



Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya



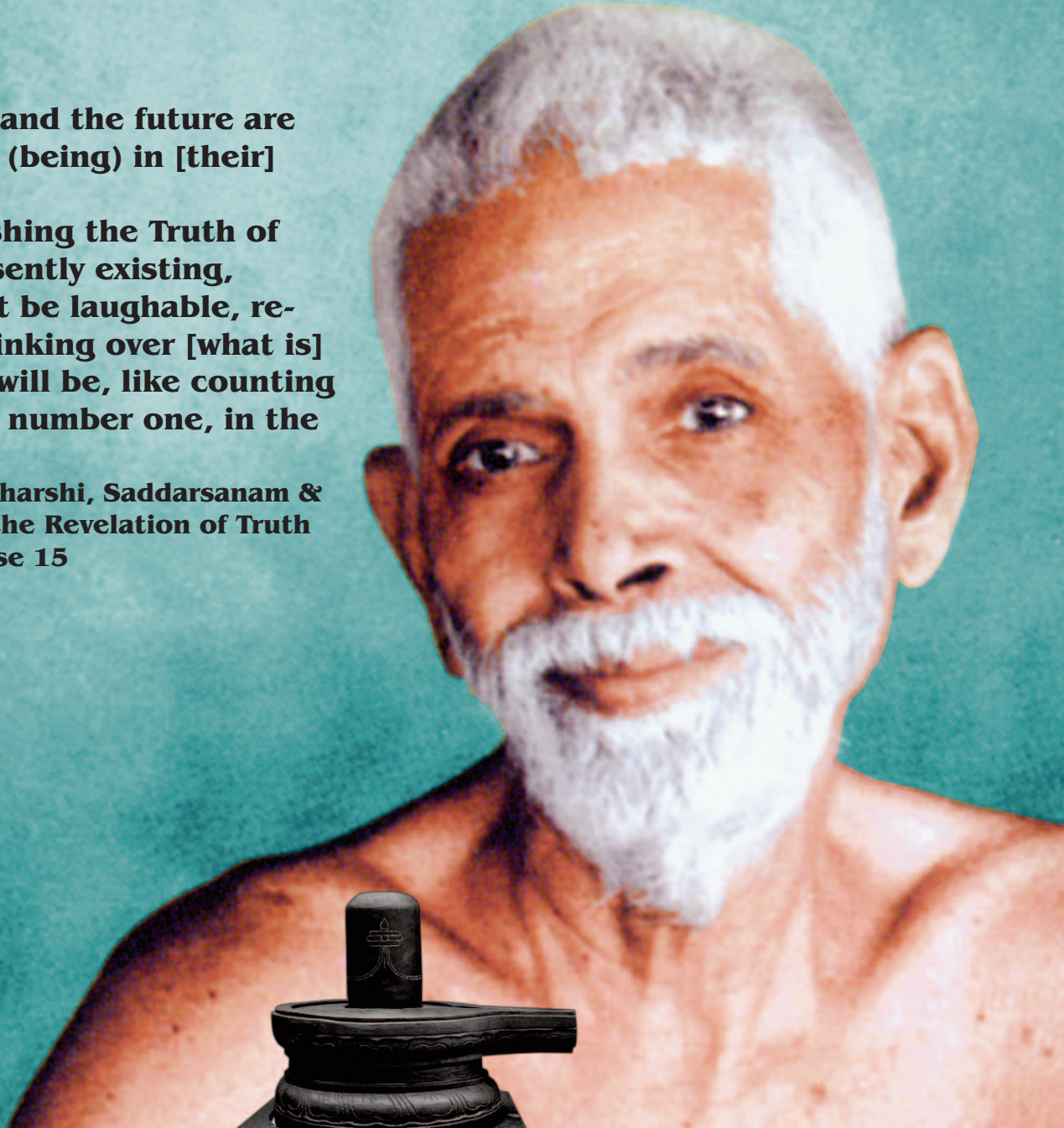
Om Namah Sivaya

**The past and the future are
the present (being) in [their]
own time.**

**Relinquishing the Truth of
what is presently existing,**

**Will it not be laughable, re-
peatedly thinking over [what is]
gone [and] will be, like counting
without the number one, in the
world?**

**- Sri Ramana Maharshi, Saddarsanam &
An Inquiry Into the Revelation of Truth
and Oneself, verse 15**



Reflections



SAT Temple

January . February . March . 2017

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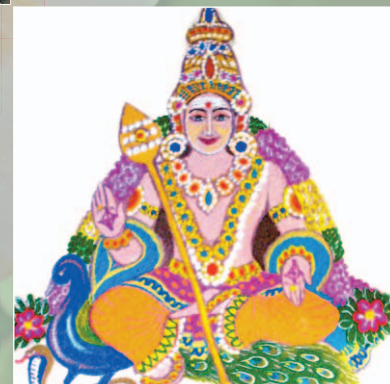


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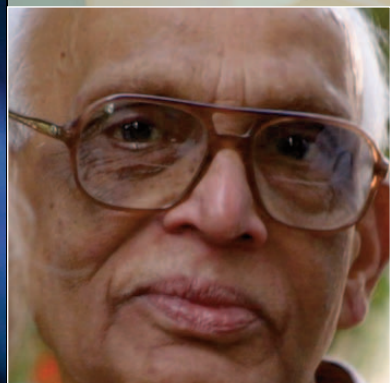


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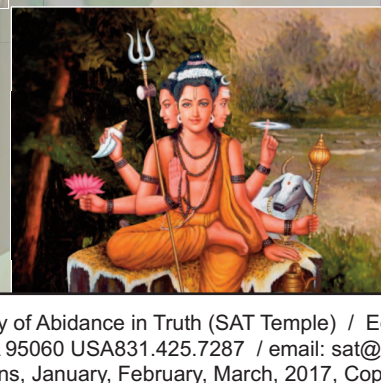
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N.: "In the world," indicates that this is an example. We cannot count without the number one, which is the very unit of which all other numbers are composed. It is the starting place. All the other numbers are just so many ones combined. Likewise is it if we ignore the basic existence and consider what will be and what has been.

If we regard this verse as a statement about time, it serves some purpose. Obviously, thinking of, or discussing, the past and the future without relation to the present, or, without dealing with what the present life is, thinking of the far past and past lives or the far future and future lives, would be laughably absurd. It would be missing the most important ingredient.

If we interpret this verse in terms of what is existent, what has been and what will be have, as their common denominator, the present Existence. It is within the present Existence that there is knowledge of the past or future existence.

"Relinquishing the Truth of what is presently existing," is the key to a profound comprehension of what Sri Ramaana reveals in this verse. What is it that is presently existing? What is it that is like the number one in his analogy? To go on repeatedly thinking about the past and the future, and it does not make any difference how near or remote the past or future is, and to be thinking, "I was," or "I will be," without knowing the fundamental "I am"—would it not be absurd? Repeatedly thinking about what is gone and what will be would be like counting without the number one and would be missing something so important.

If we would interpret the verse as referring to dealing with time, the next verse [16] would not follow very well. Muruganar has wisely arranged the Maharshi's verses, and Ganapati Muni has translated them into Sanskrit. The composition of the verses is supremely wise, and the arrangement of them is quite particular. Some aspects of the preceding verses would be ignored and the next verse would not cogently follow if



one would think that this verse is about time, such as being about the present moment, in contrast to past moments and future moments. Something deeper is being indicated. It must pertain to our own Existence. If one thinks that he is in the present moment and simply divests his mind of expectations of the future and memories of the past, he will still have the duality of "I" and "this" and everything else Sri Bhagavan just negated. There will still be the ego-notion, and there will still be the misidentification with the sheaths. There will still be the idea of "I am the body." There will still be the mistaking of the names and forms of the world to be existent. So, the "one" to which Sri Ramana refers must be something other than the present moment and must be, rather, what is presently existing.

So, there are two ways of understanding this verse. The first is the ostensible meaning, and the second is a deeper, indicated, more profound meaning. The first is that the past and the future are present in their own time. What one experiences is the present and never actually the past or the future. Even memories of the past and anticipations of the future occur in the present moment, which is the well-known "now" moment. When one relinquishes the now-moment, which is a shift of that to which one is paying attention, the mind can wander to memories and to anticipations and is filled with the clutter of thought. Consequently, taking that into account, if the aspirant keeps the attention on that which is present, he eliminates much of the clutter of thought, and, to that extent, he has an advantage. If one takes that approach, though, it is

limited in scope for several reasons.

Upon deeper examination, that which is referred to as "being in the now moment" is a corruption of the usage of "Being" into meaning mental attention, and the "now moment" actually pertains, not to the abstract moment of time, but to the present set of circumstances that are perceived through the senses. This is something contained entirely within the conjuring of the five sheaths. Consider the similarity to the experience in a dream. In a dream, the "now moment," or the present moment, is no more real than the past moments or the future moments of the dream. Similarly, that which is "here" in the dream is no more real than that which is "there" in the dream, no matter which direction the "there" might be—in front, behind, to the sides, upward or downward.

Moreover, this sacred text deals with Sat-darshanam, the revelation of Truth. Whatever might be the temporary benefits of shifting the mental attention to the present time or the present circumstances, it would not offer Liberation, because it would still be in accord with the same misidentification with the body and the same objective orientation that one is trying to abandon. The purpose of spiritual instruction is the undoing of the present preconception—no pun intended on "present." If our interpretation of the instruction is at the same level as the preconception, no great benefit is gained. Rather, we should lose the preconception, so that our experience merges with the significance of the higher instruction. Therefore, there must be a deeper way of approaching the verse.

This verse appears in the middle of the text, and the text is not written in an ascending or descending order. It is Sat-darshanam, the revelation of Truth, from beginning to end. All of it is at the highest, indeed, the supreme, level. So, why is this verse placed here, if the next verse utterly negates time entirely? There must be another way of understanding the text.

The word for "the past" means "the having been" or "the gone." The word for "the future" means the "to become," and the word for "the present" is "the present being." So, we may read the verse in this way: "The having been, or the gone, and the to become are the present being in their own time. Relinquishing the Truth of what is presently existing, will it not be laughable, repeatedly thinking over what is gone and what will be, like counting without the number one in the world?"

The Maharshi has given the analogy of counting without the number one. The number one is the basis from which all other numbers proceed, and it could very well be said that all other numbers are nothing more than collections of the same one appearing many times over. In the first verse, the word "eka," one, is mentioned, and, in verse fourteen, Sri Ramana proclaims it to be the innate Self. Counting without the number one is analogous to leaving off the Knowledge of your Existence and trying to determine what was or will be. An example of this is thinking that you came from the Absolute as an origin, which is what was. Another example of this is an assumption that you will be realized in the future, that you will reach or merge with Brahman in the future, which is the supposition of

what will be in the future. What is it that is presently and, therefore, always existent?

Because this is Sat-darshanam, the Maharshi's emphasis must be upon the nonobjective Existence. If it were just upon the moment, it would merely be paying attention to time, which is not Reality. If one attempts to only pay attention to the present moment, the best one can hope for is the clearing away of certain thoughts, while certain other thoughts remain, and the misidentifications remain intact. However, if we take this deeper approach and focus upon what is it that is actually existing, which is what we always are, always were, and always will be, the verse makes much more sense. We are not to worship time; we are to worship the Self.

If one takes an approach of giving mental attention to the present moment, he may gain the experience of a sense of continuity of the present moment, of the now going on and on. This borrows the ever sameness and continuity of the Self and mixes such with time, so that there is the superimposition of time upon the Self. Or one may gain the experience that each moment is different than the one before it and the one after it. This borrows from the ever-shining, ever-sparkling, ever-fresh nature of the Self and mixes such with time, so that time is superimposed upon the Self.

If we approach the spiritual instruction bestowed in this verse with the understanding that the "having been" and the "to become" are "the present Being, in their own time," what is the present Being? "Relinquishing the Truth of what is presently existing": what is it that is presently existing? Certainly, it cannot be the "world," which he has

utterly negated. Certainly, it cannot be anything sensed, which he has also utterly negated. Certainly, it cannot be the mind, or anything of the dyads and triads, all of which have been totally swept aside by the Maharshi in his previous instruction.

What is presently existing? It is that very same innate Self, shining by itself, alone. Therefore, rather than consider where you have been, as if the Absolute were an origin, or consider where you will be, as if the Absolute were a goal to attain, you should know your present Existence, which reveals that the Absolute is you, and is as it is, always. Ignoring that Existence and attempting to determine, "Where have I come from, where will I wind up, and where will I be?" is like trying to count without the number one. It is laughable. It is missing what exists for what does not actually exist at all. Now and always, start and end in your own Existence, for therein lies the Truth.

It is evident that many writers, speakers, seekers, and teachers may prefer the initial, ostensible explanation, yet, if you seek Liberation, this other explanation is more pertinent to you.

As is the case with any form of concentration, focusing mental attention on the present time can yield a reduction of the quantity of thoughts. This result is inevitably transient. If the thoughts in abeyance are of a defining, confining character, their subsidence brings a corresponding, temporary unveiling of the natural joy of the Self. For eternal Bliss, thought-transcendent Knowledge is necessary. This Knowledge is of the Self, timeless, and nonobjective.

The instruction in this verse also prompts a greater intensity in spiritual practice. The past is gone and

irrecoverable. If precious time was lost in illusion, determine that now you will earnestly practice. The future is not guaranteed. There is no purpose served in delaying intense spiritual practice when the opportunity to engage in such is now. If this is understood, there is little point in repetition of regret or anxious anticipation, which would be wasteful of the present opportunity to realize the ever-existent Self.

In the present Existence is found the eternal Existence. Even in this moment, one finds forever. That which is the Reality now is the Reality always.

If emphasis is placed upon the term "svakale," which means "in own time," we may also approach understanding the verse in this manner. All that is known of the past and future is in the present, which is the present knowledge, just as the present, itself, exists only in the knowledge of it. They are now known in the present, and they are the present when experienced. If the objective portion of the experience or knowledge of "now" is negated, the ever-existent Being-Consciousness remains. Just as this is so with then and now, so it is with there and here. There is known only from here. If the objective portion is negated, inclusive of the misidentification with the body, what is it that is immediately here, which is nonobjective and interior to the senses and the mind? Thus, invariably the inquiry leads to the subject, "I." Inquiry into the nature of the "I" is direct, and these other considerations, such as here and now, may be regarded as a circuitous path to the same final inquiry. ॐ

— Commentary by Nome on verse 15 as it appears in *Saddarsanam & An Inquiry Into the Revelation of Truth and Oneself*

I respectfully salute the perfect Shambhu who is the cause of the beginning, the preservation and the end of the world, who is the manifestation of the beginning, the middle and the end, and who is also the dissolution of the three.

– Jnanadeva, Amritanubhava, Invocatory Verses, v. 5

I am the Self, O Gudakesa, seated in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning and the middle, as also the end, of all beings.

– Bhagavad Gita, 10:20

Of creations I am the beginning and the middle and also the end; of all knowledges I am the knowledge of the Self, and vada of disputants.

– Bhagavad Gita, 10:32

That which does not exist in the beginning and the end is equally so in the present (i.e., in the middle). Though they are on the same footings with the unreal, yet they are seen as though real.

– Eight Upanisads, Mandukya Upanisad, Gaudapada's Karika, Vaitathya-Prakarana, II:6, pub. Advaita Ashrama

Brahman is neither gross no subtle. Neither does It appear nor disappear. It is without beginning, middle, and end. There is no higher or lower in Brahman. Indeed, I am proclaiming the Truth—the ultimate Reality. I am Existence-Knowledge-Bliss and boundless as space.

– Avadhuta Gita, III:6

We bother about the past and the future, not realizing the truth of the present. We do not know the beginning or the end. But we know the middle. If we find out the truth of this, we shall know the beginning and the end.

–Day by Day with Bhagavan, 11-21-45

The sages, in their infinite wisdom, eliminate all concepts regarding past, present and future—beginning, middle and end—revealing the Knowledge of Eternity.

For these Truths, we are eternally grateful. This quarter SAT expressed gratitude in many special events at the SAT Temple, which are shared in the following pages.



Painting by Anandhi

2016 Navaratri (Vijayadasami) included a reading by Nome of verses found in the *Atharva Veda (a Sakti Upanishat / Devi Upanishat)*.

These verses can be viewed in the Januray, February, March 2015 issue of Reflections.

Images from this event can be viewed by following these links:

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om mahādevyai ca vidmahe
śivakāmyai ca dhīmahi ।
tanno-brāhmī pracodayāt ॥

OM, that great Goddess we know and to the One desirous of Siva, may we direct our minds (meditate). May that divine/holy/spiritual One inspire (impel) us.

1. om śivāyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the auspicious
2. om vismaya-rūpyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the one of wonderful form
3. om viśva-vandyāyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the one who is worshipped by the universe
4. om sarva-bhūta-hita-pradāyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the one who gives welfare to all beings
5. om bhavānyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the the consort of śiva
6. om jñānaśakti-svarūpiṇyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the one whose nature is the power of knowledge
7. om nirmalāyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the one free from impurities
8. om niṣkalāyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the undivided
9. om nirupamāyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the unequalled
10. om moha-nāśinyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the one who dispels delusion
11. om ambikāyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the mother of the universe
12. om veda-vedyāyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the one who can be known through the Vedas
13. om cidambara-vāsyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the one who dwells in the space of Consciousness (cidambaram temple)
14. om sarva-tattva-svarūpiṇyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the one of the nature of all tattva -s
15. om parāśaktyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the Supreme power
16. om śiva-jñāna-pradāyinyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the one who confers the knowledge of śiva
17. om saccidānanda-vigrahāyai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the form of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss
18. om śrī śiva-kāma-sundaryai namaḥ OM! prostrations to the beautiful one desirous of śiva





The day that Narayana grinds to death the naraka (demon, hell) ego in the quern (hand-mill) of Knowledge, inquiring whence the naraka-I rises to rule the naraka-world, that day is the high festival of Naraka-Caturdasi (14th day of the lunar fortnight.)

– Sri Ramana Maharshi, Collected Works

To search and slay the sinner, the naraka-ego corrupted by the thought that one is the naraka-form, the false body-tenement, and to shine as the true Self, this is Dipavali, indeed.

– Sri Ramana Maharshi, Collected Works

2016 Dipavali included a reading by Nome from *Upadesa Sahasri Sri Sankaracarya*
These verses can be viewed in the Januray, February, March 2015 issue of Reflections.

Images from this event can be viewed by following these links:

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2016 Skanda Shasti included a reading by Noma of verses found in the
Skanda Upanishad.

These verses can be viewed in the January, February, March 2015 issue of Reflections.

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Subrahmanya Skanda, the form of heroic wisdom that manifests as valiant Self-inquiry in those who intensely pursue the Realization of Brahman.

In his upper right hand, he holds the traditional representation of his vel, or Sakti (spear), symbol of the power of jñana, spiritual knowledge, and the same all-conquering power of knowledge, in a more explicit depiction, is nestled in his arms. His lower right hand displays the gesture of fearlessness, abhaya mudra, for true knowledge destroys illusory duality, the cause of fear, and thus grants freedom and peace. His upper left hand holds a vajra, the thunderbolt, displaying the immense, illuminative power of this wisdom, and his lower left hand is in the pose indicating firmness and steadiness. His peacock, said in Skanda Purana to dance to the sound of thunder and to be a natural enemy of snakes, may be understood to be the experience that accords with this wisdom and destroys the passions of ignorance. For more details concerning Subrahmanya, see Advaita Devatam.



Rice flour art by Anandhi



The Truth Revealed Retreat was based upon teachings from **Saddarsanam & An Inquiry Into the Revelation of Truth and Oneself (SAT Publication)**

From Day by Day with Bhagavan, January 7, 1945

Dr. Syed asked Bhagavan when Reality in Forty Verses was made by Bhagavan.

Bhagavan said, "It was recently, something like 1928. Muruganar has noted down somewhere the different dates. One day Muruganar said that some stray verses composed by me now and then on various occasions should not be allowed to die, but should be collected together and some more added to them to bring the whole number to forty, and that the entire forty should be made into a book with a proper title. He accordingly gathered about thirty or less stanzas and requested me to make the rest to bring the total to forty. I did so, composing a few stanzas on different occasions as the mood came upon me. When the number came up to forty, Muruganar went about deleting one after another of the old collection of thirty or less on the pretext they were not quite germane to the subject on hand or otherwise not quite suitable, and requesting me to make fresh ones in place of the deleted ones. When this process was over, and there were forty stanzas as required by Muruganar, I found that in the forty there were but two stanzas out of the old ones and all the rest had been newly composed. It was not made according to any set scheme, nor at a stretch, nor systematically. I composed different stanzas on different occasions and Muruganar and others afterwards arranged them in some order according to the thoughts expressed in them to give some appearance of connection and regular treatment of the subject, viz., Reality." (The stanzas contained in the old collection and deleted by Muruganar were about twenty. These were afterwards added as supplement to the above work and the Supplement, too, now contains 40 verses.)

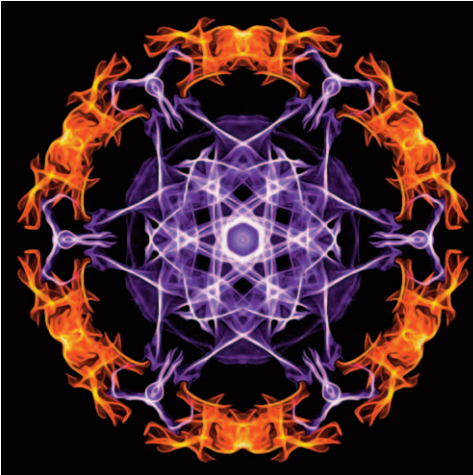
**Self-effulgent, Reality's Light,
The only Existence, the Self-Supreme.**



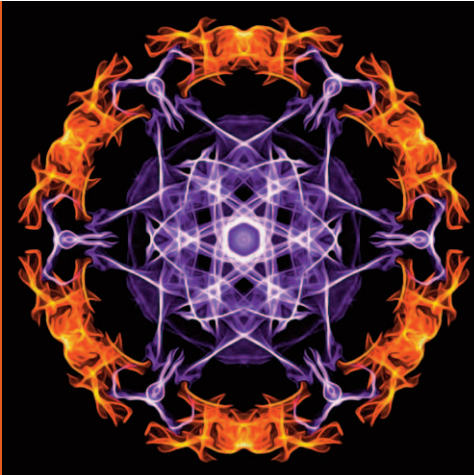
Karthikai Deepam included the reading of Lingodbhava Darshanam found in *Advaita Devatam*.

For images of the event, please visit:

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Some verses from chapter seven of the
Siva Purana
Motilas Banarsidass, pub.



Siva manifested himself as a column of fire in the battle-field and said:

2. O gods, the fight between Brahma and Visnu is already known to me. This agitation on your part is like a redundant speech.

3. Thus, the consort of Amba consoled the concourse of devas with honeylike speech sweetened with a smile in the manner of appeasing children.

8. On espying the battle, the Lord vanished in the firmament. The play of the music stopped and the tumult of the Ganas subsided.

10-11. The flames emitted by the two weapons of Brahma and Visnu burned the three worlds. On seeing this imminent untimely dissolution the bodiless form of Siva assumed the terrific form of a huge column of fire in their midst.

12. The two weapons of fiery flame potential enough to destroy the entire world fell into the huge column of fire that manifested itself there instantaneously.

13. Seeing that auspicious wonder phenomenon assuaging the weapons they asked each other, "What is this wonderful form?"

14. "What is this column of fire that has risen up? It is beyond the range of senses. We have to find out its top and bottom."

16-18. "Nothing will turn up if we are together." Saying this, Visnu assumed the form of a boar and went in search of the root. Brahma in the form of a swan went up in search of the top. Piercing through the nether-worlds and going very far below, Visnu could not see the root of the fiery column. Utterly exhausted, Visnu in the form of a boar returned to the former battle ground.

19. Dear one, your father, Brahma who went high up in the sky saw a certain bunch of Ketaki flowers of mysterious nature falling from above.

20-21. On seeing the mutual fight of Brahma and Visnu, Lord Siva laughed. When his head shook, the Ketaki flower dropped down. Although it had been in its downward

course for many years, neither its fragrance nor its luster had been diminished even a bit. The flower had been intended to bless them.

22-23. Brahma said, "O lord of flowers, by whom had you been worn? Why do you fall? I have come here to seek out the top, in the form of a swan." The flower replied, "I am falling down from the middle of this primordial column that is inscrutable. It has taken me a long time. Hence, I do not see how you can see the top."

24-25. "Dear friend, hereafter you must do as I desire. In the presence of Visnu you must say like this: O Acyuta, the top of the column has been seen by Brahma. I am the witness for the same." Saying this, he bowed to the Ketaki flower again and again. Even falsehood is recommended in times of danger. So say the authoritative texts.

26. Returning to the original place on seeing Visnu there, utterly exhausted and lacking pleasure, Brahma danced with joy. Visnu, in the manner of a eunuch admitting his inability, told him the truth that he could not see the bottom. But Brahma told Visnu like this.

27-28. "O Hari, the top of this column has been seen by me. This Ketaki flower is my witness." The Ketaki flower repeated the falsehood endorsing the words of Brahma in his

presence. Hari, taking it to be true, made obeisance to Brahma. He worshipped Brahma with all the sixteen means of service and homage.

29. The Lord taking up a visible form in order to chastise Brahma who practised trickery, came out of the column of fire. On seeing the Lord, Visnu stood up and with his hands shaking with fear caught hold of the Lord's feet.

30. It is out of ignorance and delusion about you whose body is without a beginning or an end that we indulged in this quest prompted by our own desire. Hence, O sympathetic Being, forgive us for our fault. In fact, it is but another form of your divine sport.

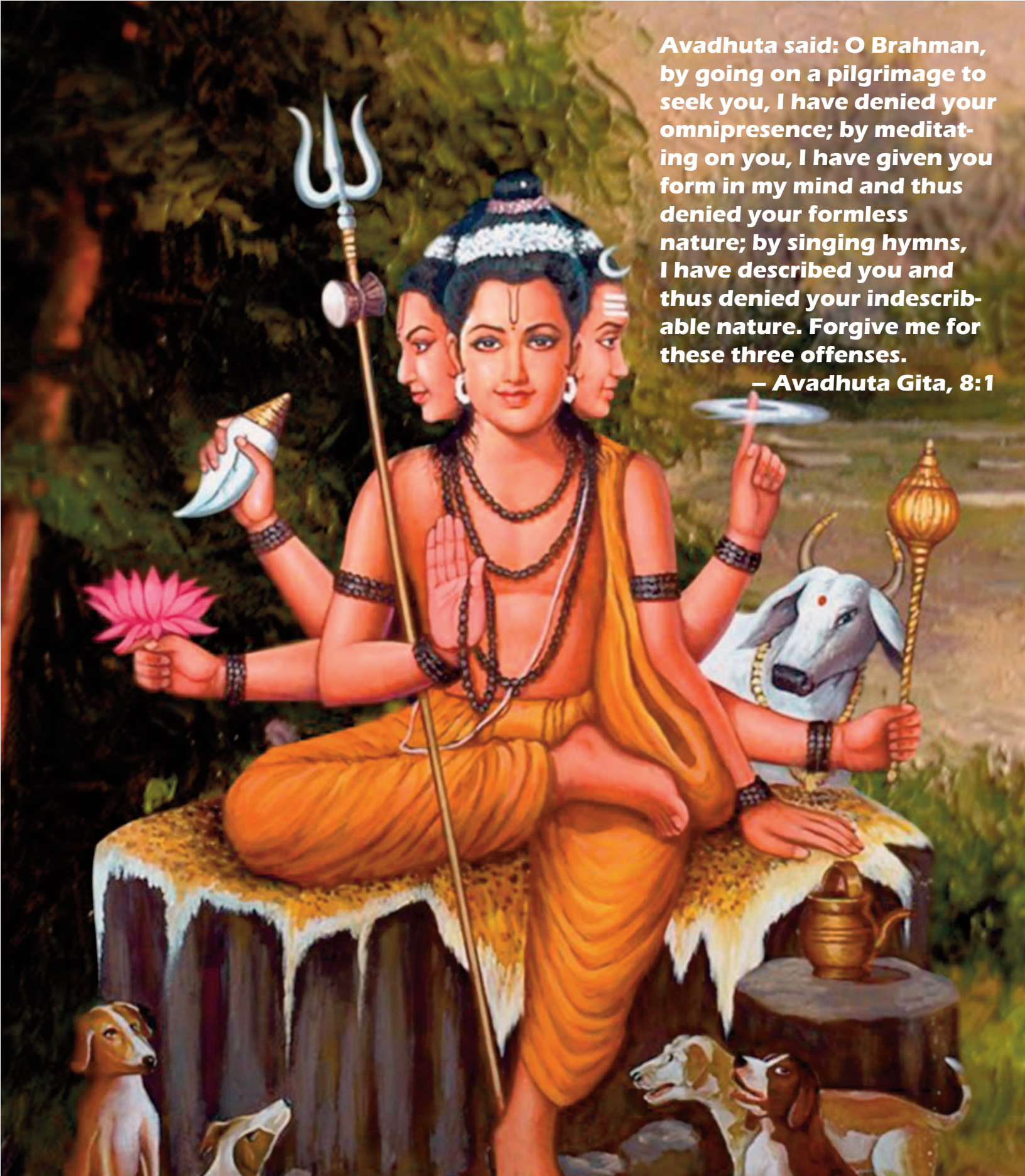
Isvara said:

31. "O dear Hari, I am pleased with you, because you strictly adhered to truth in spite of your desire to be a lord. Hence among the general public you will have a footing equal to mine. You will be honored, too, likewise.

33. Thus, formerly, the Lord was delighted by the truthfulness of Hari and offered him a footing equal to his own even as the assembly of the devas was witnessing the same. ॐ

Avadhuta said: O Brahman, by going on a pilgrimage to seek you, I have denied your omnipresence; by meditating on you, I have given you form in my mind and thus denied your formless nature; by singing hymns, I have described you and thus denied your indescribable nature. Forgive me for these three offenses.

– Avadhuta Gita, 8:1



Dattatreya Jayanti included readings by Nome from the Avadhuta Gita

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SRI RAMANA JAYANTI



1. Now I bow to Him who is the spring to the garden of spiritual endeavours, an auspicious thread of Divine Command and though formless the very incarnation of compassion.
2. I bow to Him, who mercifully runs to help the pure Consciousness who is experiencing the self-hood by wandering in the wilderness of avidya.
4. By whose glance the bondage is turned into liberation and the Knower realizes himself.
5. He makes no difference between great and small in distributing the gold of liberation. He is the cause of the knower's vision.
6. As for His powers, He surpasses even the greatness of Siva. He is like a mirror in which Atman sees His own bliss.
7. It is through His grace that the scattered digits of the moon of spiritual Knowledge are brought together to form the play of full moon night.
17. Those who faithfully endeavour and regard His will as all in all, gain the ripe fruit of their efforts.
19. By casting His glance, He causes the appearance to recede and vanish. Though His conquest is great, He does not call it His own.
21. He is like a solid substance which saves anyone from drowning in the water that does not exist, and the individual thus saved remains nowhere.
22. The ordinary sky with its component parts cannot equal Him who is like a spiritual sky that is ever full.
23. The moon with her cool rays is formed out of His light. The brilliance of the sun is due to a ray of His light.
26. Though manifest He is not seen. He is light and yet does not illuminate. He exists and yet is nowhere.
(–The Amritanubhava of Jnanadeva)

Sri Ramana Jayanti included a reading by Nome from Erase the Ego

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from LETTERS FROM SRI RAMANASRAMAM

The Boundless Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi



Akshayalokam
(The Eternal World) (133)
July 18, 1947



The day before yesterday, a Tamil young man approached Bhagavan in the afternoon and said, "Swami, when I lay down doing dhyana today, I fell asleep. Someone, I can't say who, appeared to me in my sleep. Seeing me, he said in a firm tone, "God has come down as an avatar of Kalki with fourteen heads. He is being brought up somewhere." I have come here thinking that Bhagavan will be able to tell me where that Kalki avatar now is."

"I see. Why did you not ask the person himself who appeared in your dream about it? You should have asked him at the time. What is lost even now? Go on doing dhyana until he comes back and tells you," said Bhagavan. Unable to understand the significance of that, the young man said, "Will he really come back to me and give me the required information if I go on doing dhyana?" "You may or may not be informed where that avatara purusha is. If only you do not give up dhyana, but do it continuously you will realize the Truth. Then, there will be no room for any doubts," said Bhagavan.

Taking advantage of this conversation, another person asked, "It is said that God lives in an eternal world. Is it true?" Bhagavan, replied, "If we are in a temporary world, He may be in an eternal world. Are we in a temporary world? If this is true, that also is true. If we are not

real, where is the world and where is time?"

In the meanwhile a young boy, four years old, entered the hall with a toy motor car. Seeing that, Bhagavan said, "See. Instead of the car carrying us, we are carrying the car. That is right," and laughed. Later, looking at us all, he said, "Look, this also can be taken as an example. We say, "we sat in the motor car," "the motor car is carrying us," "we have come in the car," "the car has brought us here." "Will the car, which is inanimate, move without our driving it? No. Who drives? We. So also this world. Where is the world without our being in it? There must be someone to see the beauty of this world, and understand it. Who is the seer? He. He is everywhere. Then, what is transient and what is permanent? If one knows the truth through Self-enquiry, there will be no problems." Bhagavan has already written the same thing like a sutra in verse No. 19 in his Sad Vidya (Unnadhi Nalubadhi). ॐ

Grace is beginning, middle and end. Grace is the Self. Because of the false identification with the body, the Grace is considered to be with body. But the Guru's outlook is only the Self. The Self is only one. He tells you that the Self alone is, then is not the Self your Grace? Wherefrom will Grace come? It is from the Self only. Manifestation of the Self is the manifestation of Grace and vice verse. All the doubts arise because of the wrong outlook and consequent expectation of things external to oneself. Nothing is external to the Self. -Thus Spake Ramana, 124



Satsang with Nome

No Difficulty

Satsang, April 21, 2013

Om Om Om
(Silence)



Nome: "The Self" refers to your very Being, the innermost Consciousness. That is unborn and imperishable. It is undifferentiated and entirely homogeneous. That never undergoes any kind of modification at any time, and its nature is Bliss that is perfectly full. It is silent. It is Silence. Infinite and eternal, it is without division, free from parts. It always is just as it is. Transcendent of the perceptible and the conceivable, it is the Reality.

Self-Realization is the supreme accomplishment, the finality of all goals in life. To realize the Self is to know Brahman. It is to realize God. It is to know the Reality as it is, Existence pure, as it is. Yet, the Maharshi declares that it is not to be newly acquired; that is, the nature of Self-Realization must necessarily be identical with the Self that is realized. Otherwise, it will not be eternal, it will not be infinite and thus will not be the finality. But it is the finality; it is infinite and eternal. The Realization of the Self is of the same nature as the Self, itself. Therefore, it is ever-existent. It is the one real state that there is. Because it is ever-existent, it does not diminish.

Then, the question must be, "How is one to realize the ever-realized?" If it is ever-existent, how do we go about attaining it? The way is nonobjective in character. The Reality already exists. What seems to hide it from view and from whom is it hidden? The unexamined suppositions concerning for whom it is hidden constitutes the

veil or the so-called obstruction, the obstacles, to Self-Realization. What are the obstacles? Only suppositions; suppositions starting with the first false assumption of an ego, of existing as an individualized being. The suppositions do not come from without. Illusion is conjured up and adhered to by oneself.

Because of its ever-existent nature and its identical nature with the Self, of Realization the Maharshi said in verse, "It is the easiest thing that there is". It is also the easiest thing that there is because the so-called obstructions to it, the spiritual obstacles, are entirely imagined, self-created, and seem to remain only so long as one sustains them. Ignorance, therefore, has no power of its own but only what is lent to it by you. Ignorance, like illusion, is not a thing in itself. Its actual nature is non-existent. So, the way to realize the Self is not at all difficult. It does require the abandonment of every false supposition, every erroneous concept, but that is not difficult. It does require one to search for happiness where it is found and not where it is not, but that is joyfully not difficult. It does require the discernment of the Real and the unreal, but the unreal, being unreal, cannot represent any serious obstacle or be of any lasting nature. Most essentially, it requires Self-Knowledge, and how else better to know one's Self but by inquiring, "Who am I?"

Since this is a matter of your Self with your Self, there is no chasm to cross, no obstruction as if it were between one self and another self. This has to do with your Self. If you make your vision nonobjective and steadily, whole-heartedly inquire, "Who am I?" there will be found to be no obstacles, and no tricky curves to navigate. Abandon the

false suppositions by finding out how they are false. Find out how they are false by questioning them. In this way, transcend the tendency to misidentify with the body, with the senses, with the mind, and with the notion of "I." The infinite Consciousness will shine in its own Light, quite naturally. Your very Existence will remain reposing in itself, the undivided One.

In addition, we should know that the omnipresent Grace carries all, in all, at all times. So, how could there be a difficulty? Whether known as the Self, or known as Grace, that is the Reality. It cannot be divided from itself. That Self is your true nature, the only nature you actually have.

Questioner: The very idea of an individual inherently has in it the revelation of the Self, if examined in the right way. The idea of the "I" must give way to the Self. If I ask, "Whose thought is this?" it is my thought, even though I may still consider that the individual thinker, it's in the inward direction. To be unhappy points to Bliss in a way, because the full happiness that is undoubtedly known seems to be obstructed.

N.: Everyone knows that, don't they? You, being Bliss, overlooking your own nature, seem to become unhappy and then desire some situation to set it right. You know what is right; you know what is natural. For whom is the Self unknown, for anyone? The individual does not become happy. Happiness shines in the absence of an ego. Likewise is it with immortality. A body-bound ego does not become immortal. Abandonment of the misidentification with the body and the ego notion reveals the innate immortality of pure Existence. In truth, there is really no such thing as actually being ignorant of the Self.

Q.: Even if taking the stance as an individual, if the progress can be made that accepting that all suffering is self-imagined, even if there were assumed that there was another, but that that other wasn't imposing anything, then, even if not conquered, the suffering is doomed to vanish because it's not being opposed by another. If it is self-created, then how could it be unsolvable?

N.: That is right. When you think that it is created by another, it seems to truly obstruct you be-

yond a solution. When you recognize you are the cause of your own suffering and you are the source of your own happiness, you are actually quite free. Now, tell me who it is that imagines himself as an individual. The real Self has no ignorance, hence no imagination. In and for that Self, there is never an ego. So, for whom is the ego? To say it is for itself is absurd. If one just so much as inquires into the assumptions that constitute ignorance or maya, illusion, such disappears utterly without a trace. Who is it that thinks of himself as "I"?

Another Q.: I was reading Saddarsanam and Maharshi says, "Seek refuge in that Existence to conquer the fear of death." I have not solved that problem. You also quote from the Gita, "The wise do not grieve for the living or for the dead," because the wise know what is immortal. I try to meditate, but I see I am not seeking refuge in that Existence.

N.: Where else can you seek refuge? When everything is destructible, where else can you find refuge but in the supreme Existence, the Self or Siva, the conqueror of death? Can anything in this world provide such refuge?

Q.: There is some issue to be solved. I feel that is a grace; He saw, He does everything, He will take care of everything. Then it goes down and up, and ultimately it will end up right. You also mentioned, "Wholeheartedly inquire and know there is this Grace." There is something I'm not doing right.

N.: What else are you holding on to?

Q.: The belief in the individual.

N.: Can the belief in individuality provide you with the happiness that you want? Can it give you that which is eternal? Are you an individual? Regardless of whether you think that you are holding on to that idea or not, who are you? If a definition is an idea, it cannot be you, because you cannot possibly be an idea. A thought is just a thought, not your Self. So, who are you?

Q.: I need to give myself to this discrimination.

N.: Yes, but this is a matter of joyful Knowledge, not really a problem to be solved. If you do not examine, it can appear like a problem to solve, but, once you are engaged in inquiry, it is just the happy revelation of interior Knowledge. So, who are you?

Q.: You said it is the supreme accomplishment. I've got the feeling that that is a goal I need to seek every time.

N.: Yes, one needs to seek it, but it is within you. That which is within you is of an eternal nature. So, on the one hand, we call it the supreme accomplishment, yet, on the other, we say that it is not to be attained anew, for it is eternal, without beginning and without end. It is the finality. Knowing the Self, there is nothing other to be known. Experiencing the Self, there is nothing further to be experienced. Finding the happiness of the Self, there remains nothing else to be desired. The Self is your very Being. Inquire in such a way that the ideas that you have some other kind of being, some other kind of identity, are destroyed. The "I" notion, with its attendant definitions, is the first to be destroyed for those who take refuge in the conqueror of death, the immortal Existence.

Another Q.: There are times when there are a whole bunch of thoughts and the mind is searching frantically to find happiness. The mind is seeking for the same happiness through those thoughts or those tendencies. They become a way to practice. I can see those very tendencies are showing me a way to go back in a different direction. Whatever comes to the mind, I just look at it and see whether it is showing me a way to pursue that or that is not the way to pursue that.

N.: So, everything becomes fuel for the inquiry. Everything becomes fuel to be burned in the fire of discrimination. For one who knows this, who can inquire always, no harm can come to him, for whatever happens, in whatever manner, it merely serves to point out the truth of his own Self.

Q.: The whole practice becomes a joyful experience, as you mentioned.

N.: It all becomes joyful in the revelation of Self-Bliss, and nothing can obstruct.

Another Q.: (about fear of coming and going and finality)

N.: The Bhagavad Gita says, "For that which has birth, death is certain, and, for that which has death, birth is certain". There is appearance and disappearance. Death of the body is not the finality. The finality lies in the Reality, in realization of the Truth. Nothing pertaining to the jiva, or individual, is the finality. When the jiva finds Siva, and that Siva to be his own nature, then there is final Freedom, final Peace.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil from Chapter 2 of the Song of Ribhu.)

As the Self

Satsang, August 9, 2015

Om Om Om

(Silence)

Nome: Abidance in Brahman is abidance as Brahman. Knowledge of the Self is being the Self.

What do you consider yourself to be? If you consider yourself to be a body, or an embodied individual, you suppose that the attributes and activities of the body, its conditions and states, life and death, pertain to you. Are you the body? If you are not a body, if you are not in a body, what are you? Bodiless, you are not a thing; nor are you located anywhere. Yet, you exist. What is the nature of this existence? What do you consider yourself to be?

If you consider yourself to be a mind, a second knowing entity, in addition to or separate from the

infinite Consciousness, which is Brahman, you assume thoughts pertain to you. Are you the mind? If you are not thought, if you are not anything of which you can conceive, what are you?

You who exist, what is the nature of your existence? If you suppose yourself to be an individual, an ego, has this actually ever been seen, or is it merely assumed? If assumed, assumed by whom? By the ego itself? How can something that is unreal assume itself? What do you consider yourself to be? There is Existence - unborn, imperishable, not an object, indivisible, condition-less, transcendent - but what do you consider yourself to be? What is the meaning of "yourself"?

Dependent on your identity is what you regard as reality. If you misidentify as a sensing entity or a body, an embodied individual, you suppose that there is an external world that is real. If not, then not. If you suppose yourself to be a mind, things that are subtle, things composed of thought, are regarded as real. If not, then not. If you regard the "I," the individual, as your identity, you correspondingly assume there is an objective sphere of experience, "this," that is experienced by the "I." If you find that your true existence is "I"-less, that is to say egoless, there is no such thing as "this."

What, then, exists? What, then, are you? Just Existence, inconceivable, imperceptible, immutable, and ineffable. This infinite, eternal Existence, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, is what, in truth, all are, and there are no all and no you distinct therefrom. To realize the undifferentiated, egoless, true Existence of the Self is the purpose of inquiry and, indeed, of all sadhana.

Sri Bhagavan says, "Who is to realize what,

when all that there is, is the one Self?" Understand the profound significance of this by steady, deep inquiry to know what, in truth, you are. It is not known through the senses. It is not known in thought. Nonobjective Knowledge is the substance of the inquiry. What do you consider yourself to be, and what in truth are you? If you wisely discern this, the Self knows itself as it is. Brahman knows Brahman, and there is nothing other, no one other, to be ignorant of this.

What, in truth, are you, and what do you consider yourself to be? Cease to confound that which is not the Self with the Self, and you find the perfect fullness, which is supreme peace. The not-self does not actually exist. The Self alone is real. The Self alone exists. Dive within, and you will understand.

Questioner: One of the great things said about reality, is that nothing can be said about it, because the pure Consciousness of which all those expressions would be attempted could never be any of those expressions. It is very humbling. At best, I can just be still and seek to stay in it. There is no object of desire, no object for aversion. The reality spoken of in the teaching is so vast.

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

(Silence)

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

(Then followed a recitation in Tamil from Chapter 11 of the Song of Ribhu. ॐ)



I HAVE FOUND A SEA OF LOVE, AN INEXHAUSTIBLE FLOOD; I HAVE
OPENED A TREASURE OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE, IT DIFFUSES THE
LUSTRE OF A MILLION SUNS, ARISEN IN THY WORSHIPPER'S SOUL.

UNEXPECTEDLY, WITHOUT AN EFFORT, I HAVE HEARD THE
ETERNAL SECRET, I HAVE LEARNED TO KNOW GOD.

THE SEED OF THE HIGH REUNION HAS BEEN ENFOLDED
IN MY OWN DESTINY.

I HAVE NOW BEHELD HIM IN WHOSE SIGHT IS ALL GOODNESS,
A SEA OF HAPPY AUGURY, THE SUPREME POWER OF MYSTIC
WORDS.

I HAVE ATTAINED HIM, WHOSE NAME IS NECTAR, WHOSE
NATURE IS PURE, INTELLECT FREE FROM PASSION.

THE VERY JOY OF PEACE AND COMPASSION IS FOUND
IN THIS JOY, THAT ACCOMPANIES THE
KNOWLEDGE OF THE BEING AND
KNOWING GOD.

– TUKARAM,
TEMPLE BELLS, 1930

From The Ramana Way

The following articles appear in the October 1989 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

With Body or Mind?

By Dr. Sarada Natarajan

Once upon a time lived two brothers, both devoted to the Lord. The elder would awake early in the morning and walk into their garden. He would stand before a bloom-laden plant and ask it for a flower to offer the Lord. Then, he would pick a single flower, in all reverence take it to their room of worship and lovingly offer it to the Lord. Prostrating before the Lord, he would leave the room and get involved in his daily duties. The younger brother, too, would wake early and, taking with him two or three flower baskets, would begin to pluck the choicest flowers in the garden. After about an hour of plucking, he would bring in the flowers and begin to adorn the image of the Lord with the best of them. Then, he would offer elaborate worship with the remaining flowers for one more hour. After this, he, too, would leave the shrine and get involved in his day's work. One day, as he was walking to a neighboring village he saw an extremely tired cartman hauling a heavy cartload of the most beautiful flowers. He stopped him and asked, "My dear friend, where are you taking these flowers?" The cartman answered, "Oh! Do you not know? This is my daily plight. There are two brothers who live in that village," and he pointed to their village. "The elder of them



offers worship daily to the Lord and I have to carry his offerings to the Lord. I do wish he might worship the Lord less, what a heavy load I have to carry every day!" So saying, the cartman proceeded on his way. The younger brother hearing this thought happily to himself, "If the single flower offered by my brother becomes so great an offering to the Lord,

how much greater must my offering be!" So thinking, he walked on when a man passed him singing happily and carrying a single flower in his hand. The younger brother stopped him and asked, "Friend, where do you go with that flower?" The man replied, "In that village, live two brothers who daily worship the Lord. I am so glad that my task is to carry to the Lord the offering of the younger brother. Ah! It is an easy task indeed!" Hearing this the younger brother got angry, "What kind of joke is this?" he stormed, "My brother offers only one flower to the Lord, and his offering becomes a cartload! While I offer almost a cartload in daily worship, and it is equal only to one lone flower?" Then, the man with the flower smiled and replied, "Your brother thinks of the Lord when he offers that one flower and you think of your skill in adorning and worshipping the Lord when you offer your many." The younger brother at once understood that it was not the elaborateness of the worship that mattered but the single-mindedness with which it was performed.

It is for this reason Bhagavan declares, in His Upadesa Saram, that the best kind of activity to offer God would be the mental. Of the three kinds of activity—the physical, oral and mental—the mental would form the highest offering. Next in order would come the oral and only last the physical.

Why is it so? Does Bhagavan imply that performing Pooja to the Lord is a lesser offering to Him than singing His Name? And would the chanting of His name imply loving Him less than if one meditates on Him? Why should the mind be given prime place? It may be that worshipping Him is suited to one temperament, singing His name to a second and meditating on Him to a third. If each be done with equal devotion why should one be considered better than the other? Certainly, a pertinent question, but, one must pause to understand the question itself better. If one offers physical, vocal or mental worship to the Lord with the same devotion, why should one form be held superior to another? This is the question. It implies that so long as the common factor of devotion underlines the worship, the form is immaterial. But, what is devotion? Is it the body that is devoted? Or is it the mouth which chants the name that loves the Lord? If the mind does not imbue the act with devotion, would not worship be merely a physical movement of the hand from the flower basket to an image? It is only because one sees the Lord in the idol, because one wishes to adore that presence and the expression of that love becomes the offering of flowers, fruit and so on that it comes to be called worship. Would the repetition of any sound amount to chanting the Lord's name? It is only because one recognizes a given sound to be the Lords' name and one sings or chants it with that attitude of reverence that it is called japa. Thus, is not devotion itself a quality of the mind? When it is so, any activity would be an offering to the Lord only if it is accompanied with the mental attitude of devotion, of love, of dedication.

But would not the appropriate mental frame be a corollary to every action? Can a physical action be performed in a mental void, without the involvement of the mind? If it cannot, then every action must imply the participation of the mind. Then, physical worship must necessarily be men-

tal worship, as well. To understand whether this is so, one must take a closer look at the nature of physical activity. Physical activity is, obviously, that performed by the body or parts of the body. In this, a subdivision is usually made between automatic, physical activity and voluntary, physical activity. The workings of the liver, the intestines, the heart, lungs and other organs which perform function of the body are seen to be automatic. The heart beats whether or not one is attentive to its beating or even aware of it. On the other hand, the limbs move when the individual wills them to do so. If one feels lazy, he need not walk. If he wants exercise, he can run. However, an individual cannot with equal ease stop or accelerate his heartbeat, at least, he cannot consciously do so. Yet, when he gets excited, his heart beat accelerates, and when he is absolutely calm, it slows down. Hence, the mind influences even those aspects of physical or physiological activity that appear to be practically autonomous and free from mental control.

While this is the case, one does not normally recognize the power that the mind wields over physical functions. Usually one tends to view the mind and the body as more or less distinct entities, a perspective typified in the much worn idiom that "that spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Hence, physical activities are carried on with or without the conscious involvement of the mind. One may walk without paying the least attention to the fact that one is walking, one may brush one's teeth, comb one's hair, board a bus, and even eat one's food in a purely mechanical manner. The more habituated one is to a given action, the easier one performs it without putting one's mind to it. One may well be driving to the airport and suddenly find oneself at one's office because that is the usual spot one drives to. One may pick up the telephone to dial an acquaintance's number and be surprised to hear the voice of a dear friend at the other end. This may be because one talks to the friend very often and one's fingers automatically dialed that number instead of the new code. Such actions are termed "absent-minded," since they are performed practically in the absence of the mind, or, to put it more precisely, with practically no attention.

This brings one to recognize that while all physical and physiological activity is linked to the mind, the degree to which the mind is directly and consciously involved varies from activity to activity. One also realizes that the involvement of mind usually decreases in proportion to the frequency with which a physical action is performed. It is for this very reason that Bhagavan places physical worship on the third rung, below oral and mental offerings to the Lord. It is because of this possibility that physical worship could become purely mechanical while the mind is happily wandering over the world. On the other hand, if Pooja is offered with attention and devotion it would naturally become a form of meditation. One would then be meditating on the Lord even as one worships Him.



Meditations on the Teaching

By A.R. Natarajan

An elderly man from Ananthapur, after hearing the Vedas recited in the hall, stood up and asked, "It is said that the non-Brahmins should not hear the recital of the Vedas." The Maharshi said, "Mind your business. Take care of what you came here for. Why do you waste your time in these matters? I heard the recital, you say. Who is that 'I'? Without knowing the 'I' you are using the word. If its significance be known there will be no doubt. Find the 'I' first and you may afterwards speak of other matters." –Talks, v. 161

At Sri Ramanasramam, both in the mornings and in the evenings, there would be Vedic recitations in the hall in the presence of Bhagavan. The elevating atmosphere created by it was helpful to all seekers. Even so, this orthodox visitor chose to raise an objection forgetting the purpose for which he had come to Sri Ramanasramam. However, the doubt raised by the visitor is by no means an unusual occurrence. Rather, it is typical of the way in which our minds function. In "Talks," we find quite a few instances of such wastages of time earmarked for "sadhana." This is all the more a matter of regret since these persons had come seeking the sanctifying presence of Sri Ramana and, in fact, were quite serious about their search for truth. Yet, they had allowed their attention to be distracted from the purpose for which they had come, and had failed to hold on to essential matters. Instead of concentrating on finding out about the validity of one's notion about the "I," and eradicating the false idea that one is a particular name and form, attention would drift onto the concern which had no direct or indirect relevance for the search.

A look at the cross section of doubts raised over the years would be helpful to highlight this. Two devotees in the hall were very much upset by the death of King George V. They started discussing the matter ignoring the presence of Ramana and other devotees. King George was certainly not their kith nor were they bound to him by strong bonds of attachment. Yet, in the very holy presence of the Master, they were frittering away the time until He Himself gently pulled them up by saying "What is it to you who dies or is lost? Die and loose yourself, become one with love." Quite often the devotees would start questioning Ramana as to what would happen to a Jnani's body, whether disappearance of the body from sight is possible as it is stated to have happened with respect to Vasistha and Viswamitra. Ramana would ask them, "Is that the essential object of our interest? Why trouble about other matters? You are not the body. What does it matter if the body appears or disappears in one way or the other?" Again, many would load themselves with scriptural knowledge and start discussions about the validity of the various

viewpoints set out in the different texts. Ramana would never encourage doubts which were merely intellectual, doubts which were not concerned with the seekers practice, for there would be no end to polemics. As Ramana once remarked, "The author of Vritti Prabhakara claims to have studied 350,000 books before writing that book. What is the use? Can they bring about realization of the Self? Vichara Sagara is full of logic and technical terms. Can these ponderous volumes serve any purpose?" Another pet diversion of the seekers was their interest in the past, whether it is possible to know about it, and also about coming events, whether they could be predicted. The questioners would not pause to think how futile it would be to dig into the ashes of the past or to crystal gaze into the future. For, such interest only distracts attention from the now which alone matters. When someone asked Ramana about the report in Paul Brunton's book, A Hermit in the Himalayas, relating to the sages who could recall past incarnations, Ramana observed, "The load of the past forms the present misery." For, it is memory, vasanas, which has caused this birth and which is at the root of the division of the mind, its pulls and cross-purposes. Self-inquiry is aimed precisely at cutting tendencies at their very root. Strangely, the by-lanes of the spiritual path seem to hold more attraction for us than the royal path of Self-enquiry.

What we are mediating on is the tyranny of purposeless thoughts. Unless thoughts are held on a tight leash, the mind will be flitting from one useless thought to another. Useless because they are not conducive to the gathering of the mind in a single thought stream. If any headway is to be

made at all on the spiritual path, there is no alternative to cutting this wastage. This would be made possible by being alert against interest in extraneous matters which are constantly puncturing holes in our pursuit of self-enquiry. In the beginning, of course, there is the apparently endless job of warding off thoughts and bringing attention back to the "I." The analogy which Raman gave to his attendant Rangaswamy brings out this point clearly. A nest of squirrels was above Bhagavan's couch. A cat had eaten the mother of the young squirrels and the responsibility of looking after them was taken over by Ramana. He remarked, "Theses little ones do not know that wisdom lies in remaining in their nest. All trouble lies outside, yet they cannot remain within. Similarly, if the mind is not externalized, but remains sunk in the Heart, there would be happiness." When Rangaswamy questioned Ramana about the way for doing so, Ramana replied, "It is exactly the same as I am doing now. Each time a young squirrel comes out, I keep putting it back into its nest till it realizes that happiness lies in sitting in the nest." As one learns to revet attention on the "I" more and more, then there would no longer be any need to stay wary about thoughts. The mind, strengthened by the quest, would turn within at once. Then, these peripheral questions about others, arguments in circles and dry intellectualism would drop off as a ripe fruit would from a tree. Mediation would then be a sheer delight. The time set apart for it would overflow first into idle time, and on to the busy schedules, until all time becomes meditative time. Bliss would be felt every hour, every minute and every second. ॐ

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*How did the Self that ever is
Awareness—Bliss
How did It till now behave
As if It had forgotten this?*

*Wonder of wonders, beyond understanding,
Is your strange fear,
My Swan (mind), my dear,
Your fear of Me!*

*Mind learning, knowing and forgetting,
Body begotten, begetting and then dying,
Whence these impurities in Purity?*

*Bigness, smallness, class, rank, sight and seer
Why these darkling waves in the full deep sea of Bliss?*

*No need for speech or vow of silence;
No coming or going; no beginning, end or middle,
Nor light nor sound; nor quality,
No separateness and hence no fear.
Oh wonder of wonders,
The things that seem
In a dream!*

*In and out, high and low, and all the ten directions
Lost in light illimitably vast,
Unbroken, unsupported, full and calm,
Pure Awareness, Bliss immutable,
The once-remote, long-longed-for goal
Now here, joy, joy!*

by Avudai Ammal, as it appears in *Day by Day with Bhagavan*



Ever yours in Truth

Correspondence between Nome and seekers.

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



[In response to a question regarding lila (divine play) and illusion]

September 17, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Although you may think you are confused, the necessary clarity as the answer to your questions shines forth in the final paragraph of your message.

How would it be possible to know the nature of the universe, the nature of God, the nature of any lila, the nature of illusion, the nature of all "this," the nature of Brahman or Parabrahman, etc. without first knowing oneself? What else is there to know or to be known when the Self is realized? Without Self-Knowledge, all of these are just ideas. So, first, deeply inquire, so there is certainty beyond all doubt regarding the Self and, with all confusion gone, free from perplexity, you will find the final answer to all of your questions.

Illusion cannot have a real cause or beginning because it is unreal. Inwardly discerning this by the inquiry to know the nature of the perceiver is said to be its end.

The above and similar explanations are found in "The Quintessence of True Being."

Grace is ever present; remain keenly aware of it.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[To the same seeker, who asked about destiny and free will]

September 21, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavat Sri Ramanaya

Namaste.

Destiny and free will pertain to an individual, or ego. Liberation is egoless. In truth, Liberation, or Self-Realization, is not an event in time. It consists of Self-Knowledge. This Knowledge is neither by an ego nor for an ego. Knowledge of the Self is a matter of the depth of Self-inquiry. The inner revelation of this Self-Knowledge is the cessation of the assumption of the unreal ego and the true display of grace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A response to a seeker's questions about thoughts, the mind, and Self-inquiry]

September 22, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namoh Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

Something knows the arising, appearance, and dissolution of all thoughts. Seek to find what that is.

Investigate to determine what truly constitutes your identity. You are not the body that "picks up milk." If you are not the body, who are you? You are not the body that "goes to work." If you are not the body, and if you are not the performer of action, who are you?

That which is aware of time must, in itself, be transcendent of time. That which knows the mind transcends the mind. Who is this knower?

First, determine the nature of the "I." It now appears as if it were an ego. If you deeply inquire to know its nature, only non-individualized Existence

of the Self is found, and the ego is realized to be nonexistent.

Bhagavan says that the mind is only a bundle of thoughts. You cannot be a thought, and a bundle of thoughts does not represent a separate knower apart from the infinite Consciousness. The infinite Consciousness is the only true knower. It is the Existence of the Self. Nothing exists but that. All of the known does not exist as such but is only the undifferentiated knower. Thus, there is really no such thing as a mind.

Keep wondering about who you are. Self-inquiry deepens by practicing it.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

In reply to a seeker's observations regarding doubts

October 8, 2016

Dear ,

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

It is, indeed, wise to discern the egoistic nature of the thoughts that constitute doubt. Humble joy is much more sensible and natural. If Self-Realization were not possible, who would have even mentioned it? As surely as you exist, it is certainly possible. Self-Knowledge reveals it to be the only state that there is.

May you ever abide happily in the Self, as the Self, the world-less and "I"-less, and remain at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

In response to the questions posed by a seeker in Hungary

October 20, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your message.

You naturally desire to be happy. It is an intuition of your innate state. Such happiness is not found in the changeful, transient, objectified illusions of an unreal world. You cannot expect that which is external and objective to give you what is yours and, really, you.

If you discern the source and nature of happiness, you find such to be within. Within is the Self. Thus, your very Being is the happiness you seek. As Existence does not cease to exist at any time, this true happiness is unceasing. As the Self's Existence does not depend on another, likewise is it with happiness.

There is really no other kind of happiness. The enjoyment experienced in the midst of various experiences is actually the shining forth of the Self, with the addition of superimposed limitation born of delusion. The happiness of the Self is unconditioned and uncaused. The delusion is based upon misidentification, which is the confusion regarding oneself

Self-Knowledge eliminates such ignorance. The direct means to realize that is Self-inquiry.

In human relationships, about which you ask, who relates to whom? What are the definitions that you assume for yourself and also imagine as the supposed other? Do you imagine that you are the body or an embodied ego-entity? Yet, who are you really? What you are, everyone is. Then, love is the indivisibility of Being, the Self. That is imperishable. Thus, the Upanishad declares that "all are loved for the sake of the Self."

Abidance as the Self, which alone is eternal, is the revelation of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss without beginning or end.

You ask how to start. By your questioning, you have already started. You may find reading "Self-Knowledge" (one of SAT's publications) to be helpful.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

In reply to the same seeker's further questions about Self-inquiry

October 25, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The Self is only one. There are not two of you, that one could not access, not attend to, or not know the other. Who are you?

Existence is ever beyond doubt. You never doubt your own existence. How do you know that you exist? This knowledge does not depend on the senses or thought, mental modes or states of mind. The Self, Existence, is never an object of perception or conception. At the same depth that you know that you exist, you should inquire. Self-Knowledge is nonobjective. The means and the end must be of the same nature. Indeed, the end, itself, manifests as the means, or practice. Therefore, the enquiry to realize the Self consists of nonobjective Knowledge. In practice, the inquiry negates, or destroys, misidentifications, leaving the self-luminous (self-knowing) Self, the solitary Existence, as the indestructible residuum. Misidentification alone constitutes ignorance, and ignorance alone composes bondage, attachment, and suffering. Thus, Self-Knowledge reveals the innate Bliss, and what is known one is.

In addition to the book, "Self-Knowledge," mentioned in the previous reply, you may find it beneficial to read "Self-inquiry and the Four Requisites" (the fourfold sadhana) and "Saddarsanam and an Inquiry into the Revelation of Truth and Oneself."

May your inquiry be deep, so that you ever abide in the Self, as the Self, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, and thus remain ever happy and at peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker was confused about stopping thoughts. Here is the reply.]

October 31, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. You need not worry about stopping thoughts. Just cease to misidentify with any of their content, and inwardly investigating the nature of the mind's very supposed existence, realize yourself to be illimitable, undifferentiated Consciousness.

Sasvati is fine and sends her love.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[In reply to a question about concentration]

November 5, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. That which knows the concentration and dissipation of mental attention, but which is not affected by them, which is never an object of attention, and which knows itself by itself, is Consciousness, your very Existence. The Self is truly utterly transcendent.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker raised several questions that can be inferred from the answers given in the reply.]

November 8, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. Thank you for your email messages.

It is only within the context of thought that thought appears to be problematic. In the true Knowledge of Being, thought is found not to exist. The same is so with the mind.

It is by meeting such grace with appropriate devotion and spiritual practice that those devotees of Sri Ramana were forever changed.

Spiritual practices, including listening to and reading spiritual instruction, are never in vain or a "waste of time." Continuing to read Saddarsanam and meditating on the significance of what is said therein will be beneficial. Also, it would be wise for you to reread the previous response to you about thoughts and the mind. Though brief and terse, its meaning is far-reaching.

As the Self is the sole-existent Reality, Self-Knowledge shines forth as soon as ignorance is destroyed. Ignorance, being unreal, is destroyed as

soon as it is recognized as such. Ignorance is merely misidentification.

So, steadily, deeply inquire to realize the Self, the only knower, of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

There is only one Self. An ego is merely imaginary, and has no power except that which you imagine it to have. Search for its source, and it will vanish. Then, there is peace.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[A seeker in UK asked about reading scriptures and if such would be a distraction from realizing ajata, as well as a recommendation of what to read. Here is the reply.]

November 9, 2016

Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. The earnest desire to practice so that Self-Knowledge is realized is entirely beneficial. Be certain to deeply meditate upon the meaning of what is read. Such meditation should be of the nature of profound, inner, nonobjective inquiry to realize the Self, your very Being, as it is. In such Realization, the truth of ajata is self-evident. In light of this, there need not be any concern about whether or not reading Advaita Vedanta scriptures, or even this paragraph, could detract or distract.

The recommendation is as before.

The timeless revelation of that which is expressed in the scriptures is found within you.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome

[This email is from the same seeker in the UK. Nome's response follows.]

November 20, 2016

Dear Nome,

I will keep my question brief and to the point. Is the "goal" (not the right word I know), to become so detached that, even if my husband and son died, there would be no suffering, as the Self clearly does not suffer in anyway. I have read several accounts of when Ramana died, Muruganar was inconsolable. Is it that grief may be felt, tears may happen, but there is no attachment whatsoever, they are just passing through so to speak? Clearly from Muruganar's profound verses he had truly realized his Self, so I am just a little unclear.

Thank you so much for your time, it is deeply appreciated.

Warmest Regards

November 20, 2016

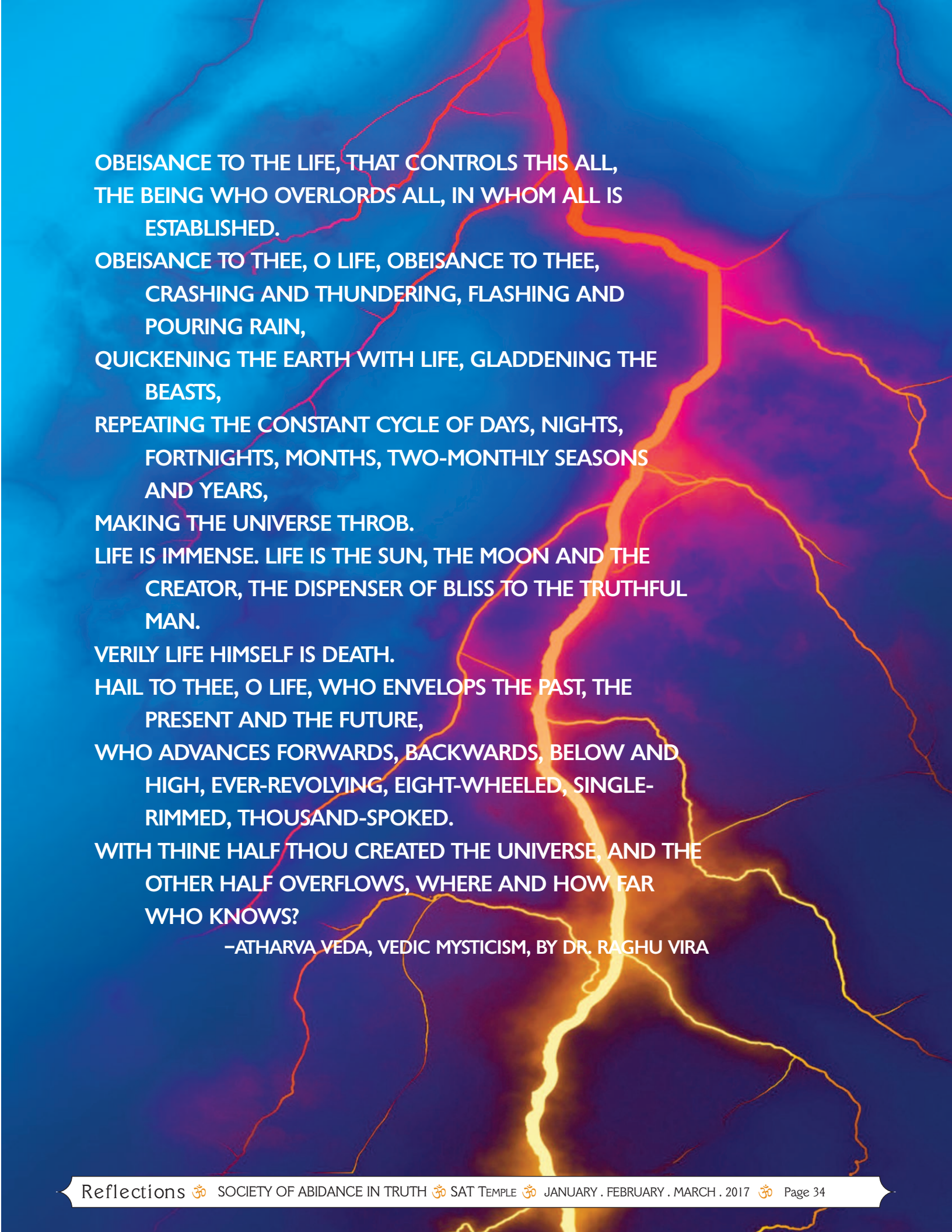
Dear ,

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Namaste. There is no harm with the word "goal." Only you must understand that it is within you. In the end, you find that you, yourself, are the goal. That is of the nature of eternal Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. Such is the only Self there truly is and the only identity of the realized. Such is entirely bodiless. Thus, it is immortal, unborn, and actionless. So, it must be asked if it is Muruganar who suffers and grieves or is that idea only according to the body-misidentified viewpoint of the so-called onlooker? Whether with smiles or tears, speaking or silent, moving or still, the realized remain ever the same. The Self never perishes; Self-Knowledge is never lost; nothing can cause the destruction of the immutable. Conclusively realize this, and you will not suffer.

Om Namah Sivaya
Ever yours in Truth,
Nome





OBEISANCE TO THE LIFE, THAT CONTROLS THIS ALL,
THE BEING WHO OVERLORDS ALL, IN WHOM ALL IS
ESTABLISHED.

OBEISANCE TO THEE, O LIFE, OBEISANCE TO THEE,
CRASHING AND THUNDERING, FLASHING AND
POURING RAIN,
QUICKENING THE EARTH WITH LIFE, GLADDENING THE
BEASTS,
REPEATING THE CONSTANT CYCLE OF DAYS, NIGHTS,
FORTNIGHTS, MONTHS, TWO-MONTHLY SEASONS
AND YEARS,
MAKING THE UNIVERSE THROB.

LIFE IS IMMENSE. LIFE IS THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE
CREATOR, THE DISPENSER OF BLISS TO THE TRUTHFUL
MAN.

VERILY LIFE HIMSELF IS DEATH.

HAIL TO THEE, O LIFE, WHO ENVELOPS THE PAST, THE
PRESENT AND THE FUTURE,
WHO ADVANCES FORWARDS, BACKWARDS, BELOW AND
HIGH, EVER-REVOLVING, EIGHT-WHEELED, SINGLE-
RIMMED, THOUSAND-SPOKED.

WITH THINE HALF THOU CREATED THE UNIVERSE, AND THE
OTHER HALF OVERFLOWS, WHERE AND HOW FAR
WHO KNOWS?

—ATHARVA VEDA, VEDIC MYSTICISM, BY DR. RAGHU VIRA

Work begins on the new siding for the SAT Temple



Day by Day with Bhagavan

Today, between 10 and 11 a.m., the foundation was laid for Bhagavan's new hall in front of the temple and Bhagavan attended the function. The sthapati in charge (Sri Vaidyanatha Sthapathi) of the work made a short speech in which he said that it was his aim and endeavour to see the entire work finished in one year and that he wanted the cooperation and goodwill of all Bhagavan's devotees. A number of devotees also subscribed various sums. First a widow came and offered some money to Sarvadhikari. He took it and put it on a plate on the ground, saying, "This sum, the lady is offering as her contribution." Thereupon various devotees began putting down various sums. I guess the amount offered on the spot could not have been less than Rs. 2,000. A radio singer, hailing from Tirukoilur, sang a few songs in praise of Bhagavan and the function ended with a feast for us, the inmates. -Day by Day with Bhagavan, 2-6-46

Seemantham was performed for Jyoti and Raghu at the SAT Temple on December 10th.



**A Temple Blog has been posted of this event and can be viewed by following this link:
<https://satramana.wordpress.com/2016/12/25/seemantham-baby-shower-for-jyoti-and-raghu/>**

Arches are being created by Scott to adorn Ribhu Rishi and Adi Sankara's altars in the Satsang Hall.





OM NAMO BHAGAVATE SRI RAMANAYA ॐ OM NAMAH SIVAYA

Namaste dear devotee,

The Heart is the temple of God, and the temple is the Heart of God.

In a manner consistent with the wisdom of Sri Bhagavan, the SAT Temple offers the pure teachings of Advaita Vedanta and guidance for Self-Realization along the path of Self-Knowledge. The SAT Temple exists solely for the purpose of Self-Realization. Lovers of SAT and Advaita Vedanta recognize the uniqueness of the SAT Temple and from this recognition have been instrumental in sustaining SAT throughout the years through selfless service and donations.

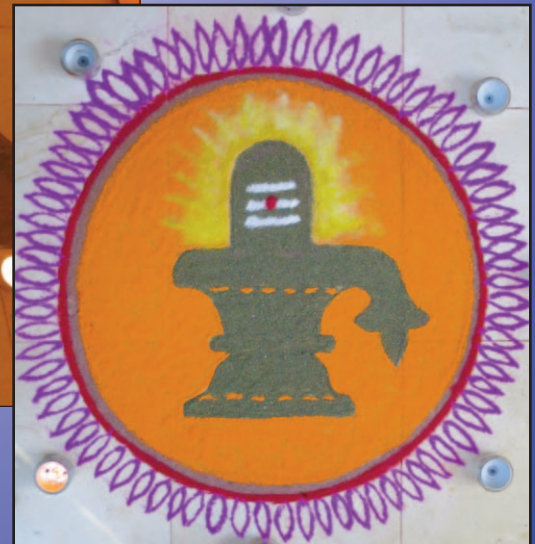
Once a year, the SAT board of directors sends a pledge letter to those who have benefited from the sacred events at the SAT Temple extending the opportunity to express gratitude in the form of a pledge donation. The pledge donations, the membership donations, and the donations from devotees who come to the temple for satsangs and retreats are a significant portion of the support that helps the temple make available the glorious Light of Sri Bhagavan's teachings.

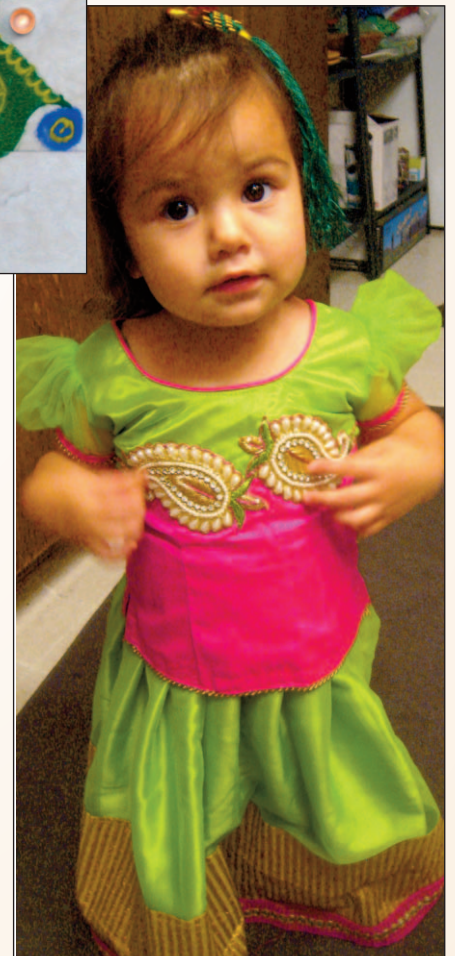
Because of the natural expression of their appreciation for the SAT Temple, devotees made it possible through generous donations given during the 2016 pledge drive for us to be able to replace the temple siding, which has deteriorated considerably. After securing an architect to submit plans to the City of Santa Cruz, we finally obtained a building permit and this project has commenced. In addition to the general maintenance costs for upkeep of the temple, there are other special repairs, upgrades and projects needed over the coming years for which we will have to plan and save. The next project in the cue is renovating the old temple kitchen. The temple kitchen is regularly used by devotees to prepare prasadam that is served during events at SAT. With your donation and by the Grace of Lord Siva and Sri Bhagavan, we hope to accomplish this improvement in 2017.

We invite you to reflect on the magnificent blessing of the opportunity of participating in the SAT Temple, which supports and illumines your spiritual life and to offer a pledge for 2017. For more information, please contact the SAT office at: <sat@cruzio.com>

With heartfelt appreciation and in service to Sri Bhagavan,
The SAT Board of Directors

Temple Photo Album















Upcoming Special Events at the SAT Temple

Arudra Darshan: January 11, 2017

Mahasivaratri: February 24-25, 2017

Nondual Self-Inquiry Retreat: March 17-19, 2017

<https://www.facebook.com/SATTemple>

<https://satramana.org>

Many satsangs and special events are available to view on YouTube. Just type satramana in the search section of the YouTube site.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya
Om Namah Sivaya

Many of the background images used in Reflections are from: Pixabay.com

SAT Retreats 2017

This year, SAT will offer four retreats to assist spiritual seekers in their quest for Self-Realization. SAT retreats are wonderful opportunities for spiritual experience and practice and are perfect for all seekers of nondual Self-Knowledge.

In SAT retreats, Self-Knowledge and Self-inquiry meditation, the means of inquiring within to know the true Self, are taught, with ample time to ask questions as the teachings are given, so that you can clarify and deepen your understanding and experience. SAT retreats are very thorough in their presentation and provide a tremendous amount of spiritual guidance. The experience of attending retreats is profound and very helpful for spiritual development.

All of SAT's retreats are taught by Nome, a sage who practiced the inquiry for steady abidance in Self-Realization. He places no emphasis on himself, but keeps the focus of the instruction entirely upon Self-Knowledge and Self-inquiry, turning the aspirants' attention fully inward, for it is in this way that meditation, Self-inquiry, and Self-Knowledge truly open for one.

Recommended readings for the retreats are the works of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Ribhu Gita and The Song of Ribhu, Self-Knowledge, the writings of Sankara (Adi Sankara), such as those contained in Svatmanirupanam and Advaita Prakarana Manjari, Avadhuta Gita, Ashtavakra Gita, Saddarshanam and an Inquiry into the Revelation of Truth and Oneself, The Essence of Spiritual Instruction, and The Quintessence of True Being. Familiarizing yourself with or studying these books will enable you to obtain even more from the retreats, which are an experiential immersion in the essence of Advaita Vedanta. All of these books and similar nondualistic literature are available from SAT.

Vegetarian meals are provided during the retreats. During retreats, lunch and dinner are served on Friday, three meals are served on Saturday, and two meals are served on Sunday. SAT does not provide special meals for those with unique dietary concerns.

The Nondual Self-inquiry Retreat

March 17 - March 19, Friday morning through Sunday afternoon

This retreat is based upon the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi as presented in his books, Self-inquiry and Who am I? The spiritual instruction focuses on the nature of the Self, the natural state of Self-Realization, the introspective inquiry that results in this Realization, the nature of happiness, the nature of Being, the nature of Consciousness, and transcendence of the body, mind, and ego. The retreat provides much time for silent meditation in addition to the instruction.

The Self-Knowledge Retreat

May 26 - May 28, Friday morning through Sunday afternoon

This retreat is based on the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi contained within Origin of Spiritual Instruction. The spiritual instruction focuses on the discernment between the Self and what is not the Self, between what is real and what is not. The Nondual Realization of the Unborn State of the Self and the Truth of No-creation (Ajata), as always in the teachings presented at SAT, are central to the instruction provided during this retreat. The retreat provides much time for silent meditation in addition to the instruction.

Sri Ramana Self-Realization Retreat

August 18 - August 20, Friday morning through Sunday afternoon

The date of September 1st is when Sri Ramana Maharshi arrived at Arunachala, steadily abiding in and as the Self, where he would henceforth reveal the highest Nondual Truth with teachings of Self-Knowledge, showing the primary means of the path of Knowledge - Self-inquiry. This retreat, which precedes the celebration of that holy day, focuses on the Maharshi's teachings contained within Atma Vidya, Ekatma Pancakam, and other short texts, with spiritual instruction about these teachings, and much time for silent meditation. This retreat is an immersion in the fusion of Knowledge and devotion.

The Truth Revealed Retreat

November 10 - November 12, Friday morning through Sunday afternoon

This retreat is focused on nondual Self-Knowledge as revealed by Sri Ramana Maharshi and consists of an in-depth explanation of the teachings contained in Sri Ramana Maharshi's Saddarshanam (i.e., Sat-Darshanam, Truth Revealed, Forty Verses on Reality). There is also much time for the participants to silently meditate upon this quintessential, profound, Blissful Knowledge for the revelation of the Truth within.

Online Retreat Registration Now Available!

Please visit the link below to register for retreats at the SAT Temple:

<https://satramana.org/web/events/retreats/retreat-application-form/>

Or, visit the SAT website at: satramana.org > Events > Retreats