



Reflections

SAT Temple

January . February . March 2015



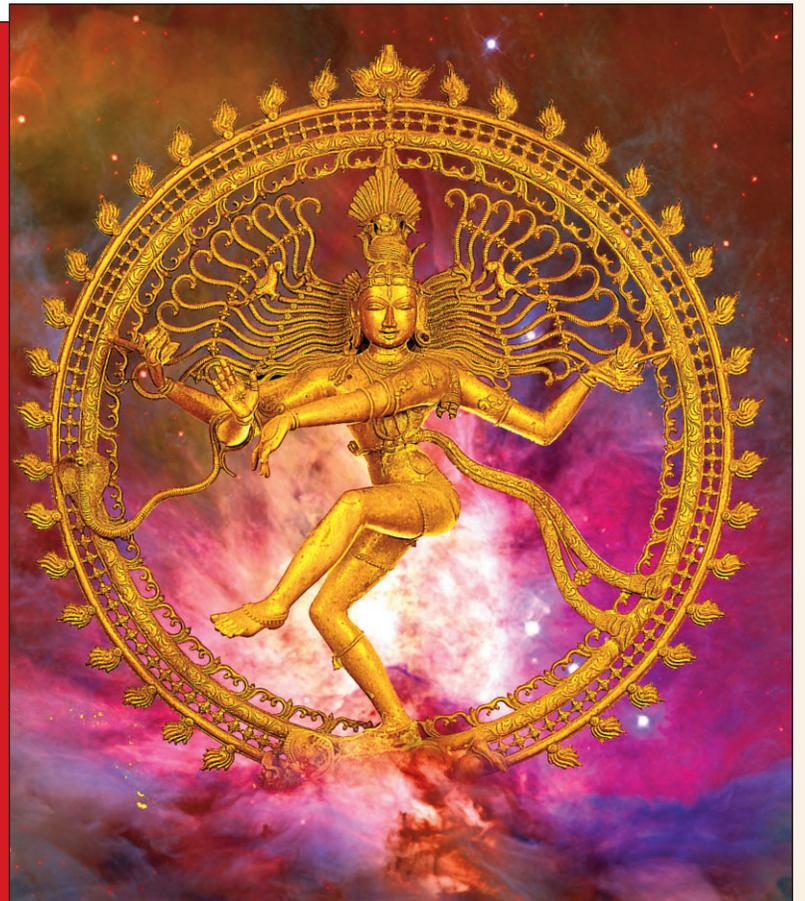
“...Can there be the individual without Siva? Even now He is you....you cannot be without Him...He is ever Realized and never non-realized.”

-Talks, Feb. 3, 1938



“He is ever hard to find, but He lives in the thought of the good; He is the innermost secret of Scripture, inscrutable, unknowable; He is honey and milk and the shining light. He is the king of the Devas, Immanent in Vishnu, in Brahma, in flame and in wind, Yea, in the mighty sounding sea and in the mountains. He is the great One, who chooses Perumpattapuliur for His own. If there be days when my tongue is dumb and speaks not of Him, Let no such days be counted in the record of my life.”

~ Tirunavukkarasu Swami (aka: Apparswami)
Tamil Saivite Saint of Chidambaram
Hymns of the Tamil Saivite Saints, V. 60
Assoc. Press 1921



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For those whose minds are fixed on Sri Bhagavan His ceaseless blessings are inescapable.

Even if we tried to sidestep His enduring Grace, it would be utterly impossible. He yields a myriad of means to worship Him for His Glory and for our ultimate emancipation. At the SAT Temple, one of those means is special events.

Special events held at the SAT Temple during the months of OCTOBER, NOVEMBER & DECEMBER . . .

In this past quarter, Bhagavan blessed devotees with six special events: Navaratri on Oct. 3, Deepavali on Oct. 22, Skanda Shasthi on Oct. 29, The Truth Revealed Retreat on Nov. 21-23, Karthikai Deepam on Dec. 5, and Sri Ramana Jayanthi on Dec. 30.

Each otherworldly event included the teachings of Sri Ramana and other sages graciously expounded by Nome revealing our perfection within, copious measures of meditation, with each event culminating with a puja, singing, and recitations. Following are images of these events and some of the texts that were availed of during each event.



Vijaya Dasami (10th day of Navaratri)

For a meditative video of this event, please visit this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIAe8RaynbU&list=UUvSFoystpABLbbLf8tvIfPg>



Selected verses from the Devi Upanishat

(Found in the Atharva Veda, a Sakti Upanishat.)

1. All the Gods, indeed, placed themselves near (served) the Goddess [and asked], “Who are you, Great Goddess (Mahadevi)?”
2. She answered: I am the true nature of Brahman. From me is the universe that consists of prakriti (manifested nature) and purusha (spirit) and the void and the non-void. I am bliss and non-bliss; in awareness (vijnana, knowledge) and unawareness I am. Brahman in Brahman is to be known. Thus, indeed, [declares] the Atharva scripture (shruti).
3. I am the five elements and also what is other than the five elements. I am the entire universe. I am the Veda, and I am what is not the Veda. I am knowledge (vidya), and I am non-knowledge (ignorance). I am the Unborn, and I am the born (lit. not unborn). Below, above, and across I am.
6. To the zealous (attentive) worshipper who sacrifices, offering oblation and extracting the Soma juice, I grant substantiality (power, dravinam). I am the ruler bringing union (gathering together) of the excellent ones (of the Gods); I am the yoni (womb, origin, repository, resting place, abode) [in which] heaven and the head are well-woven in the water in the inner sea. Or: I am the yoni (womb, origin, repository, resting place, abode), the well-woven (in the powerful water), heavenly summit in the water of the inner sea.
7. One who thus knows attains the abode (foot) of the Goddess.
8. They, the Gods, said: Salutation to the Goddess, to the great Goddess! To Siva (the auspicious) salutation constantly and always. To blessed Prakriti, salutation! Ever to Her we bow [with hands] together.
9. She is the color of fire, burning with tapas, the resplendent (sun-like) Goddess, pleased with (propitiated by, wished for by) actions’ fruits. For refuge, I resort to the inaccessible Goddess (Durga-devi), still more, [and] darkness is destroyed.
10. The Gods created (gave birth to) divine speech, [yet] She, who is the form of the universe, [all of] the herd speak. Speaking pleasantly to us, the powerful Lord, with power and strength, [may She] aptly draw, as from a cow, the milk of excellent speech.
11. To [Her], the dark night, praised by Brahma, belonging to (devoted to, worshiper of) Vishnu (the all-pervasive One), the mother of Skanda (the attacker), Sarasvati (the flowing one, fluid), Aditi (freedom, boundlessness, “eternal and infinite expanse”), Daksha’s (adroit, intelligent, heightening the intellect) daughter, we offer salutations, to holy Siva.
12. We know great Lakshmi (Goddess of good fortune and beauty). On all-accomplishment we meditate. May that Goddess inspire (impel) us!
15. ...This is the power of the Self, universally bewildering...This is the great, holy Knowledge.
16. One who knows thus crosses over grief.
17. Divine Mother! May this salutation be to you. Mother, protect us in all possible ways.
18. She, here, is the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras, the twelve Adityas. She, here is all of the Gods, those who drink Soma and those who do not. She is the yatudhana-s (evil spirits), the asura-s (demons), the raksha-s (evil beings), the ghosts, the yaksha-s (semi-divine beings), and the siddha-s. She is sattva, rajas, and tamas. She is Prajapati (progenitor), Indra (chief of the Gods), and Manu. She, here, is the planets, the stars, and the luminous spheres. She is the divisions of time and the form of time. I salute Her ever.
19. She is the Goddess who banishes distress, grants enjoyment and Liberation, infinite, victorious, pure, the refuge, the giver of good, Siva.
25. I bow to you, Goddess, you who destroy great fear, the great tranquil inaccessible one (Durga); the extinguisher of great difficulties), of the form of great compassion.
26. Brahma and others know not her true nature; so she is called the Unknowable. Of Her no end is found (exists); so she is called the Endless (the infinite). Of Her a grasp is not obtained; so she is called the Invisible (the mark-less). Of Her, birth is not obtained, so she is called the Unborn. One alone exists everywhere, and so she is called the One. One alone is all forms, and so she is called the many. For these reasons, indeed, she is called the Unknowable, the Endless, the Invisible, the Unborn, the One, and the many, thus.
27. The Goddess is the mother of all mantras. Of words (sounds), the knowledge is her form. Of [all] knowledge, she is of the nature of transcendent Consciousness. Of the voids, she is the witness.
28. Beyond her is nothing. She, here, as “Inaccessible (Durga)” thus is proclaimed. To Her, Durga, the inaccessible Goddess, the granter bestowing good conduct, I, frightened of worldly existence, bow (offer salutations), to the one who enables [me] to cross over the wavy sea of samsara.



Deepavali

For a meditative video of this event, please visit this link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L31-jxV6PIY&feature=youtu.be>



किं ज्योतिस्तव भानुमानहति मे रात्रौ प्रदीपादिकं
स्यादेवं रविदीपदर्शनविधौ किं ज्योतिराख्याहि मे ।
चक्षुस्तस्य निमीलनादिसमये किं धीर्धियो दशने
किं तत्राहमतो भवान् परमकं ज्योतिस्तदस्मि प्रभो ॥ १ ॥

kiṁ jyotistava bhānumānahati me rātrau pradīpādikaṁ
syādevaṁ ravidīpadarśanavidhau kiṁ jyotirākhyāhi me ।
cakṣustasya nimīlanādisamaye kiṁ dhīrdhiyo darśane
kiṁ tatrāhamato bhavān paramakaṁ jyotistadasmī prabho ॥ 1 ॥

Eka Sloki (Found in various versions of Century of Verses, derived from Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4-3)

The Light of Lights, by Adī Sankaracarya, translated by Y. Subrahmanya Sarma

Master: What is your light?

Disciple: The sun during the day, the lamp and other lights by night.

Master: It may be so, but please tell me what is the light by which you see the sun and lamp.

Disciple: It is the eye.

Master: When you close it or when you are not able to see through other causes?

Disciple: It is the mind.

Master: And what is the light by which you see the mind, itself?

Disciple: In that case, it is myself.

Master: So, then, you are the Supreme Light?

Disciple: Yes, Master. I am That.

An alternative version:

शतश्लोकी

śataślokī

translated by S. Venkataramanan

किं ज्योतिस्ते वदस्वाहनि रविरिह मे चन्द्रदीपादि रात्रौ
स्यादेवं भानुदीपादिकपरिकलने किं तव ज्योतिरस्ति ।
चक्षुस्तन्मीलने किं भवति च सुतरां धीर्धियः किं प्रकाशे
तत्रैवाहं ततस्त्वं तदसि परमकं ज्योतिरस्मि प्रभोऽहम् ॥ ९५ ॥

kiṁ jyotiste vadasvāhani raviriha me candradīpādi rātrau
syādevaṁ bhānudīpādikaparikalane kiṁ tava jyotirasti ।
cakṣustanmilane kiṁ bhavati ca sutarāṁ dhīrdhiyaḥ kiṁ prakāṣe
tatraivāhaṁ tatastvaṁ tadasi paramakaṁ jyotirasmi prabho'ham ॥ 95 ॥

Tell me what is your light. You say, "The sun in the day and the moon, lamp, etc., at night." It may be so, but by what light do you see the sun, the lamp, etc.? You say, "the eye." But when that is closed, what brighter light is there? You reply, "the mind." By what light is the mind revealed? "For that, I alone am the light," you say. You are, therefore, that Supreme Light. "I am, my Master."

From A Thousand Teachings

by Sri Sankaracarya

उपदेश साहस्री श्री शंकराचार्य

upadeśa sāhasrī śrī śaṅkarācārya

[translation by Swami Jagadananda, very slightly edited]

I bow down to that all-knowing One, which is pure Consciousness, all-pervading, all, residing in the hearts of all beings and beyond all objects of knowledge. 1:1

The aspirant cannot know that he is Brahman if it is different from the Self. But if he has the conviction that he, the Self, is Brahman, this is right Knowledge, which destroys ignorance. 3:1

As it is the object of pure Consciousness and exists for it, the ego is not the Self. Pure Consciousness is the universal Self when the object portion is rejected. 5:5

As it is not the Self, the object portion in the consciousness "I" should be renounced by the wise. 6:6

I am the supreme Brahman, all-knowing, and all pervading. Mounted upon (brought to) the intellect, all things in all conditions are always illumined by me. 7:1

Just as I am the witness of all objects of my intellect, so, also, I am that of the objects of other intellects. I am not capable of being rejected or accepted. Therefore, I am the supreme Brahman. 7:2

As it is the witness of all intellects and their modifications, the Self is not of limited knowledge like the intellect and has neither change nor the impurity of the material nature in it. 7:3

Just as, in the presence of sunlight, colors such as red etc. are manifested in a jewel, so all objects are seen in the intellect in my presence. All things are, therefore, illumined by me like sunlight. 7:4

Objects of knowledge exist in the intellect as long as it is there, but they do not exist in the opposite case. The Knower is always the knower. Duality has, therefore, no existence. 7:5

The intellect supposed the nonexistence of the supreme Brahman before the discrimination between the Self and the non-Self, but, after the discrimination, there is no individual self different from Brahman, nor is there the intellect itself. 7:6

As the intellects of all beings are illumined by my Consciousness, all beings are bodies belonging to me who am all-knowing and free from all sins and virtues. 9:6

Objects that come into being and are capable of being made the objects of knowledge are as unreal as those known in a dream. As duality has no existence, Knowledge is eternal and objectless. 9:7

It is clearly understood that Brahman cannot be the object of knowledge, just as it cannot be the object of seeing etc. as it has no color, form, and the like. 9:9

I am the supreme Brahman, which is pure Consciousness, always clearly manifest, unborn, one only, imperishable, unattached and all-pervading like space, and non-dual. I am, therefore, ever free. Om. 10:1

I am the witness, pure and changeless Consciousness. I am by nature devoid of objects. Unborn and established in the Self, I am all-pervading Brahman in the front, oblique, upward, downward, and in all other directions. 10:2

I am unborn, deathless, devoid of old age, immortal, self-effulgent, all-pervading, and non-dual. Perfectly pure, having neither cause nor affect, and contented with the one Bliss, I am free. Om. 10:3

No perception whatever in waking, dreaming, or deep sleep belongs to me, but it is due to delusion, for these states have no independent existence or an existence depending on the Self. I am, therefore, the Fourth, which is the seer of all the three states and without a second. 10:4

Beginningless and devoid of attributes, I have neither actions nor their results. Therefore, I am the supreme One without a second. Though in a body, I do not become attached on account of my subtlety, like space, which, though all-pervading, does not become tainted. 10:7

Though I am the Lord, always the same in all beings, beyond the perishable and the imperishable, and, therefore, the Supreme, the Self of all, and without a second, I am considered to be of a contrary nature on account of ignorance. 10:8

Not distanced by anything from itself and untouched by ignorance, by false conceptions and by actions, the Self is very pure. Without a second and established in my real nature, like immovable space, I am thought to be connected with the powers of seeing and other perceptions. 10:9

There is the saying of the Sruti that one who has the sure conviction about oneself that one is Brahman is never born again. There being no delusion, there is no birth, for, when the cause is not, there cannot be any effect. 10:10

False conceptions of people such as, "mine," "this," "thus," "this is so," "I am so," "another is not so," etc. are all due to delusion. They are never in Brahman, which is Siva, the same in all and without a second. 10:11

All beings are by nature pure Consciousness itself. It is due to ignorance that they appear to be different from it. Their apparent difference from it is removed by the teaching "thou art Existence." 11:1

Just as dreams appear to be true as long as one does not wake up, so, the identification of oneself with the body etc. and the authenticity of sense-perception and the like in the waking state continue as long as there is no Self-Knowledge. 11:5

I am Brahman, of the nature of pure Consciousness, without qualities, free from ignorance, and free from the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Living in all beings, like space, I am the witness, free from all their defects. 11:6

Ever free and different from names, forms, and actions, I am the supreme Brahman, the Self, consisting of pure Consciousness and always without a second. 11:7

I am Brahman, without attributes, ever pure, ever free, non-dual, homogeneous, like space, and of the nature of Consciousness from which the object portion has been negated. 12:11

He who knows that the Consciousness of the Self never ceases to exist and that it is never an agent and also gives up the egoism that he is a knower of Brahman is a real knower of the Self. Others are not so. 12:13

I am the Self of all, as the intellects of all beings are illumined by me, who am of the nature of the Light of Consciousness only. 14:7

The ideas "I" and "mine" are superimposed on the Self due to ignorance. They do not exist when the Self is known to be one only. How could there be an effect without a cause? 14:19

He is a knower of the Self to whom the ideas "I" and "mine" have become quite meaningless. 14:29

Sound etc. cannot illumine themselves or one another. Therefore, taste etc. are illumined by one other than themselves. They pertain to the body as they are objects of knowledge. 14:41

The objects of knowledge, the ego and other changes described as "mine," such as desires, efforts, pleasure, etc. cannot, similarly, illumine themselves. They cannot illumine one another for the same reason. You, the Self, are, therefore, different from them. 14:42

As the minds of all embodied beings are pervaded by the Self, as Consciousness, which is its nature, like space, there is neither a lower nor a higher knower other than itself. So, there is one non-dual, universal Self alone. 14:44

The one and the same Self is in all beings, and they are in it, just as all beings are in space. As everything is pervaded by space, so also everything

is pervaded by the Self, which is considered to be pure and which consists of the Light of pure Consciousness. 15:9

Just as the ideas of “I” and “mine” are not thought to exist in other bodies, so, also, they do not exist in one’s own, for the Self is the common witness of all intellects. 15:12

The Self is changeless and all-pervading, on account of its being the witness of all the functions of the mind. It would be of limited knowledge, like the intellect etc., if it were subject to change. 15:17

Unlike the knowledge gained through the eye etc., the Knowledge of the Knower does not cease to exist. It is said that the “knowledge of the knower does not go out of existence.” The Knower, therefore, is always of the homogeneous nature of Knowledge. 15:18

One should discriminate thus: who am I? Am I a combination of the elements or of the senses or am I any one of them separately? 15:19

I am not any one of the elements separately or their aggregate. Similarly, I am not any one of the senses or their aggregate. They are objects and instruments of knowledge respectively. The Knower is different from all of these. 15:20

The conditions of the mind, the intellect, and the senses, produced by actions, are illumined by pure Consciousness, like jars and other things by the Sun. 15:26

Independent of every other knowledge, of the nature of the Light of pure Consciousness, and not distanced by anything, Brahman, my own nature, is always known by me. 15:40

The Sun does not require any other light in order to illumine itself. Just so, Knowledge does not require any other knowledge except that which is its own nature in order to be known. 15:41

Just as one light does not depend on another in order to be revealed, so, what is one’s own nature does not depend on anything else. 15:42

Just as there is no day or night in the Sun, as it is of the nature of light only, so, there is no knowledge or ignorance in the Self, which is of the nature of pure Consciousness only. 15:50

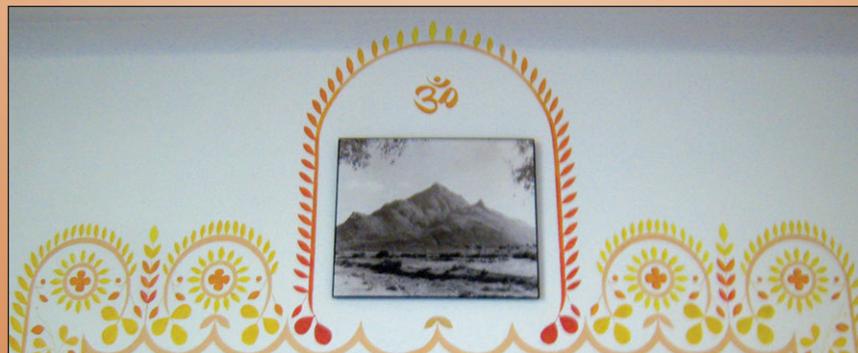
One who has fallen into the stream of births and deaths cannot save oneself by anything else except Knowledge. 15:52

The Sruti says that the knots of the heart are torn asunder, all doubts disappear, and one’s actions come to an end when the Self is seen. 15:53

The Self to be known is beyond everything as there exists nothing else. I bow down to that pure, all-seeing, and omniscient One which is to be known. 17:1

I bow down to that all-knowing and all-powerful One who is of the nature of Consciousness and besides whom there is nothing else such as a knower, knowledge, or an object of knowledge. 17:88

I bow down to my most adorable guru, who is all-knowing and has, by imparting Knowledge to me, saved me from the great ocean of births and deaths filled with ignorance. 17:89





Skanda Shasthi

For a meditative video of this event, please visit this link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxUqt5V1eWc>

Skanda Upanishat

A Samanya Vedanta Upanishad of the Krshna-Yajur-Veda

1. I am imperishable (solid), Mahadeva (Great God), by a small portion of your compassion (kindness). I am a mass of Knowledge (vijñana) alone. I am Siva. What is beyond (higher than) this?

2. What is not innate appears as if one's own because of the swelling (yawning) of the inner organ (mind, antahkarana). By the destruction of the antahkarana, Hari abides as only Consciousness (Samvit).

3. As I, also, abide as Consciousness (Samvit), I am unborn. What is higher than (beyond) it? All that is different (separate) is inert and, like a dream, vanishes (is destroyed).

4. He who, indeed, is the seer of the conscious (cit) and the inert (jada) is Acutya (imperishable, Vishnu), and is of the form of Knowledge (Jnana). He alone, indeed, is Mahadeva. He alone, indeed, is Maha-Hari (Mahavishnu).

5. He alone is the Light of all lights. He alone is Paramesvara (the Supreme Lord). He alone, indeed, is Parabrahman. That Brahman I am. There is no doubt (of this).

6. Jiva is Siva. Siva is jiva. That jiva is Siva alone. Bound by husk, it is rice paddy; by becoming free from the husk, it is rice.

7. Thus, just so, the jiva is bound. [If] karma is destroyed, [he] is Sadasiva (always Siva). So long as he is bound by the bond (fetter), he is jiva. Liberated from the bond, he is Sadasiva.

8. [Salutations] to Siva, to the nature of Vishnu (the all-pervading one); [salutations] to Vishnu, to the nature of Siva. The heart of Siva is Vishnu. The heart of Vishnu is Siva.

9. As Vishnu is the nature of Siva, Siva is the nature of Vishnu. As I see no difference (distance, exterior, interior), therefore for me are well-being and long life. As within, there may be no differences, just so is it with Siva and Keshava and happiness.

10. The body is declared to be the divine temple. He, the jiva, is alone Siva. One should abandon the cast-off, useless remains of ignorance and should worship with the conviction "He am I."

11. The revelation of non-difference is Knowledge (Jnana). Meditation is the mind having no dwelling place (supportless, free from attachment to sense objects). The ablution (bath) is abandonment of the dust of the mind. Purity is the seizure (restraint) of the senses.

12. The immortal nectar of Brahman should be drunk. One should go about begging alms for the care of the body. One, devoted to the One alone, having been in a solitary place, should dwell devoid of duality. Thus should the wise one conduct himself. He thus will attain Liberation.

13. For the holy, supreme abode, well-being, and long life, salutation thus. Of the nature (the Self) of Brahma, Narayana, and Sankara, Narasimha, the Lord of the Gods, bestowing grace, unthinkable, unmanifested, infinite, immutable, the Self of the Vedas, Brahman, the innate (the constant) is known.

14. That Vishnu, the Supreme abode (state, padam), the wise see always, like [with] the eye extended to heaven.

15. By that stretching out of the sages, joyfully, wonderfully awake, is kindled the supreme abode (state, padam) of Vishnu. Thus, this is the instruction about Nirvana; thus is the instruction of the Veda; thus is the Upanishad.



Truth Revealed Retreat



Saddarshanam

& An Inquiry Into the Revelation of Truth and Oneself

By all, an original (first) cause (original essence) of the universe (world) and of the "I"
Is to be said, the Lord (who is the powerful Master), someone with boundless power.
Variegated here (in this) (In this picture here), the seeing one (the seer) and the seen, and
The screen, and the Light, only (also) He, the One, became. (1)

With naming the individual, the world, and the Supreme Self
Principles (verities), all suppositions (doctrines) begin.
(Or: Naming the individual, the world, and the Supreme Self is inherent in suppositions.)
This triad is so long as the "I"-notion will exist (be).
The best of all is abidance void of the "I"-notion ("I"-assumption). (2)

True or false, this is consciousness or inert,
Suffering or happiness, thus to no purpose (vain) is the dispute (quarrel).
The world is not seen, no "I"-belief (no going toward the "I") (clear ascertainment of no "I"),
Abidance without differentiation (without doubt), the Absolute (the Supreme), is agreeable for (dear to) all. (3)

With-form idea (belief) the world and the Lord [are]
So long as the with-form idea the Self is (the with-form idea in the Self is)(in oneself is).
If the Self is formless, who is to see?
That vision (eye, wisdom, beholding) is one (single), limitless, [and] certainly perfectly full. (4)

The body is of the nature of the five-fold sheaths (lit.: Which five-fold sheaths forming the nature is the body.)

Without that does the world shine?
Without the five-fold body, that, this here (now),
Who at all see the world? Let them speak. (5)

[Of] the form of sound and others is the entire world.
The existence of sound and others is a mode of the senses made to appear (brought to light).
The existence of the senses in the mind's power (control) is.
Full of the mind (Composed of the mind) is that world, we say. (or: Full of the mind, therefore, the world is, we say.) (6)

With the idea (thought, intelligence, mind) rises, with the thought (mind) sets
The world. Therefore, of the mind's (thought's) light is this.
The abode (glory, splendor, light) [in which] the mind and world are born and decay (are destroyed, perish) is the perfect fullness,
The real thing (the true Reality), devoid of birth and decay (destruction, perishing), the One. (7)

Let them be spiritual practices for the vision (darshanam) of Truth,
Worship (plural) of the Supreme with name and form.
Abidance in the true Reality, the Attainment of that Self-Being (or: Abidance in the True Reality, the attainment of the state ((conviction)) of That is the Self),
Alone is the vision of Truth (true vision). Thus know (understand). (8)



Karthikai Deepam

For a meditative video of this event, please visit this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVfNj36obGg>

Significance of Arunachala: (Muruganar)

The appearance of Annamalai in front of Brahma and Vishnu and their utter distress at not being able to know it symbolizes the Heart Center (the Self), which shines of itself, while the intellect and the ego are nonplussed seeking it.

Significance of the Beacon: (Bhagavan)

Getting rid of the “I am the body” idea, turning the mind inward, and merging it in the Heart to realize the real, non-dual Light of the Self (to realize the Self as non-dual Being and the Light of all), is the real significance of seeing (darshan of) the beacon on Annamalai, the center of the universe.

Lingodbhava Dipam

by Nome

Absolute Reality,
Inconceivable, immeasurable,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

Shining forever,
Self-luminous light,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

Of limitless height,
Of fathomless depth,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

Insurmountable by Brahma
As a great swan,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

Unsearchable by Vishnu
As a great boar,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

Ketaki flower
The descent into falsehood,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

The Creator now humble,
With anjali mudra,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

The Pervader devoted,
One with Existence,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

From within Siva
Comes forth Siva Himself,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

As figures of stone
Are from stone not apart,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

With axe held aloft,
The mudra severs delusion,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

Abhaya mudra grants
The fearless refuge nondual,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

The mind-antelope captured,
The mudra cuts through illusion,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

Kati mudra on hip,
Firmness, serenity,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

Tendencies slain,
Skins His attire,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

The sacred thread,
Identity as Brahman,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

Smile of perfect Bliss,
With eyes fully open,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

Light upon light,
Light within light,
The infinite Consciousness,
Eternal Siva.

BHAGAVAN SAYS:

“You who wish to celebrate the birthday, seek first whence was your birth. One’s true birthday is when he enters That which transcends birth and death—the Eternal Being.”

“At least on one’s birthday one should mourn one’s entry into this world (samsara). To glory in it and celebrate it is like delighting in and decorating a corpse. To seek one’s Self and merge in the Self: that is wisdom.”



“It is false to speak of Realisation. What is there to realise? The real is as it is, always. How to realise it? All that is required is this. We have realised the unreal, i.e., regarded as the real that which is unreal. We have to give up this attitude. That is all that is required for us to attain Jnana. We are not creating anything new or achieving something which we did not have before. We dig a well and create a pit. The akasa (space) in the pit or well has not been created by us. We have just removed the earth which was filling the akasa there. The akasa was there then and is also there now. Similarly we have simply to throw out all the age-long samskaras which are inside us; and when all of them have been given up, the Self will shine, alone.

There is no greater mystery than this, that being the Reality ourselves, we seek to gain Reality. We think that there is something binding our Reality and that it must be destroyed before the Reality is gained. It is ridiculous. A day will dawn when we will ourselves laugh at our efforts. That which is on the day of laughter is also now.”

- Erase the Ego

The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi

May 18, 1947

(117) Seeing A Lion in a Dream

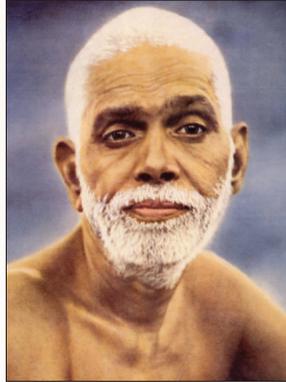
This afternoon, at 3 o'clock, another series of questions started. "Brahman is said to be Sat-Chit-Ananda Swarupa. What does that mean?" said one. "Yes. That is so," Bhagavan replied, "that which is, is only Sat. That is called Brahman. The luster of Sat is Chit, and its nature is Ananda. These are not different from Sat. All the three together are known as Sat-Chit-Ananda. It is the same in regard to the attributes of the jiva — satvam, ghoram and jadam. Ghoram means the quality of rajas, and jadam means the quality of tamas. Both these are parts of Satvam. That is the truth which is eternal and pure. Call it Atman, Brahman, Shakti or anything you like. If you know that that is yourself, everything is lustrous. Everything is Ananda."

That questioner said, "The ancients say that, for a person who wants to know that real state, sadhana, sravana, manana, and nididhyasana are absolutely necessary till the very end." Bhagavan replied, "They are necessary only to get rid of the various things that come from outside and that, too, for purposes of sadhana only, but not for realizing the Self. One's own self is there at all times and in all places. Sravana etc. are to be resorted to only to get rid of external influences, but, if they are regarded as the most important things, they will be the cause of the development of the feelings of ahankara, such as 'I am a pandit' (learned man), 'I am a great man' and the like. That is a big samsara (family). It is difficult to get rid of it later on. It is bigger than a wild elephant. It will not yield ordinarily."

"For the wild elephant, it is said that Guru Kataksham (the Grace of the Guru) is like seeing a lion in its dream," said the questioner. "That is true. If an elephant sees a lion in its dream, it wakes up startled and will not sleep again for that day for fear that the lion might appear again in a dream. In the

same way in a man's life, which is also akin to a dream, it is not Guru kataksham alone, but also sravana, manana, nididhyasana, etc. that are akin to the sight of a lion in a dream. As they go on getting these dreams, they wake up and again go to bed and, by efflux of time, they may someday get a lion's dream called Guru Kataksham in an intense manner. They get startled and obtain jnana. Then, there will be no more dreams, and they will not only be wakeful at all times but will not give room for any dreams of life but will remain alert until that true and real knowledge is obtained. The lions dreams are unavoidable and must be experienced," said Bhagavan.

With some surprise, the questioner said, "Are sravana etc. and Guru Kataksha akin to dreams?" "Yes, that is so. For those who realize the truth, everything is akin to a dream. That being so, what do you now say is the truth? During sleep, you have no control over this body. You wander about in various places with different bodies. You do all sorts of things. At that time, everything appears real. You do everything as if you are the doer. It is only after you wake up that you feel that you are a Venkiah or a Pulliah, that what you had experienced in the dream is unreal and that it was only a dream. Not only that, sometimes you go to bed after eating your fill at night — sweets such as laddu and jilebi. During sleep you dream that you are wandering in all sorts of places, cannot get food and are about to die of starvation. When you get up startled, you will be belching. Then, you will realize that the whole thing was a dream. But during that sleep, did you remember about this (your over-eating)? Another person goes to bed suffering from starvation. In his dream, he enjoys a feast, eating laddu and jilebi. Will he remember at that time the fact that he had gone to bed hungry? No, he wakes up and finds himself terribly hungry. "Oh God! It is an illusion, a mere dream," he thinks. That is all. You were existent in the wakeful state as well as in the dream state and also in the sleeping state. When you are able to un-





Entrance to Sri Bhagavan's Inner Shrine in the SAT Temple.

derstand your state which had been existing all the time, you will then understand that all the rest is like a dream. When that is known, the feeling that the Guru is different from you will disappear. But then, since this realization must come about because of Guru kataksha, that Guru kataksha is likened to a dream of a lion. That dream must be intense and must imprint itself in one's mind. It is only then that a proper wakefulness will come about. For that, the time must be propitious. If sadhana is performed relentlessly, some time or other, favorable results turn up. That is all." So saying, Bhagavan assumed a dignified silence.

The clock struck four. The people in the hall who were completely absorbed in this spiritual discourse of Bhagavan, came back to their own consciousness. The voice of Bhagavan was ringing in my ears. I returned, wondering whether at any time in this life I would get that lion's dream of Guru kataksha and get it imprinted on my mind. ॐ

"...Samsara means samsara of the mind. If you leave that samsara, it will be the same thing wherever you are.

Nothing troubles you."

*-Sri Ramana,
Letters, 11*



The One Self

July 23, 2006

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: The Reality, which is the Self, ever is and alone is. That which is unreal never exists. Those who see the Truth comprehend this. How is it that they see the Truth? The Reality alone can know the Reality. Brahman alone knows Brahman. No other can do so, nor does any other exist in order to attempt to do so. How did the seers of Truth see the Truth? By abidance in That, as That itself. It is not possible for the unreal to know the Real, or the not-self to know the Self. Knowledge belongs to the Self alone and in this lies Liberation from all of the imagined bondage.

Sri Bhagavan tells us to inquire, “Who am I?” in order to realize the Self. He also says, “How to realize, or make more real, that which is already real?” Therefore, the inquiry to know one’s Self is more a matter of un-realizing the unreal; that is, ceasing to misidentify, ceasing to confuse the Self with what is not the Self. The Maharshi said, “Who is to realize what, when all that exists is the one Self?” He also advises to inquire, “Who am I?” There is no contradiction. If the one who does not know the Truth examines his own nature, his nature, his knowledge, the knower and the known, all turn out to be the same thing.

Samsara, or the realm of illusion, prevails only due to not knowing the Self. If the Self is known, there is no samsara whatsoever. Therefore, the Maharshi defined maya as that which is not, not as something temporarily occurring, nor as some independent power, but simply that which is not.

For the Realization of Supreme Truth, put the question to yourself. Inquire deeply within yourself, “Who am I?” The one who realizes Truth is already existent, and that one, the Being of that one, is the substance of the Realization, for, in this,

Being is knowing. It is not a conceptual or perceptual knowledge, not through thought or the senses. How will you know your Self? Not through seeing and hearing and not through thinking. How is it that you know that you exist? It is with that very same Knowledge. If there is one who seems to stand apart and says, “My experience, I have not realized, I will realize,” who is that one? Sri Ramana says, “To say, ‘I have realized the Self, I have not realized the Self,’ both statements are absurd,” because all that exists is this one Self, pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss, without form, without division, without type, phase, condition, or limitation of any kind. It is unborn, so it is innately imperishable. Only that which is without beginning and end is real. That which appears with beginning or end actually never began at all. The realization of this is its end.

That unborn, imperishable Existence is what you are. To conceive otherwise is merely imagination, and that imagination is at the root of all that is of the nature of bondage or suffering. The suffering depends on bondage, the bondage, or limitation, consists of misidentification, or ignorance. All of the ignorance has its root in the conception of existing as an individual entity, an ego. Search for the sense of “I” in yourself, the one that seems to be individualized. If you inquire into that one, no bondage is found, and there is the Liberation. If you inquire into that one, no ego is found; only one Self exists.

The Upanishads instruct, “Tat tvam asi,” “That you are.” It is a statement of the Truth. To realize the significance, one need not pretend to stand apart from it, that is, as if an onlooker, or a contemplator of it. The statement is, “That you are,” and not, “You are another.” What you are does not change at any time. What changes is not true. The characteristic of what is true, or what is real, is that it is immutable. The changeless abides in and as the changeless; that is, it realizes itself. Through inquiry to know who you are, abandon false definition; that is, relinquish misidentification, including the notion of “I.” Then, everything the Maharshi has imparted is abundantly clear. Inquire within yourself to realize the essence of this. The “I”-less

Being that remains, the infinite Consciousness that remains, is the Silence.

Questioner: Any idea of the world is an imagined limitation of Reality. Anything that is objective is an idea of limitation and can't be real.

N.: To whom does the imagination belong? If the world be merely imagined, who imagines?

Another Q.: If I say That I am, how should creation exist? Why do I feel difference all the time, in the mind, in my emotions? I try to see everything the same, but still I still feel that there is somebody else. Why are their actions perceived by me so that I react to them?

N.: What is the definition of you? When you speak of others, relating to others, and reacting to others, what is the definition of you? As some sort of person?

Q.: Yes.

N.: How do you mark off you and the other person? By the bodies and the minds apparently inhabiting them?

Q.: Right.

N.: Even though the body is in the mind, it seems as if the mind is in the body. Once there is that definition, there are others. Once there are others, even though one yearns for oneness, problems will arise. Go back the way you came. Examine your own definition. If you examine your own definition, you and others as individuals, vanish. The division between you and the universe vanishes. The ideas of you, a God, and the world—jaga-jiva-para—all of that vanishes. Based on the definition of yourself, the divisions appear, and what you are divided from is always the mirror-image of the definition of yourself. So, according to how you, as the jiva, are defined, so God is defined; likewise the world and the people in it. If you say that you know this but I feel otherwise, examine what constitutes what you call "feeling." Invariably, it will turn out to be certain ideas, thoughts, upon which you place too much emphasis, because you lend them your reality and your identity. When identity and reality, as well as happiness, return to their right place, you see what is.

Another Q.: I have to practice in a balanced way. There needs to become a balance regarding practice. I do not have balance.

N.: Balance between what and what?

Q.: Between spiritual practice and external activities.

N.: If the sense of what happiness is, the knowledge of happiness, is strong and returns to its right place, you will find yourself detached from all else, and all will be at peace, or in balance, regardless of the state of affairs of external events. If, further, upon knowing where happiness is, you determine that, since it is within, you must know yourself, and you come to know yourself, the happiness, the peace, seen initially with detachment, will be found to be immortal. If you wish to call that state "balance," all right. (laughter)

Another Q.: How do we know that the state of knowing that we have realized, or achieved, or blended with is not just another stage of perception? There are so many paths that people feel that they are on, and each one thinks that he is on the right path and is going to be in a state of ultimate reality. The reality that we believe we have achieved, how do we know that it is not merely another sense of perception, even though it may be a more refined state of perception than the one we had before?

N.: You say that each one feels he knows what is right or what is true or the right path. The forms of such differ; the feeling of rightness is the same. What is the source of that rightness? With each experience, you have the sense of, "this is real." Regardless of how illusory it is, there is "this is real," and with the next experience, "that is real." The sense of reality remains unalterable, yet the forms keep changing. From where does this sense of reality derive? If we say, "From the senses," that is absurd. If we say, "From our minds," what happens in deep dreamless sleep or in any state in which the mind is not thinking? Still, there is the sense of what is real. There is no objective part to it, but still there is the sense of reality. From where does that come? If you trace that inward, Reality comprehends itself, and, since it is free of causality, it is not a perception or conception. The Reality in is never a known or unknown object. In the nonobjective, which is

the formless, duality, as in the doubt, "It could be this, it could be that," becomes impossible. Is this clear for you?

Q.: Not necessarily. It's just a wanting to be faithful to myself, I suppose, by acknowledging that there have been stages that I felt were the ultimate in the past. I don't want to be trapped in the sense of having reached or, in a definitive way, being on a path of, realization.

N.: The fear is not grounded. If you do not find the Reality, your happiness is not complete. Being and Bliss are identical. Unless Being, as it is, is realized, bliss is not complete. Your own search for the innate happiness will not allow you to stagnate. If you arrive at some conception, perhaps lofty, but it is not the final goal, something will urge you on. Onward is inward. Where there exists only One without a second, such doubts no longer arise. As long as such doubts are possible, it is wise to inquire.

Another Q.: When I'm in satsang or I meditate, I have that experience of expansion and happiness, but it doesn't stay all the time. So, is it that it is continuous inquiry that is required, because it's not there 24 hours per day?

N.: Where does it go? Does the expanse come and go? Or does something else rise and set?

Q.: The mind chatters.

N.: When we cease to regard what is true, which is the Self, as an objective experience and cease to regard ourselves as an ego-entity, what you want is accomplished. Why treat the direct experience of the Self as if it were an object and time-bound? Your Being does not come and go. The mind's chatter comes and goes. Which one are you? Continuous inquiry should be the case. The end, itself, appears as the means. For continuous Knowledge, there should be continuous inquiry. What is now called "inquiry" is later revealed as self-existent Knowledge. What actually occurs when one inquires? Is it thinking or something else?

Q.: I experience that peacefulness, but it seems that the mind is more powerful than the bliss or that happiness and makes me restless.

N.: From where does the mind get such power?

Q.: I believe that it comes from the Atman, or that Bliss. It gets the power. Why does it get the power that strongly?

N.: Even delusion is a testimony to the vast power of the Self. What thoughts have the power to delude you? Do all thoughts delude you, or do only some upset you?

Q.: Some.

N.: Thoughts that are of a higher nature do not disturb you, but other thoughts do disturb you. What makes the thoughts that are disturbing, disturbing?

Q.: They make me restless, so that I cannot concentrate.

N.: Do the thoughts confuse you, as if they were animate in themselves, or are they inert, empty illusions to which you lend reality?

Q.: It seems that they have the power.

N.: If we attribute to them their power, it is we who attribute that power. The thoughts do not declare their own existence. You say that they exist and are "I." All the thoughts depend on you for their apparent validity. They depend on you even in order to appear. Since Consciousness is never modified, thought really is nonexistent. If you consider your thoughts to be existent, search from where they derive their power. You will find that those thoughts with which you identify cause the problem. If you did not misidentify with them, did not claim them as "I" or "mine," they would be as disturbing to you only as much as somebody else's thoughts, which generally do not bother you.

Q.: I was thinking about external problems.

N.: The confusion is over "I" and "mine." If we assume that something else determines our freedom, when will Liberation come? There will always be some kind of thing that is changeful, disturbing, etc. in the phenomena, in the senses, with the thoughts, etc. If you find out for whom these are, who is declaring their importance, their reality, their disturbing capacity, you find everything lies in yourself. When you see that, Liberation is at hand.

Q.: Do we see Reality at the time of death?

N.: We, ourselves,, are the Reality all of the time, and life and death do not alter that. Consequently,

the Gita says, “Neither for the living nor for the dead do the wise grieve.” “For that which has birth, or life, death is certain. For that which has death, birth is certain.” If we know ourselves as we are, life and death, birth and death, do not pertain to us. We are the unborn, imperishable Existence, which is itself of the nature of Liberation, or Moksha.

Another Q.: In our discussion on Friday night, what Self-inquiry is became more apparent me. I keep forgetting that. I really have to know my Self. This is not thinking but more a kind of understanding that has to be the case. It is my identity that determines how I meditate. So, it is like a catch 22.

N.: Why do you say that?

Q.: Because ignorance clouds my vision.

N.: If meditation be upon the nature of the meditator, how will ignorance survive? The so-called catch is the assumption that there is a duality, that there are two selves, one to be realized and one who is attempting to realize. This was addressed at the beginning of satsang.

Q.: Yes, it was a great discourse.

N.: Knowledge is Liberation. Action does not lead to Liberation, as Sankara has stated in Atma Bodha. The activities are to be understood as pertaining to the body, speech, and mind. That includes thinking. Knowledge is Liberation. Inquiry consists of Knowledge. The end appears as the means.

Q.: I guess that the divine thought of Brahman drives the mind inward. How do I become confused, because, when you explain it, it’s very clear? If I could be that focused all of the time, a lot more ignorance would fall away.

N.: The inner focus and perseverance are definitely in order. As for focus, is Consciousness ever out of focus? Does its knowing ability, or light, ever diminish?

Q.: So, that’s just misidentification. When it seems to be out of focus, it’s misidentification with the mind.

N.: Alright, yet you clearly know the misidentification. Consciousness does not change. Existence does not change. For purposes of spiritual instruction, this term “misidentification” has been coined.

“Mixing up the Self with the not-Self” does not mean that something concretely of that nature happens. After all, all explanations of illusion and ignorance are to destroy such, not to establish their existence.

How do you misidentify? How does it actually happen?

Q.: Only through imagination. I just posit myself as something other.

N.: But that does not actually happen, does it?

Q.: Where does it really start? If it started, it would be continuous, right?

N.: If it started and it ended, it might start again. There would be no real freedom. If it did not start and you realize it did not start, that is said to be its end.

Q.: It doesn’t make sense that a mind is created inside itself. That is part of the belief, that, somehow, inside something that doesn’t change there is a creation.

N.: Examine your mind. Where does it start? How do you know it?

Q.: Well, I know it by myself.

N.: You know it in the Self and by the Self and never apart from the Self. Does something with an utterly dependent existence have any existence at all? From another angle of vision, what is it that you call “mind”?

Q.: It is hard for me to describe. When you were just talking to me, I had a very deep experience. The mind doesn’t seem to be. It’s hard to imagine. If I were to subtract what is real from the mind, there would be nothing. It must be imagination plus me.

N.: If we add imagination, has anything actually been added? The rope does not become or grow into a snake by any means. There are no snakes living in the rope.

Q.: Or temporarily coming to life.

N.: The rope does not temporarily become a snake. The rope does not take up its abode in a snake. It is merely imagined, but the imagination does not alter the rope. It does not even become a snake by imagination. Likewise is your Self. What is referred to as the mind is thought. There are the

form of thought and something that knows it. The conjoining of those two seem to be what you may call “a mind,” in all its various permutations. There is no such thing as a formless thought. The form of thought depends entirely on the knowing part, without which it cannot exist. The knowing part, stripped of the form of thought, is what?

Q.: You are saying this of all thought, though, when it is stripped of any objectification.

N.: Was there one that you wanted to retain? (laughter)

Q.: Isn't that what keeps the illusion going, something that is retained?

N.: Yes, we can describe illusion as a combination of imagination, creating ignorance, and retention of, or adherence to, it.

Q.: Clarifying that there is nothing else to adhere to is good. There is no place where it originates. The confusion comes once it is mixed.

N.: How does the mixture happen? Who does it? When you say confusion arises, for whom does it arise? If, confusion rising, you inquire like this, “For whom is it? Who am I?” there is no confusion. Then, there is no start of illusion. Hence maya is beginningless.

Another Q.: Is maya beginningless too, as Brahman is beginningless?

N.: Yes, in the sense that neither one has a start. One is eternal, and one never is.

Q.: Maybe that is what is meant by a snake in the rope; that there is no snake actually, but we think there is snake.

N.: Yes. All that there is is the Self, and even illusion, or ignorance, is not separate from it. There is no ignorance, or illusion, in the Self, but, if we speak of illusion, or ignorance, such is merely a misperception of the Self. Always, we deal with only one thing.

Q.: Why is the need of all this when I'm so happy with myself? Why do I get up and open my eyes to the world? What is compelling me to do it?

N.: How did you become endowed with eyes? You who are bodiless, how did you get eyes? Did you get eyes?

If the “I am the body” notion is left unquestioned, then you open the eyes, get up, move about, do things, etc. If there's no “I am the body” notion, you are ever the same. Whether the body is sitting or up, active or inactive, eyes open or eyes closed, living or dead makes no difference. The “I am the body” notion needs to be severed. That is all. How? Inquire and see if there is any connection between the body and your Self.

Q.: At some point, in time there is none, but, then, at some other point in time, there is.

N.: Is it the change of time, as if we could mark it on a calendar or a clock? At some point, it seems as if you have become or are a body. If that is questioned, you find that it never occurred and is not true. The “I am the body” conception is so much the cornerstone of illusion. Remove that stone, and the entire illusion collapses. “I do, I am here, I am there, I am now, I am then,” etc., all these are based on the “I am the body” notion. You are not the body. A changeful, sporadically appearing, sense-and-mind-dependent, divisible body never became the unchanging, indivisible, stateless, ever-the-same Self. Know it for certain by inquiring within yourself. Do not mistake the object for the Self. The object is the body.

Another Q.: There is the advice for self-examination when there seems to be attachment or misidentification, but when you asked the question, “Are you that which abides or that which rises and sets?” it put me more in mind of the Maharshi's analogy of no need to examine the trash. If I know completely that it is trash, it is not relevant anymore, and I don't have to understand it with the same mental mechanism that created it or is part of it. If I feel identified or attached to it, then examination is the right motion within the illusion to get out of it. If I do recognize it as irrelevant, I don't have to have answer why and how.

N.: Yes and no. You are confusing various instructions given by the Maharshi. The first is, “There is no false ‘I’ and true ‘I,’ there is just one Self.” If we imagine that there is a false “I,” the false “I” comes and goes, rises and sets. The true “I” ever abides. Thereby he points out with what you should identify. Since you cannot identify with yourself as if this were some kind of activity to be performed with the mind, in practice what is in-

volved is a negation of the misidentification. What remains as the residuum knows itself. As for self-examination: if it is possible, do so, because destruction of vasanas, tendencies, leads to Self-Realization. If you do not examine, you continue to live by such, be it attachment, or some other kind of vasana. What he said, in the trash analogy is that a study of the tattvas, enumerating them, when all that is to be tossed out, is like analyzing the rubbish before tossing it out. We should not extend his instruction beyond that context.

Self-examination and Self-inquiry are necessary to destroy the tendencies and liberate yourself from them. Deeply inquire as to who you are, and do not treat any of this as if it were an objective study. Self-Knowledge is interior. It involves making your vision nonobjective, examination of what you regard as yourself, relinquishment of what is not the Self, and, thereby, abidance as the Self. We should not treat this as if it were an objective study. We should not treat Advaita Vedanta as if it were an objective study, because such would just be so many thoughts. If we are attempting to be rid of illusion or ignorance, an objective study divorced from our own experience is not of much avail. It is like analyzing the trash. What is required is to get to the very heart of our experience and not, with the intellect, concoct images, names, definitions, etc. as a description of the activities of the ignorance. Go right to the core of what you regard as yourself. If examination is possible, examine. If inquiry is possible, inquire. There is no navigation required as to when to look at yourself, when not, when to inquire, when not. Such a doubt can arise only when you relegate such self-examination and Self-inquiry to a merely mental plane. If the end, itself, manifests as the means, we do not turn on and off the discrimination or the inquiry. We pursue it to its end. It is like a river that empties into the ocean. It loses its form.

Q.: The Maharshi's reference was misapplied in my question. In discriminating, can I ask, "Which one are you, which one am I? Am I the background Consciousness, or am I these?"

N.: There is no need to do so.

Q.: Ok.

N.: The choice is known by you. You say, "Which one?" Someone knows the two. Who is he?

Determine his nature. To establish your identity really means to know what, in truth, you are. It is not a choice.

Q.: It is more discriminating than choosing what is real about myself?

N.: Yes, that will work.

Q.: That could be seen as Grace, to be taken every time and whenever, if it is available.

N.: How often is Grace available?

Q.: It may seem to take different forms, but it is always available.

N.: So, discrimination is always in order.

Q.: Right.

N.: The essence of discrimination is pure Knowledge.

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

(Silence)

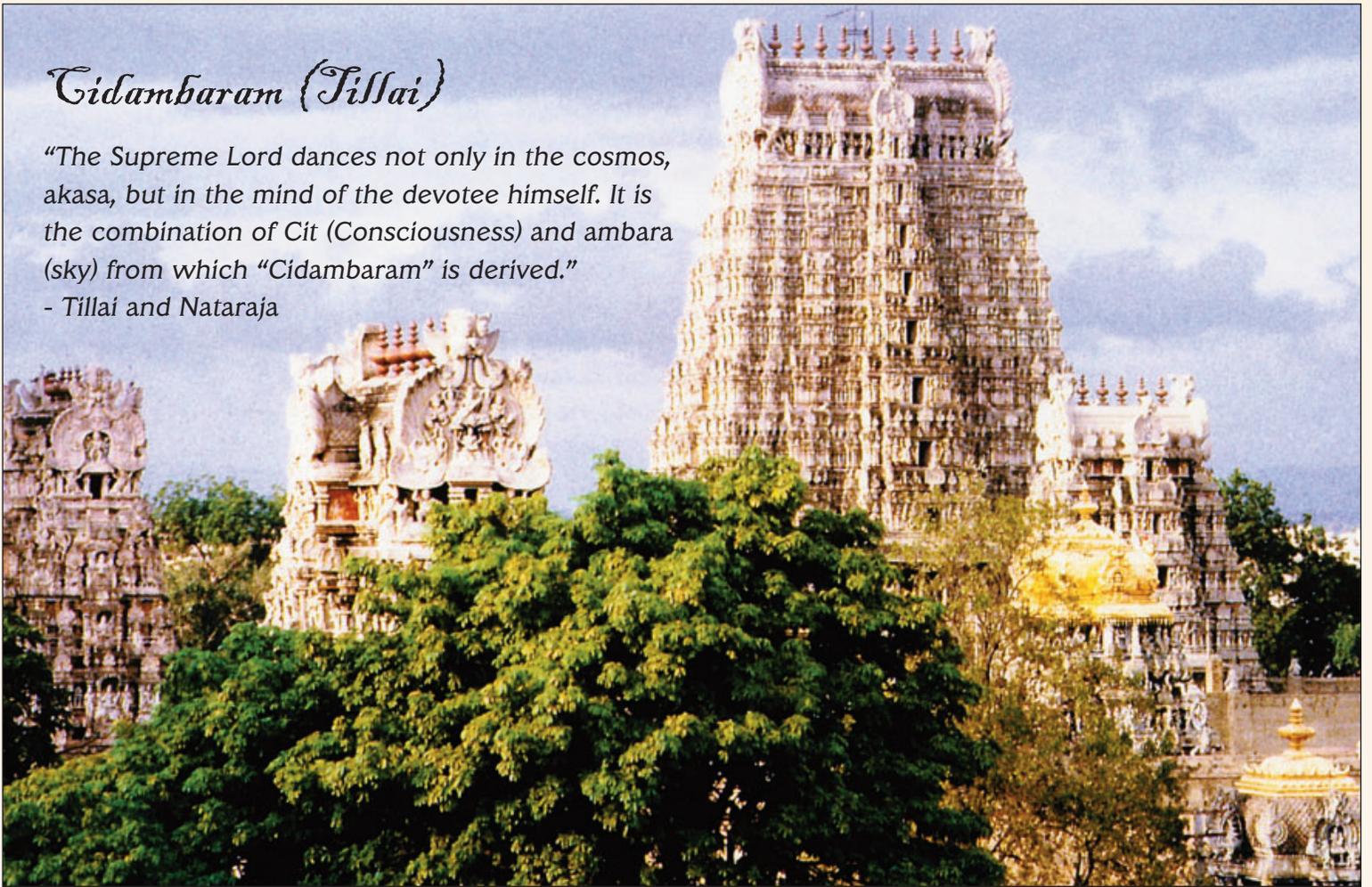
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om ॐ



Gidambaram (Tillai)

“The Supreme Lord dances not only in the cosmos, akasa, but in the mind of the devotee himself. It is the combination of Cit (Consciousness) and ambara (sky) from which “Gidambaram” is derived.”

- Tillai and Nataraja



“OM. NOW, WHAT IS HERE IN THIS CITY OF BRAHMA (THE BODY) IS AN ABODE, A SMALL LOTUS FLOWER (THE HEART). WITHIN THAT IS A SMALL SPACE. WHAT IS WITHIN THAT IS TO BE REALIZED.

THAT, ASSUREDLY, IS WHAT ONE SHOULD DESIRE TO UNDERSTAND. IN THAT DWELLING, SINCE THE DWELLING IS SMALL, THAT WHICH IS INCLUDED IN IT IS SMALLER THAN IT — ANTAH (IN THAT DWELLING) IS AKASAH, SPACE, CALLED BRAHMAN. BRAHMAN IS LIKE SPACE BECAUSE OF UNEMBODIEDNESS AND BECAUSE OF THE SIMILARITY IN QUALITIES OF SUBTLENESS AND ALL-PERVASIVENESS.

IF THEY SHOULD SAY TO HIM, “NOW, THAT WITHIN THE CITY OF BRAHMAN, THERE IS THIS SMALL LOTUS-LIKE DWELLING AND WITHIN IT IS A SMALL SPACE, WHAT IS IT THAT EXISTS THERE WHICH IS TO BE SOUGHT AND UNDERSTOOD?”

HE SHOULD REPLY: “THIS SPACE WITHIN THE HEART IS AS VAST AND EXTENSIVE AS COSMIC SPACE. WITHIN IT ARE CONTAINED BOTH HEAVEN AND EARTH, AS ALSO BOTH FIRE AND AIR, BOTH SUN AND MOON, BOTH LIGHTNING AND STARS; WHATEVER THERE IS OF HIM IN THIS WORLD AND WHATEVER IS NOT—ALL THAT IS CONTAINED WITHIN IT.” - Chandogya Upanishad, 8:1:2-3, as it appears in “Tillai and Nataraja,” Mudgala Trust, 1994.

The murti is no mere idol and it is much more than a likeness of the divine, rather, it is the Lord Himself taken form. The uses of the word murti in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita suggest that the form is its essence. The murti is an experience, and devotional worship of the murti is centered on cultivating that experience—the direct experience of God. Here, in Nataraja Darshanam, Nome reveals the essence of Lord Nataraja for the purpose of direct Knowledge of Him.

Nataraja Darshanam

ॐ Namah Sivaya.

In the infinite sphere
Of Your universal manifesta-
tion,
Composed of the fire
Of Your infinite Consciousness,
You dance in Bliss
While remaining motionless,
Stillness of the Unborn,
Dance of the Infinite.

Your locks fly in
Complete abandonment
Of all differentiation,
In the universal wind,
That rises and vanishes,
Extending through time,
Filling all space,
From You never apart.

Emanation of Light,
From and into Yourself,
Eternal Light real,
Shines for Itself.
Dancing as fire,
Reposing as space,
Where sun, moon, and stars,
Shine, yet shine not.

In the space-like Void,
Perfect Fullness of Being,
Lies the potential of form,
Smiling head of Shakti,
From whose mouth flows
The Ganga of Grace
In ever-flowing Bliss,
Supported by You.

The severed Brahma-skull,
Creation's very source,

Of ephemeral illusion,
Annihilation complete,
All this is not,
Yet not separate from That,
No creation realized,
Laughing and free.

With the moon of the mind's
Reflected luminosity,
And the passing of time
In the Eternal,
As ornaments
All this is carried by You,
The mind-free and timeless,
The Absolute One.

The beauty of Your flower,
Is the display
Of the universe,
Experienced, glimpsed,
A momentary vision,
In hallucination unreal,
By one who has consumed
The fragrant datura.

In one hand is sounded
The Pranava, Om,
The vibration of which
Is all the vast universes,
In all states of mind,
Bringing forth entirely
This apparent creation,
All of this You.

In one hand blazes
The fire of destruction,
In which all forms cease,
Things, bodies, and minds,
Events and the world,
Time and space, too.

You, the destroyer,
Alone You remain.

These two divine hands,
Are perfectly balanced,
Creation and destruction
As displayed by You;
Simultaneous they are,
Momentary they are,
Both are by You,
Who are prior and after.

Snake that adorns,
Of unimpeded energy,
Around throat indestructible,
Your nectar immortal;
Serpentine passion,
Sways from Your arm
Along with the hide
Of power and inertia.

The three gunas appear
In matter and mind,
Harmless to You,
Detached Witness of all,
For You they are only
The merest of ornaments
Weightlessly flapping
In the breeze of Your
motion.

Fear-destroying hand
Of Revelation and Grace,
Granting protection,
Sanctuary untouched.
Another hand points
To Your vast, cosmic dance,
Raised leg in motion,
Dance of the universal.

Your other foot planted
On the jiva subduing,
Key to the Self-evident,
The nonexistence of "I."
Your dance destroys
That false assumption,
And only by that
Can Your Truth be known.

Your whole figure so balanced
And Your features so fine,
Like the delicate stamen
Of a wondrous flower
And the thin fibers
Of a celestial feather,
Upon Your lotus throne
Of imperturbable Perfection.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
Upon the lotus heart
Of perfection attained
By Self-knowing wisdom,
The false, minute ego,
Whose nature is non-being,
With his weapon of ignorance,
Is utterly destroyed,
And no trace remains.

This yields smiling Bliss
That points to the dance.
The loss of the ego
Is attainment of Truth.
The transcendent dance
Of ego-death true
Is the dance of Bliss,
The Ananda tandava.

Perpetually indicated
By the Supreme Itself,
Here take refuge!
To this be devoted!
This should be known!
In this be absorbed!
Here is Bliss ultimate,
Timelessly realized.

Nothing's concealed,
In Your open hand,
Eternal protection
From illusion and suffering.
Such is Your Grace,
Pervading the universe.

Such is the Truth
That You alone are.

Dead skins of illusion,
Ornaments nonbinding,
Empty ignorance gone,
And the world vanished, too;
Dissolved in pure Knowledge,
Dissolved in the Reality
Of the Unborn, Siva—
The Self nondual.

Dissolving duality
In Your drum, two-in-One,
The nature of experience,
Surpassing all time;
Significance of Om,
Pervading the three states,
Yet transcendent of these,
Your Being ever is.

In Your raised hand,
The fire of Jnana,
Destroying utterly
All ignorance forever.
Around Your neck
The protector of Knowledge,
Mere adornment for One
Who is Knowledge itself.

All yoga is contained
In Realization of You,
Thus Your form of the Yogi
Who is in highest Union,
Inseparably One,
And never apart,
With You, Yourself,
By You, Yourself.

Your serene eyes radiating
Love and deep Peace,
Mystery of mysteries
Revealed in You.
Your smile is the inexplicable
Indication of Sahaja,
With its own deathless Peace,
And profound Silent Joy.

Your open third eye
Is Wisdom Supreme,
Destroying delusion,
In which no thing is seen,

Yet Truth's clearly discerned
By the Consciousness-Knowledge,
Which is, itself You,
Indivisible One.

Severed skull of the one
Who starts the creation,
Pours forth the Ganga
Of Self-Knowledge pure.
Matted locks of renunciation,
Abandonment of the unreal,
O Destroyer of delusion,
Who is alone real.

The flower of expansion
Of the beauty of mind,
Released from its limits,
Dissolved in its true nature,
Unfettered, absorbed,
Having swallowed itself
In ecstatic revelation
Continuous, divine.

The moon of the mind,
Your shining adornment,
Shines by Your Light,
Who alone really shine.
You dance as Consciousness,
Moving, though still,
As Truth liberates,
Though there is no unreal.

In the Transcendent Space
Of Being-Consciousness-Bliss,
Empty and full,
Great Void, pure Being,
Circle of flame,
Completeness of Infinity,
You abide always
As the true Self forever.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
Many are the ways
You have danced before.
You danced the kalika,
And srishti (creation) appeared.
You danced the gauri,
And the sandhya of wonder,
For the preservation (sthiti) of
all,
And all were sustained.

You danced the samhara,
And all was destroyed.
You danced tripura tandava,
And there was tirobhava (dis-
appearance),
And there was concealment;
But what disappeared?
Did You, indeed, hide
Yourself from any?

Are there any ever
Other than You?
Does illusion hide You?
Is the Real ever gone?
Yet, none other can see
The invisible Being,
When revealed by You,
And the ego is gone.

You danced the urdhva,
With leg lifted high,
And in that Grace (anugraha),
Is freedom triumphant.
Dismissed was the darkness,
Confusion no more;
You are the space
In which You, yourself, dance.

Now, all the five dances
Are contained in the One,
The Ananda tandava,
Which reveals all.
Innate Bliss full,
Uncreated, unborn,
The State of Siva
As Siva is.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
In this one dance,
All is wonderfully shown,
With Your drum of creation,
Your hand of preservation,
Your fire of destruction,
With Your lower foot
Of disappearance,
And your raised foot of Grace.

In Your left ear,
Her glistening earring,
All Sakti is fully
Absorbed in You,
Right, Your own earring,
For You are ever Yourself.

Wearing the thread, You,
The Knower of Brahman.

Showing your sign
In the hand of auspiciousness,
The other hand's fingers
Are the triad in you,
While with the same hand,
Lordly and Graceful,
Bestowing endless Bliss,
You point to the dance.

The cluster of jatas,
The shining, woven locks,
Is concentrated Jnana,
Knowledge unmixed,
Indivisible, solid;
Your spread hair flying,
The expanse of Knowledge,
Space-like and clear.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
The tiger appears,
The waking state and body;
A serpent appears,
The dream and the subtle;
The dwarf of forgetfulness,
The confusion of mind,
The deep sleep and causal;
The three states appear.

And you slay them all,
With self-evident Truth.
You play with the three,
But are ever transcendent.
The Fourth and Beyond
Your own state is You,
Siva immutable,
Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
You display the five elements
Within your own Being,
Your foot is the earth,
In Your hair is the water,
With drum for the air,
Your blazing hand of fire,
The dance is of space,
Your head is pure Jnana.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
In Your right hand is held
The sound of creation;

In your left hand shines
The flame of absorption;
There in You, saguna Brahman;
There in You, nirguna Brah-
man.
You, Yourself, remain
Without difference at all.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
Covered with ash
Is Nataraja eternal,
Immutable Being,
And unchanging Bliss.
In your hair, like a tree,
Perched are two birds,
Isvara and jiva,
Who are ever together.

Appearing as two,
Yet of the same kind.
When their nature is known,
They are only You,
Jiva only Siva,
Paramesvara You,
The Absolute Being,
The Supreme Lord of all.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
O Great Transparency,
Limitless expanse
Of pure Consciousness,
Lord of the dance,
Auspiciousness itself,
Bestower of eternal Bliss,
Realized as I,
That which alone is.

In You all is,
In You all is consumed,
In You no notion
Of "all" survives.
Your motion is,
In Truth, Your stillness;
Your dance is in Silence,
The Silence that's real.

Your sound, too, is Silence,
Fuel-less Your flame.
Your form is formless,
Your manifestation uncreated,
Motion that's motionless,
Vision of the Unseen,

Your nature inconceivable.
For You alone are.

More ancient, indeed,
Than time itself;
Vaster than vast,
Than space itself;
Lord of the universe,
Smile of wise sages,
Substance of my Being,
You alone are.

Transcendent Consciousness,
Indwelling all;
There is none to worship You
Than You, Yourself.
Only You can meditate
On You, the one Self.
One without a second,
O Infinite Consciousness.

There is none to know You
Than You, Yourself.
O endless Existence
Without any duality!
O Life of all sages,
Essence of meditation,
Knowledge itself !
Solitary Being!

ॐ Namah Sivaya
Many are the meanings
Of Your adornments and ges-
tures,
But Your real nature defies
Definition and symbol;
Graceful dance of

Pure Grace Itself,
Illuminating dance
Of Self-Knowledge itself.

Dance of freedom,
Of Liberation itself;
Dance of Existence,
Of limitless Being;
Dance of joy,
Of unending Bliss;
Dance of Siva,
The Lord of the dance.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
In You the innumerable
Beings live and die.
All ever in You,
You who are in all.
For the sake of the world,
You appear in the world,
But the world that appears
Is only in You!

In You alone,
Appear all the elements;
And in You alone,
Appears the power five-fold.
You put a complete end
To the entire samsara
And abide as the identity
Of those who dwell "I"-less.

The source of true Knowledge,
Of full Wisdom perfect,
Only You, the Undivided,
Are the goal and the means.
Effacing the individuality,

Leaving not a trace
Of delusion's cycle,
Imagination's dust.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
You are ever shining
As the only Reality
For all who absorb themselves
Completely in You.
For those who seek love,
You are pure Delight.
For those who seek peace,
You are unfailing Repose.

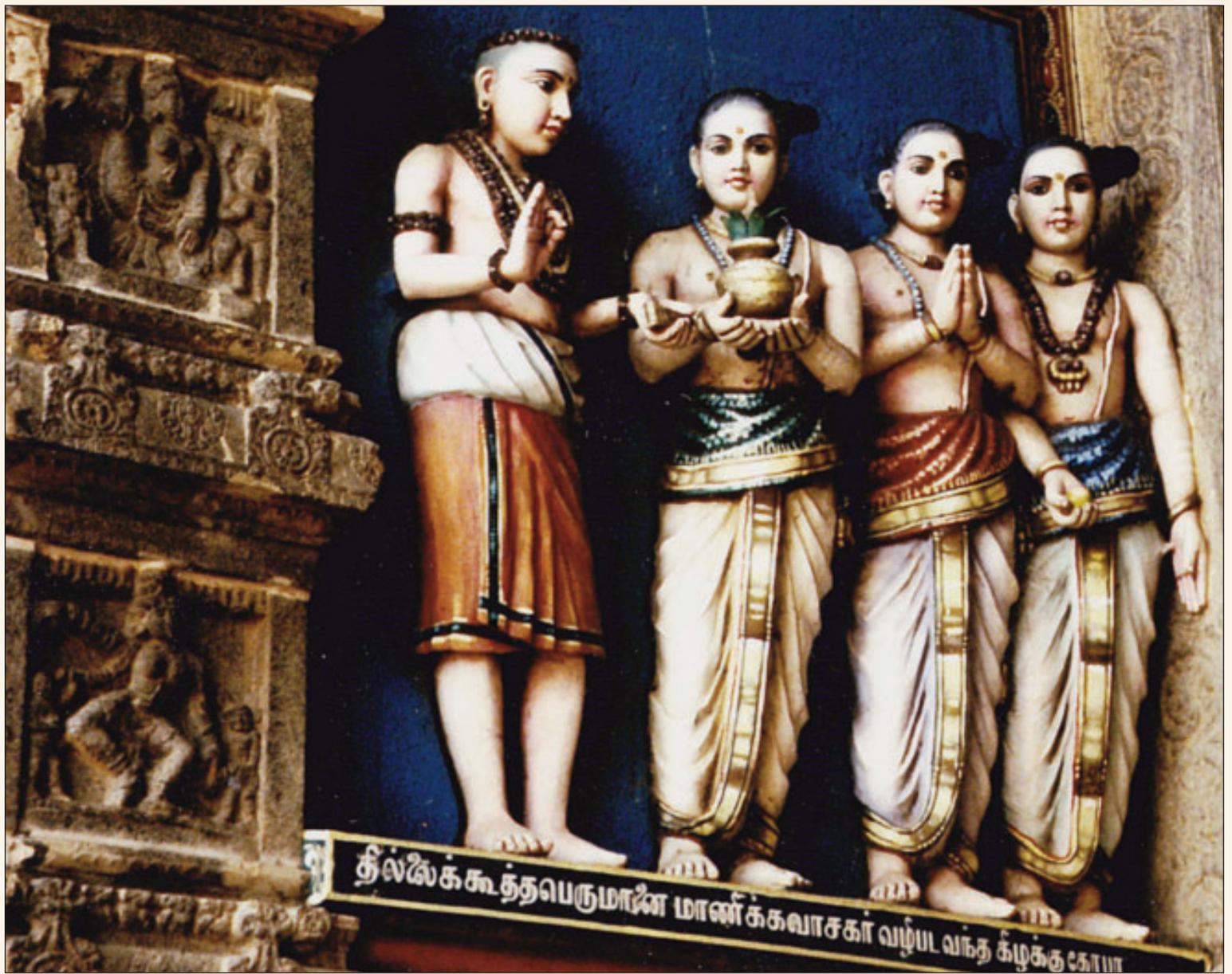
For those who seek happiness,
You are complete Bliss.
For those who seek freedom,
You are final Liberation
For those with no seeker,
You are Self-evident Being.
You are the very Self,
The only Self of all.

ॐ Namah Sivaya
Nataraja-Siva,
Salutations to You for all eter-
nity.
Sivoham, Sivoham!
Siva-Nataraja.

Please see SAT's publica-
tion, "Advaita Devatam"
for additional poetry by
Nome describing the
nondual experience of
other Murtis in the SAT
Temple.

"Oh Brahmanas! It is possible to perceive the parabrahma jyoti (the supreme effulgence) which is concealed in the lotus-shaped heart and which has been proclaimed in the scriptures, only in the jnana-sabha of Cidambaram which is the lotus-heart of the Virat-purusha." - Cidambara Tattva Nirnayam

. . . it is held that mere darsana at Cidambaram assures mukti (deliverance); mere thought of Tiruvannamalai, mere birth at Tiruvarur and death at Kasi (Varanasi) are likewise believed to assure moksha to the devotee. The ever-dancing Lord—the Ananda Tandavamurti—Nataraja is the atma, the jyoti in our heart. - Tillai (Cidambaram) and Nataraja, Mudgala Trust, 1994



The Tamil Saivite Saints of Chidambaram above. Tiru Jnana Sambandamurti Swami (Sambandar), Tirunavukkarasu Swami (Apparswami), Sundaramurti Swami (Sundarar), Manikka Vasahar (Manikya Vachaka). On pages 30 and 31 are some of the hymns from these Saivite Saints as they appear in "Hymns of the Tamil Saivite Saints, The Heritage of India Series," Association Press, Calcutta, 1921. (BL Library)

The four Saivite Saints above are most famously associated with Chidambaram. They are included in the 63 Tamil Saints which Sri Bhagavan speaks of in the Meenakshi temple at Madari.

"I used to go alone and stand motionless for a long time before an image of Siva or Meenakshi or Nataraja and the sixty-three Saints, and as I stood there waves of emotion overwhelmed me."

"The soul had given up its hold on the body when it renounced the "I-am-the-body" idea and

it was seeking some fresh anchorage; hence the frequent visits to the temple and the outpouring of the soul in tears. This was God's play with the soul. I would stand before Iswara, the Controller of the universe and of the destinies of all, the Omniscient and Omnipresent, and sometimes pray for the descent of His Grace upon me so that my devotion might increase and become perpetual like that of the sixty-three Saints. More often I would not pray at all but silently allow the deep within to flow on and into the deep beyond." – Sri Bhagavan, Bhagavan Sri Ramana, A Pictorial Biography, 1981.

Hymns from **SAMBANDAR**

His ears are beringed, he rideth the bull;
His head is adorned with the crescent moon's
ray;
White is He with ash from the burning-ground
swept;
And He is the thief who my heart steals away.
Great Brahma enthroned on the lotus' full bloom
Erstwhile bowed him down and His glory ex-
toll'd,
And singing received he the grace of our Lord
Who dwelleth in famed Bramapuram old. ॐ

He is our only Lord, conjoined still
To her whose breast no sucking lips have
known.
They who in Annamalai's holy hill,
Where falling waters noisy chatter down,
And the hill glistens gem-like, bow before
Our great one who is Lord and Lady too,
Unfailingly for them shall be no more
Dread fruit of good and bad deeds they
may do. ॐ

Holy Vedas chanting,
Sacred thread He wears;
All His hosts surround Him
Whom the white bull bears.
Cometh He in splendor,
Tiger-skin attired.
Lord, our naked beggar
Above all desired,
Cry ye in your worship,
At His feet appeal.
He who dwells in Palny
All your sin will heal. ॐ

Three eyes hath His forehead,
Fair moon crowns His hair;
When Death sought a victim;
Siva's foot crashed there;
Gory streams of blood flowed,
Death it was that died,
Such is He, our Father,
Uma at His side;
Dwells He aye in Palny,
Where bees hum around
Drunk with honeyed sweetness,
Till its groves resound. ॐ

Hymns from **APPARSWAMI**

The moving water He made stand unmoving in
His hair;
And He my thoughtless heart hath fixed in
thought of Him alone;
He taught me that which none can learn, what
none can see laid bare;
What tongue tells not He told; me He pursued
and made His own.
The spotless pure, the holy One, my fell disease
He healed,
And in Punturutti to me, e'en me, Himself
revealed. ॐ

Thou to me art parents, Lord,
Thou all kinsmen that I need,
Thou to me art loved ones fair,
Thou art treasures rich indeed.
Family, friends, home art Thou,
Life and joy I draw from Thee,
False world's good by Thee I leave,
God, pearl, wealth art Thou to me. ॐ

If men speak not His name in letters five,
Nor e'er the fire-formed Siva's praise repeat,
And never walk in reverence round His shrine,
And pluck no flowers for offering ere they eat,
If they for healing wear no sacred ash,
I'll tell you whereunto such men were born,
T'was that foul plagues might torture them to
death,
Then death bring rebirths endlessly forlorn. ॐ

O Lord of Scripture, whom the Word doth help,
Celestial light of heaven, so I but praise,
With hands meetly unpraised, Thy golden feet,
Then though men tie on me two weightly
stones,
And sink me in the oceans depth, e'en then
The cry "Hail Siva," would salvation be. ॐ

Though they give me the jewels from Indra's
abode,
Though they grant me dominion o'er earth, yea
o'er heaven,
If they be not the friends of our Lord Mahadev,
What care I for wealth by such ruined hands
giv'n?
But if they love Siva, who hides in His hair
The river of Ganga, then whoe'er they be,
Foul lepers, or outcastes, yea slayers of kine,
To them is my homage, gods are they to me. ॐ

Hymns from **SUNDARAR**

Ah sinful, I have left the path of love and service pure!
Now know I well the meaning of my sickness and my pain.
I will go worship. Fool how long can I so far remain
From Him, my pearl, my diamond rare, the king of great Arur. ॐ

Henceforth for me no birth, no death,
No creeping age, bull-rider mine.
Sinful and full of lying breath
Am I, but do Thou mark me Thine.
Venny-nallur, in Grace's shrine
South of the wooded Pennai, there
My Master, I became all thine;
How could I now myself forswear? ॐ

Linked to naught else in life, my mind thinks only of Thy holy feet.
I'm born anew, from this time forth I pass the way of birth no more.
In Kodumudi, lord austere, where wise men Thee with praises greet,
Should I forget Thee, my own tongue 'Hail, Siva!' crying, would adore. ॐ

When will the end draw nigh, sense fade, life close, and I the bier ascent?
This, naught but this, is all my thought. But, lord of speech, Thou light on high,
Where the bright streams of Kaviri to Kodumundi coolness lend,
Should I forget Thee, my own tongue to Thee would loud 'Hail, Siva' cry. ॐ

Our life is all unreal,
Its end is only dust,
Out of the sea of birth
Come ruin, pain and lust.
Delay not to do good
But praise Ketaram king,
Whom Vishnu and great Brahma
Vainly sought sorrowing. ॐ

Hymns from **Manikya Vachaka**

Thrills and trembles my frame;
Hands are lifted on high;
Here at Thy fragrant feet,
Sobbing and weeping I cry;
Falsehood forsaking, I shout,
"Victory, victory, praise!"
Lord of my life, these clasped hands
Worship shall bring Thee always. ॐ

Indra or Vishnu or Brahm,
Their divine bliss crave not I;
I seek the love of Thy saints,
Though my house perish thereby.
To the worst hell I will go,
So but Thy grace be with me.
Best of all, how could my heart
Think of a god beside Thee? ॐ

Though like Thy saints I seem, tis but the acting of a part.
Yet wondrous swift I run to reach the heaven where Thou art.
O hill of gold and precious gems, grant in Thy grace to me
A heart to melt, lord of my life, in ceaseless love to Thee. ॐ

I have no fear of births, but quake at thought that I must die.
E'en heav'n to me were naught; for earth's whole empire what care I?
O Siva wreathed with honeyed blossoms, "When shall come the morn
When Thou wilt grant Thy grace to me?" I cry with anguish torn. ॐ

The sky, earth, wind, the light, our very flesh and life art Thou,
Being art Thou, non-being too, Thou king, who see'st how
Men dance like puppets with their foolish thoughts of 'I' and 'Mine,'
While Thou the cords dost pull. What words can tell Thy praise divine? ॐ

According to Hindu Philosophy, the dance of Nataraja is a dramatization of the panca kṛtya—the five activities of the Supreme Being, which constitute the world-process—Sṛṣṭi (creation or evolution), Sṭhiti (preservation or continuation), Samhara (destruction), Tirobhava (illusion or concealment) and Anugraha (salvation or bestowal of grace).

Nataraja is a unique concept among the noblest symbolisms of the supreme power. The linga of Cidambaram is the ether (akasa) category, that is, Lord without form. There are, in South India, five sacred spots, each housing a linga associated with one of the five elements, pancabhutas: Prthivi (earth) at Kancipuram, Appu (water) at Tiruvanaikka, Teyu (fire) at Tiruvannamalai, Vayu (air) at Tirukkalahasti and Akasa (ether) at Cidambaram.

The worship of the linga of Siva in association with the five elements, earth, water, fire, wind and ether, is peculiar to Indian culture, and sacred places sanctified by such association exist in South India. Cidambaram, the seat of Nataraja, is noted for the worship of Siva in the form of akasa or ether—infinite space.

In Indian tradition, each of the five elements (panca-bhutas) has its own characteristics. Space (ether): akasa is associated with sound (nada); air (vayu), with touch (sparsa); fire (agni), with color; water (appu) with taste; and earth (prthivi) with smell. Space can be experienced only through sound. The quality of sound is associated with spatial ether as transmission of sound demands ether. These aspects explain how “nada” is so closely linked with the Ananda Tandava of Nataraja.

- Tillai (Cidambaram) and Nataraja, Mudgala Trust, 1994

*Nadanta that is the end of Nada (the principle of sound),
Bodhanta that is the end of Bodha (jnana),
Vedanta that is the end of the Vedas,
Sivananda that is the true Bliss of Siva,
Sadasivananda that is without end,
In all these, He dances the Siva Natana,
He that is Nada Brahman (Lord within the sound-principle).*

Verse 2792, Tirumular's Tirumandiram



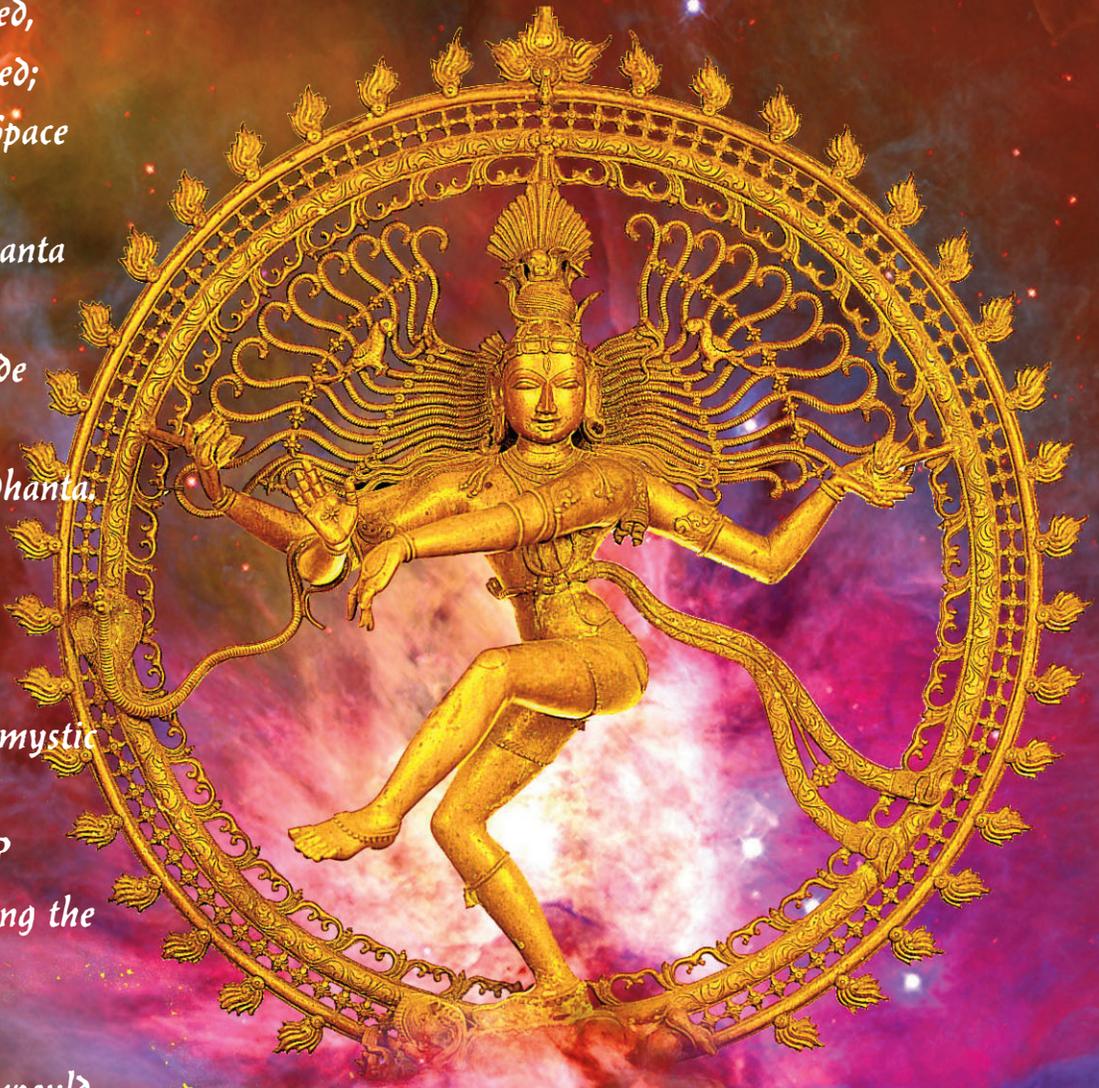
The above image of the temple tank at Chidambaram was taken during SAT's first pilgrimage to India in 1994. At that time, devotees could walk down the steps to the tank and wade their feet in the water. To our surprise, the water was teeming with fish!

*Siva danced, Sakti danced,
 The worldly desires danced;
 The normally unmoving Space
 danced;
 The wondrous Tattva Nadanta
 danced;
 When Siva danced inside
 of Truth,
 That indeed is Vedanta-Siddhanta.*

Verse 2791,

Tirumular's Tirumandiram

*"The Lord of Tillai's court a mystic
 dance performs.
 What is that, my dear?
 Siva's supreme spirit pervading the
 entire universe is itself
 Siva tandavam.
 But for it, the wide universe would
 be reduced to nought."*



Writings on Chidambaram and Nataraja are voluminous and worthy of study. The temple possesses certain characteristics, of which a few are listed below. Those who dwell in Siva-Nataraja know that He who dances in the heart is beyond space and time and that His perfection lies outside the realm of form.

1) This temple is located at the center point of the world's magnetic equator.

2) Of the "Pancha bootha," i.e., 5 temples, Chidambaram denotes the Skies. Kalahasthi denotes Wind. Kanchi Ekambareswar denotes land. These 3 temples are located in a straight line at 79 degrees 41 minutes longitude.

3) The temple roof is made of 21,600 gold sheets, which denotes the 21,600 breaths taken by a human being every day (15 x 60 x 24 = 21,600)

4) These 21,600 gold sheets are fixed on the Gopuram using 72,000 gold nails which denote the total number of nadis (nerves) in the human body. These transfer energy to certain body parts that are invisible.

5) "Ponnambalam" is placed slightly tilted towards the left. This represents our Heart. To reach this, we need to climb 5 steps

called "Panchakshara padi," "Si, Va, Ya, Na, Ma" are the 5 Panchakshara mantras.

6) There are 4 pillars holding the Kanagasabha representing the 4 Vedas.

7) Ponnambalam has 28 pillars denoting the 28 "ahamas" as well as the 28 methods to worship Lord Shiva. These 28 pillars support 64 roof beams which denote the 64 Arts. The cross beams represent the blood vessels running across the human body.

8) 9 Kalasas on the golden roof represent the 9 types of sakthi or energies.

9) The 6 pillars at the Artha Mantapa represent the 6 types of Sashtras.

10) The 18 pillars in the adjacent Mantapa represents 18 Puranams. ॐ

From The Ramana Way

The following articles appear in the December 1994 issue of "The Ramana Way," a monthly publication produced by the Ramana Maharshi Center for Learning in Bangalore, India. RMCL has been producing monthly publications entirely devoted to Sri Ramana and His teaching since the early 1980's. Sri A.R. Natarajan dedicated his life and his family's life to the cause of Bhagavan Ramana. Sri A.R. Natarajan was absorbed in the lotus feet of His Master in 2007. His daughter, Dr. Sarada Natarajan, continues in his legacy, keeping the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning and "The Ramana Way" alive for all Ramana devotees. May the devotion and wisdom from which these articles are written "jump" off the pages and into your heart. Please visit them at: www.ramanacentre.com



Why This Wailing?

by Dr. Sarada Natarajan

It was a Sunday evening, and the family was enjoying the holiday at home. All was fine and quite some fun until the lights went out. Surely, there are things one can achieve by candlelight, one may say. But the child thought otherwise and started weeping aloud that she was afraid of the dark, that she wanted the supply of electricity to be resumed immediately and that her father had better do something to alter the sorrowful situation. The usual platitudes of "Don't worry, we are with you," "See, Amma is bringing a torch," "Light will come soon (Now! I want it now)" were found to be of no avail. The emotional blackmail of "Aren't you a big girl now, shouldn't you be brave?" didn't work either. Somehow the bawling had to be stopped, else the others might all go mad and start crying, too, thought the father. He couldn't generate energy to burn all the lights in the room, but he did generate a creative idea. When the usual doesn't work, it's time for the unusual. So, he started mono acting the very situation, imitating the child. "Boo hoo hoo," he began to say in an artificially sad tone, "boo-hoo, there is no current, and life is such a mess. I thought I could put on the TV, but I can't. I thought I could spoil the cassette recorder by rewinding and playing the same song 100 times,

but I can't." The manner and tone of mockery were so amusing that he soon had everyone rolling with laughter, and the parody widened to include himself, his wife, his friends, and the world at large, "I thought I would get a grant for my new project, but it didn't come. I thought my boss would say, 'Good morning' to me but he only said 'harumph.'" Then coming back to the most crucial part, "And I want to cry because the lights are out, and appa is not letting me cry. He is telling me all kinds of funny tales and making me laugh. I don't even have the freedom to finish crying boo hoo hoo."

This exercise not only effectively stopped the child's tears, it was a timely reminder to all the adults that they tend to get carried away by their often petty sorrows. How often do we wallow in self-pity? There are reasons enough in life which one can be sad about. Yet, for everything that would make us sad, there must be another that would make us happy, if only we would look for it. It is like the man who complained about not having shoes until he found another who had no legs. But what of the man without legs? What is his solace? Perhaps that he at least has hands to hold his crutches. This may be termed a negative approach. There is a positive angle to it, though. That is the need to fight self-pity for one's own sake, so that one may be happy again. One who was an ice diver had an accident and was paralyzed up to the neck. What did she do? Wallow in self-pity? For a time, yes, that was natural. Soon, however, she learned to paint with her

mouth and create beauty, find joy. The lotus blooms, growing in the mud. Leading dancers who have had a debilitating accident have made a comeback through sheer grit. Indeed, those who suffer more seem to have greater courage to bounce back into life and true living.

All this, we would be told, is mere philosophizing. We would not talk of determination if we ourselves are the victims of anguish. On the contrary, this is by no means an attitude we must assume towards the travails of others. When someone else is suffering, compassion is the only right way, to the degree that we can arouse it in ourselves. Not sympathy but empathy, or a simple sharing and helping in what little way one can. Surprisingly, though, sometimes an unsympathetic and seemingly callous attitude may challenge us into getting over our problem. Loved ones of people learning to walk again after some trauma have often said they fought their longing to help in order to force the patient into independence. This attitude of combating, of denying outright self-pity, however, is what we must acquire, each for ourselves, to deal with our own often trifling and rarely even serious problems. G. K. Chesterton writes in an amusing essay that “toothache” is a real problem. Not so losing one’s hat on a windy day and having to run after it. The majority of what we call problems are merely inconveniences and can be enjoyed if looked upon as adventures, he says. If we do not adopt this attitude of laughing at our own woes, none is the loser but ourselves. We can very well go through life feeling martyred, but life may not change to assuage our grievances. On the other hand, life may simply pass us by as it has done all along. And what would we have gained for all our sorrow? Only bitterness and anger and misery. If anything, we might have helped in spreading these feelings. It may be well to remember, too, that justice does not always bring joy. And joy is the elixir of life, it is the only meaning which we all seek. Why then be self-righteous in sorrow (we can never be self-righteous in happiness for it is spontaneous and full)?

The worst thing about sorrow is that it makes us self-centered. Joy makes us lose ourselves, forget ourselves for a while at least. It puts us in touch with the Self. Sorrow on the other hand, especially sorrow that has lost its immediacy and in-

tensity and becomes merely a nagging companion, makes us dwell more and more on ourselves. All energy is consumed in pondering how life could be so unfair to us, of all people, to us. Yes, sorrow leads to self-pity, self-righteousness, self-justification and the need to get a fair deal for oneself. All, centered round the self. Doesn’t it then become doubly the duty of every seeker to keep depression and negativity at bay at all costs? Isn’t our crying often like that of the child who says, “Don’t tell me funny stories and rob me of my freedom to cry.” It’s almost as if we enjoy our sorrow and martyrdom. Else we would not hold so tight to it. We would let it go at the first chance.

When a devotee complained in tears about the inability to pursue self-inquiry earnestly, Bhagavan answered sternly, “Why are you wailing instead of abiding in the Self?” The answer seemed, on first reading, to be harsh. Why was there no reassurance? Why no encouragement and reminder of the unfailing presence of Grace? On rethinking, it became evident that the answer itself was most compassionate in its solemn tone. When a trauma victim gets hysterical, a slap on the face is said to be the only remedy. When someone is drowning, the rescuer first knocks the victim out cold and then drags him to shore. Otherwise, with the sheer force of fear, the drowning man could well pull the rescuer also into the treacherous waters. Sometimes, one is in need of “shock therapy.” One needs to be told, “Enough of all this lamenting which is merely another way of holding onto the ego, to self-centeredness. Drop it. Simply let go of this stand, too. Isn’t the Self ever available? To say one cannot be aware of it and bemoan this ignorance is itself a means of escaping that which ever is.”

Negativity and complacency are the two stances we assume to protect our limited identities. Complacency, at least, is positive. It does not spread the poison of depression and unhappiness. While complacency, too, must be dealt with through self-inquiry, it seems more important not to allow entry into any form of negativity. It would be well to recall, at our low and down moments, that events can only affect the body, the Self is unalloyed bliss, ever full. But, we protest, to remember this is not easy. Well, if we don’t who will lose out on the flood tide of nectar? ॐ

The Very Asking is the Denying

by A.R. Natarajan

*Do not dwell in the desert
hot*

*Of the non-self, eating arid
sand.*

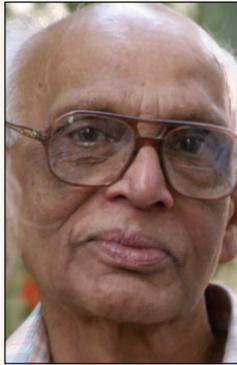
*Come into the Heart, the
mansion*

*Cool, shady, vast, serene
And feast on the bliss of Self.*

*By Guru's grace and this alone
And by no other means can one
Gain coveted peace and bliss.*

*Therefore with single-minded zeal
Persist, ever seek such grace.*

Garland of Guru's Sayings, versus 297 and 290



Ramana reminiscences abound in his innumerable rescue acts, His unfailing response to prayers in distress in his limitless boon-giving. Ramana's miracles, which keep happening every day, bring in fresh accounts of his continued role as an unparalleled benefactor in the post-Nirvana period, as well. Given as we are to our endless demands on Ramana for more of what we already have, these true reports whip up our desires even further. Like spoiled children seeking the satisfaction of every passing whim and fancy, we keep heaping our requests and prayers on Ramana. We are trapped by the demon desire for things springing from an illusive, ego-based life.

The very motherly concern of Ramana seems to be pushing us in this direction instead of away from it. The Maharani of Baroda comes for a few days for consolation and to pray for her husband's health, for he was ailing in England. Ramana asks Devaraja Mudaliar to translate to her the benediction from "Ramana Sarana Pallandu" which reads thus: "All devotees coming to Ramana get their desires fulfilled for he firmly plants his feet in their hearts, setting at rest their troubles and bestowing peace." As if this was not enough, Ramana encouraged Mudaliar to translate his favorite verse "Arunai Ramanesan" the gist of which is that "Ramana bears upon his head, because it is his fate, the burden of those who throw themselves at his feet." Ramana

would cry with Echamma, relieving her of the pain of bereavement, readout passages from the Psalms to console Eleanor Noye's anguish at parting, or just canceled fate's decree as he did for Jagadeeswara Sastri, by accepting his pleadings for saving him from sure death.

True, prayer and response strengthens one's faith in the power and protection of Ramana. However, unless we cry a halt to the pull of our tendencies, we would be pushed headlong into the external whirl of the mind with its ceaseless pressures. As Muruganar says in the quote, he would remain content "to eat arid sand" ignoring what we could have got by the guru's grace "the cool, shady, vast, serene, feasting on the bliss of the Self." All this brings us to certain fundamental questions, about the need to reflect and be firm about basics. Why at all have we opted for a spiritual life? Why at all are we attempting to find peace and balance in life? Why are we not just content with what seems to be making the teeming millions happy? What makes us care for freedom from karma, freedom from pestering thoughts, freedom from all that is keeping us chained to our ego-centric life? If all this is to have a meaning, we must stand rock-like, should we not, against the beguiling power of Ramana to satisfy our desires?

We are not thinking about prayer which is integral to surrender, prayer for support in sadhana, prayer invoking his grace for inwardness. What one has to be on guard against is the prayer which, by its very endless nature, pushes one away from the Sadguru into the wilderness of desires.

Also, one should pause and ponder as to what would happen if we do not pray at all for this or that, but let Ramana order our life, if we transfer the burden of our cares to him. Would we be abandoned? Left high and dry? Would we not be shielded against fate's onslaughts? Surely 'No.'

Such unburdening, such offloading would be a great relief. It may not happen just in a jiffy. Gradually as one comes to recognize more and more Ramana's omnipotence and his love, an unsaid joy will fill one's being. This true dependence on Ramana makes us his in the real sense of the term as he gives himself wholly and unreservedly in a response of love. Everything becomes sunny. There is no need to look for the silver lining in the dark clouds of life. For there would be no dark clouds

on the horizon, there would not be a single care.

Then, only then, we cease to deny him. For the very asking is the denial of his unconditional love, his willingness to give unasked the very best. It is based on the fallacy that he needs requests and reminders to extend his help. It is based on one's ignorance of umpteen crises and dangers where he has protected even without one's knowledge. This reminds one of an incident which happened in Ramana's Hall in 1939. One day, among the visitors there was a small boy of about five years. He looks

lovingly at Ramana, who placed his left hand on his head and asked, "What do you want?" The boy replied firmly, "I do not want anything." "Oh!" said Ramana, "You belong to us." Speaking to others present, he said, "If we do not intervene with the working of the divine plans, the mystery of Ramana's grace would be unraveled to us. It is that he reserves the best for those who do not ask. To them he gives himself, to them he grants the boon of awareness of his wondrous dance in the heart."



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Ever yours in Truth

Correspondence between Nome and seekers.

(Names of seekers are omitted to preserve their privacy.)



[A devotee of Sri Ramana in India wrote:]

October 30, 2014

Respected sir,

I have troubled a mind. There is no clarity of mind. Whenever I get pain in the back or when I suffer from gas problem, my mind is disturbed. Still, I am murmuring Bhagawan Ramana. Kindly let me have the solution. I have only 5 months until my retirement. I am quite afraid, also.

Kindly advise me.

[This is Nome's reply.]

Dear . . . ,

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

Sri Bhagavan teaches that, for clarity of mind and peace, there must be freedom from misidentification with the body. Blessed with His Grace, consistently inquire so that your sense of identity rests entirely as the Self, which is eternal and perfect, and is not confused with the body, which is subject to ills, pains, and mortality.

Where there is a second, as it were, there is fear; for that which is One without a second, there is no fear. By inquiry to know the Self, realize that which alone is and is without a second. For whom is the fear? The falsely assumed ego is the cause of fear and is caught in it. Inquiry reveals the nonexistence of that ego, and, with that, fear is dissolved.

Since most, if not all, of your problems and difficulties actually pertain only to the body, steady abidance free of misidentification with the body would be wise and joyful.

Immersed in deep devotion to Him, how could there be any bondage or suffering for you?

I hope that you find what is mentioned above helpful for you.

Om Namoh Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker asked about finding something in the world that is free of preferences that "does not have eyes of a human to like some aspect of me or dislike some aspect of me" upon which he could place his attention. Here is Nome's response:]

Dear . . . ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Brahman, the one infinite, eternal Existence, which is the Self, is completely free of your likes, dislikes, and ideas of preference.

Sri Bhagavan, the Sadguru, is completely free of your likes, dislikes, and ideas of preference.

The inquiry to know the Self, the fruit of which is Self-Realization, is completely free of your likes, dislikes, and ideas of preference.

The entirety of Advaita Vendanta, revealed in the Upanishads and by Ribhu and by Adi Sankaracarya, is completely free of your likes, dislikes, and ideas of preference.

The teachings and lives of numberless jnanis and bhaktas, shining in egoless, transcendent perfection, is completely free of your likes, dislikes, and ideas of preference.

Even the intuition of the natural state of the Self that manifests as the desire for happiness, and thus the desire for Self-Realization for the wise, is completely free of your likes, dislikes, and ideas of preference.

The entire universe is completely free of your likes, dislikes, and ideas of preference.

Are you completely free of your likes, dislikes, and ideas of preference?

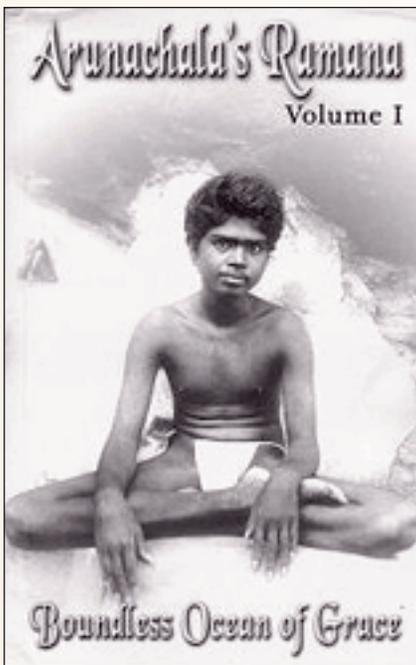
The aspects of the mind should not be mistaken for the Self. The wise examine themselves and, turning within, abandon delusion to find perfect fullness. In addition, the Bhagavad Gita declares, "Let a man raise himself by himself; let him not lower himself."

Om Namoh Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

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, Adī Sankara, Rībhu, Ashtavakra, Dattatreya, Vasīstha and many more who have kept Advaita Vedanta alive for millennia.



The following excerpt is taken from Sri Ramanasramam's exquisite 8 volume set of "Arunachala's Ramana, The Boundless Ocean of Grace." This set 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, and interesting incidents from every published source under a single set of eight volumes. This eight volume set is a treasure trove of wisdom for spiritual seekers. Available in Tamil and English."

The following excerpt is taken from vol. VI

One forenoon two Brahmins, whose dress and demeanor spoke of abject poverty, entered the hall. It was known that they earned their livelihood by the wretched and socially demeaning occupation of bringing the dead to the cremation grounds. Both were hungry after having discharged their duties.

Custom demands that anyone entering a house recently visited by death should take a bath immediately on leaving. This stricture applies ever more so if one steps into the cremation ground, not to mention for

those involved in removing and physically transporting the departed to the cremation grounds.

A heated argument had ensued between them about the propriety of coming to the Ashramam to have a meal without having bathed. While one of them keenly felt the impropriety of transgressing this revered custom, the other dismissed it as impractical in view of their extreme hunger. Assured of a meal in the Ashramam, which was quite on their way home, they thought they might appease their hunger. They came to the hall and sat down.

One of them excitedly and abruptly said, "Swami, I have been insisting on the customary bath before we sit for our meal. Is it not but just and proper?" Bhagavan responded in a very soft tone, "No one can say you are unjust." The other at once in a voice greatly agitated burst forth, "The pangs of hunger are so intense that our entrails are being devoured. Is it wrong to eat when hunger is gnawing?"

Bhagavan quietly replied, "Who says it is wrong? Not at all."

Shocked, looking at one another, they asked in one voice, "But then who is wrong?"

Bhagavan answered, "Don't think you alone are pallbearers. All of us are carrying these lifeless corpses. This body is a veritable corpse. Everybody carries it saying 'I, I.' Whoever has the 'I-am-the-body-feeling' is but a pallbearer. As long as one has not gone beyond this, one remains as impure and polluted as a pallbearer. The pollution of bearing a dead body cannot be washed away by a dip in any tank. Bathing in the holy waters of the Atman alone can remove this pollution."

The Brahmins, though initially feeling vindicated, were now startled and stared at each other. In an instant, the entire complexion of the issue stood transformed. Everyone without exception was equally polluted! All people shared their fate!

The next minute, the two Brahmins were nowhere to be seen. None knew where they had gone, to the dining hall for food or elsewhere. But one thing was certain; for their spiritual hunger, Bhagavan's words had been an unexpected feast. ॐ

“In The SAT Temple” . . . is a new SAT publication. It is a guide through the SAT Temple, providing a brief description of the symbolism contained in the murtis, the stone carvings, and other sacred icons representative of Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism. Everyone is invited to take a copy of this pamphlet. They are located on the SAT literature table. For a more in-depth explanation of these, please read SAT's publication, *Advaita Devatam*.

Some devotees in the Ashram wanted to publish an Ashram magazine. A scheme was drawn up and submitted to Bhagavan for approval. He asked: "What will the magazine contain?" "All the news of the Ashram and Bhagavan's talks and answers to questions to be read by

people all over the world." "And if I don't talk or answer, what will you publish? Am I to keep on talking so that your magazine appears regularly? What new punishment have you invented for me?" The idea was quickly dropped. -Ramana Smrti, 1980



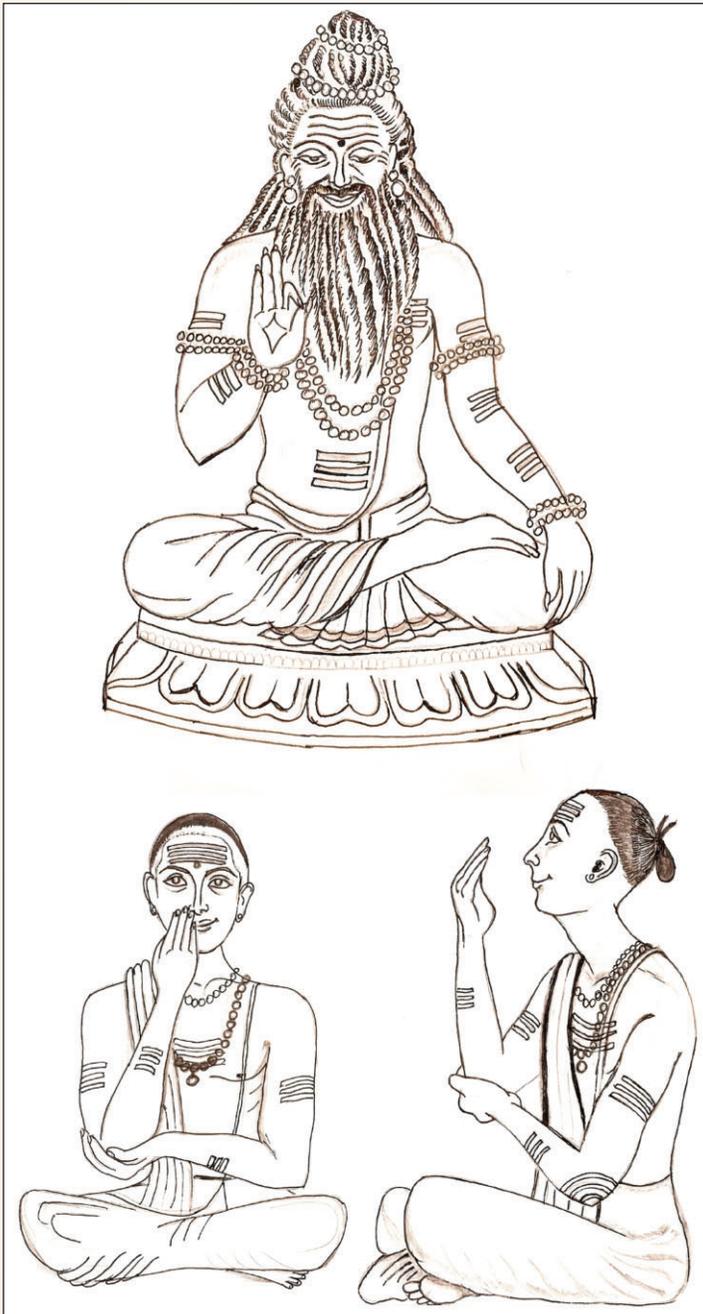
Jayalakshmi, Shermilla, and Sangeeta assist Anandhi with the mural. They are applying the base paint. Anandhi will add the fine details such as shadowing and blending.

Vasistha Mural

Anandhi continues with her magnificent mural in the Lotus Room of the temple of Vasistha instructing Rama in the company of other sages. Please visit the "Temple Blog" at:

<http://satramana.wordpress.com/2013/12/28/vasisthas-instruction-to-rama/>

Bhagavan provides what is needed . . . and though we know this with absolute certainty, we cannot help but be in awe each time we see this truth manifest. In February of 2012 the vision of building the Sri Sadisvara Mandiram came into being. A fund began inviting devotees to support this endeavor. The projected cost was \$150,000 and devotees donated and have pledged \$109,248. The entire project has been carried out, including the procurement of the murtis pictured below, under the projected cost at \$109,948. thanks to the selfless efforts of a few devotees who worked on this project tirelessly. With the Sri Sadisvara Mandiram complete, we are now in the final phase of the project, that is, procuring bronze Murti-s of Adi Sankara and Ribhu instructing Nidagha. One can only be in awe of Bhagavan's boundless Grace!



Please follow the link below to see the completion of the Sri Sadisvara Mandiram:
<http://satramana.wordpress.com/2014/11/08/sri-sadisvara-mandiram-part-12-completion/>

To the left, is a drawing by Anandhi of Ribhu and Nidagha. Although not much has been written about the physical characteristics of these two sages, SAT has taken whatever small amount that appears in the Ribhu Gita and surmised the rest, to the best of our ability, according to Hindu culture for Rishis and householders during the time of Ribhu and Nidagha. This image has been sent to the sculptors in India as a guide. The murti of Adi Sankara will be of the classic image we are all familiar with. It is the image of Sankara as it hangs in the stairwell of the SAT Temple leading to the Satsang Hall.

*That in which all meditation is merged,
 In which all yoga is obliterated,
 In which all ignorance is dead,
 In which all knowledge is nullified,
 In which there are no interactions involved,
 And which is the state of Absolute Truth
 By the very firm conviction that "I am That,"
 Be in the Bliss of ever being That itself.*
 - Song of Ribhu, 26:33



An Offering to Devi on Navaratri

Sruti happily displays her offering for Navaratri, which she artistically constructed in reverence of Devi. It is a paper mache of Arunachala, the pradakshina path and the temples along the way. Beautiful.



A Meaningful Journey...

All of life has a meaningful purpose. Life is not simply a random occurrence for an individual ego entity, but a journey that will eventually lead to Self-Realization, which is the purpose of birth and the purpose of life.

Sunday, October 19, devotees gathered to recognize this meaningful journey with Prema and Scott Roney and their child. A blog has been created about this event and can be enjoyed at:

<http://satramana.wordpress.com/2014/11/01/rites-of-passage-samskaras/>

Since the above event, Prema and Scott welcomed their baby girl, Sia, into their family on December 6, 2014. Devotees at SAT welcome Sia into the “Ramana Family” and extend blessings to her for a bliss-filled journey in Bhagavan.

Jaya Bhagavan!

Sruti and Janani rake the leaves from the walkways of the temple after the storm. They are learning early the importance of selfless service. It will be a boon to their sadhana during their lives.

Upcoming Special Events

Arudra Darshanam: Mon., Jan. 5, 2015, 7:30 PM

Mahasivaratri: Tues. - Wed., Feb. 17 & 18, 2015, 7:00 PM

The Nondual Self-Inquiry Retreat: Fri. - Sun., Mar. 13-15, 2015

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE SRI RAMANAYA

OM NAMAH SIVAYA

