There is certain joy in this; there is a certain clarity and wisdom in this. We should remain keen on the depth and importance of this in all our endeavors, so that those who wish to meditate,

worship, and devote themselves to know themselves have a place to come." 10/4/09

(To be continued.)

SAT Board members:

Nome & Sasvati, Ramana Muthukrishnan, Eric Ruetz, Myra Taylor, and Ganesh Sadasivan



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 & parking lot, cleanup after events, cleaning the temple, set-up for events, helping with flower arrangements; 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, 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; Wimala Brown: providing meals at retreats and prasad after satsang; 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: lighting candles at meditation events, flower arranging,

preparing meals at retreats; Richard Clarke: helping with book orders from India; Nome: temple grounds maintenance, writing books, administrative stuff, general help wherever needed including spiritual guidance; Sasvati: preparing books & Reflections for publishing, maintaining residential rentals, overseeing property repairs, flower arrangements, maintaining temple gardens; Advait Sadasivan & Janani Chandran: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play, helping out when asked; Tristan Mzhavia: assisting with flowering the murtis and lighting candles, cleaning the temple, transcription; Sheila Hillman, providing prasadam after atmotsava and satsangs; Jay Hiremath: transcription; Carol Johnson: transcription; Anandi Muthukumarasamy: providing prasadam after satsang and at atmotsava, cleaning the temple; Sabiha Vyas: providing prasadam after satsang and at retreats; Prema Roney: providing prasadam at special events; Scott Roney: repairing sump pump and diverting water from the temple property & overall property maintenance; Jaden Silva: assisting with sump pump repair; Sivakumar Chandran: property and Temple maintenance, assisting wherever needed, maintains recordings for online bookstore, uploads satsangs on YouTube and Vimeo; Grant Summerville: transcription.



Upcoming Special Events

Mahasivaratri: March 10-11, 2013

Nondual Self-Inquiry Retreat: March 15-17, 2013

Self-Knowledge Retreat: May 24-26, 2013



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.

Om Namah Sivaya

