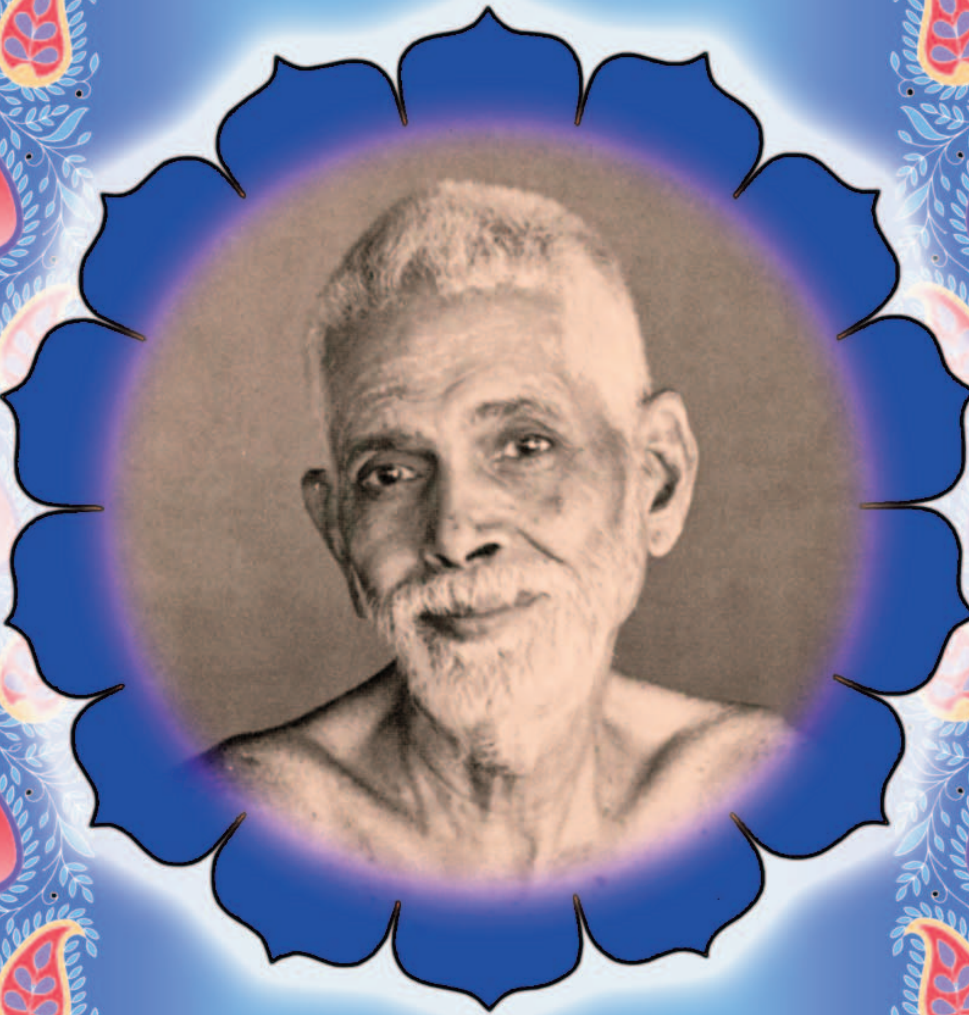


# Reflections



SOCIETY OF ABIDANCE  
IN TRUTH

January February March 2014



## Invocation

*O Mahaveva! O Thou auspicious One, with the moon  
shining in Thy crest!*

*Slayer of Madana! Wielder of the trident! Unmoving  
One! Lord of the Himilayas!*

*O Consort of Durga! Lord of all creatures! Thou who  
scatterest the distress of the fearful!*

*Rescue me, helpless as I am, from the trackless forest of  
this miserable world.*

*- Adi Sankara, Hymn to Mahadeva, verse 1*

*Lord of the universe! Refuge of the whole world!*

*O Thou of infinite forms!*

*Soul of the universe! O Thou in whom repose the infinite  
virtues of the world!*

*O Thou adored by all! Compassionate One! O Friend  
of the poor!*

*Rescue me, helpless as I am, from the trackless forest of  
this miserable world.*

*- Adi Sankara, Hymn to Mahadeva, verse 8*

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# *The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**(From Letters from Sri Ramanasramam)**

February 25, 1947

## **Self (Atman)**

This morning a Gujarati lady arrived from Bombay, with her husband and children. She was middle-aged, and from her face she appeared to be a cultured lady. The husband wore khaddar, and appeared to be a congressman. They seemed to be respectable people by the way they conducted themselves. They all gathered in the Hall by about 10 a.m., after finishing their bath, etc. From their attitude it could be seen that they intended to ask some questions. Within fifteen minutes or so they began asking as follows:

Lady: Bhagavan! How can one attain the Self?

Bhagavan: Why should you attain the Self?

Lady: For Shanti (peace).

Bhagavan: So! Is that it? Then there is what is called peace, is there?

Lady: Yes! there is.

Bhagavan: All right! And you know that you should attain it. How do you know? To know that, you must have experienced it at some time or other. It is only when one knows that sugarcane is sweet, that one wishes to have some. Similarly, you must have experienced peace. You experience it now and then. Otherwise, why this longing for peace? In fact we find every human being is longing similarly for peace; peace of some kind. It is therefore obvious that peace is the real thing, the reality; call that "shanti," "soul," or "Paramatma" or "Self"—whatever you like. We all want it, don't we?

Lady: Yes! But how to attain it?

Bhagavan: What you have got is Shanti itself. What can I say if some one asks for something which he has already got? If it is anything to be brought from somewhere, effort is required. The mind with all its activities has come between you and your self. What you have to do now is to get rid of that.



Lady: Is living in seclusion necessary for sadhana? or is it enough if we merely discard all wordly pleasures?

Bhagavan merely answered the second part of the question by saying, “renunciation means internal renunciation and not external,” and kept silent.

The dinner gong sounded from the dining hall.

What can Bhagavan reply to the earlier part of the last question of this lady who has a large family? She is also educated, and cultured. Bhagavan used to speak similarly to householders; and there is a ring of appropriateness about it. After all, is internal or mental renunciation so easy as all that? That is why Bhagavan merely replied that renunciation means internal renunciation and not external. Perhaps the next question would have been, “what is meant by “internal renunciation?” and there would have been a reply if the dinner gong had not intervened. I returned to my abode where I live in seclusion. You see God has allotted to each individual what is apt and appropriate.

Did Bhagavan ever ask me, “Why are you living alone?” Or did he mention it to anybody else? Never. If you ask why? it is because this is appropriate to the conditions of my life.

February 26, 1947

### **Guru Swarupam (The Guru's Form)**

This afternoon a Tamil youth approached Bhagavan, and asked, “Swamiji! Yesterday morning you told the Gujarati lady that renunciation means internal renunciation. How are we to attain it? What is internal renunciation?”

Bhagavan: Internal renunciation means that all vasanas should be subdued. If you ask me, “How to attain that?” my reply is, “it is attainable by sadhana.”

Question: Sadhana requires a Guru, doesn't it?

Bhagavan: Yes! A Guru is required.

Question: How is one to decide upon a proper Guru? What is the swarupa of the Guru?

Bhagavan: He is the proper Guru to whom your mind is attuned. If

you ask, how to decide who is the Guru and what is his swarupa, he should be endowed with tranquility, patience, forgiveness and other virtues capable of attracting others even with the bare eye like the magnetic stone, and with a feeling of equality towards all—he that has these virtues is the true Guru. If one wants to know the true Guru swarupa, one must know his own swarupa first. How can one know the true Guru swarupa, if one does not know one's own swarupa first? If you want to perceive the true Guru swarupa, you must first learn to look upon the whole universe as Guru rupam. One must have the Gurubhavam towards all living beings. It is the same with God. You must look upon all objects as God's rupa. How can he who does not know his own Self perceive Iswara rupa or Guru rupa? How can he determine them? Therefore, first of all know your own real swarupam.

Question: Isn't a Guru necessary to know even that?

Bhagavan: That is true. The world contains many great men. Look upon him as your Guru with whom your mind gets attuned. The one in whom you have faith is your Guru.

The youth was not satisfied. He started with a list of great men now living, and said, "He has that defect; he has this defect. How can they be looked upon as Gurus?"

Bhagavan tolerates any amount of decrying of himself, but cannot tolerate even a little fault-finding of others. He said with some impatience, "Oho! you have been asked to know your own self, but instead you have started finding fault with others. It is enough if you correct your own faults. Those people can take care of their faults. It looks as if they cannot attain salvation unless they obtain your certificate first. That is a great pity! They are all waiting for your certificate. You are a great man. Have they any salvation, unless you approve of them? Here you blame them, elsewhere you will blame us. You know everything, whereas we know nothing, and we have to be submissive towards you. Yes! we shall do so. You go and please proclaim, "I went to Ramanasramam; I asked the Maharshi some questions; he was unable to reply properly; so he does not know anything."

The youth was about to speak again in the same strain, but another devotee prevented him from doing so. Bhagavan observed it, and said, "Why do you stop him? Let all keep silent, and let him go on speaking as long as he pleases. He is a wise man. We must therefore lie low. I have been observing him ever since his arrival. He was originally sitting

in a corner with all his questions carefully assorted and kept ready bundled up, as it were. He has since been moving and coming nearer day by day till at last he has come close enough and has started asking questions. After hearing the lady questioning me yesterday, he decided to show off his knowledge and so has opened his bundle. All that is in it must come out, mustn't it? He is going to search the whole world, and decide the Guru swarupa for himself. It seems he has not so far found anybody with the requisite qualifications for being his Guru. Dattatreya is the universal Guru, isn't he? and he has said that the whole world was his Guru. If you look at evil you feel you should not do it. So he said evil also was his Guru. If you see good, you would wish to do it; so he said that good also was his Guru; both good and evil, he said, were his Gurus. It seems that he asked a hunter which way he should go, but the latter ignored his question, as he was intent upon his aim to shoot a bird above. Dattatreya saluted him, saying, "You are my Guru! Though killing the bird is bad, keeping your aim so steadfast in shooting the arrow as to ignore my query is good, thereby teaching me that I should keep my mind steadfast and fixed on Iswara. You are therefore my Guru." In the same way he looked upon everything as his Guru, till in the end he said that his physical body itself was a Guru, as its consciousness does not exist during sleep and the body that does not exist should therefore not be confused with the soul—dehatmabhavana (the feeling that the body is the soul). Therefore that too was a Guru for him. While he looked upon the whole world as his Guru, the whole world worshipped him as its Guru. It is the same with Iswara. He who looks upon the whole universe as Iswara, is himself worshipped by the universe as Iswara—yadbhavam tadbhavathi (as you conceive you become). What we are, so is the world. There is a big garden. When a cuckoo comes to the garden it will search the mango tree for fruit while the crow will only search the neem tree. The bee searches for flowers to gather honey, while the flies search for the faeces. He who searches for the salagrama (small holy stone) will pick it up, pushing aside all the other stones. That salagrama is in the midst of a heap of ordinary stones. The good is recognized because evil also co-exists. Light shines because darkness exists. Iswara is there, only if illusion exists. He who seeks the essence, is satisfied if he finds one good thing among a hundred. He rejects the ninety-nine and accepts the one that is good, feeling satisfied that with that one thing he could conquer the world. His eye will always be on that single good thing." Bhagavan said all this in a resounding voice and then remained silent.



The whole hall was steeped in a dignified silence. The clock struck four. As though it were the original peacock that had come to salute the lotus feet of the Arunachala Ramana that destroyed the demon Surapadma, and to offer praises to him, the Asramam peacock entered the hall from the northern side and announced its arrival by giving out a resounding cry. Bhagavan responded to the cry by saying: "Aav, Aav" (come, come) and turned his look that side.

March 28, 1947

### **Delusion and Peace of Mind**

Yesterday a youth arrived from Andhra Pradesh. From his face he appeared to be simple-minded. He approached bhagavan this morning and asked, "Swamiji! I came here ten months ago for your darshan. I got a desire to have your darshan again now, and so immediately set out and came here. I could not delay even for a moment. Can I do so in future also, whenever I have such a desire?"

Bhagavan replied: "Whatever happens, happens. Everything happens according to what we deserve. Why worry in advance about it?"

He again asked: "Can I come whenever I have such a desire at any time in the future? Or, should I suppress the desire?"

"Things happen of their own accord, if you stop thinking ahead of the future," replied Bhagavan.

Question: "I am not able to suppress this desire even for a moment. Is it a self-deception?"

Bhagavan looked at me with a smile, and said, "It seems he came here some time ago, and again had a desire to come here now, and so he came immediately. He is asking me whether he may do so whenever he has such a desire in future."

The youth intervened and said, "Whenever I get the desire to see Bhagavan, I am not able to control it even for a moment. I am only asking whether it is mere mental delusion."

I said, "How can a desire to have darshan of a great person be mere mental delusion? While there are so many delusions of the mind to be controlled and suppressed, does this desire alone appear to you to be a mental delusion?" There was no further question.

There were some Andhra visitors in the hall who had come there on pilgrimage. One of them got up and asked, “Swamiji! How does the soul attain peace?” Bhagavan replied, laughing, “What! What is peace for the soul?” “No, no! I mean for the mind.” “Oh! for the mind! The mind attains peace if the vasanas are suppressed. For that, one must enquire and realize who one is. How can one get peace by merely saying, “I want peace, I want peace!” without first enquiring what is peace! First make efforts to recognize and realize what already exists.”

There was a Pandit among them. He asked, “Life itself becomes extremely hard in some places. How is one to perform sadhana in such places?”

Bhagavan replied, “The place is within you; you are not in the place. When you are in all places, where is the question of difficulties in some places, and not in others? All are within yourself. How can they cause you difficulties?” “But we get no peace of mind at all in some places,” he protested and Bhagavan replied, “That which always exists is peace. That is your natural state. You are not able to recognize your natural state. You get deluded by aberrations which are unreal and feel sorry that there is no peace. If you realize your self, all places will become equally suitable for Sadhana.”



## *Satsang*

### **Happiness, Reality, Identity**

January 6, 2013

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: How could you, being Happiness, ever be unhappy? How could you, the Reality, absolute Existence that ever is, ever cease to be? How could you, of the nature of the Self, which is Being-Consciousness-Bliss, ever be another; something different from your nature? Such is only because of ignorance, which takes the form of misidentification.

From the confusion regarding identity comes confusion regarding reality and happiness. If you are not the body, there is no unhappiness regarding being the performer of action, the condition or state of the body, its qualities, its attributes, and its sensations. If you know that you are not the mind, you remain undefined by any thought ever conceived. If there is the realization that you are not the ego, the very root of unhappiness, of the confusion regarding what is real and what is not, the very root of mistaken impressions regarding your identity, is absent.

Happiness, reality or existence, and identity, that is, your true Self, are One and the same thing. To find happiness that is unconditional, uncaused, and perpetual, know yourself. To know reality, know yourself. For your view of yourself invariably becomes involved in your view of what exists. To know yourself, deeply inquire, as Sri Bhagavan advises, "Who am I?" With an introspection that is nonobjective in nature, Being will know itself as it is.

How could Being ever cease? It is unborn and imperishable. It is not to be misidentified with the ego, with the mind, with the body, or with anything of this world. How could Consciousness, which is of the very nature of supreme Knowledge, entertain any ignorance or illusion? By realizing your nature, you find the Knowledge, the Wisdom, that is innate, and it is eternal. How could Bliss, Ananda, ever suffer? The Bliss of your true Self is immortal. To find that supreme happiness or peace, which is neither given nor taken away, neither created nor destroyed, know yourself. Question yourself and abandon the tendency to misidentify your Self with anything that actually you are not, such as all that is transitory, all that is objective, and all that is differentiated. Turn within and find yourself to be that which is infinite, eternal, stateless, partless, beginningless, and endless. If your experience appears to be in any way otherwise, inquire more deeply, "Who am I?" Where the notion of an embodied individuality subsides, the Truth shines.

Questioner: Thank you Master. Your discourse pointed to what is so inexpressible. It brought me back to one of my favorite contemplations, which is about the story of the Maharshi in his uncle's house, when he awakened. What did he experience? I've wondered if his deathlessness that he realized was a sense of completeness and from that completeness, comes the freedom, the bliss.

N.: It is the same thing, whether we refer to this as that which is deathless, that which is perfectly full, purnam or complete, freedom, or peace. What is it that is entirely free? What is it that is perfectly com-

plete? What is it that is actually deathless? What is it that is changeless, for you must be changeless to be at peace? The answer to all those questions is the same.

Q.: It seems so simple that it begins for him, from the with transcendence of the body. Then, all the rest was right there.

N.: If you realize that you are not the body, in what way would you be bound? In what way would your peace be disturbed? The “I am the body” misconception is the cornerstone of delusion. If you know fully and completely that you are not the body, what more could you need to know? That which applies to liberation from the body, applies to any other form that could be attributed to the experiencer. If you are not the body, gross or subtle, what would be missing?

Another Q.: On Friday night, you were talking about how to meditate on the Self, and you mentioned that it had to be devoid of differences. At some level, it is clear that I am; there is only one Existence. But to completely abandon the idea that there’s an individual, was not clear at that time. Why is it not clear? Today, when you started the satsang, it became clearer, that I was trying to use the same misidentification to transcend itself. So, abandonment really means complete dis-identification. I’m telling this now, but I’m still not completely one with that experience. I want to get completely sure of it.

N.: How certain are you of your existence?

Q.: I am sure of existence. The problem is I’m trying to add something on to it.

N.: Is Existence an experience that comes and goes, or does it always abide? Who is the one for whom coming and going appear? In the thought, “I want to realize the Self,” who is the “I”? Can he truly be something other than this Existence, which is Brahman? If there appears to be a semblance of internal difference within the one absolute Existence, who perceives that difference? The difference and the perceiver are the same thing. But what actually is there? It is just like the recognition that the ego and ignorance are the same thing. So, if we inquire, “Whose ignorance; for whom is the ignorance?” the “I” and the ignorance, being the same thing and unreal, vanish. Likewise is it with differentiation. Thus, meditation on the Self becomes nonobjective. There is not one who meditates on a distinct thing called “the Self”; rather, the Self is the very Existence of the meditator. Existence cannot

cease to exist at any time. Similarly, it cannot be more or less at any time. It cannot even be a unity, let alone a diversity.

Q.: What about the changes perceived?

N.: The changes, or modifications, perceived, are as illusory as the perceiving. The perceiving is as illusory as the perceiver. One Self alone exists, eternally. It is homogeneous Existence. There is no different one to experience any other kind of difference, ever. If it seems in your experience to be otherwise, simply inquire as for whom that is, “Who am I?” All differentiation is illusory, like the snake superimposed on the rope. Whatever kind of difference there may appear to be—of a different kind, of the same kind, or of internal difference—whether it’s a difference in your happiness, a difference in your identity, you seem to become an individual or an embodied being, a difference in what you regard as real, as when the changes of states of mind—waking, dreaming, and deep sleep—occur, whatever kind of difference there may appear to be, continue to deeply, profoundly inquire, “Who am I?” Then, you will peacefully abide in the difference-less state, which is the only real state there is.

Another Q.: A couple of questions. Last night I was reading the latest issue of Reflections. I was reading a transcript from a satsang and in it you posed a question, as you often do, and it’s the kind of question that really invites one to turn the mind inward and to reflect and meditate deeply. When I got through with the meditation and I started reading what you said next, the experience was full of, “Of course the experience is going to be the same.” There was the Self revealing itself to the Self, and there wouldn’t be two different answers, and it wouldn’t be a coincidence that the same experience would be there.

N.: So, what is the question?

Q: Is that the correct understanding?

N: Where there is that which is realized by all without a trace of difference, how could there be a doubt of whether it is correct or not? The result of profound inquiry, Realization, is quite naturally of a self-evident, doubtless certainty, for it is not dependent on thinking. Until this certainty is certain, one should continue to inquire. There truly are no such entities as “you,” “I,” and “another.” All such thinking is based on the “I am the body” misconception, which is misidentification. If we are not bodies, where are “you,” “I,” and “others”?



Q: They disappear like my experience of myself in a dream. The body no longer is the point of differentiation.

N: For that which is bodiless, there is no such thing as inside and outside. With the subsidence of the first person, as the Maharshi points out in *Saddarsanam*, the second and third persons also subside. “You” and “it” depend on “I.” In the “I”-less Existence that you truly are, there are no differences such as “others.”

Q: On Friday night in a dialogue, you said that all the differences are gone. You dismissed the entire objective sphere by saying, “It’s unnecessary.” I kept asking myself two questions: “What is unnecessary? What actually is necessary?” In *Self-Knowledge*, in the *Mandalas*, in the section on aspiration, there’s a place where you talk about what’s necessary. It’s in a verse on *Self Realization*, and I kept reading that over and over. It became very clear that that’s what’s necessary. When I pursue that, it makes the unnecessary become unnecessary—the unnecessary desires, the unnecessary happenings, differences, bondage, and suffering. I’m forever grateful to the Maharshi for pointing to what’s necessary.

N: He points to what is necessary. He himself is what is necessary. Grace is also said to be necessary, but it is already completely full. In *Realization of the Self*, the Self obviously is necessary. It is already ever-existent. What, then, is necessary? The Knowledge that constitutes *Self-Realization*. For that Knowledge to dawn, there need be only a consistent, deep, ardent desire for *Realization*. If the desire for *Self-Realization* is strong enough, one becomes nonattached to all else, and his happiness is no longer entangled in delusion. Limitation drops off. If the desire for *Self-Realization* is strong enough and one is ardent in the quest to know the Self, the necessary discrimination will be born within one, and the confusion regarding the Real and the unreal, the Self and the not-Self, will vanish. If only the desire for *Self-Realization* is strong, all the qualities that are useful for spiritual practice quite naturally shine in one. There must be this intense desire for *Self-Realization*. We could even say that *Self-Realization* is naturally humble, so, unless it is fully invited in, it doesn’t enter.

Another Q.: When I’ve come to the temple to visit for meditation, when my mood was one of absolute surrender and devotion to Maharshi’s grace, with every fiber of my being at his feet, I felt a kind of magnetism from his picture pulling all of my molecules toward his

Being, and, in that liberating moment, was freed from all fear and pain for those two hours that I was here. It was an experience of his grace, and it feels as if one of the keys is that invitation of asking for Realization whole-heartedly.

N.: So one's approach matters significantly, doesn't it?

Q.: Apparently.

N.: In coming to a temple, meditation, satsang, reading a scriptural text and other such things, how you approach matters supremely. If you approach understanding the value of it, the magnitude of it, with humility and an intense desire to realize, all these things come alive. Without the right approach, one doesn't see.

Another Q.: When I misplace my happiness, the first thing that I do is whining to myself.

N.: Does that help?

Q.: No.

N.: Then don't do that. (laughter) It's easy to tell if your approach is correct or not. If it is deep, your experience is profound. If your experience is not profound, change your approach.

Q.: I look at something so small in that instance and I could be seeing the whole, bigger picture. I can inquire, I can find happiness, I can find true surrender and devotion.

N.: Deep devotion is like a shoreless, fathomless ocean. You shouldn't trade it for a drop, even though the drop also comes from that ocean.

Q.: Yes.

N.: If you keep this in mind, there will be clarity regarding your decisions.

Q.: When I enter into a state of mind that I don't find valuable, that is not happiness or devotion, I do something that will help me to get there. Right away, it changes the entire experience. I wonder why I don't I do this all the time?

N.: Don't ask me. (laughter) Perhaps you'll arrive at a loss for an answer as well and be done with that approach. (laughter) Plunge into that shoreless, fathomless ocean. In this are found supreme happiness and the vast Truth.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil from Chapter 40 of the Song of Ribhu.)



## *Satsang*

### **I and Mine**

January 14, 2007

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: The scriptures, such as the Upanishads and others, declare that to be endowed with the conceptions of “I” and “mine” constitutes bondage, while being without the conceptions of “I” and “mine” constitutes Liberation. What does it mean? Does it mean that there are two states for the Self, bondage and liberation? No, it does not mean that. The Self, which is of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, is invariable; without conditions, without states, and undergoes no change. It is the abiding Reality. It is absolute in nature; not in relation to anything else. In truth, it cannot be described in terms of being bound or liberated. When you imagine that your Existence, which is infinite, formless, and undifferentiated, is some kind of entity, an “I,” such is bondage. When you claim something as your own—my, mine—such is bondage. When there are the conceptions “I am”, “I am what I think”, “I am the body”, “I am the one who senses”, “I am the experienter” and so forth and so on, such is bondage, superimposed merely by imagination upon your real identity, which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. When you imagine, “These are my thoughts, my memories, my ideas, my experiences, my body, my sensing, my world, my objects” and so forth, such is imagined bondage, superimposed on the abiding Reality. Whose

bondage is it? If we inquire as to that, as the Maharshi reveals, both the bondage and the one who is bound, being unreal, vanish. The “I” that is bound is as imaginary as the bondage that he can claim as “his.”

What, then, is Liberation? From the perspective of an actually existent bound one, one’s own natural state, or Being, is regarded as a state of liberation, as if it were something other, to whatever degree, than oneself. This is because the identity has been falsely taken up as the bound individual, the “I,” who can have “my state of bondage” and “my state of liberation.” Liberation pertains to Truth, but the stand as the individual is entirely false. If you inquire, “Who is it that appears as the individual?”, the individuality, being only superimposed by imagination, disappears, and what was previously regarded as the state of Liberation is self-revealed as the very nature of your own Being.

To be free from bondage and attain Liberation, what is required is the deepest Knowledge of your Existence. It is in this Knowledge of your Existence that we can say that there is no bondage to be destroyed and no liberation to be attained. What is pivotal in the inquiry is the examination of the one who experiences either of these states. This includes all possibilities of states, for any state different from Liberation should be regarded as bondage, some kind of limitation, whether it is waking, dreaming, sleeping, or any mode of mind.

Who is it that feels “I”? Who is it that says “mine,” even to the extent that you regard something as existing apart from yourself, and, though you do not exercise a gross form of possession over it, still it is “my experience,” “my perception.” If the false conceptions of “I” and “mine” are destroyed, Liberation is revealed. It is as if that which is eternally free, becomes free again. Well, it has always been free. The wrong identity ceases, and the nature of Existence, the Self, which is eternally the same, knows itself.

Your nature is the formless Being, the space-like Consciousness, the uncaused Bliss. Your nature is the Self, Brahman and nothing less, nothing other. If your experience seems to be otherwise, examine the “you” or the “your” in that experience, and imagination will vanish. The Reality will remain.

Questioner: Ramana’s instruction to Muruganar was about “watch from where the ‘I’ arises.” There are different ways to watch. One way is to watch thoughts come. Another way is, when there seems not to be an “I,” and then a thought comes, and, with it, comes this “I.” Is that appropriate watching?

N.: You already perceive thought. So, if we engage in an exercise of watching thought, it is somewhat redundant, isn't it?

Q.: Yes.

N.: Nothing new is attained thereby. However, some people, when they exercise themselves in some kind of practice involving watching thought, feel some degree of freedom. It would be wise for them to discern what is causing the degree of freedom that they are feeling. It has very little to do with the redundant watching of thoughts. They are already watching, in as much as a thought is known. If it were not known, one would have no experience of it.

If, even accidentally, there is some shift in what one regarded as his identity, freedom shines. To the degree one's true identity is discerned, to that degree the freedom and peace shine. The same thing happens when one is quiet. Of course, unless there is Knowledge of the Self, the false identity, the misidentification, will recur. Then, peace and freedom seem elusive, in your grasp one moment, out of the grasp another. The way to be steady is to see whose grasp it is. Otherwise, peace, freedom, and such will seem as if passing states, just like the thoughts are passing states. The identity of the one who experiences these passing modes and states is what gives reality, apparently, to those states and modes. If we inquire as to whose they are, "Who am I?", the sense of reality returns to its origin. The identity becomes steadily established in its real nature and no longer gives rise to the individual, to the idea of differentiated thoughts, or the various modes or states of mind in which that individual becomes immersed after projecting them with his own imagination. Clear so far?

Q.: Yes, certainly it is much more watching the watcher than it is watching the watched.

N.: When we speak of watching or observing the rise of the "I," what is really indicated is discerning the identity of the "I," or we may say the root or whence the "I" arises. From where does the sense of "I" arise? It obviously does not arise from a physical place in the body. It cannot arise from within the thoughts of the mind, because the thoughts of the mind succeed and do not precede the "I." Where does this "I" arise? It seems as if to bubble up, a mere bubble, from the depths of the ocean of pure Existence and Consciousness. The ocean of Existence-Consciousness is homogeneous, and there is nothing else to act upon it to create a separate "I." So the instruction, reiterated by Muru-



ganar, proclaimed by the Maharshi, is to discern, or watch, “Where does this “I” rise?” Or see it as it arises. If we proceed in this type of inquiry, symbolized by the destruction of the demon of forgetfulness beneath the foot of Nataraja and Dakshinamurti and such, its birthplace is its death-place. How does the birthplace become its death-place? We discern the unborn nature of our Existence; it neither gives birth to anything nor is it started by anything. Nothing comes before it; nothing comes after it. We need to discern this by immediate, direct experience, tracing the sense of identity to its very source. All forms of identity rest on the “I.” Discern where this “I” starts. What is the most basic notion or assumption and how does it start? If we observe keenly and steadily, it will not start, and we will see that it has never started. The eternal nature of Enlightenment, or Liberation, thus becomes self-evident.

Another Q.: “Me” and “mine” are just self-conjured ideas in my mind. Noticing that brings about a little bit of detachment. I can’t be something objective. I can’t be those things.

N.: Is your mind also one of those things?

Q.: Yes, in terms of something objective.

N.: In terms of something from which you should be utterly detached.

Q.: (laughter) Yes. My mind is just one of those notions

N.: If the mind is a notion and that notion contains all other notions, how does the mind start at all? If all notions are for and in the mind and the mind, itself, is a notion, does one notion have another?

Q.: It is strange.

N.: The explanation is good, inasmuch as it propels you to the deeper, perfect wisdom of knowing your Self, but is there something really formed called the “mind” or the notions and such?

Q.: Is there real existence in those thoughts, or something partaking of Reality, something that has real substance? Are they just totally bogus notions? Where does the reality come from? Did it really come from those thoughts?” If It didn’t come from the thoughts, where did it come from?

N.: The reality must come from the one who knows the thoughts. If there is “this,” it derives its reality from that which is the Self. In knowing

the nature of the Self, does it lend reality to anything else? The Self is declared to be the substrate, the all-illuminator, the all-knower, the all-doer, the all-pervading, etc., in order to show its ultimate, transcendent nature and to eliminate any residual belief in something objectively existing, something existing apart from the Self, but it does not mean that the Self is those things.

Q.: It should lose its form—anything objective.

N.: It is not in relation to anything else. If it were in relation to anything else, there would not be nonduality.

Q.: In relation to anything else?

N.: If there is something else, in one sense it is a denial of the absolute nature of Brahman, or the Self.

Q.: Yeah.

N.: Then, something else is considered to exist along with it, inside it, outside it, or pervaded by it. If that which is the Self alone is, such is nondual, such is absolute, such is Reality. Where there are differences, there is imagination. Where there are no differences, there is Reality; hence the questions about the mind and notions.

Q.: Minds and notions are made up of stuff that can't be present. As my meditation goes deeper, those notions lose significance. The Reality is divested of those ideas. You ask if the Reality is ever in those. You say to return to the source completely.

N.: Be thorough in the Knowledge. The Self should be seen divested of every idea, including the idea that it could have any connection with ideas at any time. The Self is ever the same, and you are the Self. You are not bound now, you will not be bound in the future, so can you truthfully be said to have been bound in the past?

Q.: What is the past anyway? Is that something that exists? It is a thought, and it pertains to a body, a world, or some sort of amorphous mind.

N.: And someone who has that thought. But knowing the Truth revealed by "Who am I?", all of that illusion is blown away without a trace.

Q.: I still have a cause for meditation that is not the Reality. I attribute focus or concentration to it. In meditation, there is a certain awareness of what is ignorance or what can't be the Self. There is clarity.

N.: Is that experience of clarity a concentration of mind, or is it something in which the mind is not a factor?

Q.: It is taking apart the mind. But there is an intention. When I say that I am going to meditate on what is real, it seems to be an intention or a thought.

N.: What is the cause of the intention?

Q.: It would not be unreality, because that doesn't do a thing. How could something that does not partake of the Real ever do something that is real?

N.: If it has no substance, it has no Consciousness.

So, from where does the intention come? The intention may take the form of some thought or may be at a deeper level than manifested thought. What is the cause? Liberation is said, in some texts, to be self-caused. Does it mean that one's ego causes Liberation or that the individual does it in contrast to relying on the help of someone else? That would be a very shallow interpretation. If it is its own cause, the meaning must be the self-existent nature of Moksha, or Liberation. Then, to say Reality is its own cause or that it is utterly uncaused is identical. When we say that it is uncaused, does it mean it happens by random? Randomness would just be a cause that is not perceived clearly.

Q.: Right, yes.

N.: Uncaused means there is no cause and effect relation, because there are not two; likewise self-caused. Nothing brings about the Existence or nature of your Self, other than that Existence or nature itself. When seen like this, it is not a bringing about; it just is.

Q.: There is a gravity of, or a drawing toward, the Real.

N.: Yes, but who is drawn? Within the context of the individual, there seems to be something at the heart of the individual that gives rise to such intention and calls him to return. The water rising up into clouds must eventually return through rain, streams, rivers, etc. to the ocean. Such is the analogy used by the Maharshi in one of his hymns to Arunachala. When we inquire and know the Self as it is, is there departing and returning? For that which has separation, there must be union or yoga. In the realization of the eternally undifferentiated, there is Knowledge or Jnana.

Q.: Clarifying the root is important, because that is where the confusion comes in, and that is where it leaves.

N.: Where it comes in is exactly where it leaves. Clear, deep Self-Knowledge is the necessity. Once that is overlooked, there can be any kind of illusion. Then, there will be some kind of explanation for the illusion. The explanation points to the dissolution of the illusion. It is good, but, in the end, you must come back to the starting place. So, where are you now?

Another Q.: Thank you Master. I wanted to ask about one way of using the dream analogy. If the character identified within a dream has an urge to know the truth of his situation and encounters a sage in the dream who says, "The actual fact is that all this is your dream," the truth of that could well be enough to awaken that dreamer. There would be no reason to also require that the assumed dream character exhibit any other phenomena. The recognition that it is a dream doesn't have to be voiced by the dream character who was, until that point, immersed in the dream. If it comes from a wise, awake being and the depth of that is felt and recognized, that could be enough to awaken the dreamer.

N.: Alright. Have you been having such dreams?

Q.: I have had dreams a little bit like that, but not recently. I am using it more as a comparison with this one, at the moment.

N.: Alright. That is why you say dream analogy.

Q.: Right, it is not an analysis.

N.: There is a waking state, a dreaming state, and a deep dreamless sleep state. Someone seems to experience each of those. Gaudapada points out that there is an individual experiencer for each of those, so that there are three different experiencers, which is corroborated by the experience that they do not agree with each other in terms of their knowledge of these states. This means that you are not any of those experiencers, and you are not in any of those states. Who are you? If this is known, what can we say about these various dreams and dream characters? What can we say about the wise ones and the ignorant ones? Self-Knowledge is necessary, but Self-Knowledge belongs only to the Self and not to the character. Does the character wake up? You wake up from the character. In terms of illusion, it is sufficient to know illusion as illusion, for it to be no more.

Q.: So that the character genuinely knows it.

N.: The character knows nothing. He is a figment of imagination.

Q.: So, if the illusion is known as illusion, there will be nothing impelling the character. I want to say the character because who else could I refer to?

N.: If the illusion is known as illusion, the dream character and his dream, the subject and the object, both cease to exist. The dreamer himself does not exist, let alone the character he thinks himself to be.

Q.: Someone has to open the door to walk into a room not knowing who is there. If there is a stranger, a person has a role of civility, if a close friend a role of familiarity, if a son or daughter a parental role. The person entering will move right into the role, and then, when no longer needed, maybe because of leaving the room, the role will just vanish.

N.: That is good proof that you cannot be any of the roles that you play.

Q.: Including ...

N.: Because you do not vanish; just the role vanishes.

Q.: Right, but is this individual just a role?

N.: Alright. It may be useful to view it that way. The next question, if you are inquiring deeply, is, "Who plays the role"? A role is basically a form of definition, as ascribed to you in relation to somebody else, but the definition could be without relation to somebody else; it could just be a figment within one's own mind.

A role is just a definition, and there is implied someone who has that definition, the role that has all the other roles. Whose is this primal role? In one sense, we can say the one Self appears as all the individuals, including the one you style yourself. Therefore, it takes on all the roles, but how does the Self become individualized? The explanation is good enough, as far as showing that the nature of all the individuals is really the one undivided Self, but if the Self is truly One and undivided, how could it become individualized? If its nature is pure Consciousness, how could it dream? If there is a dream, the entirety of it is only Consciousness, yet, if the Consciousness is what is real and changelessly so, can it dream?



Q.: The reverse idea that there were separate individuals would be based on sense experience and thought conclusions. So, you would have to take those sense thoughts and concluding thoughts to be persisting, or existing, or having a substance, in order to maintain the wrong view of there being all these separate individuals.

N.: Exactly so, which is why, in the pursuit of Self-Knowledge, we negate the sensing and the conceptual on our way in. Otherwise, we would find ourselves saying, "The Self is real, and it is dreaming these individuals." How do we know about the individuals? Only through the sense perceptions of various bodies. Are you the body? Are you the senses? Do the senses show you what is real? If we understand in this way, that doubt does not arise, does it? We cannot simultaneously have the Knowledge that the Self is, or the Self is real, and the supposition that an ego exists, individuals are, and embodiment is true. You cannot have ignorance and Knowledge simultaneously. If they seem as if simultaneous, you have not really known, have you? If we really know, ignorance ceases to exist from that moment on.

Q.: So, it cannot be a snaky rope?

N.: A snaky rope or a rope that undergoes snake conditions from time to time, according to cosmic cycles, etc.? No. If we really know that it is a rope, the snake, the attributes and activities of the snake, the qualities of snaky-ness etc., cease to exist for us, because they were just imagined, from that moment on. Although I said from that moment on, there is the certitude in the realization that the rope was always a rope; there was never a snake. The Real was always real, the Self always the Self; there never was the illusory ego entity and his world. So, your question amounts to, "If a friendly snake happens to meet a friendly rope, does the rope's statements about them both being ropes, not snakes, do the trick?"

From another angle of vision, if there is the depth of Knowledge, whether it is one's own silent inquiry or the instruction of a Self-realized sage, it is sufficient. The Knowledge is what is essential. It will most certainly wake one up from the dream of samsara and put an end to all the illusory bondage. Listening, or sravana, becomes identical with inquiry. Likewise, manana, or reflection on what is said, and nididhyasana, or constant meditation upon what has been reflected on and heard. They are all the same at this depth.

Another Q.: Could you just say a little more about silent inquiry?

N.: In the teachings of the Maharshi, silence is indicative of that state in which no false sense of “I” arises. Where no false sense of “I” arises, nothing appended to the “I” – my experience, my limitation, my bondage, my suffering, etc.—arises. Inquiry thus resolves itself in Silence. We start with our existence; that is basic. Even if, at first, we assume existence to be individualized, we start with that, because that is the constant factor in one’s experience. “Who am I?” Plunging inward, the “I” loses its “I”-ness. What remains is the great silent Self, perpetual Being.

Q.: The questions just seem to have grown pointless. A question was posed, “Have you ever known a time when you were not”? At that point, there was a shift. I find myself in the place where the asking of questions is just not very important. The peace seems to be in this place where there is just silence, comes and goes. That is why I asked the question.

N.: Silence is deeper than the level at which the doubts or questions arise.

Q.: I think so.

N.: There is another kind of questioning, which those who are diving deeply with inquiry use or experience, when they are questioning their very own nature. These are not so much doubts about other things, but a questing within to know one’s own nature. It fuses with the Silence. Therefore, the questions that prompt the instruction that we see recorded in the Vedas and elsewhere of those becoming Self-realized by the instructions of rishis who are answering their questions, questions are very beneficial. They merge with Silence. They cause the going in and out to subside. Questioning that is born entirely interiorly of one’s own experience, with a yearning to rest in absolute Truth, is encouraged; it is very worthwhile. The answers to those questions, whether manifesting in a satsang or in a sacred text, are Silence.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om



## Temple Seva

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

July 13, 2013

For those attuned to Self-Knowledge, the selfless service that we perform during temple seva becomes a form of sublime meditation, an act of devotion intrinsic to the path of bhakti, a way of engaging in action that is free of the taint of egotism and also a way of expressing our thankfulness. All of these happen simultaneously. Let us give thanks to Sri Bhagavan, for whose Grace we can never be too thankful.

September 21, 2013

In this world it is very rare to have a temple, the focus of which is Self-Knowledge. In this world it is very rare to have a temple in which Knowledge and Devotion are seamlessly blended. In this world it is rare to have a place with illumined or enlightened guidance. In this world it is rare to have a temple filled with good holy company. In this world it is rare to have the opportunity to put one's efforts and skills which would otherwise be lost on worldliness to a truly sacred purpose. Indeed, in this world it is very rare to have something that causes one to transcend the world entirely. We are very fortunate! And all this by Sri Bhagavan's Grace!

October 19, 2013

Very fortunate are those who do not misidentify with the body and the mind, but rather understand these things as vessels, instruments,

to manifest devotion and the inspiration that comes from Grace. Very fortunate indeed are those who have found the abode of God in their temple and in their hearts. If you understand these things that have just been said, then you are very fortunate. And understanding how fortunate and Graced we are, causes devotion to well up even more. So that it becomes a very happy cycle. The more one is devoted and serves the divine, the happier one is and the more keenly aware of Grace one is. And the more keenly aware of Grace one is, the happier one is, the more one becomes devoted.

November 9, 2013

(Little Ribhu's baby talk is heard)

Thank you young Ribhu for giving us such extensive instruction!

But we are supremely thankful to the spiritual instruction and grace bequeathed to us by Sri Bhagavan. And we create and maintain a temple for the precise purpose of absorption of that instruction and immersion in that Grace.

December 14, 2013

That for which the temple exists is supreme happiness; the very same in dwells you in the abode of your heart. It is a joy for that which is within your heart to shine forth as meditation, worship and service in the temple for what it signifies. It is this supreme happiness that makes our activities purposeful. By meditating in joy, devoting yourself in joy, serving in joy, the supreme purpose comes to be accomplished. A happy path to happiness itself!



## *From The Ramana Way*

***The following articles appear in the April 1997 issue of "The Ramana Way," a monthly publication produced by the Ramana Maharshi Center for Learning in Bangalore, India. RMCL 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](http://www.ramanacentre.com)*

### ***Magic Moonrise and Sadguru's Love***

by Dr. Sarada

The night fell like a dark silken wrap around the shoulders of the five-faced hill. And the moon rose yellow and round from the outer end, imitating its parent light, the sun. Had we not worn watches which sensibly told us it was 8:00 p.m. and had it not been for our mechanical minds which declared that Giripradakshina could not take so long, we could well have mistaken it for sunrise. But moonrise it surely was, adding to the ethereal glow around Arunachala, playing dim and dip in the many valleys. Perhaps the moon magic was still lingering when we entered the Arunachaleswara Temple an hour later, or was it the spell of that name? Not a soul was around and we would have to hurry through before the outer doors were bolted. The inner entries were already barred but reverberating in that silence, breathing that very silence, rose the chant "Om Namah Sivaya," Om Arunachaleswaraya Namah." Again and again in slow deep tones came the chant holding one spellbound in that moment of eternity. Rising, subsiding, rising in waves of glory, subsiding into the solitude of hill and temple outlined by moonshine, rising again came the chant, encircling us like its counterpart on the sea-shore and drawing us into itself. Like on the beach, we did not allow ourselves to be sucked in, we moved on. Like the vastness of the sea, the memory lingered, the experience once savored asked to be repeated.

It was time for a new ballet to be planned. This time, it would be about the turning point, the extraordinary dawn of Ramana in many lives. "Ramanodaya" with a marvellous glow of the rising sun, the coolness of the rising moon. This took one's mind back to that magical



chant on moonshine night at the divine hill, the theme song, the theme chant should one say, for the new ballet was discovered. The Ramana mantra would reverberate through the ballet, signifying the awakening to new life “Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya,” Om Ramaneswaraya Namaha”. . . In September of 1996, a hundred years after the divine drama of enlightenment, a hundred years after Sri Ramana entered the Arunachaleswara temple declaring the union of father and son, of Arunachala and Ramana, the Arunachala mantra was recorded for the new ballet on Ramana, as the Ramana mantra “Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya” Om Ramaneswaraya Namaha.” Preparation began for the show six months ahead.

It was the 27th of February 1997. A friend mentioned to the typesetter of the Ramana Maharshi Centre, “Why don’t you get me a book on Ramana Maharshi’s teaching some time?” The request was taken seriously and acted upon immediately. “Know Yourself” was sent to the friend right away. He casually took it up for reading and was entranced, caught forever in the grip of Sadguru Ramana’s net of grace. From that moment, he was powerless except to make over his life to the pursuit of Bhagavan’s teachings. The following day, he left for Chennai on a business trip and returned the very next day. In a fresh attempt to break the habit of chain-smoking which had been dogging him ever since his teens, he carried only two cigarettes. Soon after boarding the train, he couldn’t resist lighting the first one. Yet, he was simply unable to inhale, try as he would, he to whom smoking was second nature if not first. He could not inhale. He threw away the half burnt cigarette believing it to be Bhagavan’s instruction that he should quit smoking. Many hours passed. The temptation to smoke could not be resisted any longer. He put the second cigarette to his lips and was about to strike a match. From the match box came the clear instruction “I asked you to quit, why are you persisting?” That was the end of over twenty years of chain-smoking. He returned to Bangalore and was laid down with high fever. He did not connect it with the problems of withdrawal. It was the 2nd of March. He had received an invitation of the National Seminar and Cultural Festival of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning. He decided to attend the evening function at least, brushing aside his wife’s worries about his state of health. They witnessed the ballet “Ramanodaya.” The fever left him. But, most touching was the love that flowered from Sadguru Ramana. For, the next day, this new devotee reported with tears in his eyes. “At the ballet, I received Guru Mantra, Sir,” he said “I received Guru mantra. Om Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.”

Such is Bhagavan's marvellous love. In order to bless this seeker with the "Guru Mantra," Sadguru Ramana had shaped events more than six months in advance. Taking us on a giripradakshina on a moonlit night, into the temple just at closing time to listen to the enchanting "Siva Mantra" in stirring silence, sowing the seeds of the theme chant of the new ballet, providing the devotee with necessary information at the right time to attend this event and preparing him in every way for the culmination of the initiation. Miracles happen everyday in the lives of those who turn to Him by His Grace! And in the lives of those who will be drawn to Him at the apt moment. These are miracles of the Sadguru's love which transcends all description, which cannot be comprehended or explained by the puny intellect. Of course many lives may have been touched in different ways by celebrating Bhagavan's glory in that evening of dance. Yet, does it not bring tears to ones' eyes to think that so many lives and events have been woven into a marvellous pattern by Sri Ramana to bless this one devotee in an extraordinary manner?

The Sadguru's love surpasses all human affection, how can we grasp its import? Why else does the Sadguru wear the human garb in the first place? What need is there for one who is ever aware to play the drama of enlightenment and thereafter, lead a life of Self-abidance, shedding lustre and peace on all who enter that blissful shade? Is there any other reason why such a one should undergo so many physical travails allowing his body to be eaten by vermin, being exposed to sun and dew and rain, hardly having enough to eat, or being forced to eat much more than the stomach could take, bearing the dread disease of sarcoma and the often more dreaded treatments imposed by well-meaning devotees? Why all this? The only answer is love, the boundless love of the Sadguru which made Sri Ramana not only enact the enlightenment of his death-experience a hundred years ago but also bear the cross of the body for nearly 54 years thereafter. The boundless love which made him available to every corner, ever minute of the day, every day of the year, year after year. Made him available alike to squirrels and cows, to farmers and masons, to scholars and journalists, to men, women and children. The boundless love which made Sri Ramana break the iron-rule of equal servings and accept extra puris to give a devotee who he knew would otherwise go hungry on a two day journey. The tender care which made him walk up the hill in sweltering heat with a barely healed collar bone, simply because a lone mason desired

it. The compassion which drew him off the usual road in the giripradakshina to partake of a farmer's stale gruel. The love that made Echammal's grief melt, that made mother Azhagammal ripen, that gave strength to Kandaswami to single-handedly clear boulders and cacti and build an ashram. The love which waits patiently on some remote bookshelf for one to suddenly catch a glimpse and be swallowed. The love which plays in a song in some distant township or country to lure an unsuspecting listener forever into its protective, all-giving field. The infinite care which makes us, at least on occasion, think of him, of that sweet name and beautiful form, with a joyous leap of heart and dancing tears in the eyes.

Where is the question of our loving him, Sadguru Ramana? Is it not his compassion alone which ignites that spark in us? Yet, he asks us to nurture that flame. He pretends it is our part to stoke the flame of love for him into a forest fire, into an all-devouring conflagration that will destroy all limitations, all sense of difference and leave behind the bare ground, the substratum of truth, of bliss. His is the story, he is the director of this play. He is the players too, but he pretends otherwise and seems to leave it to us to take up our roles in real earnest. Well, so long as we believe we are actors, we must surely fulfill this demand of the story. We must cultivate this garden of love which he has so readily sown. How can we ever repay his infinite debt of love? It is impossible to do so. Is it impossible, though, to do the one thing that he asks of us, to enable which he continuously showers his grace? Is it impossible to turn to self-enquiry single-mindedly, with all the love that we think we are capable of, with all the love that we believe we would show Sadguru Ramana? For, if at all there is a way to love the Sadguru, it is to abide by his teaching, to abide in our true nature through incessant self-enquiry. It is to know beyond doubt that his love is all.

### ***An Open Invitation***

by A.R. Natarajan

Bhagavan Ramana has been extending an open invitation of a state in which the mind is free of thoughts, in which the mind is immersed in bliss. Though this invitation has been extended to one and all, it seems that the response is inadequate. What is being offered is the mind which is free from limitations of time and space. What is being offered is the joy of intuitive-living with a heart full of love. Yet there is little re-

sponse. One must therefore go into the reason for this insufficient response.

The reason is that we are not clear as to the purpose of life itself. It is either ignored or one has only a hazy idea about it. According to Ramana clarity about the purpose of life is very important because whatever one thinks about or does, it must be geared to the purpose of life. Precious human birth cannot be frittered away. According to Ramana the purpose of life is to discover the state when the mind is silent and free of thoughts and is aware of its own inherent bliss. Given this purpose and the desire to work towards it what should one do?

It appears that the first stumbling block is the value which we are placing on the intellect, on mental achievements. Reason, logic, memory, concentration, etc., are given pride of place. One lives in a world of thoughts. Each day we are woken up from sleep by thoughts. The innate tendencies in the mind start the wheel of thoughts and set it in continuous motion. Of course, there is a variety of thoughts, repetitive thoughts, functional thoughts, thoughts about the past, about the future and the like. Therefore one is never alone. Thoughts are our constant companions. Hence one has to pause and consider whether this excessive faith in the mind and in thoughts is justified?

The mental faculties, too, are subject to decay. In their old age persons with prodigious memories often fumble to identify even their dearest ones. The vigorous and virile mind is sapped of all energy. It goes to sleep when there is need for serious thoughts. The power of the mind is therefore a transient power subject to decay just as the body is. Again, what is the use of placing faith in the mind without knowing anything about it. When one does not know about the mind's true nature, the thoughts cannot be stopped. They would be out of control when there is an intrusion or an invasion of negative thoughts or depressive thoughts. One would be at a loss to handle them. One can, therefore, see that this faith in the mind is misplaced.

Ramana says that thoughts and mind have become so important in our value system because we have never really faced the "I," faced the sense of our own individuality. The ego or "I" which is the core of the system of our thoughts has never been enquired into. Everything will fall into its right place if one uses the method of self-enquiry constantly emphasized by Ramana. It is only through self-enquiry that the present topsy turvy value which we lay on the mind and thoughts can be changed. There is no other equally efficacious means for discovering the free mind and its bliss.

One might pause here again and remember that all this is for gearing thoughts and action towards the goal of being free from the pressure of thoughts, of a chaotic and uncontrolled mind. When one talks about the thought-free state what does one mean? Does it mean the absence of thoughts as in sleep? No, says Ramana. For the mere absence of thoughts is not the end in itself. In sleep there are no thoughts but they come back in full vigour on waking. Absence of thoughts without understanding the mind is only a transitory state and bliss experienced as a result is not different from sensate joys. On the other hand, a thought-free mind is an alert mind which is ever attentive, undistracted and unitary. Yet at the same time it is a silent mind, a silence which comes about because ego is lost in its source. There is the positive experience of awareness of bliss in all situations and circumstances. Thoughts would arise, would come and pass off like the clouds in a clear sky. The mental space would not be overcrowded with dark and thick clouds of thought clusters in continuous succession. Thinking would take place naturally like breathing. If there is necessity for communication for doing a job, thoughts would arise and subside. Ordinarily, there would be no thoughts because there is not need for them. In that state, "it would be difficult to call in thoughts as it is now to quell them."

Once one is aware of the importance of the intuitive spacious mind and the need to experience it, one would practice self-enquiry and be steadfast about it. Ramana points out that alert watchfulness is required in the very beginning before there is a proliferation of thoughts.

Ramana gives an analogy of how thoughts are quickly formed and therefore the need for paying attention before the hosts of thoughts arise. The analogy runs thus:

"When I was staying at Skandasramam I sometimes used to go out and sit on a rock. On one such occasion there were two or three others with me including Rangaswami Iyengar. Suddenly, we noticed some small moth like insect shooting up like a rocket into the air from a crevice in the rock. Within the twinkling of an eye it had multiplied itself into millions of moths which formed a cloud and hid the sky from view. We wondered at it and examined the place from which it shot up. We found that it was only a pinhole and knew that so many insects could not have issued from it in such a short time. That is how Ego (Ahamkara) shoots up like a rocket and instantaneously spreads out as the Universe."

If self-enquiry is done instantly thoughts would not surface, or, if they do, they would be detected clearly and immediately. The result

would be that the mind would not become externalized and would stay within, in its conscious source.

There would be the exhilaration of freedom, which is known only to a caged bird when the cage's door opens or which is experienced by one who steps out of prison walls. For we have been prisoners of the past, of the mind chained by attachments and limitations. One is filled with the inexpressible wonder of this joy. Everything is bathed in it. No matter what one is engaged in, this joy, which is the mind's inherent nature, would be very much there making all actions truly worship of the Supreme in all life.



## *Jewels from the SAT Temple Bookstore*

**The SAT Temple bookstore contains an abundance of classic Advaita Vedanta in its purest expression, with emphasis on the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Adi Sankara, Ribhu, Ashtavakra, Dattatreya, Vasistha and many more who have kept Advaita Vedanta alive for millenium.**

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

### **Arunachala's Ramana, The Boundless Ocean of Grace**

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



### ***Without Knowledge No Liberation, (as it appears in Volume 1)***

Bhagavan once narrated the following incident: “We all started to go to the summit of the Arunachala Hill, with all necessary things for cooking our food and eating it whenever and wherever convenient. That was when we were in the Virupakshi Cave. Pazhaniswami stayed behind in charge of the cave. By the time we reached Seven Springs it was rather hot. So, we bathed and then wanted to cook our food. We took out the cooking vessels and all the foodstuffs such as dhal, salt and ghee and also arranged the fireplace and then found that we had not brought the most important thing of all, namely the match-box. The cave was too far away to go and fetch a match-box. Moreover it was very hot and everyone was terribly hungry. Some tried to make a fire by striking one piece of flint against another but without success. Some tried to rub one piece of wood against another as they do in Yagnas for lighting the sacrificial fire but that, too, was not successful. The second stanza in Atmabodha came to my mind, namely:

‘Just as you cannot cook whatever articles you may have unless you have fire, so also you cannot attain liberation unless you have jnana.’

“I recited it, explained the meaning and kept them all in good humor.

“Some one appears to have sent word through one of the grass-cutters who was returning home with head-loads of grass. Pazhaniswami sent a match-box through one of those going up the Hill for wood-cutting. Subsequently we lit a fire, cooked and ate. You know how the cooking was done? Rice, dhal and vegetables were all put in one vessel and boiled together and then some salt was added. A kitchadi (hotch-potch) was thus made. All of us had decided on it beforehand. After food, we took a little rest and then started for the summit. To enable them to understand the stanza I continued to explain its full significance to them during our walk. On reaching the summit, I said to them, ‘You see the amount of trouble experienced in reaching here. We climbed to a little extent and then had to mix a lot of things and eat before we could climb further. For preparing the food we had no fire, and so nothing could be done. Similarly, you may have everything for teaching and leaning, but, without understanding, there cannot be full ripening of wisdom. With that fire of jnana all worldly things must be mixed up and swallowed to attain the highest state.’ After that we came back straight to the cave before it was dark. In those days we never felt it dif-

difficult or tiresome to go to the summit; so we used to go whenever we felt like it.”



## *From The Temple Archives*

*[In the course of a message dated October 31, 2013, a devotee of Sri Ramana in India wrote: Can I control my worrying mind by recollecting the letter by Bhagawan to his mother, “The ordainer controls the fate of souls...”? This is Nome’s reply.]*

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Yes, diving deep into that instruction bestowed by Sri Bhagavan will remove all worry. That instruction concludes with, “the best course is to remain silent.” He also reveals “silence is that in which no ‘I’ arises.” So, relying on His Grace, which carries all, inquiring deeply or surrendering completely so as to abide in the egoless state, is liberation from all anxious thought.

The worry that appears in your mind is neither based on the Truth nor helpful to what you are endeavoring to accomplish. It consists of superfluous thought. Therefore, wisely adhere to the Maharshi’s instructions, and you will remain happy and at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya  
Ever yours in Sri Bhagavan,  
Nome

*[A seeker in France wrote:]*

November 9, 2013

Dear Nome,

This experience of the heart at the right side: some disciples say it has no meaning or value. Of course, it is not at all the final experience.

One must go beyond, deeper and deeper. I have this experience since the age of 20 (I am 65).

Any comment?

Om Ramana!

*[Here is Nome's reply.]*

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

If you would inquire for whom the experience appears, making your vision nonobjective, you would find the absolute Existence of the Self, which is location-less, bodiless, imperceptible and inconceivable, and eternal. That may be regarded as the true significance of the Heart. By His Grace, with adherence to the spiritual instruction He has bestowed, one is certain to abide in the Self, as the Self and thus remain in blissful peace.

Om Namah Sivaya  
Ever yours in Truth,  
Nome

*[This is a response to a seeker's message. The seeker's questions can be inferred from the answers.]*

November 11, 2013

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The idea of "here" consists of the illusory combination of existence and sense perception in relation to a body. You are not the body. Existence alone is real. The belief in sense perception is delusive. In deep dreamless sleep, there is no notion of "here." Yet you still exist. Regard only that as real which exists always, without any interruption for eternity. Regard only the real as your Self. What is the case for "here" also holds true for the idea of "now." The Self is timeless and space-less.

If you inquire as to who should stay in or abide as “I am,” the one Self without a second, without any alternative, will know itself as it is.

Your second question concerns pradakshina. What does it matter how other people may or may not approach this? If you know that such should be approached with deep devotion and an inward turned mind, that suffices. After all, your aim should be Self-Realization and absorption in that to which you are devoted. The formulation of opinions about other people and things does not serve a useful spiritual purpose. You may wish to look at the Song of Ribhu or Nirguna Manasa Puja for a profound understanding of pradakshina and other similar practices of worship.

May you ever abide in the Self, as Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and thus remain ever happy and at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya  
Every yours in Truth,  
Nome

*[A reply to a seeker:]*

November 22, 2013

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

The truth is that there is only the one infinite Consciousness, which changelessly exists forever, and you are that alone. Realizing this, the possibility of even the least illusion is no more.

If it ever appears otherwise to you, inquire to know the Self, and thus remain free and at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya  
Ever yours in Truth,  
Nome

*[A reply to another message from the same seeker who wrote on November 11th. The questions can be inferred from answers.]*

November 24, 2013

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message. Due to the Truth Revealed Retreat at the SAT Temple, this is the first opportunity to reply to you.

You may wish to read the previous response again. What is stated therein about reality and about sense perception applies to these present questions of yours, as well.

The waking state experiences are the content of the waking state of mind. Such is similar to a dream state of mind. To mistake the content of a mode of mind to be the reality is a basic definition of ignorance. Self-inquiry consists of true knowledge, and its focus is nonobjective in nature. The practice of actual Self-inquiry should be as consistent, deep, intense, and continuous as you wish your happiness and freedom to be.

The question about “relaxation” etc. is based upon the notion that the ego actually exists and that modes or moods of the mind are relevant to Self-Realization, which is not at all true.

You may find it very beneficial to read the actual teachings of Sri Bhagavan (Who am I?, Saddarsanam, Talks, etc.) and other Vedanta literature (teachings of Ribhu, Adi Sankara, etc.). You may also find it useful to read and listen to what is available on the SAT website ([www.SATRamana.org](http://www.SATRamana.org)).

I hope that you find the above helpful.

Om Namah Sivaya  
Ever yours in Truth,  
Nome



## *Announcements*

### **Thank You . . .**

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

Bob Haber: keeping the bathrooms clean, watering plants, sweeping the walkways & parking lot, cleanup after events, cleaning the temple, set-up for events, helping with flower arrangements, general maintenance around the temple; Tim Frank: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Myra Taylor: vacuuming & cleaning the temple, providing prasad after satsang & atmotsava, cleanup after pujas and retreats, providing meals at retreats; Raman Muthukrishnan: running the bookstore including mail order service, maintaining the SAT website, mastering recordings of events at SAT, assisting with the building of the Mandir embellishments, providing prasad after satsang; Sangeeta Raman: helping with the bookstore mail order, organizing things around the temple, providing meals at retreats, providing prasad after satsang & atmotsava, leading kirtans at atmotsava, organizing special events including singing, recitation, and chanting; Wimala Brown: providing meals at retreats and prasad after satsang and at atmotsava; Ganesh Sadasivan: organizing special events including singing, recitation, and chanting, preparing meals for retreats; Dhanya Sadasivan: preparing meals at retreats and special events; Eric Ruetz: editing and mastering recordings of satsangs and special events, providing meals at retreats, securing the temple; Jim Clark: lighting candles at meditation events, decorating Murtis with flowers, preparing meals at retreats; Richard Clarke: helping with book orders from India; Steve Smith: providing meals at retreats; Advait Sadasivan & Janani Chandran: providing play time at any time for anyone who wishes to play, helping out when asked; Sheila Hillman, providing prasad after atmotsava and satsangs; Carol Johnson: transcription; Anandi Muthukumarasamy: beautification of the temple, providing prasadam after satsang and at atmotsava, cleaning the temple; Ribhu Chandran: providing play time and lots of smiles & giggles; Sabiha Vyas: providing prasadam after satsang and at retreats; Scott Roney: overseeing and building embellishments in Mandir, property and Temple maintenance, building altars, & assisting wherever needed; Sivakumar Chandran: assisting with the building of the Mandir embellishments, property and Temple maintenance, assisting wherever needed, maintains recordings for online bookstore, uploads satsangs on YouTube and Vimeo; Prema Roney: providing prasadam at special events. Grant Summerville: transcription.





*”Iswara (God), Guru and Self are identical.”*

- Sri Ramana, Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, talk 284

*Nome: Consider the significance of that: the Lord, that is God, Guru and Self are identical. It is a terse statement but not to be quickly rushed by and the significance of it is exceedingly profound. If we consider Bhagavan as Guru and as he stated clearly, Guru is the Lord, then what is the magnitude of this Guru? As God is not a mere person, the Guru is not person. As God is not limited to the scope of a body, the Guru is not limited to a body. As God is the infinite and eternal, so is the Guru. But then he says, “Lord, Guru and Self are identical.” How can you be identical with God and Guru? It can only be if the Self is not a limited and embodied entity.*

## **RMCL’s Global Online Contest and Fest**

**During December and January, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore is holding a Global Online Contest and Fest in connection with Ramananjali’s 500th public offering and the centenary of the composition of Bhagavan’s Aksharamanamalai. Open to all ages, the contest will be conducted online for various artistic talents such as music, chanting, dance, drama, oration, creative writing, photography, short film, and arts and crafts. The theme is ‘Arunachala, the Magic Mountain’ and entries should be based on Ramananjali songs. For more details, log on to [events.ramanacentre.com](http://events.ramanacentre.com) or send a mail to [ra-info@ramanacentre.com](mailto:ra-info@ramanacentre.com).**



## *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](http://satramana.org) and then click on “Sri Sadisvara Mandiram” located in the sidebar menu. One new blog has appeared showing the progress of the Mandir.

Om Namah Sivaya

